

HORIZON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED	HOUSING POLICY
TITLE	ALLOCATIONS POLICY
DATE OF APPROVAL	SEPTEMBER 2007
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1.0 Introduction to the Allocations Policy

- 1.1** Horizon Housing Association aims to provide quality homes for people in housing need and to provide a high standard of housing management. All of our houses are built to a barrier free design and are lifetime homes, designed to be adapted should people's needs change over time. The vast majority of our stock is general needs housing to suit single people, couples and families, with around a quarter of our properties built to meet the particular needs of people who have disabilities and some have been designed for elderly people.
- 1.2** The level of housing need is assessed according to the number of points awarded to individual applicants, with reference to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and other guidance from regulatory bodies.
- 1.3** The purpose of this policy is to outline Horizon Housing Association's approach to the allocation of its houses, taking account of the housing and other needs of applicants and to explain how housing applications are assessed and properties allocated, whilst making the best use of available stock.

2. Objectives

2.1 To achieve the above objectives we aim to:

- ✎ allocate our houses to people with high levels of housing need
- ✎ permit open access to our houses from all sections of the community;
- ✎ make the best use of our housing stock;
- ✎ assist in the creation and maintenance of balanced and sustainable communities, by providing houses to meet the needs of a broad range of people.

3.0 Admission to the Housing List

- 3.1** We will accept applications from anyone over 16 years of age. We do not have a minimum points threshold, but it may be that because there are major demands upon our limited housing stock, that applicants with no, or a low number of points, are less likely to receive an offer of housing. Applicants with no points on the housing list are advised of this and other Housing Options which may be available to them.
- 3.2** An application must be made on the Association's application form and assistance will be available to anyone who requires it. Applicants will, in signing (or equivalent) the application form, give consent to an approach to their current or former landlord for a reference on the conduct of any current or former tenancy. Should anyone require an alternative format, i.e. language other than English then this will be provided on request.
- 3.3** Applicants must confirm, by signature or equivalent that the information provided in the application form is correct, to the best of their

knowledge.

- 3.4** It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is up to date and correct at all times. Any changes of circumstances affecting their application should be advised to Horizon as soon as possible, so that their application can be re-assessed. Amendments of a significant nature may require a new application form to be completed.

4.0 Who will not be added to our housing list

- 4.1** In general, we will apply the following exclusions:

- ✎ people with more than one month's rent arrears unless the applicant can show that an arrears repayment arrangement has been agreed with their landlord, former landlord or mortgage lender, that payment have been made in accordance with this arrangement for at least 3 months and that the applicant is continuing to make such payments.
- ✎ a former tenant of the Association or any other landlord, whose tenancy was ended by order of the Court for reasons other than arrears of rent , within 3 years of the date of application. After 3 years have elapsed, persons in this category may apply if they can demonstrate that there has been no recurrence of the behaviour that led to the original ending of the tenancy.
- ✎ information provided by the applicant on their application form is intentionally inaccurate, or there is evidence to show that the composition of the applicant's household is not as stated on the application form.
- ✎ an unsatisfactory reference is received from the applicant's current or previous landlord

- 4.2** The Association may decline to admit people to its housing lists who commit acts of violence towards our staff

- 4.3** The Association may decline to admit people to its Housing lists who have, or whose household has a member who has, an Anti-Social Behaviour Order issued against them.

- 4.4** Registered Sex Offenders are required to inform the Association when they apply for housing that they are a registered sex offender and it is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, for offenders to withhold this information. The Association is not able to assess the risk posed by Sex Offenders and will be guided on this by Agencies charged with the management and monitoring of sex offenders, e.g. the Police, the Social Work Authority and other appropriate agencies.

5.0 Factors not to be taken into account when considering an application

- 5.1** When we are assessing applications, we **will not** take into account any of the following factors:

- ✎ whether or not an applicant is resident in the area for which they are

- applying.
- ✚ any outstanding liability (such as rent arrears) that was not the applicant's responsibility.
- ✚ any rent or other tenant related debt accrued by the applicant on a previous tenancy, which is no longer outstanding
- ✚ any outstanding liability attributable to a previous or current tenancy which is less than 1/12th of the annual rent.
- ✚ any outstanding debts of the applicant or anyone else in the household, which is not attributable to the tenancy of a house.
- ✚ the age of the applicant provided they are at least 16 years old. The exceptions of this are specific properties which are designated for group support or older people.
- ✚ the income of the applicant and his/her household
- ✚ the value of any heritable or moveable property owned by the applicant or a member of his household.

