



Allocations Policy

June 2017

Consultation Completed: No changes implemented. Full consultation will be carried out when comprehensive review carried out to reflect changes introduced by Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, anticipated in October 2018

Approved by the Board of Management: Not Required as no significant change

Review Date: June 2018



Section	Contents	Page
1.	Aims and Objectives of the Allocations Policy	3
2.	The Scottish Social Housing Regulator and The Scottish Social Housing Charter	4
3.	Access to the Housing List	4
4.	Housing List Management and Planning Targets	6
5.	Homelessness and Allocation of Housing	6
6.	Common Housing Registers	7
7.	Housing Assessment Categories and Associated Points	7
8.	Balanced and Sustainable Communities - Community Need	12
9.	Mutual Exchange Housing List	14
10.	Provisions for Children Access and Care Providers	15
11.	Offers of Tenancy	15
12.	Record Keeping and Data Protection	16
13.	Appeals of Decisions	16
14.	Complaints Procedure	16
15.	Accountability	17
16.	Staff and Committee Members	17
17.	Housing and Human Rights (Allocations)	17
18.	Reporting to Board of Management and Scottish Housing Regulator	17
19.	Policy Review	17
20.	<i>Summary Housing Needs Points Table</i>	<i>Appendix 1</i>

1 Aims and Objectives of the Allocation Policy

Queens Cross Housing Association is a community based housing provider with our area of operation being in the North West of Glasgow.

The Association operates in a multi-cultural area and aims to provide good quality rented accommodation to those in housing need. This is subject to the number, type and size of houses the Association has available for let at any given time. As a community based housing Association a degree of emphasis will be placed on meeting local housing needs and achieving balanced communities.

This allocation's policy has been developed to enable the Association to meet as far as possible the housing needs of individuals and families who wish to reside in the Queens Cross Housing Association area of operation, but who are for economic, social or physical reasons are least able to help themselves access other housing tenures. Where appropriate the Association will assist with the provisions of housing support to certain categories of applicants to support them in sustaining their tenancies with us. This support will be determined by an assessment of need. Elderly and/or vulnerable tenants may benefit from these services.

The Association has approximately 4,300 rented homes. Our housing is made up of a variety of property types including traditional tenement, multi-storey and new build housing.

Queens Cross Housing Association is committed to building balanced and sustainable communities. Balanced Communities are generally recognised as places where people enjoy living and enjoy peace and security, where inequalities are addressed and the diversity of the community is an asset. A major key component to achieving balanced communities is balance allocations of our social rented housing to include the varying needs of our community and our future tenants.

The Association will make best use of our available housing stock and use this allocations policy to assist in the creation and maintenance of the communities we serve.

The Association will offer all successful applicants a Scottish Secure Tenancy or a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy as appropriate as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

2. The Scottish Social Housing Regulator and The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Association has taken due consideration of the Scottish Governments “Scottish Social Housing Charter” and the expected outcomes and standards from that Charter in the development and implementation of this policy. The outcomes and standards that cover the remit of this policy area in particular are:-

Access to housing and support:

Charter Section 7, 8, 9 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.

Social landlords ensure that:

- people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

These **outcomes** cover landlords' duties to provide information to people looking for housing and advice for those at risk of becoming homeless. This could include providing housing 'health checks' for tenants and people on housing lists to help them review their options to move within the social housing sector or to another sector.

Charter Section 10, Access to social housing

Social landlords ensure that:

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

This outcome covers what social landlords can do to make it easy for people to apply for the widest choice of social housing that is available and suitable and that meets their needs. It includes actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others, for example through Common Housing Registers or mutual exchange schemes, or through local information and advice schemes.

3 Access to the Housing List

Persons 16 years of age or over can make an application for housing. Applicants should complete and submit a housing application form. Applications will be assessed and pointed in accordance with the Associations pointing system.

In all cases a housing options and advice interview will be carried out to assess an applicant's prospects of housing with the Association or to find some other housing solution. The Association encourage applicants to attend an interview with our housing staff to allow a full housing options and prospects assessment to take place. This will ensure the Association provide applicants with the best available housing advice which meets their particular needs. An applicant may however submit a housing application at any time and it will be assessed in accordance with this policy.

The Association aim to inform an applicant in writing within 14 days of the application being received as to whether they have or have not been accepted onto the housing list. This may take longer if the Association are waiting on further information to be provided by the applicant.

The Association will implement this policy with regard to the provisions within the Equality Act 2010. The Association will not unfairly discriminate against any individual, household or group on the grounds of the protected characteristics as defined in this Act; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

All applications will be dealt with fairly and without prejudice. Applicants can be assisted with the completion of an application form by attending the office for an interview. Where mobility is difficult a home visit can be arranged if within the Glasgow area, or an application can be posted if required. Other formats of this policy will be made available on request. Should an applicant require translation services to assist in making an application the Association will make these services available.

