

# PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

## Your Guide To Our Allocations Policy



### *Our Aim*

*To make the best use of our  
housing stock by giving priority  
to those in housing need.*

This guide explains the aims of the Association's Allocations Policy and outlines how it works.

## **Policy Aims**

Paragon Housing Association aims to make the best use of the housing stock it has available by giving greatest priority to those in housing need.

The Policy aims to provide housing of a correct size and type to applicants in most housing need and who should receive priority in being allocated a tenancy, and to exclude the possibility of inconsistency, favouritism or discrimination.

## **How Does It Work?**

The Association will consider applicants from its own direct waiting list and those nominated by the Council.

The Association's own direct waiting list holds:

- Existing Association tenants who wish to transfer to another house, and
- All other applicants.

There are two systems for allocating houses.  
These are:

- Applicants nominated by the local Council
- Direct Waiting List applicants via a Points System

## **Council Nominee System**

An arrangement is in place with the Council which means that 50% of the Association's properties, which become available for let in any one year will be allocated to applicants from the Council's waiting list. Successful nominees become Association tenants. The remaining 50% that becomes available for let will be allocated from our own waiting/transfer list.

## **Direct Waiting List Points System**

Where an application is received directly, the applicant's housing need is assessed using a Points System.

The points system takes into account a number of factors of housing circumstances, giving each points. Points are added together and the applicant is placed on the waiting list in accordance with the total number of points awarded and by the date of application.

## How Are Points Awarded?

Points are awarded as follows:

### Registration

You will automatically receive 10 registration points when you apply.

### Health Assessment

If you are suffering from a long term serious medical condition which is directly caused or seriously aggravated by your current housing conditions and which would be improved by moving to more suitable housing, you can be considered for Health Assessment points. A Health Assessment form is available on request. You must complete every question and explain the type of accommodation you wish to move to and how such a move would help your health problem. Our staff will be available to offer advice and assistance.

Your completed application form will be assessed independently by the Medical Assessor (Housing) at Forth Valley Health Board. There is no need for you to contact your family Doctor direct. However, any additional information you give will automatically be passed to the Medical Assessor.

Please remember however, that a high medical priority grade is usually only recommended for people with severe and long term health problems.

The Medical Assessor considers the case, and points are awarded according to the severity of the case i.e.

High	-	<b>85 points</b>
Medium	-	<b>40 points</b>

If you are awarded health assessment points you will receive a maximum of one offer of housing suitable for your health problems.

If you refuse this offer the health assessment points will be removed and you will revert to your position on the waiting list to which your remaining points level entitles you.

If you are awarded health assessment points for a specific type of accommodation, and you do not wish to consider that type of accommodation, no medical points would be given and your application would revert to your position on the waiting list to which your remaining points entitles you.

Association tenants applying for a transfer who are awarded Health priority will be considered for the type of housing to meet their needs before non-association

applicants where they have the same medical grading and the same total number of points.

### **Homelessness**

If the Council's Homeless Persons Officer confirms that you are statutory homeless, either in priority or non priority need and not found to be intentionally homeless you will be awarded 100 additional points.

If you are found to be intentionally homeless you will only be awarded insecurity points.

### **Insecurity**

You will qualify for 50 points if you are not regarded as "statutory homeless" but may become homeless within 2-6 months and do not currently live with a parent or you have been found intentionally homeless.

### **Others Seeking Permanent Independent Accommodation**

If you are over 16 and living with your parents and wish to leave home to establish a place of your own **30 points** will be awarded.

### **Sub-standard Accommodation**

You will qualify for **50 points** if your home lacks certain facilities e.g. bathroom, electricity, running water.

### **Overcrowding**

Applicants who are owners/tenants will receive points for overcrowding if they need more bedrooms than they currently have at the moment.

We consider that couples and persons aged 8 years and over should have a room of their own.

We consider that children over 8 years of age but under 16 years of age should have their own bedroom. However, two children of the same sex aged 8 years or over may share a double bedroom if parents/guardians wish.

If your present accommodation is too small you will be awarded **30 points** per additional bedroom which you require.

If you are considered to be overcrowded and this is only partially alleviated by requesting same sex children sharing a double bedroom you will not qualify for the overcrowding points for the second child sharing.

## **Under Occupation**

If your present accommodation is too large you will be awarded **30 points** for each extra bedroom which is not required in your home. These points will only be awarded if you are moving to a smaller house. Under-occupation points will only be awarded to tenants of social landlords.

## **Children in Flats**

Applicants who are owners/tenants will be awarded **15 points** for each child under 16 years of age, if you live in a flat with or without a communal entrance unless you live in a ground floor flat with its own door access.

You will not qualify for these points if you are moving from one flat to another flat of a similar type.

## **Social Points**

In very rare cases an applicant may have an exceptional housing need which is not covered by other categories.

