

# FALKIRK COUNCIL

## HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY



**Falkirk Council**

*Corporate & Neighbourhood Services*

Amendments agreed – 29 March 2011  
Amendments agreed – 09 September 2010  
Amendments agreed -16 June 2010  
Amendments agreed - 09 December 2009  
Agreed at Falkirk Council - 10 December 2008

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT**

This policy outlines Falkirk Council's key aims, objectives and processes in relation to the allocation of its housing stock.

### **1.1 Strategic Context**

This Allocations Policy supports the Council's wider corporate aims as outlined in Falkirk Council's Corporate Plan 2008-2011. These are to:

- Continue to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our citizens and communities;
- Increase our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination;
- Further develop a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy;
- Enhance and sustain an environment in which people want to live, work and visit.

### **1.2 Policy Statement**

Falkirk Council provides a range of good quality affordable housing to help meet the needs of local people, including those with specific needs.

The Allocations Policy aims to make best use of the Council's housing stock and to develop and maintain sustainable communities. It gives priority to those in the greatest housing need while being as sensitive as possible to the circumstances and the housing aspirations of other applicants. To do this, the Council prioritises the differing needs of applicants and operates a choice based letting system where applicants can bid for the properties advertised and bids received are ranked according to applicant priority.

Falkirk Council recognises that people can be discriminated against for reasons including race, colour, ethnic and national origins, marital status, domestic circumstances, gender, sexuality and transsexualism, age, class, ethical or religious belief, unrelated criminal convictions, disability, trade union activity, long term unemployment or because they have AIDS or are HIV positive.

The Council is committed to achieving equality for all citizens and employees and to tackling disadvantage, discrimination and inequality of opportunity and social exclusion.

Falkirk Council believes that the diversity of its communities is one of the area's greatest strengths.

### 1.3 Policy Principles

The following principles underpin Falkirk Council's approach to allocating its houses:

- **Legality:** the Council seeks to ensure that the Allocations Policy reflects the legal framework and good practice;
- **Consistency:** the Council applies the Allocations Policy in a consistent manner in dealing with all applicants;
- **Openness:** the Council provides explanatory leaflets on the Allocations Policy and information on the operation and outcomes of the Allocations process;
- **Responsiveness:** the Council seeks to have a policy which is capable of responding to a wide range of complex individual needs and circumstances and which embodies an appeals process;
- **Local Co-operation:** the Council seeks to work with other housing providers in the area to best meet housing needs in the Falkirk Council area;
- **Confidentiality:** the Council is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 and is duty bound to comply with the conditions set out in this legislation regarding personal information relating to applicants and their households.

### 1.4 Policy Objectives

The Allocations Policy aims to meet the following key objectives:

- to address housing needs in the area and where possible, to take into account applicants' housing aspirations;
- to meet relevant legal and good practice standards, for instance, the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended), the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Scottish Executive Circular 1/2002 and the Performance Standards published by the Scottish Housing Regulator;
- to assess applications for housing in an objective, consistent and fair manner;
- to prevent and eliminate discrimination in lettings practice on grounds of race, colour, ethnic and national origins, marital status, domestic circumstances, gender, sexuality and transsexualism, age, class, ethical or religious belief, unrelated criminal convictions, disability, trade union activity, long term unemployment or a medical condition e.g. AIDS or HIV positive;
- to promote balanced and sustainable local communities; by "balanced communities" we mean communities that contain a broad range of households from all sections of society;
- to establish effective partnerships with local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to meet housing need, for instance, to tackle homelessness;
- to make best use of the available housing stock;
- to monitor performance and outcomes, and respond to changing patterns of need as they may arise;
- to inform the Council's strategic planning processes;

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- to ensure that the Allocations Policy and practice is accessible to all applicants by producing information in plain language that is clear and understandable;
  - to ensure that the principles and objectives of the Allocations Policy are consistent with and will assist the Council in the achievement of the objectives detailed within the Corporate Plan;
  - to review this policy at least every three years.

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## **2. LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

Falkirk Council has established this policy to meet relevant legal requirements and good practice standards.

### **2.1 Regulatory Requirements**

The Council is committed to working in accordance with Performance Standards for Social Landlords published by the Scottish Housing Regulator. These performance standards oblige us to:

- make sure that people have fair and open access to our housing register and assessment process;
- work with others to maximise and simplify access to our housing;
- let our houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need, makes best use of available stock, maximises choice and helps to sustain communities;
- ensure that our approach to letting houses is well managed and that we achieve high standards of customer service, information and consultation;
- regularly assess our performance in achieving these standards.

### **2.2 Access to the Housing Register**

Any person who is sixteen years or over is entitled to access the housing register.

Registration forms are available at the Accommodation Resource Centre (ARC), our Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops and other Council offices across the area. A contact list of addresses and telephone numbers for ARC and our Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops is provided at the end of this document. A registration form is also available online. On request, this information can be made available in a variety of formats (other languages, Braille, large print or audio tape) from ARC or any of our Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops.

If required, staff can help applicants to fill in the registration form and provide detailed information on housing options. This may include guidance on the availability of Council housing throughout the Falkirk area, housing from other social landlords in the area and more general housing advice e.g., the private rented sector and low cost home ownership.

Provided applicants are eligible to apply and have given all the information needed, applications are assessed and priority awarded to reflect their housing situation.

### **2.3 Reasonable Preference**

In accordance with legal requirements (section 20(1) of the 1987 Act as amended), Falkirk Council gives reasonable preference to applicants who are:

- a) living in housing below the tolerable standard; or  
living in overcrowded houses or in large families; or  
living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;

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and

b) to applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

In addition to these groups, we also recognise that the Allocations Policy should address other needs and aspirations. All the housing needs and circumstances that we take into account in assessing priority are detailed in Section 4 of this policy document.

## **2.4 Factors which must not be taken into account**

Section 20 (2) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by section 10 (3) of the 2001 Act) details those factors which local authorities must not take into account in the allocation of houses. Therefore Falkirk Council does not take account of the following when letting houses:

- the length of time applicants have lived in the Falkirk Council area;
- any housing debt that is not owed by applicants, for example, rent arrears or repair charges;
- housing debt that has since been paid;
- non-housing debt such as council tax owed either by applicants or another household member;
- applicants' age unless we have designed or specifically adapted the houses for people of a specific age, for example, Housing with Care;
- applicants' income or any property that they own; income of household members is also ignored.

When allocating houses, we also take no account of rent arrears that are less than one month's rent. In such cases, however, we would agree a reasonable repayment arrangement with the applicant to clear the arrears in line with our arrears policy.

This rule also applies in respect of housing debt that is more than one month's rent, if applicants:

- make an agreement with the Council to repay the debt;
- make payments for at least three months; and
- continue to make payments.

## **2.5 Residence**

We must take no account of whether applicants live in our area if they:

- are employed or have been offered employment in the area;
- want to move into the area to seek employment and we are satisfied that this is the case;
- want to move into the area to be near a relative or carer;
- have special social or medical reasons for requiring to be re-housed in the area;
- want to move into the area to escape harassment;
- want to move into the area to escape the risk of domestic violence.

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## 2.6 Specific Restrictions

The law specifies a further three restrictions that are unlawful. Therefore when an applicant is being considered for housing, Falkirk Council takes no account of:

- the length of time an applicant has been registered on the housing register;
- whether or not an applicant has obtained a divorce or judicial separation; or
- whether or not an applicant is living with some other person.

## 2.7 Information for Applicants

Falkirk Council makes sure that its policy is published widely throughout the Falkirk Council area and distributes copies to ARC, all Neighbourhood Offices/ One Stop Shops and other relevant agencies. The policy is also available on the Council's website at [www.falkirk.gov.uk](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk). Applicants and other service users are provided with advice and information about this policy on request.

