



Allocations Policy Review Consultation Report May 2019

Introduction

Ardenglen has undertaken a review of its full Allocations Policy to reflect the changes brought by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. The act required landlords to take account of the changes in legislation and to have a new or amended policy in place for 1st May 2019.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 also stipulated that all social landlords must consult with tenants, applicants and any other relevant parties on the proposed changes in order to help shape a new policy.

This consultation report details Ardenglen's approach to the consultation process and the outcome.

Consultation Process

On 20th February 2019 we issued the following text to everyone on our current waiting list including internal and external applicants

“Ardenglen HA is looking for tenants/applicants to assist us in reviewing our allocations policy in line with new legislation. Those interested will be invited along to a focus group to discuss this in more detail. Your views are really important to us. If interested, please reply YES with your name and address or call the office on 0141 634 8016”

13 people responded to this text to confirm they were interested in taking part.

A formal invite was sent to those who responded on 26th February 2019 to attend a focus group meeting scheduled for 4th March 2019 at 6pm. This was sent along with a copy of the allocations policy leaflet, a guide for tenants on the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and an agenda for the meeting.

On 4th March 2019 3 people came along to the meeting, this was a mix of tenants and external applicants.

A presentation was delivered by staff to the 3 people in attendance outlining the current policy against the changes in legislation.

The group also took part in an exercise of pointing 3 different applicant scenarios in order that they had an understanding of how each applicant were prioritised in line with current policy. It was recognised that changes were required in order to meet the new Reasonable Preference Groups contained within the new legislation.

The focus group agreed and assisted us in developing questions for a wider consultation survey which was developed using Survey Monkey.

On the 8th March 2019 the survey link was sent to 264 direct housing applicants and 959 tenants by email (where applicable), by text (where applicable) and also by post where there was no email or text. The survey link was also posted on our facebook page on 8/3/19, 15/3/19 and 21/3/19.

During the consultation period we offered two drop in sessions for tenants and applicants to come in and receive more information about the review or to get assistance in completing the survey.

These sessions took place on

12th March 2019 – 5pm-7pm

13th March 2019 – 10am-12noon

Unfortunately the response to the drop in was low and only two people took the opportunity.

The closing date for responding to the survey was 22nd March 2019. A total of 162 responses were received to our survey and is broken down below:

134 Online Surveys 28 Postal Surveys

A further focus group meeting was arranged for 16th April 2019 to present the findings of the survey and to make decisions on the new policy which is due to be implemented on 1st May 2019. All 3 members of the group were in attendance.

Consultation Results and policy decisions approved

Change	Consultation Results	Approved Recommendations
Property Ownership	Landlords must not take home ownership into account if the following circumstances apply - Living in unsatisfactory housing conditions (below tolerable standard) - The property is being occupied illegally (squatters) - Owner is experiencing abuse from someone currently living in the property or someone who previously resided with them - Medical/Health where there is a danger to the occupants and no reasonable steps can be taken to prevent this. Should we consider home ownership in any of the other circumstances specified below?	Home Owners also to receive the same points as Waiting List applicants for overcrowding / to give or receive support.

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Points categories	<p>Overcrowding</p> <p>What age should 2 children of the same sex share a bedroom up to?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>14 years of age</td> <td>77.87% 95</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 years of age</td> <td>2.46% 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 years of age</td> <td>19.67% 24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>122</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>What age should 2 children of opposite sex share a bedroom up to?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10 years of age</td> <td>85.93% 116</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12 years of age</td> <td>9.63% 13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 years of age</td> <td>4.44% 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>135</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	14 years of age	77.87% 95	15 years of age	2.46% 3	16 years of age	19.67% 24	TOTAL	122	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	10 years of age	85.93% 116	12 years of age	9.63% 13	14 years of age	4.44% 6	TOTAL	135	<p>No Change to current policy</p> <p>No change to current policy</p>
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Additional Bedroom	<p>Currently we allow applicants to apply for an additional bedroom in the following circumstances. Please select the statement(s) you agree with and suggest any others</p>	<p>Decision to remove an extra bedroom for Ardenglen tenants seeking a move with no housing</p>																				