5.2 If there is an outstanding liability attributable to the current or previous tenancy that exceeds 1/12th of the annual rent, then the applicant must have a formal agreement in place, have kept to the terms of the agreement for at least 3 months and is continuing to make payment.

6.0 Applications from Committee Members, Staff or their relatives

6.1 Applications will be accepted from staff, their close relatives, committee members or their close relatives. The Management Committee must approve any allocation made to someone in this category in accordance with this policy.

6.2 Details of any allocations made must be entered into the Benefits to Staff and Committee Members Register held by the Association

6.3 The definition of a close relative or family member is as defined in Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 namely a Spouse/Co-habitee, Parent, Grandparent, Child, Stepchild, Grandchild, Brother or Sister.

7.0 Equal Opportunities

7.1 The Association is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons in every aspect of its activities and opposes all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, age, gender, marital status, family circumstances, political or sexual orientation or social background.

7.2 Where it is appropriate we will take disability or age into account when allocating properties specially built, adapted or otherwise designated for such groups.

7.3 We will ask applicants to provide details of their ethnic origin, their gender and to state whether they have a disability, as part of their application, so that the operation of this policy may be monitored. Provision of this information will be entirely voluntary.

8.0 The different types of housing owned and managed by the Association

8.1 The Association provides mainstream housing designed to meet the housing needs of single people, couples and families. These are built to a barrier free, lifetime homes design.

8.2 The Association provides housing specially designed to meet the needs of older people. Where an applicant wishes to apply for such accommodation, they, or a member of their household must be aged 55 years or older. The Association may also let these properties to younger people who would particularly benefit from their design standards, on medical or vulnerability grounds. The Association reserves the right to re-designate these properties, where it can be shown there is low demand for this type of property.

8.3 The Association provides housing specially designed to meet the particular needs of people who are wheelchair users or who have restricted mobility.

8.4 Where an applicant wishes to apply for wheelchair housing, they, or a member of their family must be a wheelchair user, or have an impairment which progressively limits their mobility.

9.0 Processing of Application

9.1 Applications will be processed within ten working days of receipt of all necessary information. Performance against this target will be monitored and reported to the Management Committee.

9.2 Applications for all types of housing will be acknowledged and details of the points awarded, given in writing.

9.3 Applicants will be requested to advise of any changes in circumstances to the Association. Points will be reassessed in light of each change of circumstance and an amended point's letter sent out.

9.4 Applications will be reviewed at least once a year and in some cases sooner, and may be deleted if no response is received to our request for a review. Applicants must respond within one month to any request for a review of their application. One final reminder will be sent to their last known address.

10.0 Accommodation – Likely Size of House which will be allocated

10.1	MAINSTREAM HOUSING	SIZE WE WILL ALLOCATE
	Single Person	1 Bedroom Property
	Couple	1 Bedroom Property
	Single Parent /Couple + 1 child	2 Bedroom Property
	Single Parent/Couple with 2 children of same sex under 16 years of age	2/3 Bedroom Property (some of our 4 person houses have one double and 2 single bedrooms)
	Single Parent/Couple with 2	3 Bedroom Property

children of different sex where one is over 8 years of age	
Single Parent/Couple with 3 children where 2 are young enough to share	3 Bedroom Property
Single Parent/Couple with 4 Children where some can share (please refer to paragraph 19.5)	3/4 Bedroom Property (limited number of 4 bedroom stock available)
Couple/Single Parents/other households with composition of people living in household all over 16 years of age	A double bedroom for the single parent/couple and 1 for each adult over 16 in the household.