A Housing Options Guide is also available. This provides information about the range of housing options within Falkirk, as well as advice on how to contact other housing providers in both the private and social rented sector.

## 2.8 Confidentiality

Falkirk Council is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. Records concerning personal details of applicants and tenants are processed strictly in line with legal requirements. All information provided by applicants is treated in confidence. We seek applicants' permission to discuss application details with other agencies as appropriate. For instance, we may contact previous landlords to confirm details of other tenancies.

Applicants are entitled to access information that they have supplied about their housing application. They are also entitled to view other personal information; we can only withhold personal information on specific grounds detailed in the Data Protection Act 1998. We will provide this information on request, within forty working days. We do not charge for this service.

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### 3. APPLICANT REGISTRATION

This section summarises the key points involved in recording applicants on the housing register.

#### 3.1 Registration

All applicants can access our housing register by completing the standard registration form. Registration forms are available from ARC, Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops, local supported accommodation projects, local libraries and in RSL partners' offices. Forms can also be downloaded from the Council's website at [www.falkirk.gov.uk](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk) or from a freephone service.

We offer applicants help to fill in this form on request. The registration form can be provided in a number of other languages and we can also provide interpreters or signers, as appropriate. We do not charge for this service.

Applicants can choose as many of the ten allocations areas across the Council area as they wish. However applicants are asked to indicate on the registration form the allocations areas where they would prefer to live. The allocation areas are as follows:

- Bo'ness
- Braes
- Bonnybridge/Banknock
- Dawson
- Denny
- Falkirk Central
- Falkirk East
- Falkirk West
- Grangemouth
- Larbert/ Stenhousemuir

Once a completed registration form has been received, it is processed within 3 working days. We aim to complete any further assessment of applicants' circumstances within 28 days of registration and thereafter advise applicants of the priority they have been awarded.

#### 3.2 References

If the applicant or anyone named on the application has, or has had, a tenancy with the Council or any other landlord, we will contact them to get a reference. The applicant must provide the names and addresses of current and past landlords for the previous 5 years. The applicant may not be considered for an offer of a house until they can show that they have managed their current and/or past tenancies in a satisfactory way.

#### 3.3 Suspension from the housing register

In some cases, applicants may be suspended from the housing register. We aim to minimise suspensions from the housing register and to make sure that we do not unreasonably suspend applicants from the housing register. Applicants are

told of the decision to suspend their application in writing and are given a clear explanation of the action they need to take to have the suspension ended.

Applicants are told of their right to appeal against the decision.

Suspended applications are regularly reviewed and monitored.

### Grounds for Suspension

The table below outlines the reasons why we might suspend an application. It also states the length of time an application will be suspended and what the applicant must do in order that the suspension is lifted so that their application can be re-instated on the housing register.

Reason for Suspension	Period of Suspension	Criteria for Ending Suspension
If an applicant has failed to reply to us when we have tried to contact them about their registration.	28 days	Applicants are re-instated if they reply within 28 days. Where applicants do not respond, their registration is cancelled.
If we need to get a reference from your current or previous landlord.	Up to 6 months.	When a satisfactory reference is received or, when you can show that you can maintain a tenancy in a satisfactory way, whichever is the sooner.
Current or previous housing debt (rent arrears / rechargeable repairs).	Until a payment arrangement has been made and payments have been maintained for 3 months.	You can ask to be reconsidered for housing when you can show that you have made an arrangement to pay the unpaid debt and have made payments for 3 months in a row and are continuing to make payments.
Clear evidence of anti-social behaviour associated with the occupancy of a house or with local community safety.	Minimum period of 1 year.	You can ask to be reconsidered for housing when you can show that your behaviour has been satisfactory for the last 12 months.
Conviction or eviction related to anti-social behaviour associated with the occupancy of a house or with local community safety.	Minimum period of 2 years.	You can ask to be reconsidered for housing when you can show that your behaviour has been satisfactory for the last 24 months.
Your home, including any garden or common close, is in an unsatisfactory condition.	Until we are satisfied that your house is in an acceptable condition.	You can ask to be considered for housing when you can show that your house is in a satisfactory condition.
Giving false information which gave you an unfair advantage when your application was being assessed.	6 months.	Your registration will be automatically reinstated after 6 months.
Have applied to buy your house under the 'Right to Buy' legislation.	From the date you applied to buy your house until the sale is concluded (application then cancelled) or you withdraw from the sale.	Your registration will be cancelled when the sale is completed. You can register again once the sale is complete. If you withdraw from "Right to Buy" your housing application will be reinstated.

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Asylum seekers.	From the date of registration until your rights to a tenancy have been confirmed.	You will be considered for housing when the Home Office have confirmed your rights to remain in the country.
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### **3.4 Review of Applications**

In order to keep the housing register up to date, the Council reviews applications every 12 months. We will write to applicants on the anniversary of the date of their application and ask them to complete a re-registration form to confirm that they want to stay on the housing register.

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## 4. ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND AWARD OF PRIORITY

The registration form records basic details about the applicant, their household and their housing circumstances.

### 4.1 Applicant Type

From the information provided, applicants are grouped into three applicant types:

**Home Seekers** – all applicants who have been assessed as homeless in terms of homeless legislation; applicants living in supported interim accommodation e.g. hostels; applicants to whom the Council has additional responsibilities with regard to accommodation i.e. applicants who fall within the terms of the Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995

**Home Movers** – tenants of Falkirk Council or tenants of an RSL (Registered Social Landlord) living in the Council area

**Home Starters** - all other applicants.

### 4.2 Assessment of Priority

Where the registration form indicates that the applicant has particular housing needs, a further assessment may be needed to assess the priority which should be awarded to the applicant. The assessment of priority is carried out using a variety of methods depending on the nature of the housing need indicated. These methods are set out below:

**Homelessness** – determined by a Homeless Assessment carried out in accordance with the terms of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by the 2001 and 2003 Acts) and the Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2005. There is a statutory right of appeal for applicants who do not agree with an assessment decision.

#### **Functional Needs Assessment**

Where an applicant has applied for housing because their house is unsuitable for them due to a medical condition and/or disability, a Housing Priority Functional Assessment will be carried out. A trained Housing Visitor will visit the applicant at home to discuss the problems they are having and look at options for meeting their housing needs. The Housing Visitor may make a recommendation in conjunction with an Occupational Therapist within the NHS or Falkirk Council. Where a recommendation for a specific house type is provided as part of the assessment, the priority awarded to an applicant will be taken into consideration only for bids for housing which match this recommendation. More information about the Functional Assessment is set out in Appendix C.

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**Move-on Assessment** – recommendation made by Case Review Officers who regularly review and monitor in consultation with support providers, the progress of applicants in supported accommodation with regard to their ability to move into independent living.

**Leaving Care Pathways Plan** – recommendation made by Social Work Services.

**MAPPA Partnership Assessment** – recommendation made by Falkirk MAPP Partnership. The MAPP Partnership is a multi-agency partnership which has been established in response to the requirements of the Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005.

**Overcrowding** – an applicant's circumstances with regard to overcrowding are assessed from the information provided by the applicant on their registration form in accordance with the household size criteria set out at 4.4. This includes applicants whose households include "looked after" children, whether through formal or informal caring arrangements. Where an applicant's household includes "looked after children", confirmation of caring arrangements is required from appropriate agencies. A house visit may also be carried out to confirm the applicant's circumstances.

**Under-occupation** – an applicant's circumstances with regard to under-occupation are assessed from the information provided by the applicant on their registration form in accordance with the household size criteria set out at 4.4. A house visit may be carried out to confirm the applicant's circumstances.