On receipt of an application the housing needs of each applicant will be assessed and the application will be entered onto our housing list determined by the number of points an application has been awarded in assessing the applicants housing need.

Housing points will generally be awarded to the undernoted categories:

- a) Overcrowding
- b) Under occupation
- c) Sharing amenities
- d) Lacking amenities
- e) Medical needs
- f) Social and care support needs
- g) Community need

Homelessness

The Association acknowledge its duty as a Registered Social Landlord to comply with a request from Glasgow City Council to accommodate a homeless person/family under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. In implementing any such request the Association will abide by the contents of the Homelessness Protocol arrangement established between Glasgow City Council and RSL's. Further details on our homelessness provisions within this policy can be found at Section **5. Homelessness and Allocation of Housing**

Restrictions to Access

Applicants may be unable to access the housing list or offered housing after their circumstances have been carefully assessed and one of the following circumstances are noted:

- a) If you, or a member of your household are, or have been, subject to action against you or your household members, for anti social behaviour, or criminal behaviours including drug offences.
- b) Applicants who provide false and misleading information will be refused access.
- c) Previous tenants of Queens Cross H A or another landlord who have been evicted for breach of tenancy or who absconded from their previous property could be refused access to the list.
- d) Queens Cross H A expects applicants to provide sufficient evidence to support their circumstances prior to an offer of housing.
- e) Applicants have intentionally worsened their own circumstances.
- f) The Association are satisfied that the information provided is not sufficient to fully assess the applicants housing and household circumstances.

The Association will carry out a review of a previous decision, which denies access to the housing list or the offer of housing if there are sufficient grounds to merit a review of the earlier decision.

Appeals on decisions or complaints about our services can be found at Section 13. Appeals of Decisions, and Section 14. Complaints Procedure.

4 Housing List Management and Planning Targets

The Association will allocate houses using our points system. It is designed to give priority to applicants in housing need. The Association may at times give priority to Queens Cross H.A. tenants and owner occupiers occupying a mixed tenure block who live in unimproved property and who require to be decanted to allow investment improvement work to be carried out. Should a tenant require a permanent move at this time the Association will consider such an application for transfer. The Association will endeavour to satisfy the changing housing needs of existing tenants to promote community sustainability and will release subsequent vacant properties for re-letting to housing list applicants.

The Association will allocate housing using a planning target system, which will consider the requirements of: Statutory and Non-Statutory Homelessness, Sheltered Housing funded provisions, Internal Transfers, Supported Projects, Clearance and Decant situations, and General Applicants. This planning target will be guided by an annual lettings plan and monitored by our Housing Allocations Module.

The Association will allocate properties to The Fire Station Homeless Project and other Queens Cross Supported Housing Projects on the basis of agreed funding contractual obligations and planning targets for the year and these allocations will be assessed on the housing and support needs of the applicants in partnership with Glasgow City Council Social Work Services.

5 Homelessness and Allocation of Housing

- a. The Association acknowledge its duty as a Registered Social Landlord to comply with a request from Glasgow City Council to accommodate a homeless person/family under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. In implementing any such request the Association will abide by the contents of the Homelessness Protocol arrangement established between Glasgow City Council and RSL's.
- b. Homeless and roofless applicants applying directly to Queens Cross Housing Association will be invited to make an application and advised on their ability to contact

Glasgow City Council Homeless Casework Team in order that an assessment within the terms of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 can be made in order for the homeless applicant to have the opportunity to access temporary accommodation should that be required and determined by Glasgow City Council.

- c. Applicants who have been assessed as being statutorily homeless (Section 5) who make a direct application to the Association and have not been referred to the Association through the Section 5 protocol arrangements will be assessed on the basis of this allocations policy like any other direct applicant. The casework team will be advised in order to assess whether a referral can be made. Applicants living in temporary furnished accommodation like hostels will be pointed as per the pointing schedule in this policy.
- d. The Association recognise that homelessness problems need to be tackled with more than bricks and mortar and as such have established links with many partnership agencies including; Women's Aid; Council for Housing Young People; Scottish Refugee Council; The Talbot Association' The Mungo Foundation; Quarriers Homes, Turning Point.

This partnership approach includes either agency referrals or establishing lease agreements with specialist management agencies for appropriate accommodation and housing support.

- e. The Association recognises that homeless young people are generally vulnerable as a result of their age and as such continue to provide supported accommodation for 16-25 year old homeless young people through the Fire Station Project and CHYP House.
- f. The Association will assist where, possible, with the lease of temporary accommodation to Glasgow City Council to assist with their provision of temporary accommodation for homeless persons. The Association will abide by the contents of the Temporary Accommodation Protocol and model lease agreement established between Glasgow City Council and RSL's.

