



HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

Reviewed November 2022

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1. Introduction

Background to our Allocation Policy

An Allocation Policy is a core council document that sets out all aspects of our approach to allocating council houses and how we operate waiting lists, ensuring we contribute to the maintenance of stable and balanced communities. We recognise that the number of properties Stirling Council has available for letting is far fewer than the number of people looking for housing within the council area. Our policy aims are therefore to meet housing need fairly by:

- giving priority to those in most housing need;
- making best use of the housing that is available;
- helping to sustain our communities

In 2019 our Allocation Policy underwent a comprehensive review as a result of several changes including:

- changes to Scottish legislation on housing allocations (primarily the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014;
- updated Scottish Government guidance published in February 2019
- our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP).

As part of the review we analysed our existing policy and how the policy functions in practice, this gave us an understanding of the current issues that could better be addressed under a new policy framework. We then undertook a comprehensive consultation exercise to ensure the views of tenants, applicants, registered tenant organisations, elected members and other stakeholders were considered as part of the review.

The Allocations Policy was reviewed in 2022, and an analysis was carried out looking at how the policy was operating. Based on this, some minor changes were made to ensure that the policy continued to be fit for purpose and supports the Council's wider strategic objectives.

As a result, we have created a policy that meets the following principles:

- complies with current legislation and statutory guidance;
- which is fit for purpose and meets the needs of our applicant and tenants;
- ensures we meet our statutory responsibilities in relation to homelessness and supports the delivery of RRTP;
- makes the best use of our housing stock
- ensure our decisions are transparent, fair and equal.

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is available on request.

Legal Requirements

In the development of this policy we have made sure that it complies with the following housing legislation:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003

As well as the above housing legislation, we have ensured that the policy complies with other legislation, including:

- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981
- Children Scotland Act 1995
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Civil Partnerships Act 2004
- Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004
- Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Equality Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021

As well as complying with legislation we have developed this policy based upon the Scottish Government's "*2019: Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A practice Guide*" and the "*Code of Guidance on Homelessness*".

Equality Act 2010

Stirling Council is committed to equal and fair treatment of all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this policy on the grounds of age*, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

*except for limited circumstances where such age discrimination is allowed for the disposal and management of premises in accordance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010

The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords should be delivering for their tenants and other customers. The Scottish Housing Regulator uses these standards and outcomes to assess the performance of social landlords.

Therefore, to meet the standards and outcomes that are of direct relevance to allocation policy and practice, our policy has been developed to ensure:

Outcome 1: Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2: Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Outcome 3: Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Outcome 7: People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.

Outcome 8: Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.

Outcome 9: People at risk of losing their home get advice on preventing homelessness.

Outcome 10: People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

Outcome 11: Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

Outcome 12: Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

2. Eligibility for Housing

Who can apply for housing?

Most applicants will be eligible for inclusion on our housing waiting list provided your application form is complete and you have provided all the information we require such as proof of identification, birth certificate etc. and you are not subject to immigration control. Circumstances where you would not be eligible are:

- **Age** – if you are under 16 years of age as the law prevents us from doing so. Where you have applied for sheltered housing and are under 60 years old you will not normally be eligible for an offer of this type of accommodation unless there is a demonstrated need for the services provided.

We have also set out some circumstances below where although you will be eligible for inclusion on the housing list, your application may be suspended for a period of time and you may not be offered a property until the circumstances have changed, or until you have re-submitted your application in the case of having provided false information:

- **Condition of property** – if you are a Council tenant, before we can give an offer of housing, you must have maintained your current property in accordance with the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement. Specifically, the property must meet the Council's Acceptable Standard.
- **Transfer applicants** – if you are a transfer applicant i.e. moving from a current Stirling Council property, and someone staying in your property is also on our housing list. You will not be considered for any offers of housing until the household staying with you is housed.
- **Conduct issues** - If you have been evicted by Stirling Council, any other local authority or any other registered social landlord in the last three years because of anti-social behaviour you will only be offered a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). If you or anyone else going for housing with you has a current Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) you will only be offered a SSST. If you are a tenant of any local authority or any registered social landlord and your tenancy has been reduced to a SSST due to anti-social behaviour, you will not be eligible for an offer of housing until your tenancy has been re-instated to a full Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST).
- **Home Ownership** - if you own a property unless:
 - You cannot access your property; or
 - Occupying your property would lead to abuse; or
 - Occupying your property would endanger your health.
- **False information** - For all applications, if we have good reason to believe that you have deliberately provided false or misleading information to seek advantage on the housing list, you will be asked to re-submit a new application with up to date and accurate information. You will be suspended from receiving any offers of housing for up to 28 days while we carry out our investigations. If we find you have knowingly provided false information after you have been housed, we may take legal action to terminate your tenancy.

