

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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Internal References	
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External References	
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Comments	
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ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Blackwood Homes aims to provide good quality, accessible and affordable housing to disabled¹ people and others, with support where needed. It seeks to meet diverse needs, and enable independent living, in inclusive communities where people want to live and remain.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and standards that we aim to follow, and our approach to making best use of the available stock by allocating the right size and type of property to those most in need.
- 1.3 Blackwood will comply with relevant legislation and good practice guidance, in particular the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 2.1 Board members are responsible for setting, reviewing and monitoring the outcomes of the policy. The Housing and Care Committee has delegated responsibility for monitoring policy implementation and performance.
- 2.2 Housing Management staff will be responsible for policy implementation and the development of clear and consistent procedures to support this, supported by Care and Support staff

3.0 PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 Blackwood Homes works in accordance with the organisational Vision of helping people to live their lives to the fullest, through providing high quality, seamless housing and support. Our Allocations Policy is critical in delivering this Vision, through providing housing suitable for allocation to people with a range of housing needs, including disabled people and older people. We operate over a number of local authority areas in Scotland. A high proportion of the housing stock is purpose built and adapted property for physically disabled people. Some housing is linked with support provided by Blackwood Support Services or other partner support providers.

¹ When we say 'disabled people' we mean people with physical impairments, learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, mental ill health, sensory impairments, and any other long term or chronic conditions which result in housing need and disadvantage. We also include in this definition, families with a disabled household member.

- 3.2 The Blackwood will continue to redevelop and remodel some existing properties and services to improve the quality of housing and support. The allocations policy will play a part in achieving this successfully and smoothly.
- 3.3 This is the context for the overarching principles outlined here, governing our allocation of property.
- 3.4 We aim to offer open and equal access to our housing and to allocate property based only on housing need or housing and support needs. We aim to promote equal opportunities and welcome applications from all people regardless of sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, nationality or social origin, religious or political beliefs. We are committed to embracing and valuing diversity amongst the communities in which we work.
- 3.5 We aim to be fair, consistent, efficient and open in allocating properties to tenants, minimising periods where property is empty. A points system is used as a way of objectively assessing housing need, recognising the needs of disabled people and the changing needs of tenants. It aims to reflect our philosophy of promoting independence and choice, innovative housing design and offering or enabling support, social or health care where this is needed.
- 3.6 We aim to encourage stable, sustainable communities where tenants enjoy living in their homes. We aim to achieve this by enabling applicants to choose where they live, while offering housing that is well matched to their needs and preferences. We will develop procedures which support this, aiming for a minimum of refusals of offers of housing and minimising periods where properties lie vacant.
- 3.7 We aim to provide good quality information and advice about taking a tenancy so that applicants can make an informed choice and participate in an accessible, straightforward allocations process.
- 3.8 We seek to work with other agencies to enable access to our housing, using formal and informal partnerships where appropriate. This may involve nominations agreements, participation in common housing registers, referral arrangements, management agreements and leases.
- 3.9 We aim to maintain a transparent audit trail of how and why an allocation was made. Our procedures will build in checks and balances to minimise the possibility of inconsistency or discrimination. Through annual reports of performance and activities, and involving stakeholders in periodic reviews of the policy, we aim to be accountable to applicants, tenants and partner agencies.
- 3.10 Staff will respect the confidentiality of personal information at all times. We will only discuss details of an application with third parties with the applicant's prior written consent. We aim to take up tenancy references, where possible, with current and previous landlords where possible.

3.11 This policy relates to the allocation of all properties where a tenancy is offered. It does not apply to allocation of property under home ownership initiatives, leases or to occupancy agreements in registered care homes. These are subject to separate legal, contractual, funding and regulatory frameworks.

4.0 OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Applying for a house

4.1.1 Any person aged 16 or over can make an application for housing at any time and is entitled to be admitted to the housing list.

4.1.2 We seek to work with other relevant agencies and groups to raise awareness of Blackwood Homes and the types of housing it provides. We aim to encourage applications through widely available information, in a range of formats and key minority languages. We will ask applicants to provide gender, disability and ethnic origin details to help us with monitoring the effectiveness of the policy in achieving equal opportunities and taking action to improve this.

4.1.3 We aim to make it easy to apply, using a clear and accessible application form, which gathers sufficient information to make a fair assessment of housing needs, and support needs where appropriate. We aim to process applications quickly, keep applicants informed about progress and prospects of housing, and to signpost applicants to information about other housing options.