The Association will abide by section 5(6) of the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act which requires RSL's to reply to reasonable requests for housing information.

6 Glasgow Housing Register

Queens Cross HA recognises that Section 8 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 encourages the development of Common Housing Registers.

The Association has been working in partnership with RSL's in the North West of the City to develop a Common Housing Register and a Pilot on using new automated application system started in May 2017. At present the Association has not committed itself to this pilot and will review the outcomes to determine future involvement in this programme.

7 Housing Assessment Categories and Associated Points

Temporary Accommodation or Hostel Type Accommodation

Applicants who currently live in temporary accommodation provided to alleviate their current homelessness, including hostel type and temporary furnished lets, will be awarded the following points:

- 24 Sharing points
- 10 points per bedroom required

Points for social and/or medical circumstances will be assessed within the provisions of the

social and medical section of this policy.

Lacking amenity points will not be considered for applicants living in this type of temporary accommodation.

Overcrowding

(Where a current tenant of Queens Cross or external applicant is currently in a 1 apartment property and applies for a transfer to a 2 apartment with no change in their circumstances, they will not qualify for overcrowding points).

For the purpose of this allocations policy a house is overcrowded when the number of persons sleeping in the house is such as to contravene the standards specified in Sections 136 (the room standard) and 137 (the space standard) in part V11 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

Overcrowding points will be awarded by Queens Cross Housing Association using the following criteria:

1. In addition to a **living room, bathroom and kitchen**, the number of apartments required by a household will be calculated on the basis of the number of rooms in their present accommodation and the number of rooms required.
 - 1 bedroom for each applicant and spouse, (this does not apply to those who are suitably housed in a 1 apt property and there is no other change in their circumstances)
 - 1 bedroom for each 2 children (under 10)
 - 1 bedroom for each 2 children (under 12) of the same sex
 - 1 bedroom for any remaining member of the household
2. The scale of overcrowding points is:

No. of apts in present housing	No. of apartments required					
	1	2	3	4	5	6+
0	10	20	30	40	50	60
1		10	20	30	40	50
2			10	20	30	40
3				10	20	30
4					10	20
5						10

Plus 10 points for each additional apartment required.

If applicants are not householders the number of rooms that they have exclusive use of will be considered

Applicants who are part of a family unit and who are living apart due to unavoidable circumstances will be allocated an additional **5 points**

Overcrowding and the Department of Works and Pensions Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax)

Variation in Age and Sex Criteria :

DWP: One Bedroom for 2 children (under 16) of the same sex.

QCHA: One Bedroom for 2 children (under 12) of the same sex.

The Association recognise that the property size criteria for a family to be suitably housed as determined by the Associations Allocations Policy and the criteria required to be met for qualifying for housing benefits as defined by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) has variations which may have a direct impact on some of our tenants and future tenants whose household circumstances requires them to rely on housing benefit to support their rental payments.

The Association further recognise that good quality space standards for households supports all round family development including children's educational needs for private space to study and develop. In view of this, the Association may provide (when available housing stock permits) property size choices for new applicants and existing tenants requesting a house transfer. A degree of choice may be offered to applicants who are affected by the variations in the criteria of the DWP and the Associations Allocations policy. In practice this provision will allow an applicant to consider their own circumstances around family size and ability to pay. A household may be offered a property size which meets the Associations age and sex criteria where the applicant has the ability to maintain the requirements of this tenancy including the rental commitments, alternatively the Association may offer a property which meets the DWP age and sex requirements where a household finds this to be their preferred housing option permitting them to sustain the tenancy with the option of a future housing transfer to larger property when their family circumstances change.

Applicants who require this provision **MUST** state on their housing application the property size required in which they wish to be queued for. This will be the property size that will be selected should the applicant be made a housing offer. Should there be a change in circumstances and the applicant wishes to have their property size request changed, this should be notified to the Association as a change of circumstances.

In ALL circumstances, the housing applicants will be required to meet the full rent liability for the property they rent from the Association irrespective of any Welfare Benefit entitlement restrictions.

Under Occupation

1. Under occupation will be calculated on the basis of the number of rooms in the present accommodation and the number of rooms required.
2. The number of points awarded for each room surplus to requirements for non-Queens Cross H.A. tenants is **5 points**.
3. To encourage Queens Cross Housing Association tenants to release under occupied family houses for re-let, the number of points awarded for each room surplus to requirements is **15 points**.