10.2	ELDERLY AMENITY HOUSING	SIZE WE WILL ALLOCATE
	Single applicant over 55 years of age	1 – 2 bedrooms (only a few areas have 2 bedroom elderly amenity stock)
	Couple – one over 55 years of age	1 – 2 bedrooms (as above)
	Single Parent/Couple with one child still at home	2 Bedrooms

10.3	WHEELCHAIR HOUSING	SIZE WE WILL ALLOCATE
	Single Person/Couple	2 bedrooms
	Single Parent/Couple with 1 child	2 bedrooms
	Single Parent/Couple with 2 children	2/3 bedrooms
	Single Parent/Couple with 3 children	3/4 bedrooms (very limited number of 4 bedroom stock available)
	Single Parent couple with 4 children	3/4 bedrooms (very limited number of 4 bedroom stock available)

11.0 Nominations from Local Authorities

11.1 The Association will invite nominations from the Housing List of the relevant local housing authority. Such nominations will be invited within the terms of the Nomination Agreement agreed with each Authority, taking note of this Allocation Policy and Communities Scotland Guidance. While arrangements may be varied to suit local circumstances, the usual arrangement will be to let 50% of mainstream and amenity properties to local authority nominees.

11.2 The Association will aim to assist in the rehousing of homeless people by accepting referrals from local authorities under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

12.0 Offer of Housing

12.1 Normally, an offer of housing will be made to the applicant with the

highest number of points on the list at the time of the vacancy. An exception to this would be where the property had been adapted and that adaptation may be more suitable to an applicant with fewer points. In this circumstance, the Chief Executive's permission for a "special let" would be required, and subsequently reported to the next Management Committee Meeting.

12.2 Where two applicants have identical points an offer will be given to the applicant who first applied for housing.

12.3 Where an offer of housing has been made and accepted and it transpires that material false information has been given by the applicant, the Association will commence legal action for repossession to end the tenancy in terms of Section 6.3 of the Tenancy Agreement.

Tenancy Agreements

13.0

Most tenants will be given a Scottish Secure Tenancy. Where people are sharing accommodation, i.e. a group home, they will have an Occupancy Agreement. In certain situations, someone may be given a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy e.g. where someone in the household has received an Anti Social Behaviour Order.

13.1

Tenancies will be granted on the following basis:

- Sole occupant or single parent – sole tenancy
- Married or cohabiting couple – joint tenancy
- Same sex cohabiting couple – joint tenancy
- Two or more adults sharing – occupancy agreement
- Disabled person over the age of 16 living with parents being offered wheelchair housing – sole tenancy in the name of the disabled person

14.0 Refusal of an offer of housing

14.1 All offers of housing will be made formally in writing, although applicants may initially be contacted by phone. Applicants will be given a maximum of 2 days to accept or reject an offer, after viewing the property. Failure to respond will result in assumed refusal and withdrawal of the offer.

14.2 In exceptional cases only, the prospective tenant may defer a decision for more than two working days, however, the offer may be withdrawn, if it appears that the applicant is unreasonably delaying accepting the offer.

14.3 Applicants who have been determined as homeless and nominated by the local authority, should be made aware that a refusal may affect their legal status and therefore should speak to the appropriate officer at the local authority to discuss whether a refusal would materially affect their application, or legal status.

14.4 In the event that the applicant declines an offer, the Association will record the reason for refusal. The Housing Manager will consider the implications of the reasons given. This can be reflected in future policy review or decisions relating to future provision of service delivery.

14.5 The Housing Manager may propose removal of an application if it appears that the Association will not be able to meet the applicant's housing needs or aspirations. The applicant will be informed of the proposal to delete the application and invited to respond, before the Housing Manager reaches a conclusion. Applicants will be informed of their right of appeal against a decision to delete their application.

15.0 Transferring existing Horizon tenants

15.1 By transferring existing Horizon tenants whose houses no longer meet their needs, we may meet the housing needs of two households. Firstly, the transferring tenant and secondly, the household who is housed in the property that the transferring tenant vacates. Association tenants seeking a transfer will be considered in advance of other applicants.

15.2 There shall be no minimum period that a tenant must hold a tenancy at a specific address before they may apply for a transfer.

15.3 Tenants will **not** be transferred on the basis of aspiration alone, but only after assessment of their housing need.

15.4 Persons resident in Association property who are not Association Tenants e.g. the spouses or partners or adult children, will be eligible to apply to the Association within the criteria set out above for Housing Applicants who are not Association Tenants. Such applications shall be assessed in the normal way.