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Aspirational moves	<p>We currently let a small number of homes each year to Ardenglen tenants who are seeking a move to their preferred house type (based on date of application and not points). This is to help maintain a stable community. Do you agree this is a good idea?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>84.62% 132</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>15.38% 24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>156</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Yes	84.62% 132	No	15.38% 24	TOTAL	156	<p>Decision to continue aspirational moves for current tenants (1-2 lets per year)</p>												
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Health Reasons	<p>We currently award three levels of medical priority points which we would like to reduce to two to ensure that those most in need are given reasonable preference - the two levels would be described as (LEVEL 1) Applicant or member of</p>	<p>Decision to reduce from 3 tiers of medical points to 2</p>																				

	<p>household is housebound / cannot return from hospital / other emergency issue(LEVEL 2) Applicant or household member has mobility problems or serious physical or mental health problems that severely restricts your daily activities and can only be alleviated by a house move. Do you agree?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="472 336 1603 549"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th colspan="2">RESPONSES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>86.71%</td> <td>137</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>13.29%</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td>158</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Yes	86.71%	137	No	13.29%	21	TOTAL		158	
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Property condition	<p>In order to be considered for property condition points we intend to adopt the definition of below "tolerable standard" this includes: property has problems with rising or penetrating damp, it's not structurally stable (for example, it might be subsiding), it doesn't have enough ventilation, natural and artificial light or heating, it isn't insulated well enough, it doesn't have an acceptable fresh water supply, or a sink with hot and cold water it doesn't have an indoor toilet, a fixed bath or shower, and a wash basin with hot and cold water it doesn't have a good drainage and sewerage system, the electric supply doesn't meet safety regulations, it doesn't have a proper entrance and there aren't cooking facilities. Are there any additional property condition circumstances we should consider under this category?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="472 979 1603 1192"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th colspan="2">RESPONSES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>15.03%</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>84.97%</td> <td>130</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td>153</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Yes	15.03%	23	No	84.97%	130	TOTAL		153	Decision made to adopt the local authority below tolerable standard definition for property points
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Threatened with homelessness	<p>We accept homeless referrals from Glasgow City Council. People threatened with homelessness also qualify for priority on our list. These applicants are likely to be in secure accommodation or applicants who are in tied accommodation (armed forces) who have been served with a notice to leave within two months. Do you</p>	Decision made that applicants in this category are awarded the highest points level within the homeless and threatened with homelessness priority group												

	<p>agree that these applicants should be given the highest points available in our policy?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th colspan="2">RESPONSES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>74.36%</td> <td>116</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>25.64%</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td>156</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Yes	74.36%	116	No	25.64%	40	TOTAL		156																
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Suspensions	<p>Landlords can suspend applicants in the circumstances below for a maximum period of 3 years. Please select the reasons that you feel warrant a maximum suspension</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th colspan="2">RESPONSES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Anti Social Behaviour (linked to property / locality)</td> <td>89.93%</td> <td>134</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Previous Convictions (linked to property / locality)</td> <td>50.34%</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recovery of possession (eviction by court order)</td> <td>36.91%</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abandoning or neglecting a property</td> <td>71.81%</td> <td>107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent arrears or other tenancy debt (more than one month with no arrangement for at least 3 months)</td> <td>26.17%</td> <td>39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Making a false statement in an application (knowingly or recklessly)</td> <td>55.03%</td> <td>82</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Refusal of offers</td> <td>21.48%</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Respondents: 149</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Anti Social Behaviour (linked to property / locality)	89.93%	134	Previous Convictions (linked to property / locality)	50.34%	75	Recovery of possession (eviction by court order)	36.91%	55	Abandoning or neglecting a property	71.81%	107	Rent arrears or other tenancy debt (more than one month with no arrangement for at least 3 months)	26.17%	39	Making a false statement in an application (knowingly or recklessly)	55.03%	82	Refusal of offers	21.48%	32	Total Respondents: 149			<p>Decision to impose a maximum suspension (3 years) times for applicants; ASB including convictions Abandoning or neglecting a tenancy Eviction tenancy related debt Making a false statement</p> <p>Decision to impose a 6 month suspension for; Refusal of 3 reasonable formal offers within a 12 month period</p>
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Evidence	<p>Please select the categories that the association should seek supporting evidence in order to select points</p>	<p>The wording contained within the policy will be “we may seek supporting evidence” to allow flexibility</p>																											

