



HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

March 2017

The Allocation Policy is consistent with the Council's social inclusion agenda and sets out how Aberdeenshire Council (herein referred to as the Council) carries out its statutory duty of allocating houses based on an assessment of the housing need of applicants.

In order to monitor and evaluate the standard of this service, key performance indicators have been identified. Regular monitoring reports are produced which inform the ongoing assessment of the service and the Council's drive for continuous improvement in services.

With due regard to performance, the Council applies the following standards: -

1 Access to Housing

We ensure that people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment process. We work with others to maximise and simplify routes into housing.

2 Lettings

We let houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps to sustain communities.

3 Quality of Accommodation

When we arrange temporary or permanent accommodation, we treat all applicants fairly and appropriately in terms of tenancy provision, quality and location.

4 Equal Opportunities

In operating the Allocation policy the Council will not discriminate against any person because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or gender, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership.

The Allocation Policy is underpinned by general conditions (Appendix 1.) and procedures to ensure its consistent application across Aberdeenshire.

Consultation

Representatives from tenant participation groups have been involved in reviewing the Allocation Policy. Wider service user consultation on the policy has been facilitated through the Council's web site, through the availability of the proposed policy in Council Offices and the distribution of the proposed policy on request. In addition, the proposed Allocation Policy has been issued to the Council's partner organisations for comment/input as part of the consultation process.

The Council have agreed that the next full review of this policy will be in October 2018.

Admission to the Waiting List

The Council's Allocation Policy is written in accordance with Sections 19-21 of The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987: as amended by The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Applicants for the provision of housing held by the Council will be admitted to the housing list provided they are 16 years of age or older.

With regard to houses in Council ownership, or through nomination agreements with Registered Social Landlords (RSL) who provide housing in Aberdeenshire, the selection of tenants or nominees ensures that reasonable preference will be given to those who can demonstrate a housing need including: -

- Applicants with medical and/or social need for a move
- Unsatisfactorily housed applicants and unmet housing needs
- Applicants overcrowded or under occupying accommodation
- Statutory homeless cases and those threatened with homelessness.
- Applicants with large families
- Applicants occupying accommodation which does not meet the tolerable standard.

Applications may be accepted from persons from countries within and out with the EU provided there are no immigration restrictions and the applicant has recourse to public funds.

The Council's Banding Scheme

An applicant will be placed into a banding based on their housing need. Applicants will be assessed against a standard matrix (Appendix 2) to decide what band they will be placed in. An applicant can be awarded a number of need factors appropriate to their housing need. The greater the 'need' a housing applicant has, the more likelihood they have of being allocated housing.

Applicants can also apply for Sheltered Housing or Very Sheltered Housing subject to eligibility criteria. (Appendix 3)

Due to extensive waiting lists, applicants are encouraged to apply for as many areas of choice (settlements) as they can, however in most instances, applicants only have to select a minimum of 1 settlement. If an applicant has been assessed as being in the highest priority banding 'A', their application will be reviewed every three months and they will be required to add an additional 3 settlements at each interval up to a minimum of 7.

Applicants in the highest priority banding 'A', who may have exceptional circumstances which require them to be housed in one particular settlement, will have the right to request an exemption from the requirement to add additional settlements. (Appendix 4).

Applications who have been assessed as unintentionally homeless and have a local connection to Aberdeenshire as defined in Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 are considered to have a priority for housing and will be placed in Band 'A'.

The allocation of a vacant property will be based on housing need and the choices of the applicant, such as letting area/s, and property size.

The components of the policy are: -

- a) General Conditions (appendix 1)
- b) Banding Scheme (appendix 2)
- c) Sheltered Housing and Very Sheltered Housing Allocation Criteria (appendix 3)
- d) Exemptions to adding additional areas for applicants in Band A (appendix 4)
- e) Mutual Exchange Procedure (appendix 5)

SELECTION AND NOMINATION PROCEDURE

When a council property becomes available for let, the applicant to be offered the property will be selected taking account of: -

- the top priority applicant
- a management transfer

When selecting applicants for specially adapted properties, consideration will be given to the recommendations of the Housing Occupational Therapist or other health professional.

Nominations to other Housing Providers

The Council has nomination rights to a percentage of vacancies which arise in Registered Social Landlord (RSL) stock. When a request for a nomination is received the council will nominate a number of applicants in accordance with the selection procedure outlined above and the specific requirements of the RSL.

The Council will also make nominations for mid market rental properties in accordance with agreed selection criteria set out for each development.