16.0 Mutual Exchanges

16.1 Horizon tenants may apply to exchange tenancies, subject to the approval of the Association.

16.2 Permission will be granted where:

- ✘ No overcrowding will result from the exchange.
- ✘ A satisfactory tenancy reference is available from the incoming tenant's landlord.
- ✘ The exchange will result in under occupation of not more than 1 bedroom in our property.

16.3 The Association will not permit exchanges that will result in wheelchair housing becoming occupied by households that do not require such standard of accommodation.

16.4 Properties designated as amenity accommodation must continue to be occupied by a person over 55 years, except where the Association establishes that demand from persons over 55 for accommodation is low.

17.0 Management agreements with support/care agencies

17.1 The Association will enter into Management Agreements with care/support agencies to provide accommodation for tenants to be identified by the care and support agencies and usually the provision of support services by that agency. These properties may be subject to an ongoing Nomination Agreement should one of these properties become available for relet.

18.0 Confidentiality

18.1 The Association will respect the privacy of applicants and will not seek to obtain information that is not relevant to their housing application. We will not pass on information gained to third parties except with the approval of the applicant.

18.2 The Association may obtain relevant information from landlords, doctors, etc. and applicants are required to sign a declaration giving permission for us to do so.

18.3 The Association will observe procedures for the protection of confidential information within the Association and in dealings with external agencies, including observance of the Data Protection Act.

19.0 Points priority for mainstream and elderly amenity housing

19.1	HOMELESSNESS	POINTS
	Where an applicant has been determined as statutorily homeless or threatened with homelessness and produces a copy letter from the local authority confirming this	200
	Other applicants applying as homeless who do not have a letter from the Local Authority or whose letter states they are homeless but not considered to be in priority need	50
	People over 16 wishing to leave the parental home	50
	People who are living in temporary accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast, hostels or other temporary accommodation.	50
	Separated ex-partners who continue to reside in the same property	50

19.2	HARASSMENT/VIOLENCE	POINTS
	Occasional verbal abuse	10
	Verbal abuse or noise nuisance over a long period	20
	Recent damage to property	30
	Verbal abuse and damage to property	40
	Minor physical assault	60
	Serious physical assault	80

19.3	OVERCROWDING/UNDEROCCUPATION	Size
	It is considered a bedroom is required for :	
	Husband/wife/ or cohabiting couple	1 double Bedroom

One bedroom for each adult member of the household over 16	1 single bedroom
Children of opposite sex over 8 years old	1 single bedroom
No more than 2 persons should share a bedroom	
	Points
For each bedroom short of the required number (up to a maximum of 120 points)	40 points
Under occupation - For each bedroom more than required by the household	15 points

19.4	MEDICAL CRITERIA - The Association may require confirmation from a qualified medical practitioner or independent assessment by a qualified person	POINTS
	Where a current home presents severe risk of injury or major ill health	80
	Where re-housing will significantly improve or alleviate a medical condition	60
	Where re-housing will slightly improve or alleviate a medical condition	30

19.5	LACK OF AMENITIES (maximum that can be awarded = 100 points)	POINTS
	No adequate heating system	20
	No adequate cooking facilities	20
	No bath or shower in the home	20
	No inside toilet	20
	Dampness such as water penetration through a defect in the building or rising damp (not condensation)	20
	Structural Defects (evidence must be provided in the form of a Structural Engineers Report)(i.e. dry rot etc)	20
	No hot water supply	20
	No natural light or ventilation in living room or bedrooms (it is acceptable for kitchens and bathrooms and WC's to have mechanical ventilation. Halls need not be ventilated)	20

19.6	SHARING AMENITIES (NOT APPLICABLE TO PEOPLE WISHING TO LEAVE THEIR PARENTAL HOME)	POINTS
	Sharing cooking facilities	5
	Sharing bath or shower	5
	Sharing toilet	5
	Sharing hot water supply	5
	Sharing drinking water supply	5
	N.B. where amenities are shared by more than 2 other unrelated households these amenities will be considered as lacking	

19.7	INSECURITY OF TENURE	POINTS
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Lives in tied housing	10
No lease	10

