



EASTHALL
PARK

EASTHALL PARK ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Reviewed:

June 2007

Next Review:

June 2010 or sooner depending on legislative /
good practice changes.

EASTHALL PARK ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1. OBJECTIVES

Easthall Park Housing Co-operative is a community based housing co-operative, which aims to contribute to the regeneration of the Easthall and Kildermorie area through the provision of good quality housing for people in high levels of need and who wish to live in Easthall.

The principle aim of the policy is to allocate available properties to those in highest need, not only the traditional image of meeting needs such as (overcrowding, unsanitary conditions etc) but also to contribute to much broader issues such as health and social care.

Allocation Policies are not just about matching applicants to properties. It is also about the successful integration of households into the local community. This means greater attention must be paid to a wide range of complex needs at the same time ensuring the long-term sustainability of the community.

Where the Co-operative's areas of operation are under clearance orders from Glasgow City Council, the Co-operative will award priority to displaced residents in order that they be rehoused.

Additionally Easthall Park recognises that it has a moral responsibility as a social landlord, to provide information and advice to applicants about the different opportunities for housing with our area of operation, particularly for applicants who we are unable to accept onto the list or make an offer housing in the short or medium term.

2. PRINCIPLES

The under noted are the principles by which the Co-operative will administer the policy and meet it's stated objectives in addition to the objectives and preferences highlighted in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which are:

- **Occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard.**
- **Occupying overcrowded houses.**
- **Have large families.**
- **Are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions.**
- **To homeless and those threatened with homelessness.**

The Co-operatives principles are:

To be fair, efficient and consistent in allocating tenancies, this means treating applicants with similar characteristics in a similar manner to achieve similar outcomes.

The Co-operative will endeavour to enter meaningful dialogue and provide information on the allocation process, priorities and the type of household being allocated properties, (whilst maintaining individual confidentiality).

The Co-operative will strive to provide potential applicants with a complete picture of their rehousing opportunities with the Co-operative and other agencies.

The objectives, priorities and processes of the allocation policy will reflect the local context of supply and demand and will be reflected in an Annual Letting Plan (which will be reviewed on an annual basis).

The Co-operative will operate an open access allocation policy, which provides the opportunity for anyone to apply and have their housing needs assessed at any time. Easthall Park Housing Co-operative, wishes to promote equal opportunities for all, and will abide by the Race Relations Act 1976, the co-operative is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment of all persons.

- a) in the provision of all housing services
- b) employment of staff to provide these services

No person or group of persons applying for housing, will be treated less favourably on the grounds of age, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, or because of religion, sex, physical disability, appearance, marital status or sexual preference. In order to monitor the effectiveness of this policy, the Co-operative will collect details of ethnic/racial origin and disability from all those who apply for housing.

Wherever possible, information provided by an applicant or requested by the Co-operative to assess the housing need of that applicant, will be treated in strictest confidence.

The Co-operative will at all times aim to ensure that its policies and objectives reflect best practice as set out by Communities Scotland/ SFHA / Chartered Institute of Housing.

3. ELIGIBILITY

The Co-operative welcomes applications for housing from any person / persons, over 16 years of age.

Applicants are expected to provide a true and honest disclosure of their circumstances. Where an applicant has knowingly given false information, or has withheld information, the applicant will be disqualified for a period of 6 months.

Apartment Size Eligibility

In order to ensure effective use of Co-operative stock, applicants will be placed on the appropriate apartment size waiting list, on the basis of a calculation of the number of rooms required, using the following guide:

- ◆ **one double bedroom per couple**
- ◆ **one single bedroom for each single person over 16 years of age one single bedroom for an only child**
- ◆ **one double bedroom for two children under 10 years of age**
- ◆ **one double bedroom for two children of the same sex between 10 and 16 years of age**
- ◆ **one single room each for two children of different sex, where one is between 10 and 16 years of age**

ACCESS TO LIST

When making an application directly with the Co-operative, an applicant will be eligible for one of five lists.

3.1 THE GENERAL WAITING LIST

A general waiting list applicant will have to satisfy the eligibility criteria mentioned in the previous section.