4.1.4 We aim to enable access to those on Council housing lists and in contact with social care, support or housing agencies in voluntary and statutory sectors by seeking nominations for a proportion of lets. In exceptional circumstances we may consider an application from a young person under the age of 16, where Blackwood is a partner with social work in planning for a young person leaving care.

4.1.5 A common housing register is a system where applicants fill in one form in order to apply to all the social landlords in the area. It is usually managed by the Council e.g. in Edinburgh it is called Edindex and the scheme is run by the Council. When Blackwood is a member of one of these systems it will not hold its own separate housing list for that Council area. Instead we will automatically consider anyone who is registered with the Common Housing Register. We will work in accordance with the rules of each Common Housing Register.

4.2 Housing lists

4.2.1 Completed and processed applications will be held within a single system. This aims to ensure that any applicant can be considered for any vacant property that matches their housing needs. Blackwood's house types and 'match' criteria are detailed at Appendix 1.

4.2.2 We aim to keep the housing list up to date with a minimum annual review of applications and using a simple renewal process. If applicants fail to renew their application, within 3 months and after reminder (including attempted telephone contact), then this may be cancelled and removed from the list, recording the reason for cancellation.

4.3 Assessment of Housing Needs

4.3.1 The housing needs of each application will be assessed in accordance with a points system, detailed in Appendix 2.

4.3.2 The points system will consider housing needs under 6 main categories, which incorporates the reasonable preference categories under housing legislation:

- homelessness
- lack of permanent housing rights;
- overcrowding or under-occupation;
- unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- disability, health and support;
- social, economic and environmental factors.

4.3.3 We believe that everyone has the right to live their life free of harassment, violence and abuse, and recognise this a priority within the points system.

4.3.4 The high demand for particular property types and areas means that applicants with low priority may have little chance of rehousing. We aim to advise applicants of the likelihood of an offer of housing and provide them with information about other housing options where possible.

4.3.5 Where applicants have the same number of points, priority will be given to those in need for the longest period (generally calculated from information on the application form or from the date of application if this is not clear).

4.3.6 We will encourage applicants to keep Blackwood advised of any change in circumstances as this could affect their priority. If Blackwood has evidence that an applicant has intentionally changed their circumstances in order to obtain greater priority, additional points may be withheld and the application suspended.

4.3.7 If an allocation is made on the basis of contrived circumstances, false or misleading information Blackwood will consider this grounds for taking action to repossess the property.

4.3.8 Allocations will be made to make best use of our housing stock in terms of type, size and specialist equipment already installed in a property.

4.3 Housing with support

4.4.1 Blackwood is committed to enabling disabled people to live full lives in ordinary housing and communities, with support where this is needed. Certain properties available for allocation are described as 'Housing with support'.

4.4.2 Blackwood's 'Housing with support' falls into two categories:

- Housing accompanied by low level housing support provided by Blackwood and funded by Supporting People block contracts. Most of this housing is in blocks of flats (previously known as 'sheltered housing') and some is in close proximity to a registered care development. In accepting any of these properties, the applicant must also accept the support provided.
- Housing accompanied by housing support and, usually, other personal support or care. The support provider may be Blackwood support services or another support provider. Some is in close proximity to an Blackwood registered care development. Some of these properties (including some shared houses) are the subject of a management agreement with a support provider, enabling the provider or local authority social work department to nominate the prospective tenant for a specific vacancy.

These properties are listed in Appendix 1.

This Policy will seek to ensure that support is offered by Blackwood Care in all appropriate circumstances.

4.4.3 All Application Forms will seek to assess the housing and support needs of an applicant, and both Housing and Care staff may be involved in this assessment. The final decision to offer a tenancy will rest with housing management – Housing Officers or Team Leaders.

4.4.4 We will aim to prioritise applications for housing from:

- people moving out of hospital or institutional care;
- disabled people moving on from residential schools or colleges;
- disabled people wishing to move to their own home from family or shared accommodation, in a planned way (so preventing future crisis intervention);
- people needing to move to improve or receive support with mental ill health;
- other situations agreed as a priority with the local authority
- disabled people and existing Blackwood tenants who need to move to appropriately sized property, as defined by the government in the Welfare Reform Act 2012.,

4.5 Cancellation and suspension of applications

4.5.1 Applications will be cancelled where:

- The applicant has died
- The applicant has withdrawn their application
- The applicant has failed to renew their application when invited to do so.
- Where the applicant has been satisfactorily rehoused and does not wish their application to be re-assessed in light of their changed circumstances.