**Exceptional housing need** – recommendation made by a multi-agency case conference e.g. a child protection case conference.

**Social housing need** - an applicant is asked to provide further details regarding the social need for a move of house and this is assessed by an officer panel.

**Children In Flats** – an applicant's circumstances with regard to children living in tenement flats are assessed from the information provided by the applicant on their registration form. Confirmation may also be requested from their landlord.

**Parental responsibilities** – the Council takes reasonable steps to verify information provided by an applicant with regard to on-going parental responsibilities for children whose principal home is elsewhere. This may include asking the applicant to provide a letter from their solicitor or the child's school or a joint statement completed by both parents where informal arrangements are in place.

**Sharing facilities** - an applicant's circumstances with regard to sharing facilities are assessed from the information provided by the applicant on their registration form. A house visit may also be carried out to confirm the applicant's circumstances.

**Unsatisfactory Housing Assessment** – a report is requested from an Environmental Health Officer or Private Sector Housing Officer.

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**Housing Management Assessment** – the relevant Neighbourhood Manager or Senior Partnership Officer confirms details of regeneration or redevelopment proposals.

**Security of Tenure Assessment** – the applicant is asked to provide confirmation of the conditions of the lease for their current accommodation.

### 4.3 Award of Priority

Following assessment, applicants are awarded one of the following Bands of priority depending on their circumstances:

- Band 1
- Band 2
- Band 3
- Band 4

The highest level of priority is Band 1 and the lowest level of priority is Band 4. Applicants are awarded only one level of priority based on their most urgent housing need.

#### **Band 1**

Band 1 priority is awarded to the following:

- Applicants who are found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need following a homeless assessment;
- Applicants that are assessed to be threatened with homelessness within the next two months following a homeless assessment;
- Applicants living in hostel, supported or temporary accommodation provided by Falkirk Council or a partner RSL and have been assessed as ready to move on to more independent living;
- Applicants who have been “looked after and accommodated” by Falkirk Council and who are leaving their care placement;
- Applicants who are leaving the Armed Forces;
- Applicants for whom the MAPP Partnership has made recommendations regarding accommodation;
- Applicants who are unable to be discharged from hospital because their home is no longer suitable for them;
- Applicants whose home is causing significant problems due to a medical condition or disability e.g. applicants living in a house where the bedrooms and bathroom are on the first floor and they cannot manage stairs;
- Applicants who are living in overcrowded circumstances and two or more additional bedrooms are required to meet their needs (according to the household size rules set out at 4.4). This includes applicants whose households include “looked after” children, whether through formal or informal caring arrangements. If necessary, the circumstances will be confirmed by a house visit;

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- Applicants who are living in a one bedroom property and have two children under the age of 8 years sharing a bedroom with them;
  - Applicants who have two teenage children of different genders sharing a bedroom;
  - Applicants who are Falkirk Council tenants or RSL tenants living in the Council's area who are living in a house that is too big for their needs (according to the household size rules set out at 4.4). If necessary, the circumstances will be confirmed by a house visit;
  - Applicants living in a house which lacks standard amenities or is in a state of serious disrepair as specified in Appendix A;
  - Applicants who need to be re-housed as a result of regeneration or redevelopment within the Falkirk Council area;
  - Joint applicants who currently are each the tenants of Falkirk Council and/or an RSL and living in the Falkirk Council area, who wish to move so that they can live as a family unit. Priority will only be awarded if neither house is big enough for both families to live in and overcrowding will result from both parties living together in their current properties;
  - Applicants with exceptional housing needs and for whom a multi-agency case conference has made recommendations regarding accommodation e.g. a child protection case conference

## **Band 2**

Band 2 priority is awarded to the following:

- Applicants who are found to be unintentionally homeless but not in a priority need category following a homeless assessment;
- Applicants who are not homeless but are living in accommodation within the Falkirk Council area where they have no security of tenure;
- Applicants who are overcrowded (according to the household size rules set out at 4.4) and currently sharing facilities with another household with whom they are not applying to be housed;
- Applicants who are living in overcrowded circumstances and one additional bedroom is needed to meet their needs (according to the household size rules set out at 4.4). This includes applicants whose households include "looked after" children, whether through formal or informal caring arrangements. If necessary, the circumstances will be confirmed by a house visit;
- Applicants living in bed-sit accommodation;
- Applicants with social housing need such as:
  - where the applicant needs to move to give or receive care and support,
  - where the applicant's accommodation is unsuitable due to severe harassment.

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### **Band 3**

Band 3 priority is awarded to the following:

- Applicants with children under 10 years living in tenement flats with no access to shared or individual gardens;
- Applicants with parental responsibilities for children whose principal home is elsewhere;
- Applicants who are living in accommodation where their independence is limited due to a medical condition or disability e.g. an applicant living in a first floor flat who has difficulty managing the stairs;
- Applicants who wish to move to the Falkirk Council area due to a local connection e.g. employment, family reasons;
- Applicants who are not Falkirk Council tenants or RSL tenants living in the Council's area and who are living in a house that is too big for their needs (according to the household size rules set out at 4.4). If necessary, the circumstances will be confirmed by a house visit.
- Applicants living in the private sector with a short assured tenancy agreement
- Applicants currently sharing facilities with another household with whom they are not applying to be housed

### **Band 4**

Band 4 priority is awarded to all other applicants.

### **Secondary Housing Needs**

Where an applicant has more than one housing need, they will be awarded the category of priority for the highest ranked need factor e.g. if an applicant is living in overcrowded circumstances and one additional bedroom is needed to meet their needs and they are living in the private sector with a short assured tenancy, they will be awarded Band 2 priority.

Secondary housing needs are only taken into account where they relate to a medical condition or disability and following a functional assessment, recommendations have been made about the type of property which would be suitable for the applicants. Where such recommendations have been made an indicator (M) is added to the banding e.g. an applicant whose household is overcrowded and requires one additional bedroom (see 4.4) and who has a recommendation for ground floor housing, is awarded B2M priority.

If an applicant is unhappy about a decision that has been made with regard to the award of priority, they can make an appeal using the Allocations Appeals process (Section 7).

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## 4.4 Household Size Criteria

Couples are expected to share a room. However, it is recognised that there may be circumstances where each individual requires a room of their own e.g. due to a medical condition. Where there is a recommendation for an individual to have their own bedroom, this will be taken into account in determining the house size appropriate for the household's needs.

Couples and single applicants will be considered for 1 or 2 bedroom properties.

Each household member over 8 years of age is entitled to a bedroom of their own. No priority for overcrowding is awarded where two children under 8 of either sex share a room which is larger than 110 square feet (10 square metres).

Applicants do not qualify for overcrowding priority if they move to a house the same size as their existing house.

Due to the lack of larger accommodation, applicants will be considered for accommodation out with these parameters where the move would reduce overcrowding. It is recognised that some applicants may wish to allow 2 children of the same sex aged 8 years or over to share a bedroom.

The Council aims to make the best use of its housing stock and will indicate the optimum occupancy level for each available property, based on the criterion that two people can share a bedroom which is over 110 square feet (10 square metres) in size. In letting houses, the Council will seek to select applicants whose household size makes best use of the property.

## 4.5 Priority Date of Award

For applicants who are assessed as homeless and are awarded Home Seeker status, the award of priority will be from the date of presentation.

For all other applicants, the date of award of priority is the date the relevant assessment was completed or 28 days after the date of application for priority, whichever is sooner.

Applicants may appeal using the Appeals process set out at 7.1 if they consider that the priority they have been awarded does not reflect their needs.