3.2 THE INTERNAL TRANSFER LIST

Applications from existing Co-operative residents for a transfer to another Co-operative property will be accepted at anytime. Section 4 on suspending applicants will apply.

Priority

All other transfer applicants will be awarded points based on their housing need. Where two applicants have the same points totals, the length of time the applicants have been in housing need will be the deciding factor. If this is the same then the length of time that the applicants have been on the Co-operative waiting list will be the deciding factor.

3.3 Nominations Via Homeless Duty Protocol

Where possible the Co-operative will comply with any requests from the Homeless Partnership under the terms of any relevant protocols.

3.4 REFERRALS FROM OTHER AGENCIES

This route is open to applicants who have been referred by another agency, with which the Co-operative has an agreed referral arrangement – in particular for specific properties that require 24 hour support.

3.5 H.O.M.E.S. SCHEME

The Co-operative will accept nominations from H.O.M.E.S., which is a government-funded agency, dedicated to helping tenants move home, where the following circumstances apply:

- to take up employment, beyond a reasonable travelling distance.
- to receive support from relatives or friends.

3.6 MUTUAL EXCHANGES

An alternative route to housing with the Co-operative is through a Mutual Exchange. The Co-operative will allow Mutual Exchanges with another member, (internal exchange) or a tenant in the public or private sector, (external exchange). Internal exchanges will normally be approved, provided both parties will be suitably housed by this arrangement.

External exchanges will be considered on a case-by-case basis, all incoming tenants must demonstrate a willingness to accept the obligations of membership of a fully mutual Co-operative and have a satisfactory tenancy record with their existing landlord.

4. SUSPENDING APPLICANTS

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to suspend applicants to the waiting lists.

Applicants will only be suspended when other options have been explored and have proved to be unsuccessful or are undertaken as a last resort.

Applications can be suspended for a number of reasons:

Tenancy related debt – covers areas such as rent arrears, rechargeable repairs, costs of clearing an abandoned house, storing furniture. Arrangements would be made with applicants and if arrangements to repay debt had been kept for 3 months then the suspension would be removed.

Anti Social Behaviour – can cover a variety of areas such as criminal conviction specific to tenancy or community, drug dealing from tenancy, fire raising, damage to landlords property, harassment / threats / violence to neighbours or staff. In general can be seen to cover issues that can be interpreted as serious breaches of tenancy. Only temporary suspensions would be put in place and applicant's situation would be monitored closely.

Condition of Property – relates to tenancy matters and include: state of garden and common areas, control over pets, rubbish or vandalism. Any suspension on this basis would be monitored for an improvement within timescales.

False Information – where an applicant provides false information a time limited suspension would apply – 6 month suspension is maximum in guidance.

Giving up secure accommodation – a suspension may be put in place where an applicant gives up a tenancy elsewhere where they are adequately housed and puts themselves in a situation where their housing need is worsened.

In each of the above as proposed in the SFHA guidance issued in July 2004 the following is essential:

- Consideration and evaluation of robust evidence must be undertaken.
- Decisions subjected to a test of reasonableness.
- Regular review on an individual basis.
- Clear and accountable appeal mechanisms in place.

Appeals to suspensions would follow the procedure laid out in section 10 of this policy.

5. ALLOCATIONS SYSTEM

The allocation system is the way in which individual households applying for housing are formed into a set of queues which reflect the Co-operative's, principles and stated objectives.

With the exception of mutual exchanges the Co-operative operates a system of targets for each of the five waiting list categories mentioned above. The actual proportions will be determined annually, to take account of the demand and supply of houses forecast in the Annual Letting Plan.

5.1 ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS

To ensure that the policy is administered effectively and is fair and consistent to all applicants, the Co-operative will make use of a points system to measure the relative need of each applicant and to decide the relevant category of need.