4.5.2 Blackwood will seek tenancy reports from current and previous landlords, where possible. Where an unsatisfactory report is obtained, we reserve the right to suspend the application, subject to review. Refusal to give permission to contact a current or previous landlord may be considered grounds for suspending the application. However we will be sensitive to individual circumstances where an approach to a private landlord could jeopardise an existing tenancy.

4.5.3 Blackwood may suspend applications in defined circumstances where there is evidence to support the suspension:

- The applicant has debts relating to a current or previous tenancy in excess of one month's rent and an arrangement to clear the debt has not been adhered to for a period of at least 3 months.
- False or misleading information has been provided.
- There is clear evidence of a serious breach of tenancy, including serious anti-social behaviour related to a current or previous tenancy, or which would have been considered a serious tenancy breach if a tenancy had been in place, and that has taken place within the last two years.

4.5.4 Suspensions will be for a period of 3 – 12 months, and subject to 3-monthly review or at the reasonable request of the applicant. Applicants will be notified of suspension from the list, the reasons for this, and advised of their right to appeal against this action.

4.5.5 Where there is or has been an anti-social behaviour order issued, and there is evidence that the applicant is taking action to alter their behaviour Blackwood may consider granting a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. This will be subject to Blackwood being satisfied that adequate support can be provided, either by Blackwood or other agency.

4.6.1 Nominations, protocols and other partnerships

4.6.1 Nominations Arrangements

We will seek to enter into Nomination Agreements with the Local Authorities in whose areas we operate, such that the local authority will be asked to nominate applicants from their housing lists to an agreed proportion of our vacant properties, ..

In some situations a unique nominations arrangement may exist for allocations to new build developments, where this is part of the development agreement with the local authority or other partners.

4.6.2 Section 5 protocols

Housing Blackwoods have a duty to house homeless applicants referred by the local authority, unless there is good reason to refuse the request. We will seek protocols with local authorities governing the operation of this, emphasising the needs of homeless households that include a disabled person.

4.6.3 Common Housing Registers and Mobility Schemes

We may take part in common housing registers, mobility and similar schemes where this makes economic sense and where we are satisfied that this will not undermine our other principles in relation to equality of access and fair assessment.

4.6.4 *Nominations and referrals from support and advice agencies*
To maximise access to our housing by disabled people and other groups at risk of exclusion, we may seek nominations or referral arrangements with DPHSs and local agencies e.g. those representing black and minority ethnic groups and refugees. We may develop nominations and management protocols with support providers enabling access to suitable housing.

4.6.5 *National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders/Multi-Agency Public Protection Agencies*

Sex offenders and other offenders are entitled to apply for housing. We recognise the duty of RSLs to co-operate in the accommodation of registered sex offenders and aim to collaborate as required with statutory bodies in relation to risk assessment and management. Bearing in mind our responsibilities to tenants and our aim of creating safe and sustainable communities that include disabled people, we will carry out our own detailed risk assessment in these cases. Where we assess that there is a threat to individuals and the community we reserve the right to suspend the application in line with section 4.4.

4.6.6 Blackwood will, as far as possible, apply the same approach to assessment of an applicant's housing needs and circumstances, and matching of applicant to property, in the case of nominations and direct applicants. This does not mean requiring applicants to provide duplicate information where a partner agency has already provided this information.

4.7 Allocations process and routes

4.7.1 When a vacancy arises, an offer of housing will normally be made to the applicant with the highest points, who is seeking property in that area and whose needs best match the type and size of the housing which is available, and the pre-existing adaptations.

4.7.2 Prior to an offer being made, a home visit will be carried out, where practicable, to verify the applicant's current housing circumstances and obtain any additional information. If this leads to a change in points awarded, the applicant will be advised of this.

4.7.3 We aim to enable applicants to make informed choices. We will provide good general information about our developments, properties, services, rent and other charges, including support charges, and housing benefits payable in advance of any offer being made. We aim to provide good accurate specific information when an offer is made.

4.7.4 In order to maintain a balance between types of lets, and increase access by those who tend to be at particular disadvantage in accessing suitable housing, we will set broad annual targets for quotas of allocations to be made through different routes e.g. nominations and transfers. We aim to review these annually in assessing the effectiveness of the points and quota schemes in meeting the policy aims and principles. Targets are included at Appendix 2.

4.7.5 Where a vacancy arises in property which is the subject of a management agreement with a support provider, the support provider will be asked to nominate one or more applicants. This will be based on their assessment of circumstances and confirmation of the availability of care or support funding. Housing management will make the final decision on allocation.