Mutual Exchanges

Tenants are encouraged to consider an exchange of housing with other tenants as a means of meeting their housing needs. There is a procedure that details how this scheme is operated (Appendix 5). In principle, the council will agree to an exchange taking place if specific criteria are met and the exchange does not result in the housing circumstances of either party becoming worse.

1 Records

An applicant is entitled to inspect any record kept by the Council regarding information provided by the applicant. 48 hours notice is required. A fee will be charged where copies of a file are required, in accordance with the Council's policy on "Access to Personal Files".

Information required for maintaining *Apply4Homes*, waiting lists, management information and details required for statistical purposes will be held on computer. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 the Council is registered as a data user. Applicants may request sight of the data held by the Council in connection with their application. A fee will be charged for any copies requested. All applicants have the right to have inaccurate information corrected, whether held on manual or computer files.

2 Equality

Where a cohabiting, engaged or married couple apply, any eligibility requirements may be satisfied by either partner. Same sex couples will be treated in the same way as couples of the opposite sex.

3 Equal Opportunities

In the operation of this policy the Council will not discriminate against any person because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or gender, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership.

4 Change in Circumstances

Applicants are required to give notification immediately of any change in family circumstances, change of address or any other change, which may affect their housing application. This should be done by updating the housing application on *Apply4Homes* or by contacting the local Housing Office.

5 Review of Applications

All applications for housing will be reviewed annually in the month of the original application unless the application has been accessed on *Apply4Homes* in which case the review date will be moved to the anniversary date of when it was last accessed. The applicant will be invited to confirm the relevant details held about their application and to confirm their wish to remain on the waiting list. Failure to do so will result in the removal of the application from the waiting list. Applicants will be sent the review form and those that do not respond will be issued with a

reminder. Failure to respond to the review form and the reminder will result in the application being cancelled and they will be advised in the reminder that this is the last contact about the application. Applicants can reapply at any time.

6 Size of Accommodation

Single Person	1 bedroom
*Single Person or Couple where pregnancy confirmed	1 or 2 bedrooms
*Couple with no family resident	1 or 2 bedrooms
Family with one child	2 bedrooms
Family with two children of the same sex both under 10 years of age	2 bedrooms
*Family with two children of the same sex with either one or both aged 10 years or over	2 or 3 bedrooms
*Family with two children of the opposite sex both under 5 years of age	2 or 3 bedrooms
*Family with two children of the opposite sex with either one or both aged 5 years or over	2 or 3 bedrooms
*Family with three or more children dependent on ages or sex	3 or 4 bedrooms

Note 1: It should be noted that the categories of size of accommodation as indicated by an asterisk * above, provide applicants with a choice of property size. However if applicant chooses the larger property, they may only be entitled to a banding for the smaller property

Due to changes in housing benefit and universal credit entitlement the number of bedrooms an applicant has in their property will affect the amount of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing element they are entitled to if they are of working age.

This equates to a 14% reduction in Housing Benefit or Housing element if the applicant has one bedroom too many, and 25% if they have two or more bedrooms too many.

Therefore, although there are some exemptions, generally all of the categories marked with an asterisk above provide the option of a property larger than what has been determined by the government as an adequate size.

Applicants can request more information on this at time of application as this situation is being regularly reviewed and changed.

Note 2: A relative or friend intending to reside with the applicant's household will require a separate bedroom.

Note 3: The Occupational Therapist or other health professional may direct that a person is to have a separate bedroom on medical grounds.

Note 4: Couples will include those living together as co-habitees and will include couples of the same or opposite sex.

Note 5: Applicants with residential contact with a dependent child or children for more than 50% of the year may be considered for larger accommodation but will only be entitled to one additional bedroom irrespective to the number of children covered by the access agreement. Due to the shortage of housing stock the priority for the authority is to provide suitable sized accommodation for households where the child or children lives with the applicant on a permanent basis.

In areas where low demand exists applicants may be offered accommodation larger than the sizes indicated above.

7 Amendments to the Policy

The Policy may only be amended by resolution of the Aberdeenshire Council's Social Work and Housing Committee.

8 Conditions

In all of the cases below, the Housing Manager has discretion to waive or vary any condition where the circumstances of the case justify it and are exceptional.

8.1 False Information

Where an applicant deliberately gives false information, or knowingly withholds relevant information in relation to an application it shall be suspended from the waiting list for a period of up to 12 months.

If an allocation has been made prior to the discovery of false information that allocation shall be considered to be null and void. Where a tenancy has been created, prior to the discovery of false information, the Council shall take such steps as considered necessary to repossess the house. Any new application will be suspended from the waiting list for a period of 12 months.