- **Outwith the area** – If you live outwith the Stirling Council area, you will only be eligible for an offer of housing where:
 - You are working or are actively seeking work within the Stirling Council area; or
 - You need to move into the Stirling Council area to be nearer a relative or carer; or
 - You are experiencing serious harassment; or
 - You are experiencing domestic abuse; or
 - You have particular social or medical reasons for wishing to move to the Stirling Council area.
- **Arrears/debt outstanding** - Applicants will be eligible for an offer of housing or a mutual exchange where: -
 - The applicant(s) had a tenancy related debt but has maintained an acceptable repayment agreement for a minimum period of three months and is continuing to make such payments; or
 - Any tenancy related debt has been paid in full; or
 - Any tenancy related debt represents less than one month's rent; or
 - All tenancy related debt is over five years old and has not been pursued within the preceding five-year period

The three-month period that any agreement must be maintained will be reduced to one month where the housing situation of an applicant is deemed to be so poor that it could result in a delay to re-house and be a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of any occupant of the house to the extent that it would be unreasonable for them to remain in the house. In this context “reasonable to remain” will be assessed in terms of the relevant homelessness legislation and case law.

For the purposes of the above, debts do not include: -

- Council Tax arrears;
- debts accrued while in temporary homeless accommodation; or
- any other debt of the applicant which does not relate to the tenancy of a property.

What size, type and location of property can I apply for?

To make the best use of our housing stock we will let a property based on the house size you require using the criteria below. For the purposes of the table below, a child is anyone under the age of 16. Any household member aged 16 or older will require a bedroom of their own.:

Household size	Number of bedrooms
Single person	Bedsit or 1-2 bedrooms
Couple	1-2 bedrooms
Family, 1 child	2 bedrooms

Family, with 2 children under five years old	2 or 3 bedrooms
Family, with 2 children of the same gender where at least one is over eight years old	3 bedrooms
Family, with 2 children of different genders where at least one is over five years old	3 bedrooms
Family, 3 children	3 or 4 bedrooms
Family, 4 children	3 or 4 bedrooms
Family, more than 4 children	4 or 5 bedrooms

You will be eligible to be allocated a property with an additional bedroom under certain circumstances, including:

- If you require an additional bedroom on medical grounds.
- If you provide foster care, or have been pre-approved to provide foster care or to adopt children.
- If you have overnight contact with children who do not reside with you on a full-time basis (unless this makes you eligible for a property bigger than if the children you have access to were a permanent member of the household).

In exceptional circumstances, we may agree to allocate housing outwith the above criteria, though this would be on a case by case basis and have to be agreed with the Housing Allocations Team Leader.

Housing Type

When you apply for housing you can choose to apply for a range of housing types. Some property types are more or less common than others and this can affect the length of time you will wait for an offer of housing. As an example, houses are generally more popular than flats and we have fewer bungalows than other property types.

Choice of Housing Area

With housing areas you can choose to apply for as many areas as you would like to stay in. As with housing type some housing areas are more or less popular than others and this can affect the length of time you will wait on an offer of housing. It is important that you carefully consider the areas that you would most like to stay in and don't select an area that would not be suitable for you as a refusal of an offer in an area may lead to your application being suspended (see section 7).

Our 54 allocation areas are listed in Appendix 1.

If you have been placed into the homeless group, you can choose one or more of the 9 homeless groups. These are listed in Appendix 2. If the size of property that you

need is unlikely to become available in the groups you have chosen, we will ask you to choose at least one group where we have properties that meet your needs.

Properties for People with Support Needs

Some properties, both Council and Housing Association owned, have been formally designated for those with specific housing and support needs. For example, people with mental health conditions or adults with a learning disability. The allocation of these properties will be linked to the provision of specialist support from relevant partner agencies; the Council's Adult Social Care Services for example.

The allocation will take into account both the housing and support needs of applicants. Only applicants who have been assessed as requiring specific specialist support will be eligible for these properties. Details of the assessment and placement criteria used to allocate them and how to access the assessment process will be available on request.

Sensitive Lettings

Sensitive lettings may be used in exceptional circumstances to ensure that individual allocations do not result in an unsustainable tenancy or create wider issues within the local community. A sensitive let means that a person at the top of the list for a particular property may be bypassed if, based on information that we hold, we believe it may lead to an unsustainable let.

Sensitive lets will be used in a minority of allocations, where there have been previous ASB problems within a void property or in the immediate vicinity of a void property or if there is any exceptional reason that a particular property should be let sensitively to avoid an unsustainable let. Any allocation of a property where a sensitive lettings approach is taken will be approved by the Housing Allocations Team Leader and details kept of the reason for using a sensitive lettings process and the reasons for any bypass of applicants.