4.7.6 Blackwood wants to promote choice and will not penalise applicants where an offer of housing is refused. Where an applicant has refused three offers we will, together with the applicant, actively review their stated housing preferences and reserve the right to suspend their application during this review period.

4.7 Transfers

4.8.1 Any Blackwood tenant may apply for a transfer, regardless of their length of tenancy. Transfer applications will be assessed and pointed in the same way as other applications.

4.8.2 We want existing tenants to remain with us and to be responsive to tenants' changing needs and aspirations. We recognise that disabled people can have great difficulty finding suitable alternative accommodation if their circumstances change. Similarly we are acutely aware of the shortfalls in property suitable for people who use wheelchairs and for families and want to assist those who no longer require this to move in order to maximise use of this stock. We will set a broad annual target for allocations to transfer applicants, and give priority to:

- Applicants occupying wheelchair accessible property where there is no longer a wheelchair user in the household.
- Applicants occupying larger housing than they require
- Applicants needing larger housing to live with a partner, to accommodate a carer, or for an additional child.
- Applicants experiencing any form of serious harassment or abuse.
- Applicants needing to move location in order to take up or sustain employment.
- Applicants needing to move because of particular social or health factors, including family support and mental health issues
- Applicants needing to move to access greater support from Blackwood.

4.8.3 In general, transfer applicants will:

- be subject to the same conditions of suspension and cancellation as any other application in relation to debts or anti-social behaviour
- not be considered where there is an ongoing tenancy related legal action
- prior to an offer, have their existing home inspected for confirmation that the tenant has fulfilled their tenancy obligations in maintaining the property in a lettable condition. Failure to do so may result in any application being suspended.

4.9 Mutual Exchange and Mobility Schemes

4.9.1 Blackwood tenants can apply for a mutual exchange with another Blackwood tenant or with the tenant of another Registered Social Landlord.

- 4.9.2 Permission to exchange will normally be granted providing certain conditions are satisfied:
- Both applicants need to complete Blackwood's usual application form.
 - The other landlord agrees to the exchange.
 - The exchange partner satisfies the eligibility criteria for the size and type of housing they would move into.
 - Both tenants have a satisfactory rent payment record, have maintained a repayment plan for 13 weeks and there have been no other material breaches of the respective tenancy conditions in the previous 2 years.
 - Blackwood suffers no rent loss as a result of the exchange.
- 4.9.3 We aim to ensure that tenants are aware of Homeswapper or equivalent Mutual Exchange and Mobility Schemes which help people to move either locally or nationally, providing information through the Tenants newsletter and factsheets.

4.10 Local lettings plans

- 4.10.1 From time to time a local area or development may experience difficulties or plans that affect the wellbeing of the tenants and the community. Some examples are:
- an over concentration of households with similar particular needs;
 - anti-social behaviour;
 - low demand for the area or certain house types;
 - major redevelopment or regeneration.

If the allocations policy is not helping, or is getting in the way of managing or improving the situation, Blackwood can decide on a different allocations policy just for this local area. Before it can do this it will have to set out very clearly:

- The changes or improvements it wants to achieve in the community (the objectives of the local lettings plan).
- How a local allocations policy will help this to happen.
- How long the local policy should be applied before it is reviewed.
- Detailed plans for involving tenants and communicating with them.

This local lettings plan will need to be approved by the Housing and Care Committee. Where there is an urgent need to act, the Operations Director has delegated authority to approve a local lettings plan, subsequently reporting this to the Committee.

4.11 Special circumstances and cases

- 4.11.1 The allocations policy seeks to meet the greatest housing need. In some cases support or intensive housing management may be needed to enable the applicant to sustain the tenancy. Blackwood will take this into account in making an allocation decision, together with the impact of the allocation in creating or maintaining a sustainable community.

4.11.2 While properties will normally be offered to the person with the highest number of points eligible for that property size and type, we reserve the right to give priority to an applicant with fewer points where:

- A clear lifestyle clash would be avoided.
- There is an over concentration of vulnerable people
- The allocation would allow a person to access greater support or care.

4.11.3 Where an applicant at the top of the list is not made an offer, this must be recorded along with the reason for the decision and must be approved by the Housing Team Leader. The bypassed applicant(s) should be offered an appropriate property at the next opportunity.

4.11.4 A points system cannot capture all housing needs situations and very occasionally situations may arise where the applicant is in substantial housing need and the points system does not allow for the specific circumstances. The Operations Director has delegated authority to award points for 'exceptional circumstances' subsequently reporting these to the Housing and Care Committee. The detailed consideration of the circumstances should be fully documented to enable subsequent amendment of the points schedule if indicated.