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## 5. LETTING A PROPERTY

### 5.1 Void Properties

When a house becomes void it is recorded on the allocations database which indicates if the property is:

- Housing with Care accommodation;
- a mainstream house;
- adapted and would meet the needs of an applicant with a medical condition or disability

### 5.2 Housing with Care

Housing with Care is housing for older people who are physically frail and need care and support services at home. Many Housing with Care properties have been designed or adapted to make living easier for older people. A Directory listing all the Housing with Care developments, including RSL properties, in the Council area is available.

There are three types of Housing with Care:

- Level 1 (formerly called “very sheltered housing”)
- Level 2 (formerly called “sheltered housing”)
- Level 3 (formerly called “amenity housing”)

To qualify for Housing with Care, applicants must normally be aged 60 or over and have support needs. In the case of joint applicants, one person must be aged 60 or over with support needs. Exceptions can sometimes be made, where a younger applicant suffers from ill health or a disability and they would benefit from the features of the housing or services provided in a Housing with Care property.

#### **Assessment of Applicants' Needs**

When an applicant applies for Housing with Care, a home visit is carried out to assess their care and support needs as well as their housing needs. The assessment may involve family, carers or other professionals.

The assessment will look at how the applicant manages activities in and out of their home e.g. making a cooked meal, walking around the house, doing laundry and shopping. It will take into account the help the applicant has at home and the social activities they are able to take part in.

The assessment allows applicants to be prioritised according to both their personal and housing needs by taking account of the following:

- the frequency and type of care and support that the applicant needs;
- any risk factors that the applicant may face;
- the urgency for re-housing;
- the applicant's preferences.

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## Allocating Housing with Care

Level 1 (very sheltered housing) and Level 2 (sheltered housing)

When a Housing with Care Level 1 or Level 2 property becomes available for letting it is matched to the applicant on the housing register for that property who has the greatest care, support and housing needs, and whose needs match the characteristics of the property and the level of care provision.

Detailed information on the process for allocating Housing with Care Level 1 and Level 2 is set out in Appendix B.

When a Housing with Care Level 3 (amenity housing) becomes available for let it is advertised through HomeSpot as per mainstream properties (See 5.4).

## 5.3 Mainstream Properties

The remainder of void properties i.e. mainstream properties are assigned for allocation to Home Seekers, Home Movers and Home Starters through an automatic sequencing process generated within the database.

This sequencing process takes into account the allocation area the property is in, the size of the property, the property type and the date the property became void.

Within each Allocation Area listed below, the sequencing process will stream properties into four groups.

- Bo'ness
- Braes
- Bonnybridge/Banknock
- Dawson
- Denny
- Falkirk Central
- Falkirk East
- Falkirk West
- Grangemouth
- Larbert/ Stenhousemuir

The process assigns voids in the following sequence:

Void 1 – Home Seekers  
Void 2 – Home Movers  
Void 3 – Home Seekers  
Void 4 – Home Starters

With regard to property size these are grouped as follows:

- 0 - 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 4 bedrooms or more

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With regards to Property Type, within each Allocation Area and each house size group, properties are sequenced according to property type i.e. houses, four-in-a-block, flats

The objective of this process is to allocate 50% of available properties to Home Seekers, 25% of properties to Home Movers and the remaining 25% of properties to Home Starters. The outcome of the allocations process is routinely monitored and is reviewed annually. This provides an opportunity for the targets for allocations to each applicant group to be adjusted to reflect changes in the nature of the housing register and local housing demands.

## **5.4 Advertising Mainstream Properties**

To ensure efficiency in managing void turnover and to minimise voids rent loss, arrangements to advertise properties are made as soon as a termination of tenancy is notified. Properties are advertised weekly. All applicants can bid for any property, however adverts indicate the applicant type to whom preference is to be given. This is determined in accordance with the void sequencing process set out at 5.4.

Where a number of similar properties in one location are available, they are advertised through a single advert e.g. several properties in the same block.

Properties are advertised on the Council's website, and in a weekly property newsletter that is available from the ARC, Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops, local supported accommodation projects, local libraries and in RSL partners' offices. Applicants can also contact a freephone telephone service to find out what properties are being advertised. Applicants are also able to indicate on their registration form if they require particular arrangements to be made to alert them to available properties and opportunities to bid. Such applicants will be supported by an outreach worker and will be routinely notified of any vacancies which may be of interest to them.

### **Advertising Mainstream New Build Properties**

New build properties suitable for general needs applicants are advertised through HomeSpot stating that the properties are subject to a local lettings initiative and that preference will be given to existing Falkirk Council tenants. The purpose of the lettings initiative is to maximise the opportunity for meeting housing needs that the additional supply of new Council housing offers as two households will benefit for each additional new-build property available.

## **5.5 Adapted Properties**

In seeking to make the best use of its housing stock and meet the particular needs of some applicants or members of their household, the Council aims to allocate properties which are adapted to meet the needs of an occupant with a medical condition or disability, to households who have a need for such facilities.

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An adapted property is one that is suitable for a person with a medical condition or disability and has one or more of the following:

- a walk-in shower or wet room;
- an external ramp or altered steps;
- a fully adapted and accessible kitchen.

When an adapted property becomes available for letting, it is advertised through HomeSpot for "ALL" Groups stating that preference will be given to applicants who require the adaptations the property has.

## 5.6 Lettings Initiatives

Falkirk Council aims to make suitable allocations and to promote stable communities. When a house in a grouped setting is vacated e.g. within a block of flats, Neighbourhood Managers have the opportunity to consider the characteristics of the other households living within the grouping and, where appropriate, to specify further eligibility criteria for lettings within the block or grouping. Any further eligibility criteria are specified in property adverts.

## 5.7 Making Bids

If applicants wish to be considered for an advertised property, they must make a bid before the closing date. Bids are made by noting interest at ARC, Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops, through the Council's website, or by phoning a freephone service. Bids include details of the applicant's reference number, name, address, date of birth and security password.

## 5.8 Matching Bids

Once bids have closed, a short-list of suitable applicants is prepared. Suitable applicants are those who:

- meet the criteria in the advert; and
- meet the household size criteria for the property; and
- are not affected by the policy on suspensions set out at 3.3; and
- have a recommendation for a property type which matches the property advertised (where applicable)

Suitable applicants are then ranked according to their level of priority. The order of priority is as follows, with Band 1 the highest priority and Band 4 the lowest:

- Band 1
- Band 2
- Band 3
- Band 4

When assessing bids from applicants with Band 1, Band 2 and Band 3 priority the successful bidder will be the applicant that has had their priority the longest.

Applicants with Category 4 priority will be ranked by the date of their application i.e. the successful bidder will be the applicant with Category 4 priority who has been on the housing register longest.

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If there are no bids from suitable applicants from the preferred applicant group, bids will be considered from applicants in other applicant groups where the household complement meets the household size criteria for the property advertised. Bids from other applicant groups will be considered in the order of Home Seeker, Home Mover and finally Home Starter. Bids from suitable applicants will then be ranked as set out above.

### **Matching Bids for Adapted Properties**

Once bids have closed, bids are shortlisted according to eligibility in terms of house size and are ranked according to Band of priority. Thereafter those applicants' whose band indicates that a recommendation with regard to property type or facilities has been made i.e. flagged with M, are given preference. The property will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority related to a medical condition or disability and a recommendation which best matches the facilities available. Where there is more than one applicant, the property will be offered to the applicant with the recommendation longest.

If there is no suitable applicants for a particular adapted property, the property is let as a mainstream house as set out at 5.4.

### **Adaptable Property**

Where a void property has a ground floor bedroom and bathroom and access that can be ramped, consideration may be given to adapting the property where this would meet the needs of applicants on the housing register.