3. Assessing Your Housing Need

The Housing Allocation System

Our policy gives priority to applicants with housing need as fairly as possible within the context of the relevant legislation and statutory guidance. It also ensures we make the best use of the housing stock we have available for rent, by matching housing needs to the various stock types and sizes.

When you apply for housing you can request a housing options interview where we can advise on the different types and locations of properties and how best to maximise your chances of being offered a property and what other housing options may be available to you. However, it is important to remember that applying for a house does not definitely mean we will make an offer of housing as there are more people applying for housing as there are homes available. Therefore, your application and prioritisation will be assessed on your housing need. Details of how we give priority are set out in the following sections.

Group Plus Points System

We operate a Groups Plus Points system for allocating housing. This means applicants are placed in a group with points dependent on their housing need. The Groups are based on the different circumstances which affect who we need to give priority to and we give a higher priority to people who come under housing allocation law. The Groups we use are:

- **Group 1: Homelessness** - applicants who have been assessed by the Council under homeless legislation and where we have accepted we have a statutory duty to find suitable accommodation.
- **Group 2: Strategic Needs** - applicants who have an urgent or exceptional housing need. Based on our analysis of the housing waiting list and the exceptional nature of the circumstances we'd include in this group, we expect the numbers of applicants to fall into this category to be very small. More details of the circumstances we would prioritise in this group are included in Appendix 3.
- **Group 3: Transfer List** – includes applicants who are current tenants of Stirling Council or a Housing Association or other registered social landlord living in the Stirling Council area who want to move home but do not have priority.
- **Group 4: Waiting List** – applicants who do not have a tenancy of their own, or who do not currently stay in the Stirling Council area or have their own property.

If you have only one housing need we will put you into the group for that need. If you have more than one housing need we will put you in the highest priority for your need.

Allocation Groups Targets

Our policy includes targets of the percentage of allocations we will make to the groups outlined in 3.2. These targets reflect our strategic responsibilities and have been set to generate additional housing supply so we make the best use of our housing stock. The targets we have agreed are detailed below and will be monitored annually and updated as required:

Group	Allocation Priority
Homelessness	50%
Strategic Needs	5%
Transfer List	25%
Waiting List	20%

* Note that there will be flexibility of up to 5% within each of the yearly targets.

Homeless Applicants in temporary accommodation

Stirling Council will also provide opportunities to homeless households, on a case by case basis, who have resided in self-contained temporary accommodation owned by Stirling Council for a prolonged period to convert their temporary tenancies to a permanent tenancy if the property matches their requirements.

Not all households with temporary tenancies will be able to convert this to a permanent tenancy, and consideration will be given to the amount of temporary accommodation in an area, the demand for this, and how settled the household are in the area when assessing if this can be offered to a household. The Housing Service will review all homeless households in temporary accommodation and prioritise eligible households, giving priority to:

1. Households with children in temporary accommodation, based on the length of time they have been homeless.
2. All other homeless households in temporary accommodation, based on the length of time they have been homeless.

These lets will be in addition to the Homeless Group Targets set out above, and will be reported and monitored separately from these targets. Until an offer to convert a temporary tenancy to a permanent tenancy is made, homeless households will continue to be eligible for offers of housing to ensure suitable rehousing is offered as quickly as possible.

Housing Points

Appendix 3 gives details of the groups, priority points and definitions we will use to assess your application and what determines the priority your application will be given on our housing waiting list.

We arrived at the points system following extensive consultation with tenants, applicants, stakeholders and elected members, all of whom helped determine the priority each category should be given. We also have taken into account the priorities as laid out in legislation and statutory guidance.

4. Applying for Housing

Applying for housing

You can download a housing application form from our website (www.stirling.gov.uk) by calling us (01786 404040) or visiting our offices. If you need any help completing your application form or need your application translated into another language, please contact us and let us know.

When we receive your completed application, we will assess this and may ask for further information on your personal and housing circumstances but we will let you know why we need this information and how we will use this. We may also ask that you keep us up to date with any changes in your personal circumstances such as having a baby or someone moving into or out of your home, as this can change your priority for housing or the property size you would be eligible for.

Housing information and advice

Everyone who is applying for housing will be given the option to complete a pre-application self-assessment and offered a Housing Options interview with one of our trained officers. At your Housing Options interview our officers will be able to advise you on the likelihood of being made an offer and provide advice on what steps you can take to maximise the chances of you being made an offer of housing.

