



# Cassiltoun

## Housing Association

### Allocation Policy

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Chair Person/Office Bearers Signature: <i>Aime M. Stuart</i>	

CASSILTOUN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED  
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Cassiltoun is a recognised Scottish Charity no 035544

# **CASSILTOUN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

## **ALLOCATION POLICY**

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#### **HOUSING LISTS AND ALLOCATIONS**

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## Introduction

- 1 Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) with the Housing Regulator and was registered with its forerunner, Communities Scotland and the Housing Corporation in Scotland, in 1985.
- 2 The Association is committed to providing affordable rented housing of a high quality to those in greatest housing need, contributing to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area, the provision of housing for people with specialised needs and to provide a safe environment for our residents to enjoy. To facilitate this and to give guidance and clarification to both staff and members of the public, the Association has an Allocation Policy that has been approved by the Board of Management.
- 3 The purpose of this policy is to set out the statutory provisions governing admission to housing lists and the allocation of housing by Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (“the 2001 Act”).
- 4 The legislation governing these matters is to be found in sections 19 and 20 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (“the 1987 Act”), as amended by sections 9 and 10 of the 2001 Act.
- 5 This policy is issued in terms of section 79 of the 2001 Act and will be taken into account by the Housing Regulator , in due course, when monitoring the performance of local authorities and registered social landlords.

## Policy Background

- 6 The current legislation in sections 19 and 20 of the 1987 Act extends only to local authorities. The 2001 Act both amends these provisions and extends them to Registered Social Landlords to create a common legislative framework for all social landlords. These provisions, therefore, complement the new Scottish secure tenancy and single regulatory framework (established by Parts 2 and 3 of the 2001 Act) which will apply equally to local authorities and registered social landlords. This was further amended with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 which introduces the Scottish Housing Regulator who will oversee the Regulation of both Local Authorities and RSLs in Scotland.
- 7 Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited will take into account all the legislation described above and also the Scottish Social Housing Charter for Social Landlords and Homelessness Functions published by the Scottish Government. The Charter Indicators 1, 7, 8 and 10 are indicated below:
  - (i) **Equalities: Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that : “every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”.**
  - (ii) **Housing Options: Social landlords work together to ensure that:**
    - People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.
    - Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.
    - People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.
- 8 Cassiltoun Housing Association will develop our allocations and lettings policies in consultation with our tenants.

- 9 Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited has taken into account of relevant good practice guidance when developing and implementing this allocations and lettings policy.

## Equal Opportunities

- 10 The Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome and Standard 1 states “every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

The Association acknowledges that certain people are discriminated against by the housing system and are forced to remain in unsuitable housing. Consequently the Association is committed to equal access to housing and services in relation to the needs of all groups.

- a) The Association recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and can take place at a personal or at an institutional level.
- b) The Association will consult with its tenants and prospective tenants to provide appropriate housing and suitable environment. To encourage participation by all sections of the community, in meaningful consultation, the Association will be sensitive to: -
  - (i) Religious and cultural requirements e.g. women only meetings, early meetings.
  - (ii) The needs of those with young children e.g. provision of transport, crèche, child friendly rooms, appropriate opening and closing hours.
  - (iii) The needs of people with disabilities e.g. provision of transport, access for disabled people.
  - (iv) Language differences e.g. appropriate communication format, assistance with forms and questionnaires, members of Happy to Translate which provides the use of interpreters and translators.
  - (v) The Association will consult relevant agencies working with groups of interest to the Association with a view to seeking, identifying and meeting the needs of these groups.
  - (vi) There will be a regular review of consultation procedures and policies to ensure we continue to be responsive to our tenants’ and prospective tenants’ needs.
- c) The Association will take positive action measures to ensure that all members of the community are aware of the services it provides including availability of stock.
- d) The Association will seek to ensure within its means that all people benefit equally from its services.
- e) The Association will have maximum openness about what it is doing and ensure that all policies and procedures are openly and widely advertised.
- f) The Association will provide tenants with full, clear and accurate information about their particular tenancy in compliance with the law and good practice guidelines. This information will be accessible to all. An oral explanation will be given at the beginning of the tenancy, which will be confirmed in writing. Tenancy agreements will not contain any unduly restrictive or unnecessary conditions.

- h) The Association will ensure that no communication barriers are put in place or maintained and will consider equality of access when designing permanent office accommodation. All application forms and materials published will be in simple jargon free language and where appropriate help will be given to fill out the relevant forms.
- j) The Association will be sensitive to people with difficulties in communicating
- k) All people will have equal access to housing and will be treated equally when they become tenants
- l) Selection and allocation policies will be clear, comprehensive and unequivocally non-discriminatory, providing equal access for all. All selection and allocation procedures will be designed to deal quickly and fairly with applicants for housing. Proper recording, reporting and monitoring procedures will be carried out. To ensure accountability and fairness more than one person will be involved in each decision.
- m) The Association will avoid being seen as inaccessible to those in housing need. As a result the Association will keep its waiting list open and encourage applications to be submitted and assessed throughout the year.
- n) Copies of the policies and procedures on selection and allocation will be available and accessible to all.

## **Human Rights**

- 11 Cassiltoun Housing Association recognises that applicant's human rights must be respected. Both will aim to ensure that this achieved during the assessment and allocation process.

## **Housing Lists**

- 12 Section 19(1) of the 1987 Act (as amended by section 9 of the 2001 Act) sets out the entitlement for anyone aged 16 or over to be admitted to a housing list.

