



**Drumchapel
Housing**

Co-operative Limited

Choice Based Lettings

Policy Summary

Registered Office: 4 Kinclaven Avenue,
Drumchapel, Glasgow G15 7SP

Tel: 0141 944 4902

E-Mail: enquiries@drumchapelhc.org.uk

Web: www.drumchapelhc.org.uk

"committed to providing a quality service"



The following information is a summary which has been extracted from the Choice Based Lettings Allocations Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative is a Fully Mutual Society. This means that all of its houses are collectively owned by its tenant members. In order to become a tenant of Drumchapel Housing Co-operative, you must be accepted as a member and purchase a £1.00 Share in the organisation.
- 1.2 This Co-operative will allocate any houses which it has available for let or relet in accordance with this policy.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative aims to allocate houses efficiently, having regard to recognised good practice and statutory requirements. Its objectives are to ensure that its approach to allocations is:
 - ▶ **Simple** (ensuring that the system of allocation is clearly explained and understood)
 - ▶ **Lawful** (having regard to the requirements of all relevant legislation)
 - ▶ **Sensitive** (ensuring confidentiality and the importance of meeting all types of housing need)
 - ▶ **Efficient** (minimising the time that properties lie vacant)
 - ▶ **Effective** (recognising the importance of creating balanced communities)
 - ▶ **Responsible** (recognising the role of the Co-operative in terms of supporting the Local Authority in meeting its statutory responsibilities for the homeless)



- ▶ **Fair** (equal opportunity to housing for all applicants in line with our Equality Policy)

3. **MINIMUM STANDARD**

- 3.1 All houses offered for let by the Co-operative will meet the Co-operative's minimum standard for letting.

4. **CHOICE BASED ALLOCATIONS**

- 4.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative will operate a choice based system of allocation which will allow people who are on our housing register to choose the houses for which they wish to be considered. However, in selecting who will be given the offer of a house, the Co-operative will take account of a household's needs.
- 4.2 The Co-operative maintain a lettings database which provides brief details of all the houses which are available for let. The Co-operative will also prepare and send to every eligible applicant on the Housing Register, a property schedule for each property on the database which will include the following details:
 - ▶ type of property (e.g. flat, semi-detached, terraced etc.)
 - ▶ size of property
 - ▶ type of central heating
 - ▶ type of windows
 - ▶ access to gardens

The database and the property schedule will also include closing dates by which people must apply for the houses on offer and any restrictions with regard to the use of "priority tickets".



5. THE HOUSING REGISTER

- 5.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative will maintain a database of all persons (aged 16 years and over) who wish to be considered for housing. This database will be referred to as the "Housing Register". The Co-operative will have only one Housing Register - there will not be a separate list for existing tenants who are seeking transfers.
- 5.2 The Housing Register will include the name and contact details of the applicant, the minimum size of house for which they can be considered (based on their household details), the level of priority ticket awarded (if any) and the effective date of registration. Each person on the Register will be given a Registration Number.
- 5.3 All persons whose details are included on the Housing Register will be eligible to apply for any house offered by the Co-operative, unless their household would overcrowd the property, or their application has been put "on hold".
- 5.4 New build properties let for the first time will be subject to a Lettings Initiative and will not be offered as part of Choice Based Lettings.

6. PRIORITY NEED

- 6.1 This system will be kept as simple as possible, offering three levels of priority as follows:

Priority 1:

A priority 1 ticket will be awarded to persons who:

- ▶ have been assessed by the Local Authority as being homeless and confirmed as being in priority need

OR

- ▶ are living in properties which are below the tolerable standard, or which have been scheduled for demolition by the Co-operative



6.2 **Priority 2:**

A priority 2 ticket will be awarded to applicants who have a person included in their household who has a medical condition, the symptoms of which will be alleviated by a move to a different house type. It should be noted that a priority ticket awarded on the basis of medical grounds will only be taken into consideration if the house type on offer meets the applicant's medical requirements.

6.3 **Priority 3:**

A priority 3 ticket will be awarded to applicants who are living in overcrowded conditions. Examples of overcrowding would be:

▶ there are insufficient bed spaces for the number of people occupying the house

OR

▶ there are insufficient bedrooms to allow all persons over 16 years of age (who are not co-habiting partners) to have their own room

OR

▶ there is a child over 10 years of age who has to share a room with another child who is not of the same sex

6.4 **Discretionary Priority:**

The Co-operative may award a priority ticket, at an appropriate level, to deal with special cases. A special case may include:

- ▶ issues of safety arising from harassment or abuse
- ▶ a partnership agreement with another landlord to facilitate the clearance of properties to aid local regeneration
- ▶ referrals through the HOMES Scheme (see Section 15)
- ▶ sensitive lettings

Committee approval, based on a recommendation from the Housing Services Manager will be required before a discretionary priority ticket will be awarded.