Our officers will also give you advice on the full range of housing options in the Stirling area that are tailored to your individual needs. This could include information on: private sector letting, mid-market rent, shared equity, home ownership and help to buy schemes as well as assessing whether your current home could be adapted to suit your needs.

As well as exploring alternative accommodation other than social housing, our trained officers can also offer practical assistance or intervention to delay the urgent need to leave your current home, through mediation, housing support or through debt advice. As well as highlighting all your housing options our officers will highlight the potential short, medium and long term financial implications of each of the different options discussed.

Factors that will not be considered when allocating housing

When assessing your application, we will **not** take into consideration the following factors:

- Residency (how long you have lived in the Stirling area)
- Outstanding Liabilities (except when it is reasonable not to make you an offer of housing due to significant unpaid rent arrears, service charges or costs due to rechargeable repairs, see section 2.1 for more details)

- Age (except where you need a house that is for a particular age group i.e. receiving housing support or houses designed for persons of a particular age group e.g. sheltered housing)
- Income (how much you earn)

5. Offering You a Home

Allocating a property

When a property becomes available, we will decide which Group (see section 3.2) the property should be offered to. We will then identify all the applicants in the group whose needs and preferences match the property. Then we would offer the property to the person with the most points.

Whether you receive an offer of housing will depend on:

- Your housing needs
- Demand from other people on the list
- The number of properties that become available
- The number of allocations we make to applicants in each of the groups outlined in section 3.3

When a house is available to let our computer system prepares a 'shortlist' of applicants where their choices match:

- The size of the property
- The type of property
- The area the property is in

To make the best use of our housing stock, we will take into account if the property has been/or is suitable for being adapted for a wheelchair user, and where possible we will seek to allocate these property types to applicants that require them.

When a ground floor property becomes available we will seek to allocate that property to an applicant, or a member of their household, who has an assessed medical need for ground floor accommodation.

Where a property has been designated as sheltered accommodation or designed/adapted specifically to meet the needs of older people, we will allocate this type of property to those who are 60 years and over.

Properties Advertised as Ready to Let

Properties may be advertised as Ready to Let in the following circumstances:

- Where other properties in the street were formally offered and refused three times in the previous two year, or
- The property has been formally offered and refused three time, or
- The property has been available to let for 6 weeks or longer

Properties advertised as Ready to Let are advertised on the Councils website and will be let taking account interested applicant's number points awarded, their housing need, and the housing group quotas.

Reasonable offer

Every offer of housing we make will be a reasonable offer. This means the property we offer you will have the number of bedrooms you need as defined in section 2.2 of this policy and will meet the housing options recommendations following any assessment of your needs. Wherever possible we will offer you the type of housing you'd like but this might not always be possible depending on the availability of that type of housing. If there is a priority attached to your application, we will not allow you to be unreasonably restrictive in your preferences.

Offering you a home

We will always make you a formal offer of housing and will follow up any telephone offer call with a written offer. The letter will provide details about the property being offered including:

- The address
- Number of bedrooms
- Type of property
- Cost of rent and any service charges
- If the tenancy is a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) or if there are conditions attached to the tenancy (see section 6 Tenancies)
- What information you need to bring to your pre-tenancy interview

Accepting an offer

When we make you an offer we will send you a formal offer in writing and this will include the next steps. You must tell us within two working days if you are going to accept the offer. If you do not respond to the offer, we will assume you are refusing the offer of housing and this will count as one of your two available offers.

Limiting the number of offers made

We want to relet our properties as quickly as possible to minimise the value of lost rent and ensure that properties become a new home for someone as soon as possible. To achieve this, we have introduced a limit on the number of offers you can refuse to two before your application is suspended.

It is vitally important that your application preferences reflect where you would be willing to stay and the property type you want. It is equally important that you keep us updated on any changes to your preferences to avoid us making reasonable offers that you may refuse.

If you think that any offer of housing made to you is unreasonable, you can appeal against this being counted as a reasonable offer. Section 8 of this policy details our appeal process.

Suspending your application

If you turn down two offers of housing, we may suspend your application. The suspension period will be up to 12 months meaning you will not be eligible for an offer of housing within this time.

If you are on the Homelessness Allocation Group and you refuse two offers of housing, we will discharge our homeless duty to you and you will lose your priority status and your application will be moved to another Group and be treated as any other applicant.

6. Tenancies

Scottish Secure Tenancy

When we have made an offer of housing we will in most cases offer you a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) in line with our legal requirements. This means your tenancy will last for as long as you want, provided you do not breach the terms of the tenancy agreement which you will sign. Your tenancy agreement sets out the circumstances where we may take action to end your tenancy.

