



Allocation Policy Review 2021

Introduction



We are excited to be working in partnership with another six landlords from around Scotland to deliver a new online Digital Lettings Service – **These Homes** which will replace the Homehunt system we currently use to allocate and relet our properties. We will be closing down Homehunt on **19 March 2021** and switching over to These Homes on **22 March 2021**.

As part of the planning process of moving to These Homes we carried out a review of our Allocation Policy during 2020 which, involved consultation with applicants, tenants and our partners. The changes agreed will be implemented when we move to These Homes, which, means that every application will be re-assessed.

The changes could mean a new priority pass being awarded or a different level of pass however, we will write to each applicant when they register on These Homes and advise them of any priority pass awarded.

This information leaflet is to advise all our applicants of the main changes that will be made to our Allocation Policy which, may affect them. If you wish to review a full copy of the new Allocation Policy then this is available on our website at <https://www.ochilviewha.co.uk/page/policies-and-procedures>

What are the changes



Priority Passes

Applicants experiencing domestic abuse

A new **Gold Priority Pass** will be awarded to any applicant who is experiencing domestic abuse and wishing to leave their current accommodation. This reflects the critical housing need, for a person who is experiencing domestic abuse and any children potentially being at severe risk. The housing need is also likely to continue to be significant when someone has left their home because of domestic abuse. This level of priority reflects what an applicant would be awarded if they approached the Local Authority to make a statutory homeless application. This award will enable the applicant to avoid having to make a homeless application if they choose not to.

Applicants with more than one priority pass

We have a new Priority Plus Pass which is given if an applicant is awarded two or more of the same level of pass, they will be awarded a Plus Pass. An example of this would be if an applicant had two Bronze Priority Passes, they will be awarded a Bronze Priority Plus Pass. If an applicant has a Plus Priority Pass, they will have

priority over an applicant who has only one Priority Pass at the same level. If an applicant has two passes at different levels the highest priority pass will be awarded.

Making Best Use of Our Properties

Elderly Amenity Properties

This housing is particularly designed to meet the needs of older people. When we consider which applicant would make best use of such accommodation, we will firstly consider applicants who are, or who have a permanent household member who is over State Pension Age. However, if we don't have an applicant who is (or has a permanent household member who is) over State Pension Age, we may let it to an applicant who is under State Pension Age. The second priority for such properties will be people under State Pension Age who have a medical priority pass and recommendation for that property type. We have introduced a third priority for such properties. We will now allocate it to an applicant who is or has a member of their household closest to the state pensionable age.

Access to Children -Bedroom Size Criteria

If an applicant has access to a child or children, then we will assess their bedroom requirement as follows: -

- ✓ If the applicant has residential access for at least 3 nights per week the applicant will be allocated one extra bedroom, if required, to accommodate the child or children.
- ✓ If the applicant has residential access for 4 nights a week or more, the child/children will be treated as permanent members of the household and we will allocate a property of the appropriate size to accommodate them.

In recognition of the fact that overcrowding resulting from access to children is only for part of the week and is therefore not as bad as overcrowding due to children who reside in the property full time, access overcrowding will attract lesser priority and will only be awarded at a **Bronze Priority Pass**.

Please note we will normally ask for proof that an applicant has residential access.

Suspensions

Grounds for Suspension

When an application is registered, applicants can begin applying for advertised properties immediately however, there are exceptions to this and circumstances where an application will be suspended from receiving offers of housing. The previous reasons for suspension were: -

- ✓ Current or former Rent arrears and no arrangement in place
- ✓ If an applicant or household member has a history of anti-social behaviour
- ✓ If an applicant or household member has been convicted of using a house or allowing it to be used for illegal or immoral purposes
- ✓ If an applicant or household member has been convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment which was committed in or in the locality of the house occupied by the person

We have added in two other reasons that an application could be suspended for: -

- ✓ If an applicant has had a previous tenancy which has been terminated by the landlord using the Section 18 (2) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 abandonment notice procedure or if the applicant's interest in a previous tenancy was terminated by the landlord using the Section 20 abandonment by a joint tenant notice procedure.
- ✓ If an applicant had a previous tenancy which was terminated by the landlord on the basis of ground 3 (condition of property) or 4 (condition of furniture) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 where there has been a deterioration of the condition of the property or, more unusually, deterioration of furniture provided in the property due to, for example, vandalism.

Period of suspension

In all cases where a registration is suspended, the suspension will remain only for as long as it takes to address the reason for the suspension. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 recommends that landlords should look no further back than 3 years when requesting a tenancy reference from another landlord. However, landlords can use discretion as there is no statutory time limit. In the cases of antisocial behaviour, previous convictions, abandonment and neglect Ochil View will not look further than 3 years.

The exception to this will be in the case of anti-social behaviour when there has been an on-going course of behaviour then it may be reasonable to look back further than the three years however, this will be the exception.

Contact Us

If you would like more information on the changes to our policy then please contact us by emailing housing@ochilviewha.co.uk or in writing to Ochil House, Marshill, Alloa, FK10 1AB or by phoning 07857650038 or 07857650042 or 07857650040.