*No one in housing need will be excluded from a housing list, and, therefore, will not be 'lost from the system' as a result. Although it is recognised that, once admitted to a housing list, Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited will continue to determine the priority of the application.*

In addition to this the Scottish Social Housing Charter at point 10 Access to social housing states:

*“people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being rehoused.”*

## **Definition of Housing List**

- 13 Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited operates an open waiting list for housing.

## **Definition of Housing Provider**

- 14 Cassiltoun Housing Association is a registered social landlord and is there defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 as a “housing provider”.

## **Admission to the Housing List**

- 15 Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited will operate an open waiting list to allow people in housing need to have the opportunity at all times to apply to the Association for housing.
- 16 Anyone age 16 and over will be regarded as an independent household within their current place of residence and will be eligible to apply for housing with the Association.
- 17 The Association will take reasonable steps to ensure that information and promotional material is widely available to the public. In order to achieve this, information on the Association and how to access the housing will be made available on the Association's web site, through all other housing organisations both in Castlemilk and on the periphery as well as law centres and citizen advice bureaux.
- 18 Applications submitted to the Association will not be screened and all applications will be accessed in accordance with the Allocation Policy. This will allow all applicants circumstances to be taken into account when assessing housing need.
- 19 Although every applicant will be entitled to be placed on the waiting list for housing according to the size of house required, the Association believes that it is unfair to give applicants unreasonable expectations about their housing opportunities. Applicants therefore, will be fully advised of the realistic possibilities of housing with the Association and will be given the opportunity to decide if they wish to remain on the waiting list.

## **Waiting Lists Held**

- 20 Applicants will be placed onto the waiting list that best reflects their housing needs, taking into consideration the house size required to accommodate the applicant's household.

A separate waiting list for each property size will be held

- 2 Apartment – 1 Bedroom
- 3 Apartment – 2 Bedrooms
- 4 Apartment – 3 Bedrooms
- 5 Apartment – 4 Bedrooms
- 6 Apartment – 5 Bedrooms
- 7 Apartment – 6 Bedrooms
- 8 Apartment – 7 Bedrooms

No distinction is made within the waiting list between flats and houses.

The type of property required and the need for any special amenities:

- (i) General Housing: applicants with no medical or social need for a specific type or level of housing.
- (ii) Amenity/Medical Housing: applicants with a recognised medical condition that requires low level (i.e. ground or first floor) housing or housing with specific amenities..

Applicants with a medical certificate stating that ground floor housing is required will not be considered for first floor accommodation or housing with internal stairs

## Allocation of Housing

### *Reasonable Preference*

- 21 It is recognised that there is a range of problems and circumstances, which a household may face, that places that household in some degree of housing need. This could be alleviated by re-housing.
- 22 As a means of identifying applicants in greatest housing need the Association will prioritise applications in accordance with a Points System. This system allows points to be awarded for degrees of housing need.
- 23 Points will be awarded in recognition of the following elements of housing need:-

a) Homeless Persons

It is recognised that there are a number of definitions and degrees of homelessness, with some situations being regarded as more serious than others, which, therefore, place that household in greater housing need. As such, points will be awarded to each category of homelessness according to the level and severity of the housing need.

The categories of homelessness for which points will be awarded are:-

- (i) Statutory Homeless– i.e. applicant has registered and has been accepted as being homeless with the local authority and is in a priority category for re-housing; or
- (ii) Statutory Homeless - i.e. applicant has registered, and has been accepted, as being homeless with the local authority but is not classed as being a priority for re-housing; or

Applicants will be required to provide evidence of their homeless application with the local authority.

The Local Authority still has the legal duty to assess homeless applications and to provide or otherwise obtain housing for statutory homeless people in priority housing need.

- (iii) No Fixed Abode - i.e. the applicant has short-term, temporary accommodation in a number of places; or

Applicants will be regarded as living with friends or relatives but will be advised to register as homeless with the appropriate Local Authority and advise the Association of the outcome of that application in order that they may be re-pointed accordingly

- (iv) Hostel, Homeless Units or Bed and Breakfast Accommodation - applicants that have been placed in temporary accommodation such as hostels and bed & breakfast units will be regarded as Statutory Homeless; or

- (v) People in Imminent Danger:- i.e. the applicant or a member of their household runs the risk of violence if they remain living in their present accommodation. This risk may arise out of ongoing harassment, domestic abuse or sexual abuse and will be at a level where the applicant can no longer continue to reside safely in their current accommodation but cannot be

assisted in a move by their present landlord.

Points under this category may also be awarded if the applicant and his/her household have moved into temporary accommodation but cannot return to their own home. Under such circumstances, the applicant would be assessed as still living in their original accommodation.

b) No Security of Tenure

- (i) Living with Friend and Relations:- i.e. on a permanent basis. Points will also be awarded under this category where the applicant is facing marriage or co-habitation breakdown but is still living in the 'marital' home.
- (ii) Tied Accommodation – when the applicant is required to vacate the property owing to the termination of tenancy, death, retiral etc they will be advised to register as homeless with the appropriate Local Authority and advise the Association of the outcome of that application in order that points may be awarded accordingly.
- (iii) Tenancy with Private Landlord – a copy of the tenancy agreement will be required.
- (iv) Lodger and Sub-Tenants – will be regarded as being in the same degree of housing need as tenants of a private landlord.
- (v) Personnel Leaving HM Forces – applicants will be advised to register with the appropriate Local Authority and advise the Association of the outcome of that application in order that points may be awarded accordingly.
- (vi) Patients living in Long Term Hospital Care – letter of support may be required from the hospital or social work department.
- (vii) Living in Caravan or Mobile Home – when the applicant does not own the caravan/mobile home but rents it from another party.
- (viii) Young People in Local Authority Care.
- (ix) Living with partner facing breakdown in relationship - applicants will be regarded as a separate household living 'care of' and will be pointed accordingly.
- (x) Leaving Parental Home for the First Time – this is in recognition that this group of applicants have, historically, been at a dis-advantage in the allocations procedures.