8.2 Outstanding Debts

Any applicant who owes rent, rechargeable repairs, or any housing debt to a local authority, a Registered Social Landlord or to a private landlord, may not be considered for a tenancy.

In cases where the amount outstanding is not more than 1/12th of the annual amount payable (or which was payable) by the applicant to the landlord in respect of the tenancy consideration will be given for the allocation of housing.

Consideration will be given to applicants with housing debt where the Applicant has an agreed arrangement with the landlord for paying the outstanding liability; is continuing to make such payments in accordance with that arrangement for at least 3 months; and the repayment agreement reflects that the total debt will be cleared within a reasonable period. Please refer to the Council's Re-housing with Debt policy for further details

8.3 Unsatisfactory Tenancy

Any applicant whose present house is in a neglected, unclean or damaged condition or garden is in an unkempt condition will not be considered for a tenancy until the situation is rectified and monitored over a reasonable period. The monitoring period will normally be for 3 months but may be longer depending on the circumstances of the individual case.

8.4 Anti-Social Behaviour

a) Applicants who have been evicted for anti-social behaviour may be suspended from receiving an offer of accommodation for 12 months from the date of eviction. An individual's circumstances will be taken into account before suspending an application.

b) Applicants who have been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the preceding three years, or where a member of the applicant's household is

subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, may be considered for the allocation of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy for a period up to 18 months. This may lead to a secure tenancy where the Housing Manager is satisfied that the tenancy has been conducted in a satisfactory manner

8.5 Worsening of Housing Conditions

If it is found that an applicant purposely changed address or acted otherwise to fraudulently worsen their housing circumstances in an endeavour to obtain an increase in priority, such additional priority will not be awarded for a period of 6 months from the date of which the change was reported.

8.6 Reasonable Offer

If an applicant on the waiting list is to be considered for housing the Council will make one reasonable offer of accommodation (this will include an offer received from another RSL as a result of a nomination by the Council) taking into account what the applicant has applied for, the size of the property required and the availability of property in the applicants area/s of choice and any medical need. This will also apply if an applicant has bid and has subsequently been offered a property via *Homehunt* and then chooses to refuse it.

If an applicant decides not to accept a nomination to a mid market rent property this will not be taken as a refusal.

8.7 Refusal of an Offer

Where an applicant refuses one reasonable offer of accommodation, the application will be suspended for 6 months. The Council will determine what is a reasonable offer taking into account the criteria detailed in paragraph 8.6 above and the reasons for refusal. Following the completion of the suspension period, the applicant will be required to re-apply to the waiting list.

9 Household Composition

In order to determine the composition of an applicant's household, for the purpose of assessing the priority in relation to any application the following shall be disregarded: -

Any member of the household

- (i) Who is a hospital patient and who is unlikely in the opinion of the Associate Specialist in Community Medicine, NHS Grampian to be discharged; or
- (ii) Who is serving in Her Majesty's Forces and will not be discharged within the next 6 months; or

- (iii) Who is serving a prison sentence longer than 13 weeks; or
- (iv) Who is a child under the care of a Local Authority and who is unlikely to return to live with the applicant or;
- (v) A child who only visits in accordance with a contact agreement less than 50% of the time calculated over a period of a year.

10 Flats and Maisonettes

In recognition of the unsuitability of tenement flats and maisonettes for families with young children, no penalty in terms of general regulation 8.7 will be imposed where an applicant with a child, or children, under the age of 5 refuses an offer of accommodation on the second storey or above in a tenement or maisonette block.

11 Reviews

Any applicant who is not satisfied that his/her application is being dealt with in accordance with the Council's Allocation policy may request a review of any decision taken by a delegated officer regarding his/her application. Requests should be made in writing within 21 days to the Housing Manager. Similarly, a request for review may be made against any decision taken by the delegated officer using discretionary powers.

12 Joint Tenancies

Married couples, co-habitees and single persons sharing accommodation will normally be granted a joint tenancy. A joint tenancy ensures that all parties are jointly and severally responsible for all tenant obligations including the payment of rent.

13 Management Transfer

The Housing Manager will have the discretion to transfer a Council tenant on management grounds, following Housing Managers approval and only in situations where it is in the best interests of all concerned that a tenant is transferred with minimum delay. This discretion is only to be exercised in exceptional circumstances and where it promotes the best use of the housing stock. Please see Aberdeenshire Council's Management Transfer Procedure.

14 Transfers to Smaller Property

Tenants be allowed to partially downsize to a property that they will still under-occupy but to a lesser extent e.g. from a 3 bedroom to a 2 bedroom in order to free up family sized accommodation and to provide for best use of housing stock. The transfer will be through the award of under-occupation priority and will be at the discretion of the Housing Manager who will require to be satisfied that the resultant vacant property can readily be re-let to a household that will fully occupy the accommodation.