Sharing Amenities

1. Sharing amenity points are awarded to applicants who do not have their own home and who share amenities with people other than their own household.
2. Sharing amenity points will be awarded as follows:

Living Room	5 points
Kitchen	5 points
Toilet	7 points
Bath/Shower	7 points

Lacking Amenities

1. Lacking amenity points are awarded to applicants who own or rent accommodation

that does not have the basic amenities. Points would not normally be awarded to tenants of RSL's and LA's as they have a responsibility to provide such amenities.

2. When an applicant indicates that they lack basic amenities, an inspection will be carried out and/or a report will be required from the Local Authority Land and Environmental Services to establish if the amenities are below the tolerable standard.
3. Lacking amenity points will be awarded as follows:

Living Room	10 points
Kitchen	10 points
Inside Toilet	10 points
Bath/Shower	10 points
Hot water supply	10 points

Medical Needs

Medical points are awarded where rehousing would be of benefit to relieve a severe medical problem. Medical points will be awarded using the following three categories:

Medical 'A' High Medical Priority – 30 points

Medical 'A' points will be awarded for applicants or members of their family with serious disabilities who could not, or could only with great difficulty enter or be mobile within their current house or building. Where the medical problem is not physical the award of medical 'A' will be awarded to applicants with a serious debilitating condition that requires a specific type of housing or amenity.

The points will be assessed on whether re-housing the applicant in more suitable housing, or adapted housing would provide a better quality of life, well-being, and enhance independent living.

Medical priority points may also be awarded to older applicants where re-housing in supported housing, such as sheltered housing, will enhance the well-being and independent living of the applicant or partner. Points will not be automatically given and will only be awarded after an assessment of their housing need.

Applicants awarded medical 'A' will generally be restricted to ground floor housing only, property with lift access, or a property where the amenity is more suitable for their medical condition.

Medical 'B' Medium Medical Priority – 20 points

Medical 'B' points will be awarded for applicants or members of their family where re-housing may assist the medical condition they have and may improve their health and well-being. Generally medium medical priority would be granted if their current housing situation has a worsening effect on their medical condition.

Medical 'C' Low Medical Priority – 10 points

Low medical priority points will be awarded to applicants who have a not too serious medical condition and where re-housing is unlikely to improve that medical condition but may help to improve overall well-being.

Accommodation types for Medical Applicants

Applicants awarded High or Medium medical points will generally be restricted to ground floor or 1 up properties depending on their needs. Where there is an accessible lift, these

properties will be considered. Applicants awarded Low medical points will be considered for most properties.

The award of medical points will be assessed on medical information provided to the association by the applicant or other agencies:

- A self certificate form supplied by the Association
- A medical certificate signed by a Doctor
- A Consultants Report
- Any other medical information deemed appropriate

Assessment of Medical Points

Housing Officers will carry out an assessment for medical points by completing the self-assessment form, and award points based on this or any of the above medical information. When the recommendations are for High Medical Priority points these should be made to the Neighbourhood Manager who should assess and authorise any award of High Medical Priority points.

Medical Assessment Forms must be completed for ALL applicants where medical points have been requested.

Housing Officers can also contact GP's, health workers, CPN or consultant if verification of a medical condition is required. This can be done by phone or letter and marked on the applicants file. Verbal confirmation can be accepted as long as staff member signs this off and updates the IT system.

(Note – If an applicant is awarded Medical Points based on an urgent need to move as remaining in their current accommodation may result in a serious threat to life and limb, mental stability, the stability of the family unit or result in the need for institutional care, but then refuses 2 reasonable offers of housing, then the Association can review whether Medical Points are merited based on the fact that 2 offers have been refused. Refusal, unless justified, may allow the Association to contest the claim from the applicant that there is a need for an urgent move due to Medical reasons).

Social and Care Support Needs

Social and Care Support needs points are awarded to applicants who have serious social or care needs and are only considered appropriate when other solutions to the problem are not available or not feasible.

The following categories of applicants will be considered for Social and Care Support needs points. Points may be considered for the Applicant or their household members where appropriate.

- Older and infirm people
- Homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Applicants with mental health problems
- Applicants with physical and/or learning difficulties
- Children and young adults with learning disability
- Young people
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Ex-offenders
- People with alcohol or drug related problems
- People who suffer from harassment including racial harassment
- People who are victims of crime
- Any other such circumstance which is deemed appropriate.

Social and Care Support points will be awarded after submission of evidence in support of the circumstances from an appropriate agency, e.g. Glasgow City Council Social Work, Police Health Services, Local Authority, Other Housing providers. Where no such supporting evidence is available an assessment will be based on the applicants circumstances described.

Social and Care Support needs points will be awarded using the following three categories:

Social and Care Support 'A' High Priority points – 30 Points

High Social and Care Support points will be awarded to applicants where suitable rehousing is felt essential and that if the applicant remains in their current housing situation it may result in a serious threat to life and limb, mental stability, the stability of the family unit or result in the need for institutional care.