c) Home Owners

- (i) Applications from home owners will be pointed in accordance with the Allocation Policy on a housing need basis.
- (ii) There is no requirement for an applicant to sell their home although they must occupy any tenancy given by the Association as their only principal home.
- (iii) If and when an application has been submitted to purchase a property through the Right to Buy a transfers application for re-housing will be suspended until Right to Buy process concluded.

d) Overcrowding

The degree of overcrowding being experienced by an applicant's household will be assessed according to the number of bedrooms exclusively available to that household within its present accommodation.

- (i) Points will be awarded for each bedroom required to adequately accommodate that household in accordance with the following criteria:

- 1 bedroom for the applicant/applicant and partner
- 1 bedroom for every two children of the same sex under the age 16
- 1 bedroom for every 2 children of different sexes under the age of 10
- 1 bedroom for every household member over the age of 16

The number of points awarded will be calculated on the basis of the number of bedrooms available within the present accommodation compared to the number of bedrooms required.

Only the applicant's household's needs will be considered in assessing overcrowding.

e) Under occupancy

Points will be awarded for each bedroom within the property that is surplus to requirements to adequately accommodate the applicant's household on accordance with the above criteria.

The number of points awarded will be calculated on the basis of the number of bedrooms within the present accommodation compared to the number of bedrooms required.

f) Sharing Amenities

Points will be awarded to applicants that are assessed as having to share a living room, bathroom/wc and/or kitchen with another, independent, household living within the same accommodation. However, the points awarded for most categories where this is applicable (e.g. living care of friends/relatives, living with partner facing breakdown in relationship etc) reflect these circumstances and, therefore, points for sharing amenities will only be awarded as a separate category in circumstances not covered under the normal pointing system.

g) Lack of Amenities or Below Tolerable Standards

Accommodation will be classed as lacking in basic amenities if the property has:

- A WC outwith the accommodation but within the building
- A WC outwith the actual building
- No WC
- No Bath/Shower
- No running water

- (i) A property will be regarded as being Below Tolerable Standards if it has:

Severe Structural Defects that affect the applicant's ability to remain staying in the house.

Structural Defects that represent a danger to the inhabitants.

h) Family or Community Support

The Association understands that there are a number of reasons why people may require or seek practical care and support from family, friends and/or community services and that, for many, easy access to these is an essential part of their housing requirements.

- (i) Consideration will be given to awarding points to applicants who can show that the distance and/or travelling difficulties between their current place of residence and the source of the care and support, make it unreasonable for them to receive the level of care and support required. Conversely, consideration will be given to applicants who wish a move in order to provide these services to a friend or family member. Points will also be considered where the applicant can demonstrate that a move to a property within the Association area of operation would improve current medical, social and/or family difficulties, e.g.:

Assistance with Household Duties  
Assistance with Personal Care  
Regular Childcare  
Special Needs Services

- (ii) To reflect the varying types and levels of care and support that can be given, there will be 3 categories of points that can be awarded:

INTENSIVE LEVELS OF SUPPORT e.g.  
daily visits to assist with personal care  
special needs schooling or care

MEDIUM LEVELS OF SUPPORT e.g.  
daily childminding  
regular respite care

LOW LEVELS OF SUPPORT e.g.  
assistance with household duties  
regular childminding

This is not an exhaustive list but is intended to guidelines as to the situations that will be considered under each category.

j) Travel to Work

Points will awarded to applications where a member of the applicant's household works within the Association's area of operations and it can be shown that the distance and/or travelling difficulties between their current place of residence and their place of work is causing undue hardship.

k) Harassment

Should not be confused with neighbourhood problems, general nuisance, vandalism or disputes. It is ongoing harassment, which may be verbal or physical, and which is aimed at a specific person or household purely on the basis of a personal factor such as the nationality, health problem or disability of that person or household.

Points will be awarded under this category where the applicant can demonstrate that their quality of life and/or their ability to peacefully and comfortably reside in the house, is being seriously affected because of harassment of themselves or a member of their household.

Harassment points will not be awarded for general problems being experienced with the neighbourhood such as drug dealing, vandalism, etc.

l) Domestic Abuse

The Association believes that everyone should be able to live in their own home free from fear and abuse. Applicants that can demonstrate that their quality of life and/or their ability to live peacefully within their own home is being seriously affected because of domestic abuse (whether verbal or emotional) will be considered for points under this category. Where the abuse is of a physical nature, the applicant will be regarded as being in Imminent Danger.

m) Medical and Health Needs

Having a medical or health condition does not automatically mean that medical points will be awarded. Points will only be given under this category where:

(i) applicants can demonstrate that they, or a member of their household, has a medical or health condition that is being exacerbated or adversely affected by their current accommodation and/or the applicant's current housing is incompatible with their medical condition

**AND**

(ii) the Association is satisfied that rehousing will either ease the medical condition or will help improve the person's quality of life.

