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## Summary Allocations Policy

**This leaflet outlines the main points of** the Co-operative's policy on allocations. The information contained in the leaflet has been taken from the "Guide to Allocating Houses". Further information, including a copy of the full policy itself or the sections you are interested in, can easily be provided by asking a member of staff who will be happy to help.

The policy itself is a fairly lengthy document and we have therefore provided only a summary of the main points in this leaflet – otherwise the leaflet would become very long!

### The main points covered are:

- All of our houses are allocated strictly on the basis of housing need
  - Our annual "turn over" is typically 30 – 40 properties per annum
  - Housing need is assessed by using a "points system" – see over
  - Factors that affect your points include overcrowding/under-occupation, to be close to a relative who needs support, an ongoing medical condition made worse by your current home, to be closer to work, current tenancy under threat/ homelessness, fleeing harassment or domestic violence
  - Anyone aged 16 or over has a right to apply for housing, assessed and be admitted to the Housing List
  - As well as direct lets, the Co-operative also offers houses through mutual exchanges, internal transfers and via nominations from the Council – please see a member of staff if you are interested in discussing this further
  - All applications will be assessed quickly and we will write to you advising you of your points total and the likelihood of you being re-housed
  - You have the right to have your points total reviewed if you think we have assessed it wrongly
  - In certain circumstances, you may assign your tenancy to another household member/another member may succeed the tenancy on your death
  - So long as it does not create overcrowding, you may take in lodgers or, in certain circumstances, sub-let the property for a period of time
  - We will suspend an application where the applicant has rent arrears with their current landlord and has not maintained an arrangement for three months or a member of the household to be re-housed has an Anti Social Behaviour Order against him/her
  - In the vast majority of cases, the tenancy that will be offered is a Scottish Secure Tenancy
  - Lets can only be made to Committee/staff members or their families on the basis of the points system – this is strictly regulated by Communities Scotland and our internal auditor to ensure all lets are recorded in a special Register and are made in line with legislation
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## **HOW THE POLICY WORKS**

### **METHODS OF ASSESSMENT AND ALLOCATION**

The Co-operative operates a points system for allocating its housing. This is a system, which is easily understood and simple to administer. It is a fair system of assessment and does not discriminate against any applicant.

Each application for housing with the Co-operative will be assessed and applicants will be notified of the number of points they have been awarded within 7 working days on receipt of application.

If after assessment it appears that an applicant would have to wait an unrealistic time before housing could be allocated the Co-operative may place the application on a reserve list. These applicants will be advised of other local housing organisations who may assist them in finding accommodation.

In operating this system the Co-operative will ensure that priority is given to applicants who are in most housing need.

### **HOUSE TYPES AND SIZES**

The number of apartments needed by a householder is calculated as follows: -

- One living room for each household
- plus
- One bedroom for the applicant and his/her partner
- plus
- One bedroom for each person of different sex aged 8 years or over
- plus
- One bedroom for up to 2 persons of same sex who are both under 12 years of age
- plus/or
- One bedroom for each remaining member of the household

The above table is a general guide to the size of houses offered by the Co-operative and indicates how allocations are determined for families with children.

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## **ALLOCATION OF POINTS**

Points will be allocated under the following categories.

### **HOMELESSNESS/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/RACIAL HARASSMENT 80 POINTS**

Applicants who fall into any of the above categories will be assessed based on the information provided on their application form. Checks will be made and may include police and medical reports, tenancy reports taken from previous/current landlords, visits being made by the Co-operative's Housing Officer, and in the case of homeless applicants, a letter of award of priority homelessness from their local authority. Applicants applying suffering from domestic violence may also submit supporting documentation to assist their application. When all checks are completed, and the Housing Officer is satisfied that all information required has been received in order that the application may be assessed, then the maximum points (80 inclusive) may be awarded. If after investigations the applicant is refused priority homeless status from the council then their application will be assessed as normal.

In all cases where English is not an applicant's first language, a translator will be offered and all documentation will be provided in a language of the applicant's choice.

#### **HOMELESSNESS**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on Registered Social Landlords to comply with a request from the Local Authority for accommodation for a statutory homeless applicant. (Section 5)

A protocol has been set up between North Lanarkshire Council and Registered Social Landlords in the area in relation to a landlord's duty to house statutory homeless households under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. A copy of the Protocol is available at the Co-op's office.

If an applicant, who may be homeless, approaches the Co-op directly, they will be invited to make an application for housing but also encouraged to contact the Local Authority so that an assessment within the terms of homeless legislation can be made.