1. Care and Support - if you need to be re-housed to provide support or to receive support from a relative. **20 or 30 Points**
2. Harassment and Abuse - if you have experienced proven violence and harassment. **20 or 50 Points**
3. Employment - if you or a member of your household require alternative accommodation to take up new employment or currently have to travel more than one hour by public transport. **30 Points**
4. Fostering - if you are being considered for fostering. **30 Points**

In these circumstances extra points may be awarded after consultation with relevant agencies.

## **Two Tenancies for One**

Where there are two tenants, who both hold a Scottish Secure Tenancy, and wish to move from their existing houses to live together, **30 points** will be awarded to one of the applicants, not both, normally the one with the highest priority.

## **How is a House Allocated?**

The Association will allocate vacancies to applicants with the highest number of points, taking into account, the area an applicant has requested, type of heating they wish and their family size. Where more than one applicant has the same number of points, preference will be given to the applicant who has been on the list longest.

## **Who Can Apply For Housing?**

Anyone aged 16 and over can make an application. Applicants may be tenants who wish to transfer.

The Association operates an open waiting list and applications may be submitted for assessment throughout the year.

The Association aims to re-house those applicants in the greatest need and does not discriminate on grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, age, sex, sexuality, marital status, employment status or physical disability.

## **How Do You Apply?**

You can obtain an application form by either telephoning or calling into the Association's office or Website download. Staff are available to help you complete the Housing Application form. They will discuss your housing requirements and other information, which you need to record on the form. Forms are also available at Council One Stop Shop/Community Access Points.

## **What Should You Do If You Have a Change Of Circumstances?**

You are responsible for letting us know about any changes in your circumstances that may affect your application e.g. change of address, addition or reduction in family size, change in areas wanted etc. You should contact this office for a change of circumstances form.

This form should be completed and returned to our office and any change in points will be advised to you.

If you are going to be away from home for more than 2 - 3 weeks you should let us know, in case our staff need to contact you.

## **What Happens To Completed Applications?**

The information is assessed and applicants are placed on the waiting list in accordance with the number of points awarded. The Association will strive to ensure that people in real housing need will be considered for housing.

However, the Association has only a limited number of houses which become available for re-letting each year.

In some areas, there are few vacancies in any year therefore it may not be possible to house you quickly in these areas. To increase your chances of being housed as quickly as possible you should make as wide a selection of areas and house types as possible.

### **Will Your Application be Reviewed?**

Your application will be reviewed every 12 months. You will be asked to complete a form to confirm that you want to stay on the housing list.

It is important that you fill in this form and return it to us. If you do not return the form your application will be cancelled.

### **Cancellation of Applications**

Your application will be cancelled:

- Where you request the removal of your application in writing.
- At the annual review. You will be offered the opportunity to confirm the details of your application or update the details, if appropriate. A reminder is issued. If no confirmation or update is received within a specified time-scale, your name will be removed from the list, although your application may be reactivated without penalty if you subsequently provide the information required.
- If you fail to provide information to enable the Association's staff to process your application.

### **SUSPENSION**

You will be suspended if:

<b>REASON</b>	<b>SUSPENSION PERIOD</b>
Rent arrears or other tenancy related debt.	If you have rent arrears or other tenancy related debt outstanding, we will establish what, if any, arrangement exists between you and your current/previous landlord. If you have no arrangement in place or have not kept to it for three months you will be suspended until you have kept this for three months and are continuing to do so.

REASON	SUSPENSION PERIOD
If you are failing to maintain your current house and/or garden and this is, or has been the subject of action by your landlord within the preceding 12 months e.g. a Notice of Proceedings for Recovery of Possession	Indefinite suspension period - you can ask to be considered for housing when you can show that your house and/or garden are in a satisfactory condition.
If you verbally or physically abuse or threaten staff	Verbal abuse - 6 months Physical violence - 12 months
If it is proven that you have tenancy related anti-social behaviour.	Minimum period 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.
If you have deliberately provided false and misleading information to gain an advantage over other applicants.	Six months

### **What Sort of Housing will You be Considered for?**

You will be considered for housing suitable for your household size and needs, in the areas you indicated on your application form.

In special circumstances the Association will consider you for one bedroom more than your family size requires. Special circumstances are:

1. Health grounds
2. If you have access to children for overnight stays.

### **When will You Receive an Offer?**

It is not possible to say how long you will have to wait for the offer of a house. This will depend on the popularity of areas and house sizes and types you have chosen, the number of points you have and the number of houses which become available. Staff can offer you detailed advice.

When a suitable house becomes available for you our staff will contact you.

When you accept an offer of housing you will be offered a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) of the property and you will be asked to sign a tenancy agreement.

In some situations, your tenancy agreement may be a short Scottish Secure Tenancy.

Your existing application for housing with the Association will be cancelled when

you accept a tenancy.