Social and Care Support points may also be awarded to older applicants where re-housing in supported housing, such as sheltered housing, will enhance the well-being and independent living of the applicant or partner. Points will not be automatically given and will only be awarded after an assessment of their housing need.

Social and Care Support 'B' Medium Priority points – 20 Points

Medium Social and Care Support points will be awarded to applicants who have a need for re-housing from their current accommodation to improve their social well-being or improve their care needs where this is not possible from their current accommodation or location.

An award of 20 points will be made available to applicants where suitable rehousing is felt to be desirable, preferable or of benefit in resolving a problematic situation.

Social and Care Support 'C' Low Priority points – 10 Points

Low Social and Care Support points will be awarded where an applicant's current housing condition or well-being could be improved by re-housing either in a new location or nearer to care support, but are not in immediate risk to their well-being.

Assessment of Social and Care Points

Housing Officers will carry out an assessment for Social and Care points. When the recommendations is for High Priority Social and Care points these should be made to the Neighbourhood Manager who should assess and authorise any award of High Priority Social and Care points.

(NB When deciding on Social Points staff must ensure that they are not for the same reasons points have already been awarded, such as medical conditions, or overcrowding. Staff must detail the precise reasons for awarding Social Points and how they can alleviate a problematic housing situation. Staff will complete the Social Priority Award form outlining the reasons for awarding Social Points. The Social Points Award form must be used by staff for ALL cases where social points are being awarded).

8 Balanced and Sustainable Communities - Community Need

This is when the Association assess that a particular application for rehousing would benefit the community and/or the applicant. This may be, for example, to move closer to the workplace, move to more desirable accommodation within Queens Cross H A stock or move to improve quality of life. Community Need may be accessed in the following way:-

(i) General Internal Housing Transfers

Current tenant's circumstances may change and may require alternative size and/or type of housing. In these circumstances tenants may apply for a transfer from their current house to another Association property which best meets their needs. The tenant would apply for a transfer in the same way as applying for a house if they were not a tenant. Points will be awarded within the provisions of this policy.

In order to support current tenants, community regeneration and continue to develop stable, balanced and sustainable communities, the Association recognises that current tenants may only stay within the area if their housing need can be met and as such the Association will apply a quota within our allocations letting plans to allow for this stability in the community. This means that such housing transfer allocations of properties would be considered within this quota. The vacated property would be available to be let to other areas of the lettings plan.

Current tenants requesting an internal transfer must demonstrate that they can fulfil their current tenancy responsibilities of paying the rent and leaving the property in a lettable condition which meets the Associations acceptable standard advised after a house inspection has been carried out and guidance from staff on the condition expected. Tenants must demonstrate their ability and commitment to clear any outstanding rent arrears balances owed to the Association either by clearing any outstanding arrears balance or providing a realistic arrangement to repay with this arrangement having been in place for a minimum of six months.

Recognising the introduction of size criteria (Bedroom Tax) as a result of welfare reforms in 2012, the Association aim to assist current tenants affected by under occupation and the bedroom tax by making more properties available to the current internal transfer quota within our lettings plan where increased demands for moves within our housing stock are being experienced. These measures should ensure prevention of homelessness and reduce the need for tenants living in unaffordable accommodation.

In circumstances where current tenants are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the property size criteria (Bedroom Tax), the Association will give priority to households in accommodation which is greater than their household composition requirements. Such internal housing transfers will be managed through our Management Transfer provisions below.

(ii) Management Transfers

A management transfer is a facility which allows Queens Cross H A tenant's to be moved to another part of the area to escape a threat of violence or harassment or to satisfy a pressing housing need including financial hardship relating to the bedroom tax property size criteria.

Where a tenant or member of their household cannot reasonably remain in their present house because of a potential threat of physical or mental harassment, including hate crime and other harassment associated with the equality categories, then a Management transfer can be considered to allow the applicant to move away from the immediate threat to a suitable area where the Association has suitable accommodation.

Current Queens Cross tenants may be considered for a management transfer where they are experiencing financial hardship in their current property as a result of the House Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax) introduced by the DWP, in order to ensure that the occurrence of homelessness as a result of rent arrears can be avoided.

In all circumstances a Housing Application will be required to be completed and pointed within the provisions of this policy and all other eligible points should be considered for

example points awarded for the number of unused rooms.

This decision will be made by the Head of Housing subject to a full report being provided by the Associations Neighbourhood Managers.

Where a local move is not a suitable solution, the Association will support the tenant through the process of seeking more suitable accommodation elsewhere. **50 points**

(iii) **Tied Housing**

Tied housing points will be awarded to applicants who have to vacate tied accommodation due to ill health or retirement. A tied housing is one that is allocated as part of a contract of employment and where the condition of employment requires that the employee take up residence in the tied house.