Short Scottish Secure Tenancy

In a small number of specific circumstances and where we legally do so, we may offer you a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) where your rights are more limited. The circumstances that would apply in this situation include:

- If you have previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last three years
- You or someone you live with has an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO)
- You, a member of your household or visitor has been involved in anti-social behaviour in or near their home within the last three years
- You are moving to the Stirling Council area to take up or seek employment
- Where we need to move you as where you are living is scheduled for development
- You are homeless and the property is let to you on a temporary basis
- You are in receipt of or will require a housing support service to help maintain your tenancy
- We are sub-letting the property to you as we are leasing the property we are offering from another landlord

We will always serve you a notice to inform you when we are offering you a SSST. This notice will state why it is being offered and the period it lasts for.

In the circumstances where a SSST has been given because of anti-social behaviour then we will convert your SSST to an SST at the end of 12 months provided you haven't been given a notice to quit.

When we change your tenancy agreement we will notify you and tell you what your new rights and responsibilities are.

7. Managing Our Housing List

Service Standards

Appendix 4 set out the service standards you can expect from our allocation processes as well as the performance indicators we will use to assess how we are performing. You can ask us for a copy of our performance at any time.

Verifying your application

Each application received is checked and we ensure we have all the information from you in order to process your application and award the correct points based on your needs and circumstances. It is important that you respond quickly to any request for further information as we are unable to finalise processing your application until we have complete information.

Reviewing our housing list

We will review your application at least annually on the anniversary of the date you registered this with us. We do this to ensure the information we have is up to date and that we make appropriate offers of housing.

As part of our review we will write to you asking if there are any changes in your circumstances or choice of property types or areas. We will give you 28 days to reply and if we have not received a reply within the initial 28 day period, we will issue a reminder giving you seven more days to respond if required. If you don't reply to this review letter we will assume you no longer wish to remain on the housing list and will remove you from it.

Removing you from our housing list

In addition to the annual review we will also remove your application from our housing list under the following circumstances:

- When you request, in writing, that you wish to be removed
- When we have been notified of the death of an applicant
- When you have not replied to requests for further information to support your application

Reinstating your application

Where an application has been cancelled you can reapply at any time and your situation will be assessed based on your housing needs at that time. If you contact us within 12 months of your application being cancelled and your housing circumstances have remained the same, we will re-instate your application.

Deferring your application

You can ask us to defer your application at any time. This means that you can remain on the housing list, but you will not be offered a property. For example, there may be health reasons or family or employment circumstances that mean you are unable to manage a tenancy for a period of time. However, you will need to contact us when you want the deferral removed.

Suspending you from our housing list

Everyone has a right to have their application added to our waiting list if they are 16 years or over. However, we can suspend your application from our waiting list even if you are in housing need. We will aim to keep suspensions to a minimum but will decide to not make an offer of housing in the following circumstances:

- if you refuse two reasonable offers
- If you give false or misleading information in your application
- If you withhold information that you should have told us about
- If you do something that makes your housing situation worse e.g giving up a secure tenancy with nowhere else to go
- You or someone that lives with you is responsible for serious anti-social behaviour or has been subject to an ASBO
- If you owe rent that you have not agreed a repayment plan for
- If you have abandoned or neglected a previous tenancy
- If an order for recovery of possession has been made against you

Our suspension period is for 12 months in all circumstances above.

If you think that any offer of housing made to you is unreasonable, you can appeal against this being counted as a reasonable offer. Section 8 of this policy details our appeal process.

Bypassing your application

There may be some circumstances when we don't make an offer of housing to the first or next person on the list and we call this bypassing. Examples of this are when a property that has become available has been adapted for wheelchair use, or has specialist adaptations.. We will bypass applicants who do not need that type of property or adaptation until we find someone with a need for the adapted property. We may also bypass an applicant where they have previously refused that type of property or location and we know they would not be interested in being offered a similar offer and to prevent an unnecessary suspension of their application.

We will always keep a record of when we have bypassed applicants and the reason for doing so, so that we can prove we have acted fairly and transparently.

8. Appealing our decisions or making complaints

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with a decision we have made on your application, you can appeal. You can appeal:

- The group or points we have awarded you
- Our decision to suspend or cancel your application with us
- The level of medical priority points we have awarded you
- If you think our offer of housing was not reasonable
- Any decision you believe we have made that is not in accordance with our policy

Appeals Process

You can ask us to review your case by writing to or emailing us at allocations@stirling.gov.uk or Stirling Council Allocations Team, Allan Water House, Kerse Road, Stirling, FK7 7SG. You should do this within one month of the decision having been made and you should make it clear why you think your case should be reviewed. We will respond to you with 10 working days.