If an applicant is deemed statutory homeless by the Local Authority, they will be awarded 80 points (inclusive)

If an applicant can provide a date within the next three months when they will be made homeless, they will be awarded 25 points. The maximum of 80 points will be awarded when they are deemed statutory homeless.

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/RACIAL HARASSMENT**

Raising Standards in Housing defines Domestic Violence as any form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse which takes place within the context of a close relationship. In most cases, the relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting or otherwise) or ex-partners.

The Co-operative takes this view in dealing with applications.

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The Co-operative, within this Allocation Policy believes that people have the right to have a life free from violence and abuse and recognises that any form of abuse is not the victim's fault but the perpetrators.

The policy gives priority to people who fall into this category and will ensure that victims of abuse will be dealt with quickly, sensitively, and in confidence to ensure their safety.

This category is reserved for applicants who are experiencing any form of severe harassment at their current address, including that which is racially or religiously motivated or domestic violence.

In conjunction with Scottish Federation Housing Association Model Procedures on Harassment/Racial Harassment the Co-operative will offer emergency rehousing where there is damage to the property or injury to the tenants or members of the tenants household.

We recognise that victims of harassment may wish to move immediately from the property/area where problems are being experienced. We will deal with each case sensitively and on its merits based on the evidence it is possible to gather.

**INSECURE TENURE**

25/80 points

This category shall include those applicants who are currently on a short-term private lease or applicants who are experiencing difficulties with Mortgage payments. These applicants shall be initially awarded points as with other applicants but shall then be awarded a further 25 points following receipt of the relevant documentation. The maximum of 80 points shall come into force when the property is lost. Applicants in this category are assessed on the basis of need and their financial situation will not be taken into account.

**MEDICAL**

Points will be awarded for health factors where a household includes a person who is ill or disabled and whose health would be significantly improved by re-housing. The points shall be allocated depending on the degree of Medical Priority. Applicants in this category will be required to complete a medical self-assessment form in order to determine priority. In all cases the forms will be passed onto an independent medical advisor to assess. Any other medical documentation, which the applicant wishes to provide, will be taken into consideration.

Medical points will be awarded as follows; (see appendix 1)

- PRIORITY A 40 POINTS
- PRIORITY B 30 POINTS
- PRIORITY C 20 POINTS
- PRIORITY D 10 POINTS
- PRIORITY E 5 POINTS

Information and explanation of the medial priorities is explained in Appendix IV, award of points for Medical Conditions.

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**OVERCROWDING**

The number of apartments needed by a household is calculated as follows: -

- One living room for each household
- One bedroom for the applicant and his/her partner
- One bedroom for each person of different sex aged 8 years or over
- One bedroom for up to 2 persons of same sex who are both under 12 years of age
- One bedroom for each remaining member of the household

Points are awarded for the applicants family composition as follows: -

1 bedroom short	10
2 bedrooms short	15
3 bedrooms short	20
4 bedrooms short	25

**OVERNIGHT/WEEKEND ACCESS/PREGNANCY**

Overnight/weekend access to a child will be counted as part of the household. The Co-operative will encourage the applicant to seek/provide documentary evidence in support of the application in this instance.

Where an applicant is pregnant, the new child will be counted as part of the household upon receipt of the Certificate of Confinement.

**UNDER OCCUPANCY**

Applicants under occupying their present home will receive the following points: -

1 bedroom extra	5
Each additional bedroom	5

**VULNERABILITY 10 points**

Applicants who are over 60 and whose present living conditions leave them vulnerable or unsafe. Please note documentary evidence will be sought in this instance.

**LOCATION/SUPPORT**

The Co-operative will award points if applicants are experiencing the following difficulties due to the location they are living in.

Travelling to work or offer of employment in area  
(financial, distance, or difficulty with transport) 5 points

The applicant has a relative who provides or requires their support in  
Gowkthrapple or neighbouring area. 5 points

Access to facilities and essential services (Schools/Hospitals, etc) over 5 miles 5 points

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Documentary evidence may be requested in some cases. The distance involved in each case will be taken into consideration. In most cases it will be expected that the applicant is living at least 5 miles outwith the Gowkthrapple area.