Armed service personnel who have completed short terms of service (3 years) will not be awarded tied house points. Long-term service personnel will be awarded tied housing points on successful completion of their service (3 years+).

The number of points awarded to an applicant having to vacate a tied house is **30 points**.

(iv) **Rehousing Sex Offenders**

Suspected sex offenders may be subject to a risk assessment if there is a suspicion of offences. Risk assessments are carried out by the police and social work department and result in an action plan. It is not the role of the housing Association staff to assess risk.

The Association when possible will consider referrals for housing sex offenders from the local authority and other housing providers in accordance with the provisions within and agreed information sharing protocols and our duties to co-operate. Guidance will be sought from other agencies such as Police, social work department, and health departments, Glasgow City Council and Prison Services when considering any such referral and housing request.

The Association will aim to support where appropriate the National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) in Scotland, and acknowledge the Duty to Co-Operate Part 6 of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). The Association will consider all of its responsibilities when considering any interaction with NASSO.

9. Mutual Exchange Housing List

The Association holds a register of names and addresses of those people who have registered an interest in a mutual exchange. This register is available in the Association offices and on our web-site.

Applicants may add their name and details to the list for others to view and exchange information. Applications are available on our website for downloading or from one of our housing offices.

A mutual exchange is an option, which allows tenants to move house within the Association stock or to another area and landlord.

A mutual exchange may be permitted for any number of reasons. One reason may be that the Association are unable to assist a tenant to meet their new housing need because their circumstances do not qualify them to be considered through the Association's allocations policy.

A tenant must identify with another tenant and both parties must be in full agreement

with the proposed exchange before approaching the Association or any other Landlord for permission.

Tenants must first get the associations written permission if they wish to carry out a mutual exchange and are required to provide in writing the following:-

- The details of the proposed exchange including who you want to exchange with (and the other house involved); AND
- When you want the exchange to take place.

All mutual exchanges must be carried out at no expense to the Association; a house inspection will be carried out in both houses. Any repairs which are reported or changes to the fixtures and fittings will have to be completed by the tenants, prior to any move.

If there is a second landlord involved in the mutual exchange, e.g. another Housing Association or local authority, then they have their own policy and procedures which must be met before permission is granted. The second landlord has the right to refuse any exchanges as well as Queens Cross Housing Association.

The Association will only permit a mutual exchange if it is completely satisfied that any such move would not contravene the Associations Policies.

The Association will not unreasonably refuse permission for a mutual exchange of your house. The exchange must be with another house where the tenant is either a tenant of a local authority, a registered social landlord, a water authority or sewerage authority. The landlord of the other tenant does not need to be us but the landlord of the other tenant must also agree to the exchange. Reasonable grounds for refusing our permission include the following:-

- We have served a notice on you warning that we may seek eviction on certain grounds because of your conduct;
- We have obtained an order for your eviction;
- Your house was let to you because of your employment with us;
- Your house was designed or adapted for persons with special needs and if the exchange allowed, there would be no person living in the house who required those designs or adaptations;
- The other house is substantially larger than you and your family need or it is not suitable for the needs of you and your family;
- The proposed exchange would lead to overcrowding

These examples do not in any way alter our general right to refuse permission on reasonable grounds.

If you are married, or live in the house with a co-habitee, we will need their consent to any proposed changes in the tenancy.

10 Provisions for Children Access and Care Providers

The Association will consider requests from applicants for the allocation of a property with one extra bedroom to provide for the access arrangements for children whose parents live apart and overnight accommodation is required for the children. Most often this evidence would be a solicitor's letter.

The Association will consider requests for the allocation of a property with one extra bedroom to provide for a professional carer should that carer be required to stay overnight with the tenant in order for the tenant to sustain their tenancy. Most often this evidence would be from the medical profession or social services.

In all circumstances the Association will require supporting evidence for these arrangements in order to protect limited housing supply.

Such offers of property may be subject to the bedroom tax deductions and in all circumstances the tenant is eligible for the full rent liability.

11 Offers of Tenancy

Home visits will be carried out by two officers of the Association prior to any offer of tenancy being made. This visit will be used to verify application details, review any housing support requirements, discuss tenancy responsibilities like rent costs and update any relevant information required.

Queens Cross H A seeks the right to gain previous tenancy conduct reports from applicant's previous landlords including local authority and housing association landlords.

Those applicants who are successful will be given the maximum of two suitable offers relating to the information provided within their application. If the suitable offers are refused in the Associations view, on unreasonable grounds then the applicant's applications will be re-assessed on the accuracy of their housing needs. If a re-assessment is required then the applicant's application will not be considered for further offers until the outcome of this is completed. This re-assessment will take the form of a Housing Options interview and a review of the existing housing application information.