15 Under-Occupation Grant

In order to increase the supply of 3 and 4 bedroom sized accommodation, a grant and/or assistance may be available to Council tenants who meet specific criteria who transfer to another Council or Aberdeenshire RSL house to alleviate under-occupancy. The grant will be payable providing that the tenant has a clear rent account and has no housing debts outstanding. The details of the grant conditions are available from local Housing Offices.

**Housing Allocations Policy
Mainstream Priority Banding Matrix**

Need Factor	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Evidence
<p>Housing Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Extreme need for accommodation to enable discharge from hospital where previous accommodation is unsuitable or unavailable to return to.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Due to functional ability, it is no longer possible for the individual to remain in their current accommodation</p>	<p>Able to access facilities in the current accommodation but with considerable difficulty and this is likely to get worse in the short term due to their impaired functional ability.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Current accommodation is a substantial risk to the health and safety of the applicant or others and rehousing would be of benefit.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Minimal support in their present accommodation and the applicant needs a significant level of support from others that could otherwise not be provided.</p>	<p>Able to access facilities with some difficulty but this is not having a major or adverse impact on the health and safety of the applicant or others.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Current accommodation is a potential risk to the health and safety of the applicant or others and rehousing would be of benefit</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Some difficulty with access to the property but it is suitable inside. limited</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Support is available in their present accommodation and it would be beneficial to move to another area where additional support could be provided.</p>	<p>Functional ability may moderately improve with a change of property.</p>	<p>Assessment by Council's in house staff assisted by housing OT, Social Work and other professionals using housing needs assessment procedure.</p>

Need Factor	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Evidence
Unsuitable Accommodation (includes Overcrowded and Under-Occupied Accommodation)	Social housing tenants from Aberdeenshire who are under-occupying by 2 bedrooms or more.	Social housing tenants from Aberdeenshire who are under-occupying by one bedroom			Northgate database along with tenancy reports for RSL tenants
	Overcrowded as lacking two or more bedrooms		Overcrowded as lacking one bedroom		House visit, confirmation from landlord or other agency
	A social housing tenant in Aberdeenshire releasing adapted accommodation where adaptations no longer required and demand exists or where property can be adapted to meet a specific need and existing tenant wishes to move				Northgate database along with tenancy reports for RSL tenants. If appropriate, advice will be sought from the Council's OT service and/or NHS
	A sheltered or very sheltered housing tenant in Aberdeenshire who no longer requires that type of accommodation due to a change in their household support needs.				Communication with the local area co-ordinator and other social work staff Through communication with housing.
			Applicant is sharing facilities with someone they do not want to move with		Apply4Homes application
	Applicant is overcrowded and has 4 or more family members excluding applicant and spouse/partner	Applicant is overcrowded and has 3 family members excluding applicant and spouse/partner	Applicant is overcrowded and has 2 family members excluding applicant and spouse/partner		
				Children of the opposite sex who are sharing a bedroom	Apply4Homes application

Need Factor	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Evidence
<p data-bbox="218 402 342 431">Lack Of</p> <p data-bbox="260 509 300 539">Or</p> <p data-bbox="212 623 348 688">Insecure Housing</p>	<p data-bbox="451 188 772 337">Is homeless or threatened with homelessness and owed a duty under the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.</p>	<p data-bbox="793 220 1024 337">Have no settled accommodation and/or is living at a "care of address"</p>	<p data-bbox="1081 220 1329 428">Living with friends and relatives or in Aberdeenshire Council temporary accommodation and asked to leave within 6 months.</p>		<p data-bbox="1629 220 1892 276">Applicants assessed against the legislation</p> <p data-bbox="1629 311 1919 367">Visit by housing team or environmental health</p> <p data-bbox="1629 402 1961 428">Letter from friend or relative</p>
	<p data-bbox="451 466 772 792">Homeless applicant who has been in Aberdeenshire Council placed temporary accommodation for more than 6 months or is no longer occupying Aberdeenshire Council temporary accommodation due to temp duty being fulfilled.</p> <p data-bbox="451 831 772 1377">OR An applicant who is currently occupying supported accommodation provided by Aberdeenshire Council Throughcare and Aftercare Team for more than 6 months and confirmation has been received through the Youth Housing Forum that the applicant no longer needs this accommodation and is ready to move to independent accommodation.</p>	<p data-bbox="793 466 1045 857">Homeless applicant who has been in council placed temporary accommodation between 3 and 6 months or is no longer occupying Aberdeenshire Council temporary accommodation due to temp duty being fulfilled.</p> <p data-bbox="793 896 1045 1500">OR An applicant who is currently occupying supported accommodation provided by Aberdeenshire Council Throughcare and Aftercare Team between 3-6 months and confirmation has been received through the Youth Housing Forum that the applicant no longer needs this accommodation and is ready to move to independent accommodation.</p>	<p data-bbox="1081 466 1329 857">Homeless applicant who has been in council placed temporary accommodation between 0 and 3 months or is no longer occupying Aberdeenshire Council temporary accommodation due to temp duty being fulfilled.</p> <p data-bbox="1081 896 1329 1533">OR An applicant who is currently occupying supported accommodation provided by Aberdeenshire Council Throughcare and Aftercare Team between 0-3 months and confirmation has been received through the Youth Housing Forum that the applicant no longer needs this accommodation and is ready to move to independent accommodation.</p>		