## **5.9 Time Limited Priority for Home Seekers**

Priority is awarded to Home Seeker applicants to reflect their urgent need for housing. As such, Home Seekers are expected to make bids for properties advertised within their selected areas which meet their household needs, regardless of house type. Home Seekers are required to register with Link Housing Association's HomeHunt scheme. Following a homelessness assessment by the Council, Home Seekers are awarded Priority Passes within the HomeHunt scheme and are able to bid for any suitable properties that become available. In addition, Home Seekers will be nominated for appropriate vacancies in accordance with Falkirk Council's Section 5 protocols and/or nomination agreements with other RSL partners.

Where a Home Seeker with Band 1 priority has not used the priority reasonably within three months i.e. the Home Seeker has not made bids likely to result in re-housing (including suitable Link properties) or has refused a property which they had successfully bid for or were nominated for, an offer of accommodation will be made outwith the choice based lettings scheme. Where possible we will aim to make this offer of housing within the areas the Home Seeker has selected at registration. However, this will be dependent on the availability of properties. This offer of accommodation will formally discharge the Council's duty under the homelessness legislation.

If the Home Seeker refuses the offer made by the Council in discharge of its statutory duties, the Band 1 (homeless) priority will be removed. The Home Seeker will continue to be registered for housing with their application status changing from "Home Seeker" to "Home Starter" and their circumstances being

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reassessed. Where the Home Seeker is living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, they will be given notice to leave the temporary accommodation.

Where it has not been possible for Home Seekers to bid for a property within the three month period because no suitable properties were advertised, their Band 1 priority will continue. If they are living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, this will also continue. The application will be reviewed after a further three months.

### **5.10 Number of Bids**

There is no limit to the number of properties applicants can bid for during each advertising cycle. The number of bids applicants can make during each advertising cycle is routinely monitored and reviewed at the end of each year.

### **5.11 Offering a property**

The successful bidder is notified that they are to be offered the property they have bid for. Unsuccessful bidders are not notified individually. However information on Allocation Outcomes is available on a monthly basis on the Council's website and in the Property Newsletter. This information includes how many applicants bid for the property, the priority of the successful applicant and the date of award of priority. Staff will provide housing options advice to applicants whose bids have been unsuccessful.

### **5.12 Refused Properties**

Given that applicants have the opportunity to choose which houses they bid for, there is an expectation that successful applicants will accept the properties offered. With the exception of the circumstances outlined at 5.9, where applicants with Band 1, 2 or 3 priority successfully bid for two properties, and then refuse them, they lose their Band 1, 2 or 3 priority and revert to Band 4 priority. Applicants have a right to appeal this decision as outlined in 7.1. Applicants also have a right to appeal if they consider that they have been offered a property which is in an unacceptable condition. After 12 months, the applicant can apply to have their circumstances re-assessed and priority awarded as appropriate.

### **5.13 No bids received**

Where a property is advertised and no qualifying bids are received i.e. bids from applicants who meet the advert criteria, any other bids received which meet the household size criteria are considered in order of priority as set out at 5.8.

Where no bids have been received, properties are offered to applicants identified as homeless and in priority need to discharge the Council's statutory duties in terms of homelessness legislation in accordance with the arrangements set out at 5.9.

### **5.15 Mutual Exchanges**

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Tenants of Falkirk Council, RSLs and Housing Co-operatives are eligible to exchange property if the following conditions are met:

- the properties concerned are deemed by the Council to be suitable for both parties to exchange; and
- it is agreed with the landlord concerned

Application forms and a guidance note explaining the rules about carrying out a mutual exchange are available from ARC, Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops and on the Council's website.

Falkirk Council is registered with HomeSwapper which is a web-based database of social housing tenants looking to exchange homes. More information about HomeSwapper is available on the Council's website [www.falkirk.gov.uk](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk)

## **5.16 Nominations to RSLs**

Falkirk Council has nomination arrangements in place with RSLs who have housing stock in the Council's area. Generally, the Council is able to make nominations to 50% of available RSL properties.

Nominations for Housing with Care or other specialised accommodation are made using the process set out at 5.2 or 5.3.

The priority for nominations to RSL mainstream properties will be Home Seekers. Other applicants who wish to be considered for nomination to RSL property will only be nominated when there are no suitable Home Seeker applicants for the property.

There is an expectation that Home Seekers with Band 1 priority will be prepared to accept a nomination to an RSL partner.

The nominations will be selected on the basis of the level and date of priority awarded.

## **5.17 Section 5 Referrals**

Nominations to RSLs of Home Seeker applicants with Band 1 priority are considered referrals under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Referrals are made on the basis of date of award of Band 1 priority and the suitability of the available property e.g. size and RSL eligibility criteria. Section 5 Referrals to RSLs may also be made outwith the normal nomination arrangements in particular circumstances.

## **5.18 Nominations for New Build Properties**

Where an RSL has properties available in a new build development, nominations generally operate on the basis outlined at 5.16.

Where the new build is general needs housing and a number of nominations are requested at the same time, nominations will be identified in accordance with

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the sequencing process outlined in 5.1 so that Home Seekers, Home Movers and Home Starters have the opportunity to be considered for a property

If the new build is Housing with Care Level 1 and Level 2, nominations are made using the separate housing and support needs assessment process outlined at 5.2.

## **5.19 Exceptions**

While this document outlines the policy and method which is used to allocate the majority of the Council's houses, there are exceptions and some properties are allocated outwith the choice based process:

- Housing with Care Level 1 and Level 2 is allocated following a housing and support needs assessment as set out at 5.2;
- When a property is required by the Service to provide temporary accommodation as a result of an emergency situation;
- When a property is identified that would meet the needs of an applicant with particular needs e.g. someone who cannot leave hospital due to their own home being unsuitable, we may re-house another applicant to allow their property to be let to the applicant with particular needs.
- When there are multi-agency concerns that the offer of a property to an applicant would create an unacceptable risk to either the applicant or the local community, we may refuse to offer a property to that applicant. Applicants have a right to appeal this decision as outlined at 7.1.
- When a property is required by the Service to discharge its statutory duty in terms of homelessness legislation.

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## 6. CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION

There are a number of situations when an applicant's registration on the housing register is cancelled. These are when the applicant:

- is successful in their bid for a Falkirk Council property;
- accepts an offer of housing from another housing provider and has security of tenure e.g. RSL or another council;
- moves through a mutual exchange;
- buys their existing home under "Right to Buy" legislation or buys any other property for their principal home;
- becomes a joint tenant/owner or succeeds to a tenancy;
- fails to respond within 28 days to communication from Falkirk Council regarding their application for housing.

Where an application is cancelled for failure to contact the Council and the applicant contacts Falkirk Council within 3 months of their application being cancelled, re-instatement of the registration will be considered. Where agreed, re-instatement will be from the original date of registration. Where an applicant contacts the Council after 3 months, they will be required to re-register and their circumstances will be assessed.

Where applicants consider that their registration has been cancelled unreasonably, they can appeal against this decision as set out in 7.1.

Where registration has been cancelled, applicants can register again at any time and their situation will be assessed based on their housing circumstances at that time.

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## 7. Appeals and Complaints

### 7.1 Appeals

If an applicant is unhappy about a decision that has been made about their application, they can make an appeal using the Allocations Appeals process.

An applicant can appeal if they think that:

- the priority they have been awarded does not reflect their needs;
- they have been unfairly suspended from the housing register or their application has been cancelled unreasonably;
- their priority has been removed unreasonably because they have refused two offers of housing;
- the house you have been offered does not match the choices on your application;
- they have been offered a house that is in an unacceptable condition;
- the Council has refused to make an offer of housing.