7. USE OF PRIORITY TICKETS

- 7.1 If a person refuses the offer of a house for which they have applied using their priority ticket, then that ticket will normally be withdrawn. If the Co-operative is satisfied that a person refused a house for a valid reason, we may choose to allow them to retain their ticket. In all cases, if a person refuses a second house which has been applied for using a priority ticket, then that ticket will be withdrawn.
- 7.2 If the Co-operative believes that a person who has been issued with a priority ticket has not been applying for houses that would have met their needs, the Co-operative may withdraw that ticket after one year.
- 7.3 If a person has had a priority ticket withdrawn, they will still stay on the Co-operative's Register and can apply for houses that are on offer. However, they cannot support their registration of interest with a priority ticket. If a person remains on the Housing Register for a year following the withdrawal of a priority ticket, they may apply to have their priority reinstated on the basis of a new assessment of their housing need.
- 7.4 Priority tickets cannot be used for properties that are included in the aspirational let initiative (see Section 8).
- 7.5 The onus will be on the applicant to ensure that they apply for any priority to which they believe they may be entitled, and to provide any documentation or information required in support of their application.
- 7.6 If an applicant on the Housing Register is later categorised as a Section 5 by the Local Authority, they will be removed from the Housing Register and offered accommodation in line with the Statement of Best Practice Protocol.



8. **ASPIRATIONAL LET INITIATIVE**

- 8.1 Drumchapel Housing Co-operative recognises that some people (including its existing tenants) may wish to apply for moves to what they regard as better quality houses (for example, new build and/or main door properties). Such persons may not qualify for priority tickets and therefore would be extremely unlikely to obtain a move to a very popular house type. In order to ensure that people who are adequately housed can still exercise choice, the Co-operative will identify a number of houses during each year which will be offered on the basis that no priority tickets can be used. This will include new build first time lets.

9. **REGISTERING AN INTEREST IN A HOUSE**

- 9.1 The process of registering an interest in a house will be kept as simple as possible. If a person sees a house on the lettings database that they would like, they should register their interest by completing a registration of interest form, which is obtainable from the Co-operative's office on request.
- 9.2 By completing the Register of Interest Form sent to all eligible applicants and returning it to the Co-operative.

10. **ALLOCATING A PROPERTY**

- 10.1 When the Co-operative has selected a prospective tenant for a property based on the eligibility criteria, the applicant will be contacted as soon as possible thereafter. The prospective tenant will then be given the opportunity to view the house before being asked to complete the tenancy agreement.



- 10.2 If a prospective tenant does not confirm their acceptance of the property within 3 working days of being notified (this deadline may be extended if the Housing Officer cannot show the prospective tenant the property within that timescale), then the offer will be withdrawn and the property will be offered to the next person who best meets the criteria, as detailed in the procedures.

11. **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- 11.1 Applicants for housing must confirm that they are not in rent arrears (either with the Co-operative or another landlord), or that if they are in rent arrears that they are satisfactorily maintaining an agreement to pay these arrears off at a reasonable rate.
- 11.2 Applicants should be able to confirm that they do not have a history of anti social behaviour, criminal activity or drug misuse or supply. A person can have their application taken off "hold" where he or she can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Co-operative that such previous behaviour has ceased and is unlikely to re-occur.
- 11.3 Applicants or members of their household do not have to register with the Police.

12. **APPLICATIONS "ON HOLD"**

- 12.1 An application may be put "on hold" for one of the following reasons:
- ▶ the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria for being offered a house
 - ▶ the applicant has provided false or misleading information in their application form or in their application for a priority ticket
 - ▶ the applicant has been given a new tenancy by the Co-operative within the last 36 months



12.2 If an application is put "on hold", the applicant will be notified in writing of the reason for their application being put "on hold" and advised of when, and under what circumstances, this status will be lifted.

13. **APPEALS**

13.1 The Co-operative will operate an appeals procedures for applicants.

14. **MUTUAL EXCHANGES**

14.1 A tenant has a right to exchange his/her house with another tenant, providing that both tenants are Scottish Secure tenants and that the landlords of both tenants have given their consent.

15. **HOMES SCHEME**

15.1 The role of HOMES (Housing Organisations Mobility and Exchange Services) is to make it easier for people to move home within the social rented sector throughout the UK. The Co-operative participates in the National Mobility Scheme.

16. **MARITAL/RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN**

16.1 Where a marriage or partnership breaks down, the partners may amicably agree as to who shall have the tenancy.

17. **FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION**

17.1 Prior to entering into a Tenancy Agreement, the Co-operative will, as far as possible, check that any information given by the applicant in relation to their application is accurate. If information provided is found to be false or misleading, the Co-operative will not conclude the Tenancy Agreement and will offer the house to another applicant.



If the Co-operative discovers that a tenant gave false or misleading information after a tenancy has started, then it will immediately take steps to repossess the property.

18. **OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

18.1 To ensure that people can make an informed choice about which properties they wish to apply for, we will:

- ▶ provide detailed descriptions of the properties available for let
- ▶ include photographs and/or floor plans in our property schedules
- ▶ for selected properties which are vacant, we may arrange open viewings

19. **INFORMATION AND ADVICE**

19.1 The Co-operative promotes its Choice Based Allocation Services to its tenant members and prospective tenant members and to the wider community by making available information about our housing stock and advice about our range of housing services.

19.2 We aim to ensure that our tenant members and prospective tenant members understand their housing rights/obligations and options.

20. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

20.1 The Co-operative operates an Equal Opportunities Policy which applies to all aspects of the Co-operative's work, such as service provision to ensure fair and non-discriminatory practice.