Need Factor	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Evidence
<p style="text-align: center;">Lack Of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Insecure Housing cont.</p>	<p>In supported housing for more than 6 months and capable of sustaining a tenancy and have a local connection to Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Where Aberdeenshire Council has a duty under the Children's Scotland Act 1995 to a young person leaving care who requires to move to supported or independent accommodation</p>	<p>In supported housing for less than 6 months and capable of sustaining a tenancy and have a local connection to Aberdeenshire.</p>	<p>In supported housing for more than 6 months and capable of sustaining a tenancy.</p>	<p>In supported housing for less than 6 months and capable of sustaining a tenancy.</p>	<p>Multi agency assessment. No suitable/affordable alternative accommodation available</p> <p>Social Work Department</p> <p>Local connection confirmation.</p>
	<p>In private rented, tied, owner occupied* or HM forces accommodation and due to vacate through no fault of own within 3 months and landlord actively pursuing re-possession on stated grounds (for example where Short Scottish Secure Tenancy or Short Assured Tenancy is coming to an end)</p>	<p>In private rented, tied, owner occupied* or HM forces accommodation and due to vacate through no fault of own within 6 months and landlord actively pursuing re-possession on stated grounds (for example where Short Scottish Secure Tenancy or Short Assured Tenancy is coming to an end)</p>	<p>Currently occupying HM Forces accommodation and no action being taken for re-possession by landlord.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Servicing a custodial sentence in prison or young offender's institute.</p>		<p>Evidence of NTQ</p> <p>Solicitor's letter</p> <p>*Owner Occupied - evidence required that property has to be sold and all steps have been taken to retain the property</p> <p>Army discharge confirmation.</p>

Need Factor	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Evidence
Social/Welfare Need/Local Connection	<p>At serious risk of harm from racial harassment or neighbour dispute</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Violence/abuse or need to be re-housed urgently because of witness/child protection/community safety issues</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Suffered a significant trauma within the property or in the immediate vicinity making it unreasonable to expect applicant to continue to live there</p>	<p>At risk of physical or violent harm from racial harassment or neighbour dispute or violence/abuse</p>	<p>At risk of non violent or verbal harm from racial harassment or neighbour dispute or violence/abuse</p>		<p>Evidence from Police and professional agencies of imminent threat</p> <p>Letter of support from GP/CPN/Social Worker etc</p>
	<p>Extreme level requirement for sheltered housing</p>	<p>High level requirement for sheltered housing</p>	<p>Medium level requirement for sheltered housing</p>	<p>Low level requirement for sheltered housing</p>	<p>*Only applies to applicants who have selected Sheltered Housing. For applicants who select mainstream and sheltered housing banding will only be given to Sheltered Housing Properties.</p>
		<p>Former tenant who by agreement voluntarily or at request of the authority surrendered a previous tenancy (e.g. admission to supported housing, imprisonment)</p>			

<p style="text-align: center;">Social/Welfare Need/Local Connection cont.</p>				<p>Currently live in Aberdeenshire</p> <p>or</p> <p>Currently live out with Aberdeenshire but need to move to a specific area to retain specialist education or medical facilities, provide or receive support, maintain or take up employment, be near a relative, flee harassment or abuse.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Leaving HM Forces</p>	<p>Letter from employer confirming employment</p> <p>Confirmation of address i.e. utility bill</p> <p>Letter from Education Facility/Medical Facility/Social Work Services/Family</p> <p>Evidence from police or equivalent</p> <p>Evidence from Landlord</p> <p>Application Form</p>
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Need Factor	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Evidence
Unsatisfactory Accommodation	Residing in property that is subject to a Compulsory Purchase or Closing Order				Environmental Services assessment
	Where the property is below tolerable standard and is unfit to live in. This does not apply to Local Authority or RSL properties.	When 3 or more facilities are lacking in the property	When 2 facilities are lacking in the property	When 1 facility is lacking in the property Or Where there are minor deficiencies which merits an award.	Inspection by Clerk of Works and/or Private Sector Housing Officer
				Children aged under 5 living in a flat or maisonette on the 2 nd floor or higher.	Apply4Homes application Visit by Housing Team