An appeal will be investigated by a senior officer e.g. a Neighbourhood Manager in the Housing Service, who will respond to the applicant within seven working days. Where the applicant remains dissatisfied with the response, another senior officer will re-consider the appeal and respond to the applicant within 10 working days. If the applicant continues to be dissatisfied, a final appeal can be made to an Appeals Panel.

Where the grounds for appeal are related to the condition of a house and it is not possible to resolve the matter successfully at the initial stage, the house will be offered to the next applicant making a bid for the property in accordance with the procedure set out at 5.8.

### 7.2 Complaints

We aim to provide a high quality housing allocation, housing advice and information service to applicants. However, if an applicant feels that we have:

- failed to provide a service at a standard they expect;
- delayed in responding to an enquiry or a request for service; or
- failed to follow the Council's policies, rules or procedures,

they may wish to use Falkirk Council's complaints procedure to ensure that their complaint is dealt with promptly, efficiently and fairly. The leaflet "How to Complain about Council Services" explains the complaints process and is available from ARC, One Stop Shops/Neighbourhood Offices, other Council offices and from the Council's website. Staff can assist service users to make formal complaints if required.

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## **8. QUALITY ASSURANCE, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & RERPORTING**

### **8.1 Quality Assurance**

A quality assurance mechanism operates to ensure the integrity and accuracy of allocations processes. Each month:

- A check is made of 5% of new registrations processed to ensure the relevant information has been recorded properly. The checks are undertaken by a supervising officer.
- A supervising officer carries out a check of 10% of all allocations made to ensure they have been carried out in accordance with this policy

### **8.2 Performance Management and Reporting**

In addition to publishing the results of the bidding process as set out at 5.11 above, we monitor and provide regular reports to the Housing & Social Care Committee. These include information on the outcome of quality assurance checks together with reports on the under-noted elements of the Allocations Policy. This allows local Members to monitor the performance of the Service and the outcomes of the allocations process. This also assists strategic planning so that the Council is able to respond to changing patterns of need as they arise.

#### **Accessing the housing register:**

- Number of new registrations, including processing within the target timescale of 3 days
- Reasons for application to assess levels of needs and applicants' preferences
- Number of assessments of applicants' needs e.g. medical, homeless, including processing within the 28 day timescale

#### **Suspensions**

- Suspensions from the housing register including grounds for suspension

#### **Offers and refusals**

- The total number of properties allocated
- The total number of bids per property allocated
- Any refusal reasons

#### **Houses let**

- Houses let by applicant type (Home Seekers, Home Movers and Home Starters)
- Houses let by Band of priority (1,2,3 or 4)
- Nominations and Section 5 Referrals to partner RSLs

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- The number of applicants re-housed using HomeSwapper i.e. mutual exchanges

### **Appeals and complaints**

- Number of homeless appeals made including outcomes
- Number of housing allocation appeals made including outcomes
- Number of complaints made including outcomes
- Number of requests for Exceptional Housing Need and Social Need priority and outcomes

### **Equality information**

- Information on the age, disability, ethnic and national origins, race and gender of applicants on the housing register and applicants who make successful bids for properties.

## **Unsatisfactory Housing**

A house is considered to be unsatisfactory if it does not meet the following criteria as set out in Section 86 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006:

- is structurally stable;
- is substantially free from rising or penetrating damp;
- has satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating;
- has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house;
- has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house;
- has a water or waterless closet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house;
- has a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water, suitably located within the house;
- has an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water;
- has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house;
- has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings
- in the case of a house having a supply of electricity, comply with the relevant requirements in relation to the electrical installation (i.e. electrical wiring and associated components and fittings) for the purposes of that supply;
- has satisfactory thermal insulation.

## **LETTING HOUSING WITH CARE PROPERTIES**

### **1. ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND AWARD OF PRIORITY**

The registration form records basic details about the applicant, their household and their housing circumstances. There is a specific question on the registration form to find out if the application is for Housing Care. When an individual applies for Housing with Care, we will check with Social Work Services to see if a Single Shared Assessment has been carried out.

#### **1.2 Single Shared Assessment**

The SSA is a person centred approach which takes a holistic view of the person's health, social and care needs. SSAs are shared across health, social work and housing to facilitate partnership working and provision of services.

The SSA assesses needs across a wide range of situations including the ability of the applicant to manage daily living activities, the extent of support required and provided by others, the help the applicant currently has at home, the social activities they are able to take part in and any accommodation needs they may have.

The information gathered during the SSA is used to complete the national IoRN tool which classifies older people into groupings according to their relative needs. Eligibility criteria are also applied to assess the severity of any risks to the applicant's independent living and well-being and the urgency for a response to those risks. The eligibility criteria mirror the common standard eligibility framework for older people approved by Scottish Ministers, COSLA and ADSW which categorises the needs of individuals and which is to be applied by all local authorities.

If a current SSA is not already available, a home visit is carried out and a standard or review SSA is completed.

For the purposes of assessing an applicant's need for Housing with Care, the SSA will focus particularly on the applicant's care and support needs as well as their housing needs. The assessment involves the applicant and may involve family, carers or other professionals. Where an applicant lives out with the Falkirk Council area, a telephone interview may be carried out or a questionnaire is sent to the applicant. If necessary, confirmation will be sought from the applicant's current Social Work Service.

In addition, in order to ensure that older people are maximising their income and are in receipt of appropriate benefits, arrangements will be made for a Benefits Advisor to contact the applicant, with their permission.

#### **1.3 THE INDICATOR OF RELATIVE NEED (IORN)**

The national IoRN tool is a means of recording the outcome of a SSA and awarding a level relative to the identified needs of the individual with regard to the activities of daily living/mobility, personal care, eating, mental well-being and bowel management.

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Where the IoRN indicates high needs the applicants are considered for vacancies in Level 1 Housing with Care; those with moderate needs are considered for Level 2 Housing with Care and those with lower needs are considered for Level 3 Housing with Care.

The Eligibility Criteria Priority awarded to individual applicants is determined in consultation with Community Care Services.

An applicant's SSA – IoRN grouping can change higher/lower over a short period of time and should be subject to appropriate review.

## **1.4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

### **Priority 1 – Critical Risk**

Housing with Care applicants are awarded Priority 1 where they are assessed to be at critical risk in terms of their physical or mental health; personal care/domestic routines and home environment; participation in community activities and existing care arrangements. Priority 1 is awarded to applicants with one or more of the following:

- who are at major risk in their existing environment
- who are delayed in being discharged from hospital
- who have health problems which cause life-threatening harm or danger to the applicant or others
- who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- whose existing care or support arrangements have broken down

### **Priority 2 – Substantial Risk**

Housing with Care applicants are awarded Priority 2 where they are assessed to be at substantial risk in terms of their physical or mental health; personal care/domestic routines and home environment; participation in community activities and existing care arrangements. Priority 2 is awarded to applicants with one or more of the following:

- who are at significant risk in their existing environment
- for whom social isolation is causing observable low mood
- who have health problems which cause significant risks of harm or danger to the applicant or others
- who have difficulty sustaining an existing package of care or support
- to prevent unnecessary admission to residential care

### **Priority 3 – Moderate Risk**

Housing with Care applicants are awarded Priority 3 where they are assessed to be at moderate risk in terms of their physical or mental health; personal care/domestic routines and home environment; participation in community activities and existing care arrangements. Priority 3 is awarded to:

- Applicants due to frailty or advanced ageing
- Assist applicants access family or neighbourhood support
- Assist applicants maintain or increase their independence
- Prevent applicants becoming socially isolated
- Assist applicants access care and support services

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#### **Priority 4 – Low Risk**

Housing with Care applicants are awarded Priority 4 where they are assessed as having a minimal risk in terms of their care and/or support needs or their needs are already being met in their current home.