If you are still dissatisfied with the decision you should make an appeal in writing to the Allocations Co-ordinator or by emailing allocationappeals@stirling.gov.uk within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of your case review. You must clearly state the grounds for appeal. You will receive a response within 15 working days provided you have given us all the information we need.

There is no further right of appeal.

Local Authorities have a legal duty to review homelessness decisions if requested. If you want to appeal a decision concerning your homeless application or an offer of housing, you should contact your case officer for assistance on 01786 237900.

Complaints

If you remain dissatisfied, you can use the Council's Complaints process. Information on this scheme can be found on our website.

Ombudsman

If you have gone through the Council's Complaints process and remain dissatisfied, you can write to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), at 4 Melville St, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS or contact them online at ask@spsso.org.uk or phone them on freephone 0800 377 7330.

9. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of outcomes

As well as monitoring the service standards outlined in Appendix 4, we will also monitor the outcomes of this policy to determine if it is meeting our statutory responsibilities and priorities as a landlord.

From time to time we will also conduct surveys to gauge satisfaction levels amongst our service users and to make sure we continue to comply with equalities guidance and legislation. We will report the results of these surveys to applicants, tenants and elected members

Reviewing the policy

The Scottish Government recommends the standard cycle for reviewing an Allocation Policy is normally between three and five years. Legislative changes (such as the 2014 Act) may also trigger the need for a review. Where our monitoring evidences that our policy is working well, we may decide to only check for compliance and not make any further changes to our existing policy. However, if a review triggers the need for any significant changes to our allocation policy, they we will consider a full review.

Appendix 1

Stirling Council's allocation areas

St Ninians (Cultenhove)	Raploch (Scott)
St Ninians (Lower)	Raploch (Craighall)
St Ninians (Newpark)	Raploch (Glendevon)
St Ninians (Mayfield)	Raploch (Ferguson)
St Ninians (Polmaise)	
St Ninians (Newhouse)	Strathblane
	Killlearn
Stirling Town	Croftamie
Riverside	Balfon
	Buchlyvie
Braehead	Arnprior
Broomridge	Kippen
Cambusbarron	Gargunnoch
	Thornhill
Bannockburn	Blairdrummond
Whins of Milton	Port of Monteith
Hillpark/Firs	Doune
	Drymen
Cornton	Milton of Buchanan
Causewayhead and Logie	Fintry
Bridge of Allan	
	Callander
Dunblane Town	Aberfoyle
Dunblane Rylands and Whitecross	Gartmore
Kinbuck	Killin
	Ardeonaig
Fallin	Balquidder
Throsk	Locheearnhead
	Strathyre
Cowie	Crianlarich
	Tyndrum
Plean	Deanston

Appendix 2

Stirling Council's Homeless Groups

Group 1:	Group 2:
St Ninians Culterhove St Ninians Lower St Ninians Newpark St Ninians Mayfield St Ninians Polmaise St Ninians Newhouse Cambusbarron	Bannockburn Whins of Milton Hillpark Firs Braehead Broomridge
Group 3:	Group 4:
Dunblane Town Dunblane Rylands Kinbuck Cornton Causewayhead Bridge of Allan	Cowie Plean Fallin Throsk
Group 5:	Group 6:
Raploch Scott Raploch Glendevon Raploch Craighall Raploch Ferguson Riverside Stirling Town	Callander Doune Deanston Blairdrummond Thornhill
Group 7:	Group 8:
Balquidder Strathyre Lochearnhead Killin Crianlarich Tyndrum Ardeonaig Callander	Aberfoyle Kinlochard Gargunnock Gartmore Kippen Arnprior Port of Menteith Stronachlachar And one of Balfron or Callander
Group 9:	
Balfron Drymen Killearn Milton of Buchanan Croftamie Fintry Strathblane	

Appendix 3

Group Plus Points System

The table below shows the circumstances when we will award points and the level of points we will award for each of the groups and categories.

	Points Awarded	Allocation Priority
Group 1: Homeless Applicants will be included in the Homeless list where they have been assessed by the Council under homeless legislation as threatened with homelessness or unintentionally homeless.		
Homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs	Applications held in date order	50%
Group 2: Strategic Needs Applicants will be included in the Strategic Needs list where there is an urgent or exceptional housing need that is not covered in Group 1. This includes the following categories of housing need:		
Applicants leaving the armed forces Applicants leaving prison Applicants experiencing delayed discharge from hospital or long-term care Looked after and accommodated young people HSPC partnership cases where an applicant required coordinated housing care and/or support solution Applicants who are kinship carers, fostering or adoption Applicants who need protection under the witness protection scheme Applicants who no longer need an adapted or accessible home Applicants experiencing severe harassment or abuse in their home. Young homeless applicants who are ready for a permanent tenancy following support from The Bridge Project. Exceptional applications	Applications held in date order	5%
Group 3: Transfer List		