### **Payment of Rent**

You will be responsible for rent from the date your tenancy commences. If you are currently receiving housing benefit or think you may qualify, you should apply to the local Council Rent Allowance office immediately. The Association's staff will give you general advice about benefits.

### **What about Transfers and Mutual Exchanges for Association Tenants?**

If you are already an Association tenant and you want to move to another area where the Association has housing you can apply for a transfer. You must have conducted your tenancy in a satisfactory manner. A transfer may be required for a number of reasons, i.e. due to a change in your household size, health reasons, or other pressing reasons and you want a different type of house or flat. You can apply for a transfer by filling in a Housing Application form and going on the housing list. Your application will be assessed alongside ALL other applicants in need. Our staff can provide further information. If you are an Association tenant, you may be able to exchange your home by mutual agreement with another Association tenant or with another tenant who holds a Scottish secure tenancy.

An application form for a mutual exchange can be obtained from the office. Please note that no exchange can take place until the Association gives its written permission.

### **Do You Have The Right Of Appeal?**

If you experience any problems with a decision taken on your application for housing then please bring it to the attention of any member of staff. You can do this by phone, in writing or personal visit. The person receiving the enquiry will refer it to the correct member of staff who will try to resolve this on the spot. If you are not satisfied with this response the matter would be referred to the Depute Director who will look into the matter and reply to you within 10 working days.

If you are still dissatisfied then you may apply to the Association's Housing Management and Investment Sub Committee to have the decision reviewed.

They will consider the matter within at least 20 working days, normally at the next scheduled meeting provided that there are at least 5 working days available in advance for the preparation of a report.

If you are still dissatisfied you will be encouraged to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS.

Tel: 0800 377 7330  
 Text: 0790 049 4372  
 Fax: 0800 377 7331  
 E mail: ask@spsso.org.uk  
 Web: www.spsso.org.uk

### Why Do We Ask You about Ethnic Origin?

The Association requires to ensure that there is no discrimination against any applicant because of their race or origins. The information you provide allows statistical information to be made available to ensure the Association is not being discriminatory. None of the information you provide about your ethnic origins or colour will be used to assess your priority for housing. It is for statistical purposes only, and like all of the information you provide, it is treated with absolute confidentiality.

### Contact List of Other Housing Providers

You can ask our staff for a list of other housing providers in the area who may be able to help you.

CATEGORY	POINTS
Registration	10
Statutory Homelessness	100
Insecurity	50
Others seeking permanent independent accommodation	30
Health Assessment	
High	85
Medium	40
Children under 16 in Communal/upper flats (per child)	15
Sub-standard accommodation	50
Overcrowding - per bedroom	30
Under-occupation - per bedroom not used - Only awarded to tenants of Social Landlords	30
Social Points	
Care and Support	20 or 30
Harassment and Abuse	20 or 50
Employment or Fostering	30
Two Scottish Secure Tenancies for one	30

## SUMMARY OF ACCOMMODATION YOU CAN APPLY FOR

Family Size		1/2 apt Pend or 1 Bedroom	3apt 2 Bedrooms	4apt 3 Bedrooms
Single applicant		YES		
Joint applicants/couple		YES	YES	
Single/joint applicant + 1 child			YES	
Single/joint applicant + 2 children under 8 years	1 bedroom each child 2 children share double bedroom		YES	YES
Single/joint applicant + 2 children over 8 years	1 bedroom each child 2 children same sex share double bedroom		YES	YES

Family Size		4apt 3 Bedrooms	5apt 4 Bedrooms	6 apt 5 Bedrooms
Single/joint applicant + 3 children under 8 years	single/couple 1 room 1 bedroom each child or 1 child in own room + 2 children share double bedroom	YES	YES	
Single/joint applicant + 3 children over 8 years	single/couple 1 room 1 bedroom each child		YES	
Single/joint applicant + 3 children over 8 years (same sex children sharing)	single/couple 1 room 1 child in own room +2 children same sex share double bedroom	YES		
Single/joint applicant + 4 children under 8 years	single/couple 1 room 1 bedroom per child or 2 children share double bedroom + 2 children share double bedroom or 2 x 1 child in own room +2 children share double bedroom	YES	YES	YES

Family Size		4apt 3 Bedrooms	5apt 4 Bedrooms	6 apt 5 Bedrooms
Single/joint applicant + 4 children over 8 years	single/couple 1 room 1 bedroom each child			YES
Single/joint applicant + 4 children over 8 years (Same sex children sharing)	single/couple 1 room 2 children share double bedroom + 2 children same sex share double bedroom  2 x 1child in own room + 2 children same sex share double bedroom	YES	YES	
Single/joint applicant + 5 children under 8 years	single/couple 1 room 1child in own room + 2 x 2 children double bedroom  3 children own room + 2 children share double bedroom		YES	YES

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