POINTS SYSTEM

1. House Condition

1.1 Lacking Amenities

Lack of Inside Toilet	30
Lack of Kitchen Facility	30
Lack of Bathroom/Shower	20
Lack of Adequate hot water supply	15
Lack of separate kitchen	12

Rising/Penetrating Damp **10**

1.2 Sharing Amenities

Applicants who share cooking or washing facilities with another household.

where an application is for one adult **10**
for each additional child **5**
for each additional adult **2**

2. Household Circumstances

2.1.1 Overcrowding

The criteria by which overcrowding points will be awarded are detailed on the section on apartment size eligibility. Points will be awarded as follows:

for each additional bedroom required **25**
for each additional bedspace **15**

(single bedroom is a bedroom less than 10m²)

2.2 Under occupation

for each bedroom surplus to requirements, where the applicant is the tenant of any;

social landlord **15**
for existing co-op members **30**
(to ensure efficient use of existing stock)

2.3 Insecurity of Tenure

Applicants that are threatened with homelessness will be awarded points to reflect the insecurity of their existing accommodation.

Insecure tenancy, e.g.-hostel applicant, private renting **20**

No tenancy, lodging with another Household. **10**

(Can be increased to 20 if the applicant provides documentary evidence of a requirement to leave the property in the near future).

3. MEDICAL

Where the applicant, or a member of their household, suffers from any medical condition where rehousing would alleviate the medical problem, points may be awarded in recognition of this situation.

The applicant will be required to complete a Medical Self Assessment Form, which will enable a decision to be made on suitability for rehousing.

Self-Assessment removes the need to rely on information from General Practitioners. In many cases, the applicant or the Co-operative would be charged for this service.

In certain circumstances we may seek information directly from medical professionals, however this would only be with the signed consent of the applicant.

Although an applicant is not required to provide a medical certificate, an applicant does have the right to do so, if they feel it will benefit their application, or in the case of an appeal.

Applicant housebound and would be able to get out, if moved to suitable accommodation	50
Applicant has severe difficulty getting to and from accommodation or internal layout is totally unsuitable	40
Applicant has some difficulty getting to and from accommodation	20
A move would help applicant but situation is not serious or urgent	10

NB: With regard to Stress/Anxiety/Depression. it must be established that it is a clinical illness and corroboration from a relevant health professional will be required, before points will be awarded.

4. CARE/ SUPPORT

Points will be awarded where an elderly or otherwise vulnerable person requires support from a friend or relative and the applicant is either the carer or the person requiring support.

Because of the individual nature of this type of application, each application will be assessed on its merits. A number of factors will be taken into account.

- the current distance between the two individuals involved
- whether there are other carers
- the dependency of one person on the other
- any associated health/emotional problems
- the type and frequency of care being provided
- the recommendations of health/social work professionals in relation to care and support.

Once the information has been gathered an assessment will be made and the application will receive one of the following priorities.

Priority A	40
Priority B	30
Priority C	20
Priority D	10

5. SOCIAL PRIORITY

Points in this category will only be awarded to reflect exceptional circumstances that are not covered within other areas of the policy.

PRIORITY A

100 Points

Will be awarded to applicants when there is an immediate need for rehousing, such as persistent racial, social or religious harassment, or where serious criminal offences have occurred and that rehousing would assist in terms of victim support. Or where some form of personal tragedy has occurred within the property and the applicant would benefit emotionally from a transfer.

PRIORITY B **PRIORITY C**

40 Points

20 Points

The Co-operative also recognises there are a range of social problems and circumstances, experienced by applicants, where rehousing would be a benefit, but where the need is not immediate.

A number of factors will determine the priority, the applicant will be asked to provide:

- full and comprehensive details of the nature of the problem dates of incidents.
- details of other agencies involved, Police, Social Work and or any other voluntary agencies, which can corroborate the incidents.
- explain the implications of remaining at present address.

The Co-operative reserves the right to review an award of discretionary points and can withdraw an award if circumstances change or if a suitable offers of rehousing are continually refused.

The Co-operative have also built up details of criteria that are covered within this area and these will be presented to the committee on a yearly basis.

6. SELECTION

The matching of an applicant to a property is the single most important task in the letting process.

The first step is an assessment of the main characteristics of the property, not only the size and type, but to identify if the property has been adapted in some way. Properties which have been specifically adapted to meet the needs of a particular client group, will only be allocated to applicants who would significantly benefit from

living in such a property. This can cover a number of client groups such as the needs of the elderly, or mobility issues with respect to physical disability. If no suitable applicant is present on the Co-operative's lists, the Co-operative will accept nominations from relevant agencies.

Additionally, cognisance will be taken of the immediate neighbours, to ensure that we avoid high levels of child density or lifestyle clashes.