Points will **NOT** be awarded for:

(iii) Stress, anxiety or depression unless the sufferer is receiving ongoing and long-term assistance from psychiatric services and it can clearly be demonstrated that their current housing is aggravating the problem.

(iv) the health or medical condition is being exacerbated by environmental factors (such as general neighbourhood problems or neighbour disputes) unless the applicant's existing landlord supports the application and explains why they are unable to remedy the problem or move the applicant within their own stock.

(v) the category and number of medical points awarded will be dependent on the severity of the health or medical problems being experienced within the house and the extent to which rehousing would alleviate the problems or improve the sufferer's quality of life.

The three categories of medical points are:

(vi) High

Points will be awarded where it is demonstrated that the current accommodation is:

- greatly exacerbating the medical condition or health problem
- severely restricting the person's access to essential facilities within the property
- rendering the person housebound
- severely restricting the person's daily activities
- the present accommodation is totally incompatible with the person's physical disabilities

High medical points will only be awarded where there is clearly an urgent need for re-housing in order to improve the sufferer's quality of life and/or improve the medical condition.

(vii) Medium

Points will be awarded where it is shown that the current accommodation is:

- aggravating the medical condition or health problem
- restricting the applicant's mobility within the property
- making it difficult for the sufferer to enter and leave the property independently

(viii) Low

Low medical points will be awarded to applicants that demonstrate that their current accommodation is:

- having a detrimental effect on a recognised and proven medical condition or health problem
- making it difficult for the sufferer to move freely about the house
- causing the person mental and/or emotional problems to such a degree that continued and long-term assistance is required from psychiatric service

This is not an exhaustive list of the medical conditions that will be considered under each category and is intended to give guidance only.

n) Assessing Applications for Medical Points

- (i) The Association aims to ensure that all applications for medical points are assessed in a fair and consistent manner and requires to have all relevant information made available to enable assessment
- (ii) Applicants wishing to have a medical condition considered are, therefore, required to complete a comprehensive medical self-assessment form. The form will ask for verification of the health problem and an explanation of how the current accommodation is adversely affecting the sufferer.

A health professional familiar with the applicant's case will be consulted

- (iii) where necessary for verification purposes and/or for further relevant information.
- (iv) The assessment and the category of points awarded will be based on 2 criteria i.e. the severity of the problems being experienced within the current accommodation and the extent to which re-housing would alleviate these problems. Consideration will also be given to the type and floor level of accommodation required and, where appropriate, the applicant will be placed on the list for amenity/medically adapted housing which restricts offers to ground or first floor housing.

o) Exceptional Circumstances

Points may be awarded under this category in very exceptional circumstances where the Association accepts that re-housing is the only means of resolving a problem, which is not otherwise taken account of in any of the other points categories.

e.g. The applicant has been a victim of serious crime within the house applicant is experiencing a significantly greater degree of nuisance than other residents in the area.

Where applicable, awarding of these points will only be considered once corroborative evidence has been provided by the applicant. This would include incident reports from the police, the applicant's existing landlord and other statutory and/or voluntary organisations such as Victim Support.

The Housing Manager may award these points and report the circumstances to the Operations Sub Committee.

### **Size of Accommodation**

- 24 When assessing the size of accommodation required to adequately house an applicant and their household the following criteria will be used:
  - 1 Bedroom for applicant
  - 1 Bedroom for applicant and partner
  - 1 Bedroom for every two children of the same sex under the age of 16
  - 1 Bedroom for every two children of different sexes under the age of 10
  - 1 bedroom for every household member over the age of 16
- 25 Only the permanent members of the applicants household and those that will be using the accommodation as their principal home e.g. those in the armed forces, will be taken into consideration in determining the size of property the applicant will be placed on the waiting list for.
- 26 **Single persons will only qualify for a 2 apartment house, regardless of the size of accommodation they currently reside in.**
- 27 Couples will share a bedroom unless a medical certificate is submitted showing that there is a medical condition that requires each to have a separate room. Similarly, a medical certificate will be required for any child under the age of 16 for same sex and 10 for different sex that requires a separate bedroom due to a medical condition.

- 28 Where the applicant and a member of their household is pregnant, the baby will be taken as part of the household from 20 weeks from expected date of delivery (proof of expected delivery date will be required). From this date, the baby will also be taken into consideration in assessing any overcrowding in the present accommodation.
- 29 Applicants may be asked to provide evidence (e.g. from a legal source or family mediation service) of overnight access to children that do not currently or permanently live with them or can provide evidence of an application for overnight access will be viewed as requiring one more bedroom, regardless of the number of children involved. Access must be for a minimum of one night per week.
- 30 Where an applicant can provide official evidence that they have been accepted to provide fostering services, the household will be reviewed as requiring one more bedroom.

### **Sensitive Lettings**

- 31 Cassiltoun Housing Association has the discretion to let properties outwith this policy to alleviate social or financial hardship e.g. as a result of Welfare Reform moving a single person from a 5 apartment property to a 3 apartment property to alleviate the spare room subsidy. In addition consideration should be given to the following;

Matching people to appropriate properties (e.g. to meet physical mobility needs).

Housing people in appropriate locations (e.g. the particular need to try to house older people or people with young children near transport links wherever possible).

Potential clashes of lifestyles: these can be difficult to overcome and each set of circumstances should be treated individually without generalisations (e.g. some older people like to live near young people ; one example might be trying where possible to avoid housing someone with a past record of playing loud music in a property known to have poor sound insulation.