Explanatory Notes

A banding scheme is used to meet the Council's main aim which is to address housing need. It

- is a scheme which is clearer and easier to understand
- ensures that re-housing priority is given to those in greatest housing need
- takes account of the Council's statutory responsibilities
- Presents a local connection priority in order to achieve sustainable communities
- integrates all existing lists into one overall list
- recognises cumulative need within bands.

The bands are designed to distinguish between applicants whose need is an emergency or urgent and those with little immediate need. There is also recognition of the need to make optimum use of under-occupied council stock.

The definitions of need factors for Band A are fairly tight. This is to ensure the quick re-housing of the most urgent cases and the impact this would otherwise have on temporary and supported accommodation. Applicants in Band A will also be subject to a more robust assessment and a three monthly review to ensure that the needs remain current. To recognise this need applicants in Band A will be asked to add an additional 3 areas of choice every 3 months up to a maximum of 7 unless they have already chosen to do so.

Applicants whose needs have changed will be reassessed and if appropriate placed into a lower band. Applicants can only get one banding award from each line.

APPENDIX 3

Sheltered Housing Allocation Criteria

The allocation of Sheltered Housing (SH) is covered by the Council's Allocation policy. Applications for SH are assessed on their housing, medical and housing support needs.

Sheltered Housing and Linked Cottages:

- SH allows and enables tenants (usually older people) to live in their own rented tenancy.
- Tenants within SH will have an assessed need for both accommodation and housing support.
- All flats are self-contained but there are communal shared areas for tenants and staff to use.
- Linked cottages on the same campus as the main SH complex are also available. The same housing support service is provided.
- All complexes are user friendly to assist tenants with mobility problems. It will meet wheelchair standards where possible.
- Each complex will have a SH Officer who will provide a daily check on each tenant, should they wish it. Community alarm provides an emergency contact should this be required out with SH staff working hours.

The aim of Sheltered Housing is:

- To allow tenants to live independently with low level housing support provided to assist this.
- The model of SH and housing support respond flexibly with the best use of money available to meet tenants' needs.
- SH provides a tenancy for older people, usually those over 60 who are no longer able to reside in their current accommodation and will have an assessed need and would benefit from housing support.
- Housing support enables tenants to maintain independent living. Housing support does not include personal care however if this is required a Self Directed Support assessment can be requested through Social Work.

The allocation criteria includes:

- Applicants who are 60 years of age or above and are deemed to be vulnerable in their current accommodation. However younger applicants will be considered depending on their circumstances. Allocation will be further assisted and assessed with the completion of a Sheltered Housing Eligibility Assessment. This assessment will be instigated by the Local Area Co-ordinator (LAC SH) to further ensure the applicant has an identified need for SH.

- Applicants who refuse to have a Sheltered Housing Eligibility Assessment completed will not be considered for Sheltered Housing.
- Applicants who require more support than what is provided in their current accommodation, for example, a daily visit or call.
- Applicants who have a restricted lifestyle due to the unsuitability of their current housing accommodation and can manage daily living with housing support.
- Allocation of SH properties will be the responsibility of the Housing Service.
- Depending on the applicants circumstances they will be awarded housing, medical and support priority in accordance with the allocation policy.

Very Sheltered Housing Allocation Criteria

The allocation of Very Sheltered Housing (VSH) is covered by the Council's Allocation policy. Applications for VSH are assessed on their housing, medical and housing support needs. A multi agency panel will agree nominated applications based on the criteria and each applicant's priority and circumstances as set out below.

Very Sheltered Housing:

- VSH allows and enables tenants (usually older people) to live in their own rented tenancy.
- Tenants within VSH will have an assessed need for this type of accommodation and support.
- All flats are self-contained but there are communal shared areas for tenants and staff to use.
- All complexes are user friendly to assist people with mobility problems. It will meet wheelchair standards where possible.
- Each complex has a 24 hour staffing model to provide care and support every day of the year to meet tenants' individual assessed needs. This is inclusive of a meals service.