4.11.5 We will not use transfers as a way of addressing minor tenancy disputes. However where there is evidence of harassment or violence (or other exceptional circumstances), the Housing Manager or Operations Director have authority to approve a transfer, having given detailed consideration to the circumstances and documentary evidence. The Housing and Care Committee will monitor the number and nature of these cases.

4.12 Schedule 7 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

4.12.1 In relation to the allocation of all properties, Blackwood will continue to work in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Housing (Sc) Act 2001, despite its revocation, to ensure transparency and fairness in all allocations."

The Housing and Care Committee must approve any proposed allocation that would have fallen under Schedule 7.

4.13 Appeals

4.13.1 Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the way their application has been assessed, reviewed, suspended or any other decision taken in relation to their application, can ask the Housing Team Leader to review the decision. Should the applicant be dissatisfied with the response, the applicant will be advised to complain using Blackwood's formal Complaints Policy.

4.14 Monitoring

4.14.1 The Operations Director will provide information on agreed measures and targets to the Housing and Care Committee on a regular basis to enable monitoring of performance and to draw the Committee's attention to any areas of concern indicating a need for a change or review of the policy. Appendix 4 details the Key Performance Indicators.

4.14.2 This will include reports on equal opportunities data collected from all applicants, which may be used to inform strategies for increasing access to the housing list and addressing unmet needs through business development.

5 LEASES

5.1.1 The majority of Blackwood housing stock is provided for permanent housing to people in housing need with tenants holding a Scottish Secure Tenancy. In exceptional circumstances property may be made available under lease for provision of housing or for non-residential purposes to organisations, including local authorities, working with people with support needs. This section of the allocations policy defines the circumstances in which we will lease properties and the organisations to which we will lease them.

5.2 For residential purposes

Blackwood aims to maximise the housing rights of people occupying its properties as their home on a permanent basis, irrespective of their support needs. Where a property is to be used as permanent housing, we will consider lease to an organisation, rather than to the individual, only in very exceptional circumstances e.g. the house will be shared by more than two unrelated adults, the person is under section or on licence.

We will consider a lease of property for use as temporary residential accommodation the following criteria apply:

- The local authority housing and /or community care strategy identifies a priority need for temporary housing for the proposed purpose;
- The proposed use is a clear fit with the objectives of Blackwood, and a risk assessment has established that proposed use will not adversely affect the stability of the existing tenant community.
- We are satisfied the lease complies with the terms for Section 66 agreement.

5.3 For non-residential purposes

We will consider lease of property for non-residential purposes where one or more of the following criteria apply:

- The property was designated at the time of development for office or community purposes related to provision of support, tenancy or community services
- The proposed lease is part of a wider initiative to change the balance of the community or development.
- The property type is in low demand
- We have suspended letting due to planned redevelopment
- We have obtained Section 66 agreement from the Scottish Housing Regulator for the lease.

5.4 Terms of the lease

We will use the SFHA model documents to establish the lease, and ensure the lessee uses the appropriate model tenancy and occupancy agreements where applicable.

Where we need to consider a variation on an existing model lease, tenancy or occupancy agreement, we will seek legal advice to ensure that we are maximising the security of tenure for individuals in permanent housing.

The Chief Executive has delegated authority to vary lease terms, providing that good reasons can be demonstrated for departing from the terms of any model agreements. This should include where the lease is for longer than three years; where the appropriate SFHA Model lease is not used; where the model is used but some clauses are omitted or amended; or where the appropriate model occupancy or tenancy agreement is not used.

5.5 Rent and service charges

The rent and service charge for will be set in line with the rent setting policy for the accommodation to be leased for housing purposes.

For non-housing purposes, the rent will be set on the same basis, and adjusted to reflect the terms of the lease, with deductions or additions relating to allocation of responsibility for maintenance, and including any additional costs likely to be incurred as a result of the proposed use.

5.6 Delegated authority

The Operations Director and Chief Executive are authorised to sign leases on behalf of Blackwood.

Any proposal to lease property which falls outwith these circumstances must be referred to the Housing and Care Committee or Board of Management for a decision.

6 REVIEW

- 6.1 The Housing and Care Committee will receive an annual review of the operations of this policy and consider any minor amendments required. A full policy review will be carried out 3 years after policy implementation. We aim to involve and consult applicants, tenants, local authority and other partner agencies in the full review process.