Secondly, the co-operative will identify the applicants who have priority on each list and examine the targets set for particular lists and groups within those lists and to examine the degree of 'match' which exists between the applicant and the property.

At this point the use of discretion can be essential to ensure a good and lasting match.

Allocations will in normal circumstances be made to the applicant with the highest points level, however the Co-operative reserves the right to allocate to a lower priority case, if by letting to the high priority case would exacerbate a specific problem. Where an applicant is bypassed the Co-operative will endeavour to ensure that an alternative offer is made as soon as possible.

7. ADDITIONAL ADVICE

The Co-operative recognises that with such a large demand and limited supply of houses, that a large majority of applicants needs will not be met. Therefore Housing Management staff will provide information and advice to applicants about the various other providers and different opportunities for housing within the local area.

8. APPLICANTS OBLIGATIONS

Applicants are asked to take care to submit to the Co-operative accurate information, regarding their circumstances.

In the event of an applicant having knowingly submitted false or misleading information in support of their application, the application will be suspended. Where an allocation has been granted, the Co-operative may seek to recover the property.

If an applicant's circumstances or address change, they should notify the Co-operative immediately in writing. The Co-operative will contact all applicants on the transfer and waiting lists every 12 months, to ensure their applications are still valid.

If an applicant fails to respond to the Co-operative within four weeks of any communication, it will be assumed that there is no longer a need for accommodation and the application will be withdrawn and the applicant informed accordingly.

9. MONITORING

The Co-operative recognises the need to monitor the effectiveness and the outcomes of the policy, to ensure that the stated objectives are being achieved.

The Full Management Committee will receive reports in respect of:

- time taken to process applications
- number of applicants not admitted to list
- number of current applicants on each list
- number of voids
- number of new lets and relets
- ratio of direct lets/ nominations / transfers
- ratio of lets to direct lets and nominations in respect of housing need categories
- breakdown of applications in respect of ethnic origin, gender, age, family composition, disability
- number of offers refused, reasons for refusal
- number of suspended applicants and reason

The findings of these reports will be measured against the forecast Annual Letting Plan to enable adjustment of the policy and procedures to meet the changing needs or policy objectives.

Where there are any amendments for allocations information within the Annual Performance Statistical Return (APSR) SR that is reported on an annual basis the reporting will be amended to reflect this.

10. APPEALS

A situation may occur where an applicant is unhappy with a decision made in respect of their application. If an applicant feels they have been unfairly treated, the following steps may be taken to air such a grievance.

It should be noted that appeals can only be heard if they relate to the applicant, the Co-operative will not accept queries in relation to other allocations.

The aggrieved party should submit details of the complaint in writing to the Core Services Manager of the Co-operative.

After investigating the complaint, the Core Services Manager will inform the applicant of his findings.

If the applicant does not accept the findings, they should then submit details to the Director of the Co-operative.

After investigating the complaint, the Director will inform the applicant of his findings.

If the applicant does not accept the findings, they should then submit details to the Secretary of the Co-operative and the Full Management Committee would consider the matter.

If the applicant is still dissatisfied with the handling of the complaint, the matter should be raised with The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS (0800 377 7330 or email ask@spsso.org.uk).

There is also an important distinction between appeals and complaints.

Appeals refer to a request to review a decision relating to an application.

A complaint would refer to dissatisfaction with the service provided, the Co-operative has a formal Complaints Policy, copies are available at our offices.

11. GRANTING OF TENANCIES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS, MEMBERS OF STAFF OR THEIR CLOSE RELATIONS.

The Co-operative may grant a tenancy to Employees, Committee Members, former Employee's former Committee Members (and those in the above categories in the preceding 12 months) and close relations of the above.

To ensure the Co-operative is acting in accordance with it's policy and the legislation governing the granting of such tenancies. The Co-operative will grant tenancies to those persons only where the application has been processed and meets the following requirements.

- (a) The allocation is in accordance with the Allocation Policy of Easthall Park Housing Co-operative.
- (b) The allocation has been specifically agreed at a full meeting of the Co-operative's Management Committee.
- (c) The details of such allocations are duly recorded in a Schedule 7 Register.