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	Threatened with Homelessness (2 months to leave)	50.00% 78	
	Overcrowding	49.36% 77	
	Property Condition	43.59% 68	
	Medical	60.26% 94	
	Harassment (not including cases of abuse such as domestic violence / hate crime)	53.85% 84	
	Social (travel to work / education)	17.31% 27	
	Support (to provide or receive)	30.77% 48	
	ALL OF THE ABOVE	41.03% 64	
	Total Respondents: 156		
Support (to provide or receive)	<p>Higher priority awarded to these applicants (not in survey questionnaire but part of discussion at focus group and with staff) YOU NEED TO MOVE TO GIVE OR RECEIVE <u>ESSENTIAL</u> SUPPORT</p> <p>You or a member of your family needs to move to the area to provide essential family support and your current address is severely restricting you from doing this.</p> <p>We will consider the following criteria to receive points at this level : You are juggling your own life and your caring responsibilities and the journey between home/work and our area is severely affecting your ability to provide support on a daily basis (e.g. Car mileage over 10 miles, public transport routes over 1 hour, no public transport option and you walk over 3 miles; expense will also be considered)</p> <p>AND; You receive carers allowance to care for the person in our area; OR</p>		<p>The purpose of increasing points from 10 to 30 in this area is to ensure applicants are: Remaining independent at home Preventing hospital stays/care Preventing a care home</p> <p>Applicants will have to meet the criteria set out. We have also kept 5 Social points for applicants moving to receive or provide regular support that is not essential.</p>

	<p>Supporting documents from health or support agency detailing the level of support you provide; OR Supporting documents for the person that you care for detailing their condition; OR Any other individual factors will be considered</p> <p>You or a member of your family needs to move to the area to receive essential support and your current address is severely restricting you from doing this. We will consider the following criteria to receive points at this level : Your journey to receive support is severely restricting your ability to access the support or services you need on a regular basis (car mileage over 10 miles, public transport routes over 1 hour, no public transport option and you walk over 3 miles; expenses will also be considered) AND; Supporting documents from health or support agency detailing the level of support you receive and length of time you require the support for Any other individual factors will be considered</p>	
Insecurity of tenure category	<p>You left secure accommodation 12 months prior to your housing application and placed yourself in a worse housing situation that is not secure (not a survey question but discussed with focus group and staff) You have left accommodation either in the UK or outside of the UK through choice</p> <p>Remove insecurity points for: Applicants in a private let or a Short Scottish Secure tenancy</p>	<p>Decision made to award applicants lower insecurity points where they have given up secure accommodation in the last 12 months prior to application.</p> <p>Insecurity points removed for private let or short tenancy as there is an agreement in place.</p>
Sharing amenities	<p>Sharing Amenity points are not relevant as applicants who are insecure all share amenities (not a survey question but discussed at focus group and with staff)</p>	<p>Decision to remove sharing amenity points</p>

Conclusion

During this process Ardenglen has tried to engage with as many housing applicants / tenants as possible using different methods of communication to allow them easy access to contribute their views.

As a result of this process we were able to present a draft allocations policy to a sub group of the Association's board on 26th April 2019. This draft was subsequently approved at this meeting and the policy came into operation from 1st May 2019 as required.