Applicants will be included in the Transfer List group where they are not in group 1 or 2 and are an existing tenant of Stirling Council or a Registered Social Landlord living in the Stirling Area. You will receive the following points based on an assessment of you housing need			
Applicants experiencing domestic abuse	450	30%	
Applicants who are experiencing anti-social behaviour or harassment	50		
Applicants who are tenants of social landlords and are under occupying their current property	450		
Applicants residing in accommodation of poor housing quality or below the tolerable standard	400		
	200		
	50		
Applicants who need an adapted or accessible home for medical reasons (Plus 50 points for every additional household member with a medical need)	400		+50
	200		
	50		
Applicants residing in accommodation that is overcrowded	200		
	100		
	50		
Applicants residing in insecure accommodation	200		
	100		
	50		
Social inclusion	50		
	25		
Group 4: Waiting List			
Applicants will be included in the Waiting List group when they are not in groups 1,2 or 3. This includes people with no current tenancy, who stay both within and outwith the Stirling Council area			
Applicants experiencing domestic abuse	450	15%	
Applicants who are experiencing anti-social behaviour or harassment	50		
Applicants who are tenants of social landlords and are under occupying their current property	450		
Applicants residing in accommodation of poor housing quality or below the tolerable standard	400		
	200		
	50		
Applicants who need an adapted or accessible home for medical reasons (Plus 50 points for every additional household member with a medical need)	400		+50
	200		
	50		
Applicants residing in accommodation that is overcrowded	200		
	100		

	50	
Applicants residing in insecure accommodation	200	
	100	
	50	
	50	
Social inclusion	50	
	25	

Points Value Thresholds Definitions

For some categories there are a range of points available based on low, medium and high thresholds. The table below outlines the definitions we will use to assess which level of points you will be awarded for the multiple point categories.

Points Category	Definition	
Applicants residing in accommodation of poor housing quality or below the tolerable standard	These points are awarded when your current home is in poor condition and does not meet the Scottish Government's definition of Tolerable Standard. A house may not be fit to live in if it: • has problems with rising or penetrating damp • is not structurally stable (for example, it might be subsiding) • does not have enough ventilation, natural and artificial light or heating • is not insulated well enough • does not have an acceptable fresh water supply, or a sink with hot and cold water • does not have an indoor toilet, a fixed bath or shower, and a wash basin with hot and cold water • it does not have a good drainage and sewerage system • the electric supply does not meet safety regulations • does not have a proper entrance • there are no cooking facilities – this does not mean the landlord has to provide a cooker, but there must be somewhere suitable for a tenant to install their own We may organise an inspection of your home by environmental health officers to assess the condition. The level of points awarded will be determined as follows:	
	High 400 points	• Where there are multiple and/or significant property failures

	Medium 200 points	Where there are a small number or less significant property failures
	Low 50 points	Where you are sharing facilities, such as a bathroom, with other people who live at the same address but who are not part of your household.
Applicants with a requirement for suitable accommodation based on health reasons (i.e where your current housing is affecting your health or medical needs)	These points are awarded when an applicant or member of their household's current housing situation is not suitable for health reasons. A separate Medical Application form will need to be completed when medical points are to be considered. When there is more than one person requiring re-housing on medical grounds, the applicant with the highest points category will be used and an additional 50 points will be added for each person with a medical reason for re-housing. A medical advisor will review the medical application and determine the points level. While their decision is final, an appeals process is in place to request a review of their decision. No medical points will be awarded if there are no recognised barriers to carrying out day to day activities. Where an applicant has been awarded medical points and refuses an adaptation, which would ensure their property meets their needs, then medical points will be removed. The level of points awarded will be determined as follows:	
	High 400 points	- Where you have an urgent need for housing and your medical condition is being severely affected or made worse by your current accommodation and you: - are unable to return home from hospital, or - could be prevented from being admitted to hospital or residential care, or - are unable to access any of the essential facilities in your home, or; - are having extreme difficulty getting in and out of your home due to steps or slopes leading to your doorway, or - are having extreme difficulties moving around your home. - have a significant mental health condition which causes substantial risks or harm or danger to yourself or others.
	Medium 200 points	- Where you have serious physical or mental health and/or mobility difficulties and your home seriously affects your daily activities or; - Where you have physical or mental health and/or mobility difficulties that are likely to seriously deteriorate as a result of remaining in your current accommodation.
	Low 50 points	Where you have less serious physical or mental health and/or mobility difficulties and your home hinders daily activities.