The aim of Very Sheltered Housing is:

- To maximise the independence of older people and people with a disability or people who are assessed as requiring help and care by providing self contained accommodation with 24-hour care and support tailored to meet individual needs. For example this may include help to get up in the morning, going to bed and daily tasks such as laundry. (Cleaning is not included within tenants flats)
- To enable housing and care services to respond flexibly with the best use of money available to meet tenants' needs.
- To create a housing and social culture that adds to the choice, control, freedom and dignity offered to all tenants to meet individual care needs.
- Provide a meal service within the complex offering lunch and an evening meal.

The allocation criteria includes:

- Applicants who are 60 years of age or above and are deemed to be vulnerable in their current accommodation. However younger applicants will be considered depending on their circumstances.
- Allocation may be further assisted and assessed with the completion of a Single Shared Assessment (SSA) to further ensure the applicant has an identified need for VSH.
- Applicants who have the ability to live independently but require 24 hour support including varying degrees of personal care and housing support.

- Allocation of VSH properties will be a joint Housing and Social Work responsibility.
- Depending on the applicants circumstances they will be awarded housing, medical and care and support priority in accordance with the allocation policy.

APPENDIX 4

Exemptions to adding additional areas for applicants assessed in Priority Band A

Requests for exemption from having to add additional areas of choice will be considered for exceptional circumstances which following assessment, has been approved by the Team Leader.

Examples of exception circumstances to be given consideration:

1. Essential medical treatment that can only be accessed within area of choice and no transport readily available to the applicant
2. Sensory impairment which may cause difficulties for applicant if required to move out with area of choice
3. Significant learning disabilities, mental health issues, or physical disabilities which could be exacerbated out with area of choice e.g. where applicant or member of applicant household can only reasonably access services or support within area of choice.
4. Employees of essential emergency services who are required to live within a certain area e.g. retained fireman who are required to live within an area where the travel time to the fire station is no more than 8 minutes

These exceptions are suggested as guidance and cannot cover every eventuality and the Team Leader should assess each request on a case by case basis depending on their individual merits and circumstances.

The procedure for considering these requests is as follows:

- The applicant or authorised representative will be asked to submit reasons for exemption in writing to the Team Leader.
- Housing staff will log the appeal using the proforma and assess the case and pass to the Team Leader for approval.
- The Team Leader will record the outcome of the request in the proforma and sign and date the form
- The Team Leader will write to the applicant informing them of the outcome of the request within 21 days of the receipt of the appeal
- The proforma will be placed in the applicants file and a copy passed to Information Officer (Housing) for analysis and reporting purposes.

Procedure for Mutual Exchange (Abbreviated)

All applications for mutual exchange must be processed with applicants being advised of the outcome within 28 days of both forms being received by the relevant Landlord.

1. On receipt of a completed mutual exchange application form it will be processed by the Housing Options Team. All applications will be acknowledged.
2. A check should be made that each family concerned would be moving to a suitable size of property based on the council's allocation policy and in consideration of the DWP's size criteria. Some flexibility on size criteria can be applied providing either of the party's current circumstances are not made any worse and this should be noted. Only permanent members of the household should be taken account of when considering size criteria. If the properties are not a suitable size or type to suit any specific needs, then both parties should be advised that the exchange cannot go ahead.
3. If the properties are suitable sizes for both parties the following checks need to be completed:
 - Property Inspection
 - Rent Check
 - Tenancy Management Check
4. On receipt of all information the application should be approved or declined on the basis of these checks. If one or both applicants have failed to allow the Clerk of Works access to the property or respond to a request for further information within the specified timescale then the application should be declined.
5. The application can be approved if:
 - The property is in good condition
 - The applicant does not owe rent, or rechargeable repairs or any housing debt to the Council or a Registered Social Landlord.
 - Tenancy has been conducted in a satisfactory manner (confirmed by tenancy report)
 - There is no RTB application.

If any of the above do not apply the application should be declined

6. The Housing Manager (Options & Homelessness) has discretion to waive or vary any condition where the circumstances of the case justify it and details of this will be recorded as part of the exchange application.

7. If the application has been approved both applicants should be contacted in the first instance for an exchange date to be agreed. They should also be informed that they will have to allow access for a electric & gas safety check to be carried out and any contact/access details will be taken and passed onto the Clerk of Works who will arrange for the gas & electrical checks to be carried out before the exchange takes place. Once agreement is reached both parties should be advised in writing.

Management Transfers (Abbreviated)

- 1.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 states that landlords should '*build flexibility into their allocation policies*'. This includes the use of management transfers for exceptional circumstances where Aberdeenshire Council can allocate outside the normal allocation policy.
- 1.2 A management transfer should only be used in the following circumstances:-
 - It is within the tenant's best interests to move with a minimum delay;
 - Where it promotes best use of housing stock;
 - Only in exceptional circumstances where all other methods have been exhausted;
 - If the tenant is in agreement;
 - The tenant does not have any outstanding housing related debt, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.3 Any of the housing functions can propose a management transfer.