**TIED ACCOMMODATION**

Tied Accommodation will be assessed in the following circumstances: -

Applicants in tied accommodation who have been informed of a discharge/leaving date/termination of employment 40 points

**LACKING AMENITIES/PROPERTY CONDITION**

Applicants will qualify for points in this category if they presently live in below Tolerable Standard Accommodation. Points awarded as follows:

- No inside WC
- No bath/shower
- Inadequate hot water supply/No hot water supply
- No access to kitchen facilities
- Rising or penetrating dampness/serious condensation or mould growth

20 points in total, 10 points if only one

**PROPERTY DUE FOR DEMOLITION** 40 points

**CHILDREN/ELDERLY PERSONS LIVING IN FLATS**

These points are awarded where a dependent child or someone over pensionable age lives on the second floor or above. The level awarded is as follows:

Second floor and above with **No** lift access 10 points

Second floor and above with lift access 5 points

**SHARING AMENITIES**

Applicants who as households are forced to share basic amenities such as WC, bath or shower shall be awarded 15 points.

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## **NOTES ON POLICY**

### **APPEALS**

Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the way their application has been assessed or in the allocation process can appeal against

- The points total awarded
- The decision to prevent access
- The decision to remove the applicant from the waiting list

In the first instance, an informal appeal can be made to the Housing Officer.

Where the applicant remains dissatisfied they should appeal in writing to the Depute Director. Failing satisfaction, the Director will review the case. If the matter is not resolved by this stage, the applicant may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

Where, after following the above procedures the applicant still disagrees with the decision, they may appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for Scotland based at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH4 7NS. Telephone no. 0870 011 5378.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Confidentiality of applicants and tenants personal circumstances will be respected by Co-operative Staff at all times. However applicant and tenant information is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 and to the Access to Personal Information Act.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

To take account of any changes in the Co-operative's Housing Provision, statutory codes of guidance and legislation the Co-operative will undertake to review its policy and procedures annually to ensure effectiveness of the policy.

### **ARREARS**

An applicant who is in arrears with his/her existing landlord will not be barred from housing with the Co-operative. However, the Co-operative will ensure an arrangement for the outstanding arrears will require to be made and maintained for three months between the applicant and the current landlord before an offer of housing is made.

### **FALSE INFORMATION**

In the event of any applicant giving false or misleading information or deliberately withholding relevant information the application will be cancelled. If the applicant has already been housed by the Co-operative an Action for Recovery of Possession of the house will be raised.

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## **MATRIMONIAL HOMES ACT**

The Co-operative will consider applications from applicants who are homeless as a result of marital or relationship breakdown.

If the applicant falls into this category, the Co-operative will provide advice to the applicant on conditions of the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Anyone requiring further information on this or any other Co-operative policy should contact our office at 3 Heathfield, Wishaw, ML2 0LY.

Telephone number 01698 360740

Fax number 01698 375321

Email [enquiries@gphc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@gphc.org.uk)

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## AWARD OF POINTS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The Co-operative recognises the link between poor housing and health problems.

The award of medical points will only apply where the applicant's (or a member of his/her household) present accommodation is adversely affecting the medical condition suffered and the property sought will ease or improve that medical condition.

It is not the medical condition, which is of importance but the relationship between the housing condition and the health problems.

The Co-operative has five categories of medical award.

- Priority A            40 points
- Priority B            30 points
- Priority C            20 points
- Priority D            10 points
- Priority E            5 points

The Independent Medical Advisor will award medical priority points as follows:

## AWARD OF POINTS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

### **PRIORITY A - 40 POINTS**

#### *Severe degenerative condition/special circumstances*

“severe mobility problems or extreme medical conditions where the present accommodation is greatly detrimental to that person's health”

e.g. motor neurone disease, severe deteriorating multiple sclerosis, acute degenerative Parkinson's, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, terminal cancer/illness, etc.

### **PRIORITY B - 30 POINTS**

#### *Degenerative conditions*

“mobility problems or medical condition where the present accommodation is detrimental to that person's health”

e.g. slow progressive MS, spinal/head injury, peripheral vascular disease (depending on severity), kidney failure, emphysema, amputation (non limb fitted - wheelchair dependant), etc.

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**PRIORITY C - 20 POINTS**

*Chronic deteriorating conditions*

e.g. long term deteriorating osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, ME, peripheral vascular disease, amputation (limb-fitted - non wheelchair dependant), heart failure, CVA - depending on degree of stroke, etc.

**PRIORITY D - 10 POINTS**

*Slow deteriorating conditions*

e.g. arthritis, CVA, myocardial infarction, etc.

**PRIORITY E - 5 POINTS**

*Long standing, static condition*

e.g. angina, arthritis, asthma, hearing/visual impairment (no physical difficulty), psoriasis, epilepsy, depression, eczema, colostomy, colitis, crohn's disease, etc.

Consideration should also be given to people with learning disabilities whose physical abilities are affected by their medical condition.

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