Avoid over concentrations of one particular household type or housing need type in one area, estate, street or close ( e.g. avoiding high levels of child density or an unduly high proportion of vulnerable single people).

### **Factors not to be taken into consideration in allocation of housing**

- 32 Section 20 (2) of the 1987 Act (as amended by section 10(3) of the 2001 Act) details those factors which Cassiltoun Housing Association will not take into account in the allocation of houses held by them for housing purposes.
- 33 The factors that will not be taken account of are: -
  - (i) The length of time for which an applicant has resided in its area.
  - (ii) Any outstanding liability (such as rent arrears) attributable to a house of which the applicant was not the tenant;
  - (iii) Any rent or other arrears accrued by the applicant on a previous tenancy which are no longer outstanding.

- (iv) Because of non-housing debts; or  
 if they have had arrears of rent or service charges which have since been paid or;  
 where the rent or service charges arrears amount to no more than a month's charges,  
 (to avoid penalising applicants for purely technical arrears) or;  
 where the applicant has come to an arrangement for paying arrears.
- (v) where the age of the applicant provided that the applicant is 16 years of age or over  
 except in the allocation of (a) houses which have been designed or substantially  
 adapted for occupation by persons of a particular age group; (b) houses to persons  
 who are nor are to be in receipt of housing support services (within the meaning of  
 Section 91 of the 2001 Act for persons of a particular age group).  
  
 These exceptions are brought un under section 20 (2A) of the 1987 Act as inserted by  
 Section 10(4) of the 2001 Act. They reflect that whilst age should not be a barrier to  
 getting houses, in some cases, certain housing will be particularly or only suitable for  
 certain age groups, e.g. sheltered housing for older people and, supported housing,  
 such as foyers, for young people.
- (vi) the income of the applicant and his family.  
  
 Income in this context refers to any source of income including benefits.
- (vii) whether or to what value the applicant or any of the applicant's family owns or has  
 owned (or any of them own or have owned) heritable or moveable property.

### **Lettings Plan**

- 34 The Association have agreements with Glasgow City Council and, in accordance with the  
 agreement will offer at least 25% of lets to the Council for nomination.
- 35 The Association will accept referrals from agencies  
  
 Where a void property has been adapted for special needs housing the Association will  
 seek referrals from support providers. An allocation will only be offered where a suitable  
 support package is approved and funded.
- 36 The Association is a member of HOMESWAPPER (the Housing Organisation Mobility and  
 Exchange Service).
- 37 There is a provision to meet the aspirational needs of current tenants which may fall outwith  
 the points system. This Policy allows for the accommodation of current tenants with no  
 housing need.

These transfers will not be refused providing that;

there is more than one tenant interested in an aspirational move, the applicant who has  
 been on the list longest will be preferred;

there are no rent arrears of 1 month or more and the dwelling is in good order as certified  
 by the Housing Officer.

- 38 In recognition of the Associations commitment to its existing tenants, internal transfer applicants with an element of housing need will generally be considered for suitable housing which becomes available within the Associations stock. The degree of housing need will be assessed in line with the Allocation Policy and will be placed on a separate list from the general waiting list.

### **General Waiting List**

- 39 Each factor, or degree of need is reflected by a numerical points total. Applications will be held in point order, allocations will normally be made to the applicant with the greatest number of points in order to achieve the above targets.

Where applicants have the same points total, all or any of the following criteria will be used to decide who will be offered the property. No account will be taken of the applicants time on the waiting list.

- (i) length of time applicant has been in known in housing need
- (ii) the overall space standards in relation to the applicants household
- (iii) the most efficient use of stock
- (iv) other possible housing options open to the applicant
- (v) the stated requirements or preferences of the applicant

### **Mutual Exchanges**

- 40 Any tenant of the Association can mutually exchange with tenants from:

- (i) Scottish Homes Landlord Division
- (ii) District Councils
- (iii) Registered Social Landlords
- (iv) New Towns

Subject to the prior consent of the Association. Requests for a mutual exchange will be carried out in line with this policy.

The mutual exchange will not normally be granted in the following circumstances:

- (i) one of the properties is adapted for special needs and one of the proposed tenants household does not have a need for a property with these facilities
- (ii) to any tenant who is in rent arrears of more than one months rent
- (iii) to anyone with outstanding repair work due to tenant damage or neglect
- (iv) when overcrowding of property as defined by the Association would result from or be exacerbated by the exchange
- (v) when, in the Association's opinion, the property does not match the needs of the incoming household, for example, the household is deemed to require ground floor accommodation on medical grounds, but is seeking an exchange to a 1 up property with internal stairs.

## **Residency**

- 41 In allocating houses held by them for housing purposes, Cassiltoun Housing Association shall take no account of whether an applicant is resident in their area if the applicant:
- (i) is employed or offered employment in the area;
  - (ii) wishes to move to the area to seek employment;
  - (iii) wishes to move into the area to be near a relative or carer;
  - (iv) has special social or medical reasons for requiring to be housed within the area;
  - (v) wishes to move into the area because of harassment or runs the risk of domestic violence and wishes to move to the area to escape from these problems

The rationale behind these categories is to remove obstacles within the social sector to the mobility of households between areas where applicants need to move for employment, social or medical reasons or because it has become untenable for them, because of the behaviour of others, to remain in their area.

## **Other Factors**

- 42 Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited will not impose a requirement that an application must have remained in force for a minimum period; or that a divorce or judicial separation be obtained; or that the applicant no longer be living with, or in the same house as, some other person, before the applicant is eligible for the allocation of housing.

