



Ferguslie Park
Housing Association



Ferguslie Park Housing Association

Allocations Consultation Report

Introduction

Ferguslie Park Housing Association has a range of policies that set out our overall approach to providing services for our tenant and residents.

The Allocations Policy explains how we will manage out properties, let empty homes and meet our legal obligations as social landlords. As our Allocations Policy was due to be reviewed, we carried out a full review and consultation process for our Allocations Policy as required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

We began our consultation in April 2019 and this ran over two consultation periods for the updated draft policies until October 2019 where tenants, applicants and other stakeholders were invited to provide their views on how we will allocate our empty homes.

We appointed Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to assist with the initial consultation period where we held 4 open sessions in May & July 2019.

Legal Background

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 outlines the legal duty for all social landlords to set out how they prioritise the allocation of houses, transfers and exchanges and to publish these rules.

The Act states that social landlords are legally required to consult with the following service users when they are reviewing their allocation policies:

- Applicants on their housing list
- Tenants
- Registered Tenant Organisations
- Other Stakeholders

Consultation Methods & Timeline

All tenants and waiting list applicants were sent a letter in April 2019 providing information on the Allocations Policy review and the three options under consideration for how we allocate our empty homes.

The options were:

- No changes to the Allocation Policy
- We review the points awarded for each housing need but keep one waiting list
- We change to a 'Group Plus Points' system.

All tenants and applicants were invited to attend one of the four open sessions that would be held in the Tannahill Centre and facilitated by Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

The open sessions were held in May and July 2019 (one afternoon and one evening session on each date) and TPAS carried out interactive exercises based on case studies to gauge

from participants what they believed the fairest method of allocation was. Attendees were given the opportunity to discuss the scenarios and also to and ask any questions to the staff members in attendance to assist with their decision. The preferred option from the applicants and tenants who attended open sessions was a Group Plus Points system.

An online survey was also open from May until 31st July 2019, and 83% of those who responded believed that applicants should be placed in a group with other applicants with similar needs.

Also 83% of people who completed the online survey believed being grouped with applicants who have similar needs would increase their chances of being housed by us.

The online survey asked for those who completed the form to list housing needs in the order they felt most important. The survey results listed in order of importance:

- Overcrowding
- Spare bedroom(s)
- Victim of Harassment
- Homeless
- Living with family/friends
- Moving to give or receive support
- Medical Needs
- Domestic Abuse
- Leaving Care or Armed Forces

Taking the feedback from the open sessions and online survey, a draft Allocations Policy was presented to our Board for approval for further consultation.

The Board approved the Draft Allocations Policy changing to a 'Group Plus Points' allocations system for consultation on 28th August 2019.

The Groups were selected based on housing needs and the feedback from the previous consultation. The following Groups were used for consultation:

- Group 1 – Homelessness
- Group 2 – Urgent Housing Needs
- Group 3 – Unsatisfactory Housing conditions
- Group 4 – Overcrowding/Under-Occupation
- Group 5 – General Needs
- Group 6 – Care & Support
- Group 7 – Aspirational

A new online survey was created for feedback on the groups, and a letter was sent to interested tenants inviting them to respond.

Details of the policy and links to the online survey were posted onto our website and social media pages.

The consultation questionnaire consisted of questions and space for further comments to be provided. Comments were noted and provided to the Board with the final Allocations Policy.

Ten responses were received via the online survey. Questions and responses were:

Question 1

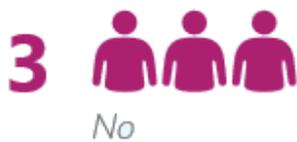
"I understand how the new Group Plus Points Allocation System will work."



Question 2



"I agree that applicants should be grouped with others who have similar housing needs e.g. overcrowding should be in the same group, Medical needs applicants should be in the same group."



Question 3

"I agree that if I have a Medical need I will be placed in Group 3 but will keep my total points due to the type of housing I will need."



Question 4

9 
Yes

1 
No

"I understand that I will be awarded points for all the housing needs I have, but I will be placed in the Group where my housing needs are the greatest (except if I have medical needs)."

Question 5

"I believe the points awarded to each housing need is appropriate."



■ Strongly Agree - 2
■ Agree - 4
■ Neither Agree nor Disagree - 2
■ Disagree - 0
■ Strongly Disagree - 2

Question 6

3 
Yes

7 
No

"It is fair that Ferguslie Park Housing association tenants who have 0 points have a chance at an 'Aspirational' move to a back & front door house from a flat?"

There was a 70% response that did not agree that tenants of Ferguslie Park HA who have 0 points (no housing need) would have the chance of an aspirational transfer.

The Aspirational Group would be a small number of lets per year (estimated 5% of total void properties) and the property vacated by the transferring tenant would be offered to an applicant in another group, essentially allowing for the same property size to be let again, and an applicant from another group to be offered housing with us.

The feedback provided changed the draft Allocations Policy for Medical Needs applicants. The updated Policy would award all points for all housing needs, however if there is a Medical Need award then the applicant would remain in Group 3 because of the type of housing they require.

The updated Allocations Policy draft was presented to our Board on 30th October 2019 and approved to be used from 1st April 2020.

We then considered the most effective approach to providing tenants and applicants with the information on how the new Allocations Policy will look and how they will be affected as all applicants will require to complete a new application form prior to the new Allocations Policy launch in April 2020.

We worked with a local animation company to develop a short film about the changes that will be happening that will show the new groups and the Policy live date.

The Allocations Animation Film is displayed on our website and shared onto our social media platforms via the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=JT2d7i8DfK8&feature=emb_logo.

Conclusion

The feedback we received throughout the consultation process was positive and helped to shape our new Allocations Policy.

Tenant and applicant feedback at the initial sessions with TPAS assisted in the decision to proceed with the Group Plus Points system for further consultation and policy development. The feedback provided on the applicants with Medical Needs, and which group they should be placed in, assisted with the changes for these applicants to remain within Group 3 being accepted into the policy and approved by the Board.