19.8

SOCIAL NEEDS	POINTS
Where an applicant wishes to move in order to receive assistance to sustain their tenancy N.B, The tenant/prospective tenant must confirm the support that will be provided and must be seeking housing within the same area of the home of the person requiring/giving support	20
Applicants who wish to move to take up permanent employment at a distance too far from their present home that commuting by public transport is unreasonable (N.B. proof of offer of employment must be provided)	20
Applicants with a child under the age of 12 living in a multi storey flat	25
Because of a disability your home limits your ability to maximize your independence	20
If your home circumstances are causing you to be socially isolated	15

20.0 Points priority for wheelchair housing

20.1	MOBILITY	POINTS
	A member of the household is a wheelchair user	100
	At least one member of the household has a progressive mobility problem	50
	N.B – NO POINTS WILL BE GIVEN IN THIS CATEGORY TO ANY APPLICANT WHOSE CURRENT ACCOMMODATION IS BUILT TO WHEELCHAIR STANDARD	

20.2	PERSONAL	POINTS
	Allocation of points depends on assessment of individual's potential to function independently or, in the case of a more severely disabled person, the ability of others to give assistance	
	(a) No level or ramped access to house or access with assistance difficult	20
	(b) No access to bathroom or access with assistance is difficult	20
	(c) No access to kitchen or access with assistance is difficult	15
	(d) No access to bedroom or access with assistance is difficult	10
	(e) No access to lounge or access with assistance is difficulty	10
	PLEASE NOTE POINTS FOR (f)(g)(h) are not granted in addition to points for no access (a) – (e)	
	(f) Limited independent use of bathing/showering facilities or limited use with assistance	5
	(g) Limited independent use of toileting facilities	10
	(h) Limited independent use of cooking facilities	5

20.3	HOMELESSNESS	POINTS
	Where an applicant has been determined as statutorily homeless or threatened with homelessness and produces a copy letter from the local authority confirming this	200
	Other applicants applying as homeless who do not have a letter from the Local Authority or whose letter states they are homeless but not considered to be in priority need	50
	People over 16 wishing to leave the parental home	50
	People who are living in temporary accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast, hostels or other temporary accommodation	50
	Separated ex-partners who continue to reside in the same property	50

20.4	HARASSMENT/VIOLENCE	POINTS
	Occasional verbal abuse	10
	Verbal abuse or noise nuisance over a long period	20

Recent damage to property	30
Verbal abuse and damage to property	40
Minor physical assault	60
Serious physical assault	80

20.5	OVERCROWDING/UNDEROCCUPATION	Size
	It is considered a bedroom is required for :	
	Husband/wife/ or cohabiting couple	1 double Bedroom
	One bedroom for each adult member of the household over 16	1 single bedroom
	Children of opposite sex over 8 years old	1 single bedroom
	No more than 2 persons should share a bedroom	
		Points
	For each bedroom short of the required number (up to a maximum of 120 points)	40 points
	Under occupation - For each bedroom more than required by the household	15 points

20.6	LACK OF AMENITIES (maximum that can be awarded = 100 points)	POINTS
	No adequate heating system	20
	No adequate cooking facilities	20
	No bath or shower in the home	20
	No inside toilet	20
	Dampness such as water penetration through a defect in the building or rising damp (not condensation)	20
	Structural Defects (evidence must be provided in the form of a Structural Engineers Report)(i.e. dry rot etc)	20
	No hot water supply	20
	No natural light or ventilation in living room or bedrooms (it is acceptable for kitchens and bathrooms and WC's to have mechanical ventilation. Halls need not be ventilated)	20

20.7	SHARING AMENITIES (NOT APPLICABLE TO PEOPLE WISHING TO LEAVE THEIR PARENTAL HOME)	POINTS
	Sharing cooking facilities	5
	Sharing bath or shower	5
	Sharing toilet	5
	Sharing hot water supply	5
	Sharing drinking water supply	5
	N.B. where amenities are shared by more than 2 other unrelated households these amenities will be considered as lacking	

20.8	INSECURITY OF TENURE	POINTS
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No lease	10
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20.9	SOCIAL NEEDS	POINTS
	Where an applicant wishes to move in order to receive assistance to sustain their tenancy N.B, The tenant/prospective tenant must confirm the support that will be provided and must be seeking housing within the same area of the home of the person requiring/giving support	20
	Applicants who wish to move to take up permanent employment at a distance too far from their present home that commuting by public transport is unreasonable (N.B. proof of offer of employment must be provided)	20
	Applicants with a child under the age of 12 living in a multi storey flat	25
	Because of a disability your home limits your ability to maximize your independence	20
	If your home circumstances are causing you to be socially isolated	15

21.0 Information to Applicants

21.1 The Association will advise applicants of the progress and treatment of their application at each stage in the allocation process.