Recommending a Management Transfer

- 2.1 The Housing Officer (or recommending officer) should carry out a detailed investigation to collect and collate all necessary evidence to allow a management transfer to be considered. This should be discussed with the Team Leader.
- 2.2 The Housing Officer should advise the tenant to make an application for re-housing on www.apply4homes.org.uk as soon as possible. A copy of the evidence should be passed to the Options team for consideration when banding the application. An application must also be submitted onto www.houseexchange.org.uk at this stage, where appropriate.
- 2.3 Following agreement, the Housing Officer should complete a Management Transfer Request Form (Appendix 1) which should be signed by the Team Leader.
- 2.4 The signed recommendation form should be passed to the Housing Manager for consideration. The Housing Manager should pass a copy of the application to the other Housing Managers (Tenancy Services/Options/Asset Management) for discussion and agreement. This can be carried out via email, however a meeting may be set up to discuss the case. If required, a Housing Occupational Therapist may be invited to join the discussion.

- 2.5 If agreed, the Housing Manager will sign the application form and pass back to the Housing Officer. The Housing Officer will then write to the tenants advising them that the Management Transfer has been approved (Appendix 2)
- 2.6 All agreed cases should be passed to the Team Leader (Options) along with the Management Transfer request form. The Team Leader (Options) should update the application form with this information and place on the management transfer list.
- 2.7 The tenant will also be informed, in writing, if the application has been rejected (Appendix 3). If they are unhappy with this decision, that can submit a formal complaint which will be dealt with through the corporate complaints procedure.

Allocation

- 3.1 Once the tenant has been placed on the Management Transfer list, the usual allocation procedure will commence.
- 3.2 If no suitable allocation has been made within 3 months, the tenant will be asked to add an additional 3 areas of choice every 3 months up to a maximum of 7 unless they have already chosen to do so. This is consistent with the standard practise for Band A waiting list applicants.
- 3.3 If a tenant feels that they should be exempt from adding additional areas of choice, the request for additional areas exemption procedure should be followed.
- 3.4 If a tenant currently has housing related debt, they may not be considered for a management transfer. Manager's discretion may be given to applicants in exceptional circumstances or where there has been a repayment agreement in place for at least 3 months, they are continuing to meet payments and the debt will be paid within a reasonable period. If the tenant does not meet this criteria, their application will be suspended from the Management Transfer List for up to 6 months.
- 3.5 Only one offer of housing will be made to any tenant on the Management Transfer list. If the tenant refuses this offer, and cannot provide sufficient evidence that the offer was unreasonable, the application will be suspended for up to 6 months (see suspended application procedure). The tenant will also be permanently removed from the Management Transfer list.

CODE OF PRACTICE

<i>Revision Date</i>	<i>Previous Revision Date</i>	<i>Summary of Changes</i>
<i>15th October 2015</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Logo updated. Date reviewed. Update to 'Unsuitable Accommodation' table. Update to 'Insecure Housing' table at Band C.</i>
<i>2nd Feb 2016</i>	<i>15th Oct 15</i>	<i>Update to Page 12 – Matrix Add information on Throughcare/Aftercare care leavers.</i>
<i>30th May 2016</i>	<i>2nd Feb 2016</i>	<i>Update to Page 12 – Matrix Add information on Temporary Accommodation.</i>
<i>1st Sept 2016 – Following Committee Approval</i>	<i>30th May 2016</i>	<i>Update to Page 1 – Add review date; Update to Page 2 – Wording for reasonable preference categories; Update to Page 5 – Working in Note 1; Update to Page 6 – timescales information I 8.1 & 8.4 Update to Page 8 – include timescales in 11 and reference to procedure in 13; Update to Page 16 – wording note. Update Page 17/18 – Job titles & assessment name</i>
<i>10th November 2016</i>	<i>1st September 2016</i>	<i>Page 17 – Update wording to Band A Unsatisfactory Accommodation definition.</i>
<i>10th March 17</i>	<i>10th November 2016</i>	<i>Update to second bullet point – Allocation Criteria for VSH. Changed from 'will be' to 'may be'</i>
<i>5th February 18</i>	<i>10th March 17</i>	<i>Inclusion of management transfer procedure (abbreviated) as appendix 6.</i>
<i>5th July 2018</i>	<i>10th March 17</i>	<i>Update wording to Appendix re evidence for unsatisfactory accommodation.</i>

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