## **Local Connection**

- 43 Applicants for housing should not be debarred because they have no local connection with an area, although clearly local connection might be a factor in determining priority. Local connection is a more significant factor in determining which authority has a duty towards homeless applicants.

## **Asylum Seekers**

- 44 The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (which has applied to all applicants for asylum since April 2000) prevents Local Authorities from allocating a house to a person "subject to immigration control". In practice, housing for asylum seekers is arranged centrally by the National Asylum Support Service who enter into contracts with housing providers. If asylum seekers are granted leave to remain, they become eligible for both local authority and RSL tenancies.

However, there is no barrier to asylum seekers being accepted on to Cassiltoun Housing Association waiting list, with an automatic suspension until their rights to a tenancy are clear.

## **Sex Offenders**

- 45 Cassiltoun Housing Association recognises that an applicant should not be excluded from housing simply because he or she is a convicted sex offender.

“Homeless and highly mobile offenders are very hard to monitor or supervise effectively. They therefore pose a greater risk, and the provision of stable accommodation will assist in minimising the rise of offences”. (A commitment to protect – Scottish Office 1997).

The Association understands that if sex offenders are released into local communities then local authority housing departments and house Association must work with other agencies to maximise the safety of the community and minimise any risk. However, given the complex issues involved in rehousing sex offenders, it is of the utmost importance that a strategy for managing the risk from sex offenders is developed with Social Work Department, Police, Prison Services etc.

The Association will participate in any risk assessment but the overall responsibility would lie with the Police and Social Work Department. As part of their assessment, agencies would carry out an “environmental scan”. The use of technique helps to identify what issues would be a potential risk to the community. Local housing and surrounding environment is a major consideration, issues such as vulnerable children and adults, location of schools and parks etc. are all investigated prior to an area being considered appropriate for re-housing sex offenders.

## **Action for Landlords**

- 46 Cassiltoun Housing Association will review this policy in relation to allocation of housing, waiting lists and application forms at least every three years. However, the Operations Sub Committee may refer elements of the Policy to the Board Of Management within that timescale if required. They will also ensure that housing staff and elected Board members receive appropriate training in the statutory provisions and in the exercise of discretion over those areas such as "reasonable preference" and "unsatisfactory housing conditions" which do not have a statutory definition but decisions on which require to be open and accountable and able to withstand any judicial challenge.
- 47 In relation to persons entitled to move into an area for employment, medical or social reasons or by virtue of harassment or risk of domestic abuse, Cassiltoun Housing Association Limited will check the validity of the reason for the move, such as employment offers, medical certificates, references from a previous landlord, confirmation from a Family Practitioner, Social Worker, Police. In any event, seeking confirmation will be carried out in a sensitive manner.
- 48 In all cases, a declaration from the tenant on the application form will be sought which, if false or misleading could lead to a Notice of Proceedings for possession.

## **Provision of Information**

- 49 It is the responsibility of every individual applicant to provide all the information necessary to assess their application and, where applicable, to provide any supporting evidence required. Any cost incurred in obtaining this evidence will be the applicant's responsibility.
- 50 Where the applicant cannot or will not provide corroborating evidence, the Association has the right to either disregard the information in the assessment of the application or to suspend the application.

- 51 It is also the responsibility of individual applicants to ensure that the information provided in the application form is a true and accurate record of their housing circumstances.

Every applicant is required to sign a statement contained in the application form stating that the information provided is a true and accurate record of their current housing circumstances. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the Association is immediately informed of any changes in their circumstances that may be relative to their application or have a bearing on any offer of re-housing.

### **Factors Considered In Making Allocation**

- 52 In recognition of the Association's commitment to housing those in most housing need, a property will, generally, be offered to the person on the relevant list that has the most points.
- 53 However, one of the stated objectives of the Allocations Policy is to assist in building and maintaining balanced, stable communities and seeks to avoid an excessive number of vulnerable households in one area or a concentration of age range and/or lifestyles in one site. At the same time consideration must also be given to potential problems caused by possible clash of lifestyles, the most obvious example being the allocation of a house to a young family in a block where, historically, there is a large proportion of elderly households.
- 54 As such, the Association is required to consider the needs of the existing tenants in an area as well as the needs of the local community before making a specific allocation to an applicant.
- 55 The Association, therefore, must be able to exercise an element of flexibility and use of discretion when making individual allocations. Where it is felt to be inappropriate, inadvisable or against the greater good of the immediate community or the applicant, the Association retains the right to bypass the applicant(s) at the top of the waiting list for a particular property. The applicant(s) bypassed will remain at the top of the waiting list and will be considered for the next suitably sized house that becomes available.

### **Applicants with Particular Needs**

- 56 As the Association operates an open waiting list, individuals with special needs such as support needs, physical disabilities etc may apply directly to the Association for re-housing. Where appropriate, the Association will seek the applicant's permission to contact relevant support and/or specialist agencies for advice on meeting an individual applicant's housing needs.
- 57 Where adaptations are required to a property to meet an individual's needs, the Association's ability to offer suitable re-housing may be dependent on the availability of funding.

### **Confirmation of Information & Checks Made**

- 58 Normally the applicants current place of residence will be taken as the address their mail is sent to and/or from which they claim benefits.
- 59 Before an offer of re-housing is made, a staff member from the Association may, where practical, carry out a home visit to confirm that the applicant's housing circumstances remain unchanged. A reference may also be requested from the applicant's current or any previous landlord regarding, in particular, the conduct of the tenancy and the rent account.