Board review date due: March 2016

APPENDIX 1 TYPES OF HOUSING AND MATCHING TO NEEDS

A GENERAL

- 1 **General Flat or House:** These properties can be let to anyone over the age of 16.
- 2 **Ground floor flats, flats accessed by a lift or single storey houses:** Priority shall be given for this type of housing to households which include a person with mobility problems or a health condition which means they find stairs difficult or dangerous. Some properties may have been built or adapted to barrier free standard. Some properties may include an alarm call system and some communal facilities e.g. laundry.
- 3 **Wheelchair housing:** This is purpose built or adapted property designed for use by someone who uses a wheelchair. Priority will *always* be given to an applicant whose household includes a wheelchair user.

Where there is no demand for the property type from priority groups as described above, allocation will be made on a simple 'housing needs' basis and in accordance with the provisions of the allocations policy.

Consideration will also be given to making best use of existing adaptations.

Blackwood can provide care and support at many of its properties across Scotland.

B REGISTERED CARE HOMES

Blackwood has 4 registered care homes. These properties are **not** included in this allocations policy. Please refer to Support Services policies and procedures for information about access to this accommodation.

Broom Court, Stirling

14 studio apartments and 3 respite rooms

MacLehose Court, Greenock

20 studio apartments

Raeden Court, Aberdeen

15 studio apartments

Belses Gardens, Cardonald, Glasgow

13 studio apartments, 1 one-bedroom flat

All other property at these locations is allocated under the terms of the allocations policy and procedures.

C SHARED OWNERSHIP PROPERTIES

Blackwood has a small number of shared ownership properties and has no plans for further development at this time. These properties are **not** included in this allocations policy. Please refer to the Shared Ownership Buy Back policy for information on access to this accommodation.

We operate a points system for the allocation of all our properties. This awards points for housing need, according to the applicant's current housing circumstances. When allocating a property we will take into account 4 factors:

- Eligibility and 'match' for the type of property available
- The size of property needed to accommodate the applicant's household and needs
- The appropriateness of existing adaptations
- Housing needs points

1 MATCHING APPLICANTS TO PROPERTY

This will be based on the type, size and property features of the accommodation. Suitability for different property types and sizes is determined by information provided by the applicant about:

- The size of their household i.e. how many people will live in the house
- The gender, relationships and age of those to be housed
- Space needed for support and supporters or carers
- Mobility, wheelchair use, support and other needs affecting the type of property and services required
- Location or development choices.

In matching applicants to property we will try to accommodate predicted future needs where possible, if where there is no higher priority applicant whose immediate needs better match the property.

2 SIZE OF PROPERTY

We will allocate property on the basis that each person within the household should have their own single bedroom except:

- a couple living as partners sharing a double room
- two children sharing a double room under the age of 8.
two children of the same sex sharing a double room under the age of 16 where the age gap is less than 6 years

Where one or two partners in a couple are disabled, or where a child is disabled, and where separate bedrooms are required but not available in their existing accommodation, this will be treated as overcrowding.

Where an additional bedroom is needed to accommodate a carer, personal assistant, support tenant or other person providing regular sleepover support or to accommodate the particular needs of a disabled person, lack of this space is considered overcrowding.

Applicants will be advised that any allocation in accordance with the Blackwood size criteria (above) may not meet the size criteria as set by the government in relation to eligibility for housing benefit. Applicants will be asked to make an informed decision on whether or not they accept an offer of a property which is larger than their "needs" as defined by legislation.

Where a divorced or separated parent has joint custody or regular access to children of more than two nights a week, the children will be classed as permanent members of the household by Blackwood for the purpose of allocating housing needs points. However, overcrowding points will not be awarded. Applicants will be advised that, for benefit purposes, the legislative position is different and applicants will be asked to make an informed decision on whether or not they accept an offer of a property which is larger than their "needs" as defined by legislation.

We may require documentary evidence to support consideration for additional bedrooms.