All offers of Housing must be signed off by a Neighbourhood Manager.

When a suitable property becomes available prospective tenants will be invited to jointly view any accommodation offered with a member of staff from the Association.

The Association will allocate property apartment sizes appropriate to the housing needs assessment of the applicant based on household composition. Only in exceptional circumstances where our available housing supply is greater than our current demand, for example a surplus of 3 apartments being available but there is no demand for this size, will the Association consider offering a 2 apartment housing applicant the opportunity to take up and under occupy a 3 apartment vacancy. This policy provision will be considered when appropriate across all our housing stock but within the above set criteria and at the Associations discretion. **Any such under occupation will result in the tenant being solely responsible for the full rent and service charge liability for that property.**

A tenancy pack will be offered to all new tenants. The information provided will include a tenancy agreement with relevant information in relation to the property including the Associations and tenants rights and responsibilities.

12 Record Keeping and Data Protection

Information and data gathered by Queens Cross H A of a sensitive nature regarding applicants personal circumstances such as health, relationship breakdown etc, will only be requested if it is required to assist the application assessment. Only housing staff involved with the allocation process will have access to that information.

Sensitive information in relation to applicant's medical condition will be kept secure and only viewed by those officers involved with the case.

Sensitive information in relation to social problems or abuse will also be kept secure and access only given to staff who are involved with the case. Under no circumstances will photocopies of sensitive reports etc be passed to third parties without the written permission of the applicant.

13 Appeals of Decisions

Queens Cross H A recognises that applicants may wish to have decisions taken against them to a review stage therefore the following appeal procedure is available.

- a) An appeal can be taken to the Head of Housing of the Association.
- b) The Board of management may consider applicants which cannot be dealt with in the normal operation of the allocation process and grant special case status. This can only be done in exceptional circumstances e.g. assisting with a disaster or extreme crisis.
- c) Appeals should be made in writing clearly outlining why applicants are appealing a previous decision.

14 Complaints Procedure

If you wish to make a complaint regarding any Queens Cross H A's services please contact us and we will ensure your complaint is dealt with. Copies of the complaint procedure are available upon request.

If you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled by Queens Cross Housing Association then you may raise the matter with the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman who investigates individual complaints. This is a free and impartial service and a leaflet about it will be made available from the Associations office. Normally the Associations complaints procedure must have been gone through first before the ombudsman will deal with a complaint.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:
Scottish Public Service Ombudsman, Edinburgh, Scotland
Tel No. 0870 0115378

15 Accountability

Queens Cross H A will monitor all customer complaints regarding our services with the reasons and outcomes of each case being retained on record.

All legal challenges successfully brought against Queens Cross H A will also be retained on record.

The Association will keep a record of all allocations, which will be made available to the Scottish Housing Regulator and internal or external auditors.

16 Staff and Board Members

Staff and Board members can apply for housing with Queens Cross H A however strict levels of criteria must be followed.

If the Association in any way considers that a breach of the conditions outlined in Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is affected, then the matter will be referred to the Scottish Housing Regulator monitoring section for clarification.

- a) Allocations to staff and board members must demonstrate that the allocation complies with the Associations allocations policy and procedures.
- b) All allocations to staff and board must be noted and approved by the Board of Management and must be recorded in the Associations minutes. Staff and or board members affected by the allocation should take no part in the decision making or selection process.

17 Housing and Human Rights (Allocations)

Queens Cross H A recognises that applicant's human rights must be respected therefore great care will be taken to ensure that respect for all applicants' private and family life is given.

Applicants will not be automatically banned from the housing list however the Association will consider banning applicants where it feels that banning an applicant is "necessary for public safety or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others".

The Association will seek legal advice and full consultation with applicants prior to refusing entry to the housing list.

Homeless applicants do not have an automatic right to housing. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 includes a number of duties for housing Associations in relation to homelessness and the allocating of housing. This policy makes provisions for these duties..

18 Reporting to Board of Management and Scottish Housing Regulator

Numbers of allocations made on the basis of this policy will be reported annually to the Board and Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the annual statistical returns. Total figures for those housed under the policy during the year will be presented as part of the annual letting plans.

19 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years and is next due for review in April 2016. Within this period, the Board may be advised and may agree to review this policy sooner where legislative changes or good practice suggest there is a requirement to do so.

Summary Housing Needs Points Table

This summary table is for a quick guide to points available to certain circumstances. Applicants should be assessed with reference to the **full policy descriptions** and not assessed using this table alone.