Applicants residing in accommodation that is overcrowded	These points are awarded when an applicant's household does not have access to enough sleeping areas for the number of people in the household. The level of points awarded will be determined as follows:	
	High 200 points	You need 3+ extra rooms
	Medium 100 points	You need 2 extra rooms
	Low 50 points	You need 1 extra room or a bed space
Applicants residing in insecure accommodation	These points are awarded when the applicant's housing situation is temporary or uncertain. The level of points awarded will be determined as follows:	
	High 200 points	- You live in private rented accommodation and your lease has expired or you have been served with a notice to quit by your landlord through no fault of your own - You have a demolition order or closure order served on the property you live in - You are unable to remain in your current home due to a relationship breakdown
	Medium 100 points	- You live in tied accommodation and your employer has told you that you will need to leave your accommodation (e.g. as a result of retirement or redundancy) - You are living in homeless temporary accommodation - You have no fixed address/no fixed abode - You are living with friends/relatives and do not have access to your own bedroom.
	Low 50 points	- You are living with friends/relatives - In you live in a houseboat or rent a caravan
Social inclusion	These points are awarded if an applicant's household needs to move to be nearer family, employment, schools, etc.	
	High 50 points	➤ Employment – where you or someone who is to be housed with you has to travel more than 1 hour on public transport for employment ➤ Education – where the applicant's child/children needs to be near appropriate educational facilities. This may include when the child has 'severe low incidence disabilities' and their needs are being catered for by Stirling Council. Or where severe disruption to the education of the child is threatened. ➤ Support Care – if you or a member of your household needs to move to receive help or provide help for somebody else.

		➤ Special facilities – where you or someone to be housed with you needs to be near specialist facilities, for example a hospital, day care unit, specialist workplace, special needs education and you cannot get these services where you currently live.
	Low 25 points	➤ Social connection – where you have lived in the area or have close family relatives living in the area. (Close family is defined as parent, guardian, child, grandchild, brother/sister and step relatives of the applicant or joint applicant.)

Appendix 4

Performance Standards and Monitoring

The table below outlines the service standards we aim to deliver in terms of our allocation processes, our targets and the performance indicator we will monitor to assess how well we are performing against these:

Service Standard	Target	Indicator
Processing timescale for new housing applications	We aim to process all applications within 10 working days	% of applications processed within 10 working days
Processing timescale for amendments to applications	We aim to process all amendments to applications within 10 working days	% of amendments to applications processed within 10 working days
Processing timescale for medical priority applications	We aim to notify all applicants of the result of medical priority within 28 days	% of applicants notified within 28 days
Making best use of our housing stock	We will review all applicants on the housing list annually Carry out visits to all Stirling Council tenants where they have given notice that they are giving up their tenancy Carry out accompanied viewings for all offers	% of applicants reviewed annually % of visits made as a proportion of tenancy terminations when notice given % of accompanied viewings carried out
Ensure allocations are made fairly and promote equality of opportunity	Every offer of housing checked by two officers	% of offers checked
Percentage of lets to each Group Category	We will aim to let our properties in line with the Allocation Group targets on Page 9 of this policy	% lets to each group

Appendix 5

Financial Assistance to Move Scheme

In certain circumstances, Stirling Council tenants will be offered a financial payment to help them move. The aim of this is to:

- Encourage tenants in larger and adapted properties to move into a property that meets their needs, and to provide assistance to do so
- To increase the turnover of four bedroom and wheelchair accessible properties.

Eligibility

To qualify for this payment, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a Scottish Secure Tenancy with Stirling Council. Applicants with Short Scottish Secure Tenancies will not be eligible for the payment.
- Be currently under-occupying a four bedroom property, or living in a wheelchair accessible property and no longer require an adapted property (our OT will assess the property and determine if it is wheelchair accessible).
- Be moving to another Stirling Council property or Stirling Council based RSL property, meaning their current property can be re-let.
- Have a clear rent account and owe no other debts to the Housing Service (tenants in arrears or owing a debt to the Housing Service will be considered for the payment if the payment is used to offset their arrears or debts)
- Leave their current home in a clean and well-maintained condition that complies with the Acceptable Standard
- Not be subject to any legal proceedings for a breach of their tenancy agreement.

Financial Incentive

To help with the costs of moving, and to help with furnishing a new property, a cash payment of £2,000 is offered through the scheme to tenants who meet the eligibility criteria. Tenants will become eligible for the payment upon ending their previous tenancy.

A limited number of tenants will be eligible for the scheme in each year and the payment will only be made if there is budget remaining for the scheme in the year. The scheme may continue in future years depending on the availability of a budget to offer the incentive.