- 60 In very exceptional circumstances where serious anti-social or criminal activity by the applicant (or a member of the household to be re-housed) is made known to the Association police reports may also be requested and considered.

### **Suspending or Excluding Applications**

- 61 Although Association will treat and assess all applications on their individual merit, there are certain standards and basic expectations that applicant are expected to adhere to when applying to the Association for housing. These relate to the information provided in the application form, the applicant's conduct when dealing with Association staff and their conduct in previous tenancies or places of residence.
- 62 Where any of the stated circumstances apply, the Association may, as appropriate:
- Suspend, indefinitely, an application and remove the applicant from the waiting list
  - Suspend the applicant from re-applying for a stated period of time
  - Withdraw any offer of re-housing made
- 63 Where an offer of re-housing has already been made or a tenancy awarded, the Association raise repossession action for recovery of the property to be instigated.

### **Grounds for suspending an Application**

- 64 There may be a variety of circumstances under which it may be deemed appropriate to either suspend or exclude an application for housing. Applications will only be suspended or excluded after a full assessment has been carried out.

Exclusion from the waiting list is likely only to happened in very specific circumstances. They include

- (i) the applicant requests removal of their application from the waiting list
- (ii) the death of the applicant
- (iii) failure of the applicant to respond to annual review of the waiting list (after appropriate procedures have been followed).

### **False or Misleading Information**

- 65 Applicants found to have deliberately provided false or misleading information on their application form OR have deliberately withheld information relevant to their application where the information given has deliberately sought to gain advantage (over other applicants in housing need) will have their application suspended.

Under normal circumstances, a new application will not be accepted from that applicant for period of six months.

Where an offer of re-housing has been made or a tenancy awarded on the basis of false or misleading information the Association may withdraw the offer or take legal action to recover the property.

### **Lack of Corroborative Evidence**

- 66 An application may be re-assessed if the applicant cannot or will not provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the Association of the validity of the information provided in the application form.

The applicant may submit a new application at any time but will be subject to the same requirements for providing supporting evidence.

### **Unsatisfactory Tenancy Report**

- 67 A history of serious breaches of tenancy conditions will not automatically mean an applicant will not be offered re-housing by the Association and each case will be considered on its own merit.

However an offer of re-housing will not normally be made to applicants who have a history of failing to observe and adhere to conditions of their tenancy, including:

- Non-payment of rent or other monies lawfully due which has accrued substantial arrears, unless the applicant clearly demonstrates a commitment to clearing the arrears
- Severe anti-social behaviour by the applicant or anyone to be re-housed with the applicant which has been confirmed by an official source (police reports may also be requested as evidence)
- Illegal or immoral use of a property by the applicant or anyone to be re-housed with the applicant which has lead to a prison sentence
- Previous evictions for breaches of tenancy conditions by a landlord

- 68 The above is not intended to be exhaustive and each application will be considered individually taking all circumstances into consideration.

Suspension of an application is again only likely to happen in specific circumstances. Where an application is suspended, the applicant will be advised of the reasons for doing so.

### **Failure to Respond to Communication from the Association**

- 69 An application will immediately be removed from the waiting list if mail sent by the Association to the address given on the application form is returned.

Applications may also be removed if the applicant fails to respond to at least two separate written pieces of communication within a period of 4 weeks.

### **Aggressive Applicants**

- 70 Any applicant who has used violence or threatening behaviour towards Association staff, whether in the housing office or in the estate where the Association have houses, to a level which has lead to the applicant being charged will be suspended for a period of 6 months.

### **Review of Waiting Lists**

- 71 The Association will carry out a review of the waiting list at least once a year. As part of the review applicants will be required to confirm, in writing, that:

- They wish to remain on the waiting list and to be considered for re-housing by the Association.
- The information provided in the application form remains a true record of their current housing circumstances.

- 72 Applicants that initially do not return the review form by the stated date will be sent a reminder before being removed from the waiting list. Review forms sent to the address given on the application form that are returned by the Post Office will result in that applicants details being removed from the waiting list and the application cancelled. Applicants removed from the list, as part of the review will be entitled to re-apply to the Association at any time.
- 73 Where the applicant has had a change of circumstances, address etc, they will be invited to re-apply to the Association and their new housing circumstances assessed in line with the Allocations Policy.

### **Properties Offered**

- 74 The Association accepts that applicants may have legitimate reasons for not wishing to live in certain areas and should be allowed an element of choice in where they reside.
- 75 Applicants will, therefore, be allowed to specify general geographical areas in which they do not wish to be considered for re-housing. Applicants can specify a preference for ground or upper floor flatted accommodation,
- 76 Full details of the Association housing stock is available in the Association office at 59 Machrie Road, Castlemilk. GLASGOW. G45 0AZ or on the Association's web site at [www.cassiltoun.org.uk](http://www.cassiltoun.org.uk).

### **Viewing Property**

- 77 Applicants will normally have up to 3 working days from the date of the letter of offer to view the property. An applicant may be allowed to extend this period of time in very exceptional circumstances such as holidays and work commitments.

### **Acceptance of Offers**

- 78 After viewing of the property being offered, applicants will have a maximum of 2 working days to accept or refuse the offer. An extension to this may be granted in exceptional circumstances at the Association's discretion. Failure to advise the Association of a decision within the two days (or agreed timescale) will, normally, result in the offer being withdrawn and the property being offered to another applicant.