Policy Area	Points Available	Policy Page
Temporary Accommodation or Hostel Type Accommodation	24 Sharing points 10 points per bedroom required	7
Overcrowding	Refer to Rooms Scale	8
Under Occupation	Non QCHA applicant 5 points per room QCHA tenants 15 points per room	9
Sharing Amenities	Living Room 5 points Kitchen 5 points Toilet 7 points Bath/Shower 7 points	9
Lacking Amenities	Living Room 10 points Kitchen 10 points Inside Toilet 10 points Bath/Shower 10 points Hot water supply 10 points	9
Medical	A. High 30 points B. Medium 20 points C. Low 10 points	10
Social and Care Support Needs	A. High 30 points B. Medium 20 points C. Low 10 points	11
Management Transfers	50 points	12
Tied Housing	30 points	13

(Appendix 2)

APPLICATION FOR MEDICAL PRIORITY

You have indicated that you require re-housing due to a medical condition that you or someone who lives with you has. Please complete this application in support of your request. You should provide as much information as possible to help us to make a decision as quickly as possible. The completion of this form does not guarantee that a Medical Priority will be awarded.

Name _____
Address _____ **Contact No. Home** _____
_____ **Mobile** _____

Please list ALL members of your household

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	RELATIONSHIP	WHO HAS MEDICAL CONDITION	MOVING WITH APPLICANT
				YES/NO
				YES/NO
				YES/NO
				YES/NO
				YES/NO

(Continue on a separate sheet if required)

When did you move to your present address? _____

What type of property do you live in? Please as appropriate

Tenement Multi Storey Maisonette Cottage Flat
Terraced Semi Detached Other

Which floor do you live on? _____

How many steps are there to your front door? _____

If you have internal stairs, please tell us how many? _____

How many bedrooms are there in your home? _____

What type of heating do you have? Gas Electric Other

Is the property centrally heated? Yes No

Do you have a garden? Yes No

Do you have shops within easy reach? Yes No

Do you have your own transport? Yes No

Would you say the area you live in is hilly or flat? _____

Please list your medical conditions and how long you have had them:

NAME OF YOUR CONDITION	HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD IT?

**Please state how your medical conditions affect you with day to day activities
e.g. housework**

Please provide as much information as you can

List all medication you are currently receiving

NAME OF YOUR MEDICINE	HOW OFTEN DO YOU TAKE IT?

How long (in minutes) can you walk for on flat ground before you need to stop?

 If you have a walking difficulty, please tell us why you need to stop? e.g.
 breathlessness

--

How many steps can you climb? _____

If you have difficulty with stairs, please tell us why?

Why do you feel your present house is unsuitable?

What type of housing would overcome the problems you have with your current housing? _____

Do you require housing all on the one level? Yes No

If 'Yes' please tell us why

Do you require sheltered accommodation? Yes No

If 'Yes' please tell us why

Are you in receipt of DLA, PIP or Attendance Allowance? If so, please tell us which rate you receive.

Mobility Component	Tick	Care Component/Daily Living Component	Tick
Low/Standard Rate		Low Rate	
High/Enhanced rate		Middle/Standard Rate	
		High/Enhanced Rate	

Have you ever applied for DLA, PIP or Attendance Allowance? If so, please tell us when:

Are you registered blind? Yes No

Do you use any of the following?
Wheelchair **Zimmer** **Tripod** **Walking Stick**

If you use one of the above, who provided your Mobility Aid? e.g. self purchased, physiotherapist etc

Do you use the aid (please tick as appropriate)

	Always	Regularly	Occasionally
Inside your home			
Outside your home			

Have any adaptations been carried out to your present accommodation because of your medical needs? Yes No

If 'Yes' please specify what these are

Is your present house fitted with a Housing Alarm Yes No

Have you been admitted to hospital in the past 12 months?

Yes No

Date of Admission _____

Length of Stay _____

Hospital _____

Reason _____

Please give us the name and address of you GP

Please give us the name and address of any hospital specialist you attend

Have you applied for medical priority before? Yes No

If 'YES' when did you apply? _____

Do you have family support? Yes No

If 'Yes' please give us their details

State Relationship _____

Details of support given _____

Please use this space to provide us with any more information you feel is relevant about your housing need

DECLARATION

“Queens Cross Housing Association is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. Queens Cross Housing Association is under an obligation to properly manage public funds. Accordingly information that you have provided on this form may be used to prevent and detect fraud and may also be shared for the same purpose with public bodies or other organisations which handle public funds.”

Signed (applicant) _____ **Date** _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Application Reference

Date Received

Date IT system updated

Decision (tick)

Medical A Ground flat level housing	Medical A No restrictions	Medical B/C	Denied

Date of Decision

Decision updated on IT system

Date letter sent to tenant

Further information if required

Housing Officer Name _____

Housing Officer Signature _____

Managers Authorisation _____ **(Med A only)**