2 HOUSING NEEDS POINTS SCHEDULE

Points are awarded under 6 categories of housing need:

Notes:

* denotes that documentary evidence will be required to support the points award

	No. points
CATEGORY 1: HOMELESSNESS	
<p>Homeless *Accepted as statutorily homeless under the terms of the relevant homeless person legislation (includes people placed in temporary accommodation by the local authority) AND in priority need as determined by the local authority.</p>	20
Sleeping rough or moving from place to place i.e. no fixed place to stay.	18
Unable safely to continue to live in the property because of harassment or domestic abuse.	18
In hospital or institutional care with no permanent home OR unable to return to former home as not suitable for needs.	18
No home where you and your family can live together e.g. you live in bed & breakfast, a refuge, a hostel.	18
<p>Threatened with homelessness *Due to become homeless within a 3 month period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced sale of property e.g. due to financial difficulties or marital breakdown • Private tenancy where Notice to Quit has been issued • Tied accommodation with employment termination date and notice to quit (includes notice from the MOD that entitlement to occupy service accommodation is due to end). • Closure order, closure for redevelopment or demolition • End of placement at residential school or college 	15
<i>[One allocation of points only in this category; if awarded in this category, no points should be awarded in categories 2 or 3]</i>	
CATEGORY 2: LIMITED PERMANENT HOUSING RIGHTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in a portable caravan, mobile home, boat 	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship breakdown requiring house sale/applicant to vacate marital or family home* 	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported temporary housing or lodgings 	11

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in residential care/group home/shared supported living and seeking independent housing • Disabled person living with family and planning for independent living • Separated household or family living 'care/of' friends or relatives • Private short term tenancy /lease • Single person wishing to establish separate household <p><i>[One allocation of points only in this category]</i></p>	<p>9</p> <p>7</p> <p>10</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>
CATEGORY 3: OVERCROWDING OR UNDER-OCCUPATION	
<p>Overcrowding For each additional bedroom required for the applicant's household (see Section 2 above)</p> <p>In access/custody cases where occupation of the bedroom will be less than 3 nights a week</p> <p><i>[bedsits & caravans are considered as one room properties which lack a required separate bedroom]</i></p> <p>Under-occupation (only where applicant is main householder) For more than one bedroom above the number required, as defined by legislation, per underoccupied room</p> <p>For each bedroom above the number required as defined by legislation where applicant is a current Blackwood tenant.</p> <p>Current tenant occupying property designed to wheelchair standard and no longer requiring this.</p> <p><i>[One allocation of points only in this category]</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p>2</p> <p>5</p> <p>12</p> <p>12</p>
CATEGORY 4: UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING CONDITIONS	
<p>Poor property and lack of amenities *Property has been assessed as Below Tolerable Standard:</p> <p>Structurally unstable, sub-standard or dangerous services; substantially affected by rising or penetrating damp; inadequate supply of hot or cold water; no inside wc. <i>[will be confirmed at home visit]</i></p> <p>Poor state of general maintenance (not tenant's responsibility)</p> <p>No central heating</p> <p>Unsuitability for disabled person in household Unsuitable heating type for needs</p> <p>Lacking space for essential equipment e.g. washing machine, wheelchair</p>	<p>12</p> <p>2 per defect</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p>

storage space	
Unable to access kitchen OR	7
Limited use of kitchen– not adapted for disability	4
Unable to access bathroom OR	9
Limited use of bathroom – not adapted for disability	6
Dangerous or difficult access	
Dangerous or very difficult for applicant (or member or their household) to access outside or essential rooms inside the property	12
Some difficulties in access to outside or to essential rooms inside.	5
Sharing facilities with unrelated households or adults	3
<i>[no more than one allocation of points per subheading in this section]</i>	
CATEGORY 5: DISABILITY, HEALTH AND SUPPORT	
Disability and health	
Where the applicant or a member of their household has an impairment or long term health condition and rehousing will:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantially improve the applicant’s (or member of their household’s) quality of life and independence (with or without support) 	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> significantly improve the situation 	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slightly improve the applicant’s (or member of their household’s) quality of life and independence (with or without support) 	2
OR	
Where the applicant or a member of their household has an impairment or health condition caused by, or aggravated by their current housing conditions and rehousing will:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantially alleviate the situation 	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> significantly improve the situation 	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slightly improve the situation 	2
Support	
Where the applicant needs to move to enable family or others to provide necessary support:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essential support 	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> desirable support 	6
Where the applicant needs to move to be able to provide essential support to a family member (and currently lives more than 10 miles away).	9
Notes	
1. <i>Quality of life factors include:</i>	
<i>Being able to manage personal and domestic tasks independently or with dignified support</i>	
<i>Being able to make or maintain relationships with family members and natural supporters</i>	
<i>Being able to contribute to and take part in community life, leisure and employment.</i>	