#### **1.5 AWARD OF PRIORITY**

Applicants are advised of the Level of Housing with Care where their needs can be met and the priority that they have been awarded in terms of eligibility criteria for an offer of Housing with Care accommodation.

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## **2. LETTING A HOUSING WITH CARE PROPERTY**

There are separate lists of applicants for each of the three levels of Housing with Care.

When a Level 1 or 2 Housing with Care property becomes available for letting, it is matched to an applicant on the appropriate Housing with Care list whose preferences for accommodation i.e. location and accommodation type, match the vacancy available.

When a Level 3 Housing with Care property becomes available for letting, it is advertised through the Choice Based Letting system. Adverts for Housing with Care 3 will indicate that preference will be given to applicants who have been assessed as requiring Housing with Care Level 3.

### **2.1 LEVEL 1 HOUSING WITH CARE**

As soon as a vacancy in Level 1 Housing with Care is identified, applicants assessed as requiring Level 1 Housing with Care are considered in order of Eligibility Criteria Priority awarded. Where there is more than one applicant with the same level of Eligibility Criteria Priority, individual applicant's IoRN level and characteristic scoring will be considered for allocation of the property. If there is more than one applicant with the same IoRN level and characteristic scoring, the applicant who has had this assessment longest is considered for the property. The Housing with Care Manager for the establishment will visit the applicant to ensure that the accommodation and level of support available are suitable for the applicant or if a review of the SSA is required. Where appropriate, arrangements are made for the applicant to visit the property.

If it is considered that the property is not suitable for the applicant, the next applicant selected following the process set out above, is considered for the property. If there are no suitable applicants on the list, applicants assessed as requiring Level 2 Housing with Care will be considered for the vacancy in order of award of Eligibility Criteria Priority.

Requests from existing tenants to move from one property to another within Level 1 Housing with Care will only be considered if there are no applicants living in mainstream housing with eligibility criteria Priority (1) on the list.

### **2.2 LEVEL 2 HOUSING WITH CARE**

Level 2 Housing with Care provides accommodation for applicants with a range of support needs, from those with moderate care needs in terms of their physical health or personal care to those with lesser physical care needs but who are socially isolated. In allocating vacancies in Level 2 Housing with Care, applicants across the range of needs will be considered in an effort to create a community within each individual complex which is balanced and sustainable.

As soon as a vacancy in Level 2 Housing with Care is identified, applicants assessed as requiring Level 2 Housing with Care are considered in order of Eligibility Criteria Priority awarded. Where there is more than one applicant with the same level of Eligibility Criteria Priority, individual applicant's IoRN level and characteristic scoring will be considered for allocation of the property. If there is more than one applicant with the same IoRN level and characteristic scoring, the applicant who has had this assessment longest is considered for the property. The Housing with Care Manager for the establishment will visit

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the applicant to ensure that the accommodation and level of support available are suitable for the applicant or if a review of the SSA is required. Where appropriate, arrangements are made for the applicant to visit the property.

If it is considered that the property is not suitable for the applicant, the next applicant selected following the process set out above, is considered for the property. If there are no suitable applicants on the list, applicants assessed as requiring Level 3 Housing with Care will be considered for the vacancy in order of award of Eligibility Criteria Priority.

Requests from existing tenants to move from one property to another within Level 2 Housing with Care will only be considered if there are no applicants living in mainstream housing with eligibility criteria priority critical (1) on the list.

### **Number of Offers for Level 1 & 2 Housing with Care**

It is anticipated that the comprehensive process of assessment and matching applicants to available vacancies will result in successful offers of Housing with Care properties. However, in an effort to ensure that Housing with Care is utilised to maximum potential in terms of addressing the particular needs of applicants and complementing community care services and to offer applicants the widest opportunity to move into suitable housing, there is no limit on the number of offers an applicant can receive for Level 1 and Level 2 Housing with Care.

## **2.3 LEVEL 3 HOUSING WITH CARE**

### **Advertising Level 3 Housing with Care Properties**

To ensure efficiency in managing void turnover and to minimise voids rent loss, arrangements to advertise Level 3 Housing with Care Level 3 are made as soon as a termination of tenancy is notified. Such properties are advertised along with mainstream properties every week. Adverts for Level 3 Housing with Care properties indicate that preference is given to all applicants who have been assessed as requiring Level 3 Housing with Care.

Properties are advertised on the Council's website, and in a weekly property newsletter that is available from the ARC, Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops, local supported accommodation projects, local libraries and in RSL partners' offices. Applicants can also contact a freephone telephone service to find out what properties are being advertised. Applicants for Level 3 Housing with Care can indicate during their assessment if they require assistance to bid for appropriate properties.

### **Matching Bids for Level 3 Housing with Care**

Once bidding has closed, bids received are assessed to prepare a short-list of suitable applicants. Suitable applicants are those who:

- meet the criteria in the advert i.e. have been assessed as requiring Level 3 Housing with Care
- meet the household size criteria for the property; and
- are not affected by the policy on suspensions set out at 3.3 above; and

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Where there is more than one applicant with the same level of Eligibility Criteria Priority, individual applicant's IoRN level and characteristic scoring will be considered for allocation of the property. If there is more than one applicant with the same IoRN level and characteristic scoring, the applicant who has had this assessment longest is considered for the property.

### **Number of Bids Level 3 Housing with Care**

There is no limit to the number of properties applicants can bid for during each advertising cycle (2 weeks). The number of bids applicants can make during each advertising cycle is routinely monitored and reviewed at the end of each year.

### **Offering a Level 3 Housing with Care Property**

The successful bidder is notified that they are to be offered the property they have bid for. Unsuccessful bidders are not notified individually. However information on Allocation Outcomes is available on a monthly basis on the Council's website and in the Property Newsletter. This information includes how many applicants bid for the property, the priority of the successful applicant and the date of award of priority. Staff will provide housing options advice to applicants whose bids have been unsuccessful.

### **Refusal of Level 3 Housing with Care Properties**

Given that applicants have the opportunity to choose which Level 3 Housing with Care properties they bid for, there is an expectation that successful applicants will accept the properties offered. However, if an applicant refused two offers of Level 3 Housing with Care properties which they have successfully bid for, their circumstances and Eligibility Criteria Priority will be re-assessed.

### **No bids received for Level 3 Housing with Care**

Where a Level 3 Housing with Care property is advertised and no qualifying bids are received i.e. bids from applicants who have been assessed as requiring Level 3 Housing with Care, any other bids received which meet the household size and age criteria are considered in order of priority as set out above.

## **2.4 NOMINATIONS TO RSLs INCLUDING NEW BUILD PROPERTIES**

Falkirk Council has nomination arrangements in place with RSLs providing Housing with Care in the Council's area. Generally, the Council is able to make nominations to 50% of available RSL Housing with Care properties.

Nominations for Housing with Care are made using the process set out above.

## **HOUSING PRIORITY FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND LETTING ADAPTED HOUSES**

Where an applicant has applied for housing because their house is unsuitable for them due to a medical condition and/or disability, a Housing Priority Functional Assessment is carried out. To be eligible for an assessment, an applicant must indicate on their application form or subsequent request for an assessment that they have a medical condition or disability which has an impact on their housing in that they have difficulties accessing essential facilities in their home e.g. the bathroom, toilet, bedroom, kitchen and getting in/out of the house.