21.2 This will include:

- Y the list(s) to which the application has been added,
- Y the number of points awarded,
- Y how the points have been calculated,
- Y the type of property that the applicant may be offered,
- Y the right of appeal if dissatisfied,
- Y if an applicant is homeless, details of the agencies who may assist that person immediately with advice and accommodation,
- Y if an applicant is experiencing abuse within a relationship, contact details for agencies that may be able to assist the applicant.

21.3 At refusal to admit to a housing list:

- Y the reasons for the refusal,
- Y the right of appeal if dissatisfied,
- Y other agencies that may be able to assist the applicant,
- Y the changes of circumstances which may prompt re-application,
- Y applicants will be informed of the reason for a proposal to refuse to admit. We will seek the applicant's response and proposals to address the position before reaching our decision on whether to admit the applicant on to our list.

21.4 At deletion from a housing list:

- Y the reasons for the deletion,
- Y the right of appeal if dissatisfied,

- Y other agencies that may be able to assist the applicant,
- Y the changes of circumstances which may prompt re-application.

22.0 Right of Appeal

22.1 The Association is committed to operating in a fair and accountable manner. If applicants are dissatisfied with how their housing application is treated, then we have published a Complaints Policy, which describes in detail how they may make their dissatisfaction known, and have errors, unfair or improper treatment rectified.

22.2 A full copy of the Complaints Policy, which covers all aspects of the Association's dealings with those who receive a service from us, is available on request.

22.3 The applicant will be free to inspect any document relevant to their application, within the terms of the Association's Policy on Data Protection. This policy document is available on request. The Association aims to resolve all disputes in a prompt and informal manner.

23.0 Monitoring the policy

23.1 In order that we can monitor our performance, a report will be collated by staff and submitted to the Housing Services Sub Committee by the Housing Staff on a quarterly basis, outlining key performance indicators.

23.2 In addition, the Housing Manager will provide cumulative figures for the current year.

24.0 Publicity

24.1 This Allocation Policy is available on request, to any person or agency that requests a copy.

24.2 The Association will provide a summary of the Allocation Policy along with each Housing Application form.

24.3 The policy shall be made available in alternative formats on request e.g. braille, large print, other languages.

24.4 The Association will send a copy of the Allocation Policy within two months of each review to:

- Y Communities Scotland's Regulation and Inspection Dept.
- Y The Chief Executive/Chief Officer with responsibility for Housing and Social Work in each local authority area where the Association has housing stock, or anticipates providing accommodation in the future.

24.5 The Association shall publicise its housing activities so that people in housing need are made aware of our activities. This may include the provision of leaflets, posters and advertisements and liaison with Local Authorities and Statutory and Voluntary agencies, as appropriate.

25.0 Review of the policy

25.1 This policy will be reviewed, at least every three years.

25.2 The Association may alter the policy as appropriate at any time, i.e. due to changes in housing legislation. Any alteration will be approved by the Management Committee.

25.3 The housing list will be reviewed annually.

25.4 Any alterations will be applicable to all applications held at the time.

HORIZON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
ALLOCATION POLICY

This policy has been drawn up with reference to:

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Data Protection Act (1998)

Sex Discrimination Act (as amended)

Race Relations Act (as amended)

Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection Act) (Scotland) Act 1981

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Reference made to the following sources and other guidance

SFHA Raising Standards in Housing: Allocations (Revised)

Communities Scotland self assessment inspection criteria

Performance Standards for Social Landlords and homelessness functions AS1.2

Lettings

Scottish Executive: Good Practice in Housing Management, Chapter Four –
Housing Allocation

Prepared by: Brenda Cunningham

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