<p>2. Awarding of points in this category will rely on information provided by the applicant on a self-assessment form and assessment by Blackwood staff. Further information may be sought from or provided by health or social care professionals, formal or informal supporters to assist the assessment, subject to the consent of the applicant.</p> <p>The category may apply to people with any impairment or condition covered by disability equality legislation and to people with age related impairment and health issues.</p>	
CATEGORY 6: SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS	
<p>Harassment, abuse, domestic violence Serious and persistent Intermittent, verbal</p> <p><i>[The effect of harassment, violence and abuse can be far reaching and serious. Awarding of points in this category will rely initially on information provided by the applicant. We will seek advice and confirmation if required from relevant agencies in making an assessment. We will advise applicants to seek legal advice and other appropriate support.]</i></p> <p>Travel to work, education or amenities *Need to move to take up or retain employment and current permanent home is more than 1 hour's travel distance from place of employment.</p> <p>Disabled person needs to move to take up or retain employment and current permanent home is more than 1 hour's travel distance from place of employment.</p> <p>Physical isolations from essential amenities and services e.g. shops, college, health centre, hospital, where applicant does not have a car or accessible public transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled person or older person: more than 1 mile • Others: more than 3 miles <p>Economic Current rent or mortgage payments are unaffordable (> 1.5 times the average Blackwood rent for size of property needed)</p> <p>Applicant is on Housing Benefit which does not meet the full rent in a private tenancy</p> <p>Environmental Household with child(ren) under 12 and no access to garden or safe local play facilities</p> <p>Disabled or older person unable to maintain garden of current property (and applying for property without this responsibility)</p>	<p>18 9</p> <p>3</p> <p>6</p> <p>5 1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>4</p> <p>2</p>

<p>Social isolation Living at a distance from neighbours, social or family support and would benefit from move to environment offering more opportunities for social contact and security.</p> <p>Other exceptional circumstances Points awarded by the Operations Director in exceptional circumstances not covered by the points scheme; all such awards to be monitored and reported to the Housing and Care Committee.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Up to 10</p>
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4. ALLOCATIONS TARGETS

While using the points schedule to prioritise applications, we will actively seek nominations from other sources to maximise access. We will aim to seek allocations and allocate properties from the different routes as follows:

Source	Nominations Sought (% of vacancies)
Nominations from Local Authority or successor organisations (includes s5 referrals, referrals from Housing and Social Work Departments)	50%
Waiting List	25%
Internal transfers	25%

APPENDIX 3

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND BLACKWOOD POLICIES

1. Legislation

This policy and related procedures have been developed taking into account the requirements of these pieces of legislation which directly or indirectly affect the allocation of houses in Scotland:

Housing legislation

Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003

Equality legislation

Equality Act 2010
Disability Discrimination Act 2005
Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006
Human Rights Act 1998
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Sex Discrimination Act 1986

Other relevant legislation

Welfare Reform (Scotland) Act 2012
Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011
Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
Anti-Social Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004
Data Protection Act 1998
Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005
Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981

2. Guidance

Scottish Housing Regulator

Our Regulatory Framework: Consent to constitutional and organisational change and disposals
Our Regulatory Framework: Intervention
Our Regulatory Framework: Inquiries and Information
Our Regulatory Framework: Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management
Our Regulatory Framework: The Register of Social Landlords
Our Regulatory Framework: Monitoring the Scottish Social Housing Charter
Our Regulatory Framework: How We Regulate
Our Regulatory Framework: About Us
Our Regulatory Framework
The Scottish Social Housing Charter – Technical Guidance for Landlords
Monitoring the Scottish Social Housing Charter - Final Indicators and Context Information

SFHA

A Housing Report for Scotland
SFHA Welfare Reform Impact Assessment Report (July 2011)
Welfare Rights Guidance
CIHS/SFHA Discussion Paper - Devolving Housing Benefit
Getting the Balance Right (Equal Opportunities)
Rent Setting Guidance
Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness
The Disability Discrimination Act
Housing for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Right to Buy Manual
Service Charges Guidance Booklet

3. Related Blackwood strategies, policies and procedures

Allocations procedures
Anti-social behaviour policy
Complaints policy and procedures
Confidentiality policy
Diversity and equality strategy & policy
Equal Opportunities Policy .
Leases and Management Agreements – policy & procedures
Rent arrears policy
Schedule 7: Control of Payments and Benefits Policy
Shared ownership buy back policy
Strategy for redevelopment and remodelling of 'sheltered' accommodation
Strategy for individualizing support services
Succession and assignation policies
Voids Management Policy

APPENDIX 4

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Statistical information will be recorded and reported as follows:

Monthly

Number of lets

% Lettings to BME

% Lettings to disabled

% Lets to Homelessness

% Tenants still in their tenancies after twelve months

Quarterly

Number of lets

% Lets to Homelessness

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