### **1.1 ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS' NEEDS & AWARDED PRIORITY**

A trained Housing Visitor visits the applicant in their home and discusses with them, the difficulties they have with day-to-day activities around their home and how the property is causing them problems. The home visit provides an opportunity to discuss the range of housing options available, and offer housing options advice and support.

As well as completing a functional assessment tool, the Housing Visitor may also take account of any relevant previous assessment of needs carried by Social Work Services in awarding priority for housing.

Band 1 priority is awarded to applicants who are:

- Unable to access toilet facilities
- Unable to access bathing facilities
- Unable to access a bedroom
- Unable to access cooking facilities
- Unable to enter or exit the property

Band 3 priority is awarded to applicants who have:

- Difficulty in accessing toilet facilities
- Difficulty in accessing bathing facilities
- Difficulty in accessing a bedroom
- Difficulty in accessing cooking facilities
- Difficulty in entering or exiting the property

No priority is awarded where:

- The medical condition does not present functional difficulties around the home

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- The home is suitable or could be adapted to meet the applicant's needs
  - The medical condition or impairment is temporary or is awaiting medical/surgical intervention
  - There is no medical condition or disability.

The Housing Visitor may also make recommendations with regard to the type of housing which will be suitable for the applicant e.g. ground floor accommodation or particular facilities that the applicant may require in any new home e.g. level access shower.

Where applicants indicate that they are applying for housing due to a severe and enduring mental health problem, they require to provide evidence of involvement with Mental Health Service and that their current housing situation is impacting on their mental well-being.

Where applicants already have a higher band of priority for other housing needs, the higher band continues to apply. However, the Housing Visitor may make recommendations about the type of housing which is suitable or particular facilities that are required in any new home. These will be recorded with the housing application and band of priority amended to include an indicator (M) to highlight that there are secondary housing needs that may be taken into account during the matching process.

If the applicant lives out with the Falkirk Council area, the Housing Visitor will conduct a telephone interview to gather information to complete the assessment and may seek further information from the applicant's current Social Work or Health Service.

Applicants may appeal using the Appeals process set out in the Allocations Policy if they consider that the priority they have been awarded does not reflect their needs.

## **2. LETTING AN ADAPTED PROPERTY**

### **2.1 Advertising Adapted Properties**

An adapted property is one that is suitable for a person with a medical condition or disability and has one or more of the following adaptations:

- A low/level access shower or wet room
- An external ramp or altered steps
- A fully adapted and accessible kitchen

Adapted properties are advertised through HomeSpot, the Choice Based Letting scheme and applicants from ALL Groups (Seekers, Movers and Starters) may bid.

### **2.2 Matching Bids**

Once bids have closed, bids are shortlisted according to eligibility in terms of house size and are ranked according to Band of priority. Thereafter those applicants whose band indicates that a recommendation with regard to property type or facilities has been made i.e. flagged with M, are given preference. The property will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority related to a medical condition or disability and a recommendation which best matches the

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facilities available. Where there is more than one applicant, the property will be offered to the applicant with the recommendation longest.

### **2.3 Adaptable Property**

Where there is no adapted housing available to meet the needs of a particular applicant with Band 1 priority and a recommendation for adapted housing due to a medical condition or a disability, the applicant may be successful if they bid for a mainstream property which meets the following criteria:

- the external access to the house is suitable or can be adapted for the practical and safe use by people with a disability or others
- the internal layout of the house is suitable and can be adapted for the practical and safe use by people with a disability or others
- there are no technical constraints which limit potential alterations/adaptations
- the household's requirement with regard to household size criteria

### **2.4 Nominations to RSLs including New Build Properties**

Falkirk Council has nomination arrangements in place with RSLs providing adapted houses in the Council's area. Generally, the Council is able to make nominations to 50% of available adapted RSL properties.

Nominations for adapted houses are made using the matching process set out above.

## Accommodation Resource Centre/Neighbourhood Offices/One Stop Shops

<p><b>Accommodation Resource Centre</b> 21 – 25 High Street Falkirk FK1 1ES Freephone: 0800 587 4440 Tel: 01324 503600 Fax: 01324 503601 Email: <a href="mailto:arc@falkirk.gov.uk">arc@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Denny One Stop Shop</b> Carronbank House Carronbank Crescent Denny FK6 6GA Tel: 01324 504050 Fax: 01324 504051 email: <a href="mailto:housing.denny@falkirk.gov.uk">housing.denny@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Bo'ness One Stop Shop</b> 24 East Pier Street Bo'ness EH51 9AB Tel: 01506 778899 Fax: 01506 778900 email: <a href="mailto:housing.boness@falkirk.gov.uk">housing.boness@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Falkirk One Stop Shop</b> Unit MSUI Callendar Square Falkirk FK1 1ZF Tel: 01324 506868 Fax: 01324 506881 email: <a href="mailto:housing.falkirk@falkirk.gov.uk">housing.falkirk@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Camelon One Stop Shop</b> 256 Main Street Camelon FK1 4DY Tel: 01324 503640 Fax: 01324 503641 email: <a href="mailto:housing.camelon@falkirk.gov.uk">housing.camelon@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Grangemouth One Stop Shop</b> 5 York Lane Grangemouth FK3 8BD Tel: 01324 504550 Fax: 01324 504551 email: <a href="mailto:housing.grangemouth@falkirk.gov.uk">housing.grangemouth@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Dawson Neighbourhood Office</b> Dawson Centre David's Loan Falkirk Tel: 01324 501450 Fax: 01324 501451 email: <a href="mailto:housing.dawson@falkirk.gov.uk">housing.dawson@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Stenhousemuir One Stop Shop</b> 398 Main street Stenhousemuir FK5 3JR Tel: 01324 503340 Fax: 01324 503341 email: <a href="mailto:housing.stenhousemuir@falkirk.gov.uk">housing.stenhousemuir@falkirk.gov.uk</a></p>

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, large print or audio tape please contact one of our Neighbourhood Offices or One Stop Shops.

#### Arabic

إذا كنت تحتاج لهذه المعلومات بلغة اخرى، بريل، احرف مكبرة أو لشرطة كاسيت، نرجوا منك الاتصال بمركز الاسكان أو واحد من نييور هود أوفيسيز / ون ستوب شوبس. هناك قائمة بارقام الهواتف و العناوين متوفرة في نهاية هذا الكتيب.

#### Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دوسری زبان، بریل، بڑی ہفتی متبادل صورت یا سولے حروف کی چھپائی یا آڈیو ٹیب میں درکار ہیں تو براۓ مہربانی اکوموڈیشن ریسورس سینٹر یا ان کے کسی بھی نمبر ہڈ آفسز / ون اسٹاپ شاپز سے رابطہ کریں۔ رابطہ کرنے کے لیے ایڈریس لسٹ اور ٹیلی فون نمبر اس کتابچے کے اختتام پر درج ہیں۔

#### Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਐਕਮੋਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਰੀਸੋਰਸ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

#### Chinese

如果你希望獲得此份表格的其他語言譯本，凸字印刷，大號字體或錄音帶，請與 Accommodation Resource Centre 或 Neighbourhood Offices/ One Stop Shops 聯絡。在這本小冊子的末頁有一份聯絡地址和電話號碼。

#### Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś/chciałabyś uzyskać owe informacje w języku innym aniżeli język angielski, w języku Braille'a, w DUŻYM FORMACIE lub zapisane na kasetach audio skontaktuj się z jedną z Naszych placówek.

#### Lithuanian

Jeigu jūs norėtumėte gauti šią informaciją kita kalba, Brailio šriftu, stambiu šriftu ar įgarsintą, prašome susisiekti su vienu iš mūsų Apylinkių ofisų/Filialų.



**Falkirk Council**