This Allocation Policy should not be seen as a fixed document, the objective of this Co-operative is to provide homes for those in the highest levels of need, to ensure we are achieving this goal the policy will be under review and may be subject to change.

Appendix 1

Breakdown of Social Points

Sep Spouses

Ex-partners having to live together	20 points
Ex partner having to share facilities	10 points

Note: If having to share bedroom 25 points for overcrowding will be awarded

Fostering/Accepting into Care 20 points

Note: Proof must be supplied from Social Services

Sep Households

Families forced to live apart due to circumstance i.e. accommodation overcrowded 20 points

Owner occupiers facing homelessness due financial issues 20 points

Note: Proof must be received from Bank or Solicitor

Threats of Violence from Neighbours 20 points

Note: Proof must be received from Landlord/Police/Solicitor

Fleeing violence from Ex Partner 20 points

Independent Living 20 points

(applicants over 25 yrs who have lived with parents since birth and never had a house/reside in Easthall/Kildermorie)

Supported Living 20 points

Where evidence has been received from a professional carer that applicant requires full time supported living

Leaving supported living ready for mainstream housing 40 points (Evidence must be provided)

Non Dependant Returning home after relationship breakdown 25 Points (Evidence must be provided e.g. solicitor, sale of house etc for each additional room required) 15 points

Further Information

- Points for access to children will only be awarded if proof of access is received from partner at time of application – further confirmation will be obtained prior to any offer of housing being made.
- Under occupation points will not be awarded to applicants living in forces accommodation.

Appendix 2

ACTIVITY STANDARDS 1: HOUSING MANAGEMENT

AS1.1 Access to housing We ensure that all people have fair and open access to our housing list and assessment process. We work with others to maximise and simplify access routes into our housing.

AS1.2 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.

AS1.3 Tenancies We offer the most secure form of tenancy compatible with the purpose of the housing. The agreement makes clear the rights and duties of the tenant and landlord. We act to uphold these rights and duties in a fair and responsible manner.

AS1.4 Housing support needs We are responsive to people's individual housing support needs and help them to sustain their tenancies.

AS1.5 Void management We monitor demand for our houses and maximise the use of available housing, keeping empty properties and spaces in our shared accommodation to a minimum. We make sure our properties are of an appropriate lettable standard.

ACTIVITY STANDARDS 4: HOMELESSNESS

(The degree to which these Standards will apply to individual local authorities and RSLs will depend on the nature of the Homelessness Strategy and local arrangements for service delivery).

AS4.1 Strategy (local authorities only) We have published, and are following, an effective homelessness strategy for preventing and alleviating homelessness in our area that responds to current policy and legislative requirements. We monitor and review its implementation. We consult and collaborate across our own organisation and with other organisations in planning and delivering the strategy.

AS4.2 Partnership working We work actively with other organisations, and within our own organisation, to ensure that the needs of homeless people are met appropriately and as quickly as possible.

AS4.3 Access We ensure that people have full, fair and open access to our homeless services.

AS4.4 Prevention We work to prevent homelessness arising in the first place, and its recurrence when it has occurred.

AS4.5 Assessment process We have a high-quality assessment process, based on relevant legislation and the Code of Guidance. We make good decisions and offer appropriate solutions when considering applications from people seeking help on the grounds that they are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

AS4.6 Information and advice We arrange free and effective information and advice services for homeless or potentially homeless people, based on the national standards for housing information and advice services.

AS4.7 Appeals We make it clear that people can appeal against any of our decisions. We deal fairly and effectively with appeals.

AS4.8 Quality of accommodation When we arrange temporary or permanent accommodation, we treat homeless people fairly and appropriately in terms of tenancy provisions, quality of housing and location. We provide temporary accommodation when needed and maximise the availability of suitable permanent accommodation for homeless people.

AS4.9 Contract compliance We comply with the terms of any contracts we have entered into, to fulfil our statutory homelessness duties.

AS4.10 Accommodation provision (RSLs only) We supply accurate and up-to-date information about our stock to local authorities as requested and in agreement with them. We comply with requests from local authorities for accommodation for homeless people, unless we have good reasons for not doing so. We make sure we treat homeless people fairly in terms of the quality of housing and location we offer them.