### **Date of Entry**

- 79 The date of entry will normally be no more than 1 week from the date of formal acceptance of the offer. The keys for the property will not normally be handed over until that date of entry.

### **Timescales for Assessing Applications**

- 80 Receipt of all application forms received at the office will be acknowledged within 2 working days.

The Association will endeavour to carry out an initial assessment of the application and advise the applicant of the outcome, in writing, within 10 working days.

## **The Right of Appeal**

- 81 All applicants have the right to appeal any decision, including suspensions, made by the Association regarding their application and will be advised of this right in writing where applicable. Applicants may also make a complaint if they feel aggrieved at the treatment they have received from staff during the allocations process.
- 82 Appeals and complaints must be in writing and will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Complaints Procedures. In line with these procedures, applicants have the right to have their appeal or complaint referred to the Association's Area Housing Managers.
- 83 A copy of the Association's Complaints Policy and Procedures is available from the office on request or on the Association's web site.
- 84 After following the above procedures, the applicant still disagrees with the decision, the applicant may appeal to the, **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**.

## **Information & Advice**

- 85 Information on the Association's Allocation Policy and Procedures will be made available to advise and assist applicants with their application.
- 86 A copy of the complete policy will be made available on request and, where necessary, will be made available on tape or in braille or will be translated into other languages as required.

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

- 87 The practical implementation of the policy and the day-to-day operation of the allocations procedures will undertaken by members of the Association's Operations staff. The Operations Team are generic therefore the assessment of applications and the allocation of void properties will be the responsibility of the Operations Team under the supervision of the Area Managers. .
- 88 All applications assessed will be countersigned by another member of the housing services team.
- 89 Any special cases or need to deviate from the policy will be reported to the Operations Sub Committee after the decision by the Director of Operations.

## **Processing Information – Data Protection**

- 90 Cassiltoun Housing Association will process information and data contained within the Housing Applications in accordance with its Policies and Procedures relating to Data Protection.
- 91 All Staff members will be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the Data Protection Act and be trained in the process that the Association has introduced to ensure compliance with the Act.

## **Monitoring of Applications and Allocations**

92 In order to ensure that the aims and objectives stated in the Allocations Policy are being achieved, data on the allocations process and outcomes will be collated and monitored annually. Reports on the information collated will be provided to the Operations Sub Committee as agreed by members.

Factors that will be routinely monitored will include:

- Age Group
- Equal Opportunities
- Sources of applications (e.g. nominations, referrals, general public etc)
- Number of applications received
- Number of applicants suspended from waiting list and reasons for suspension
- Source of allocation (e.g. waiting list, internal transfer, nomination etc)
- Housing Need
- Family complement
- Previous location
- Size of accommodation
- Waiting time

93 In addition the Operations Sub Committee will review the outcomes of this Policy on an annual basis to ensure accountability and the objectives of the policy are being met. The Association will regularly “benchmark” its performance against its peer groups. Cassiltoun Housing Association will keep a record of all allocations made and such information will be made available to the Associations internal auditor and the Housing Regulator. The Associations auditor will periodically carry out audits of allocations made and “housing need” points awarded to test for compliance with this policy.

## **Risk Assessment**

94 The Allocations Policy aims to control the following risks to the Association:

- Properties being let in an arbitrary manner.
- The Association acting illegally and not meeting good practice guidance in the allocation of houses.
- The financial security of the Association being compromised by high void periods and the corresponding loss of rental income.

## **Audit Trail**

95 It is important that Cassiltoun Housing Association clearly records how particular allocation decisions are arrived at so that it can demonstrate objective fairness in the operation of its policy.

All applications considered for any property will be pointed in line with the policy and house visits carried out by the Association. Information collated will be recorded on House Visit Forms and discussed with the Area Housing Manager. Allocation decisions will be taken by the Area Team where Application Assessment Sheets will be signed and witnessed. In the absence of the Area Housing Manager the Housing Officer will fulfil this role.

## **Common Housing Register**

96 Cassiltoun Housing Association will participate in administrating a Common Housing Register upon one being established to include the community controlled RSL's which

operate in Castlemilk.

### **Deviation From This Policy**

- 97 The Operations Sub Committee of Cassiltoun Housing Association may approve a deviation from this policy if there are compelling circumstances to support such action. In the vent of such, the circumstances and decision shall be recorded in the minute of the meeting at which the decision was made.

**POINTS ASSESSMENT**

Statutory Homeless and in Priority Need	50
Statutory Homeless	45
No Fixed Abode	30
Hostel, Homeless Units and B&B	45
People in Imminent Danger	50
Living with Friends and relations	30
Tied Accommodation	30
Tenancy with Private Landlord	20
Lodger and Sub-tenants	20
Personnel Leaving HM Forces	30
Patients Leaving long term hospital care	45
Living in Caravan or mobile home	30
Young People leaving Local Authority Care	50
Living with Partner facing breakdown in relationship	30
Leaving Parental home for first time	30
Overcrowded one bedroom	10
Every additional bedroom	15
Under occupancy 1 bedroom	10
Every additional bedroom	15
Sharing Amenities	30
Lack of Amenity	30
Below Tolerable Standard	30
Support – Intensive Level	15
Support – Medium Level	10
Support – Low Level	5
Travel To Work	5
Harassment	50
Domestic Abuse	50
Medical – High	40
Medical – Medium	30
Medical – Low	20
Exceptional Circumstances	30
Anyone applying for housing with CHA	5