

SCOTTISH VETERANS RESIDENCES (SVR)

**ALLOCATION POLICY
For
SOCIAL HOUSING
And
HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES**

October 2019

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ALLOCATION POLICY

Principles

Consistency – The SVR will apply the Allocations Policy in a fair and consistent manner so that all applicants with similar characteristics are treated in a similar manner to achieve similar outcomes.

Openness - The SVR will provide explanatory leaflets on the Policy and Information on the operation of the Allocation Policy on request (whilst maintaining individual confidentiality);

Legality – SVR will ensure the Allocation Policy reflects the legal framework and best practice.

Responsiveness – SVR seeks to have a policy which is capable of responding to a wide range of complex needs and circumstances. Applicants for housing support services will be offered an interview appointment within 3 working days of the initial contact or as contractually agreed with Commissioned Services.

Equal Opportunities – SVR will act in a manner to encourage equal opportunities and will seek to ensure that information on the Allocations Policy in a manner consistent with equal opportunities.

Objectives

- To address ex-service and merchant marine persons housing needs.
- To assess applicants for housing in an objective, consistent and fair manner, complying with the relevant legislation and best practice.
- To sustain and promote local communities as far as possible.
- To monitor performance and respond to changing patterns of needs as they may arise by reviewing the Allocations Policy of the SVR on a regular basis.
- To inform the SVR of the strategic planning process.
- To be as straightforward as possible and to be written and explained without the use of jargon.

Acceptance of Applications to the Housing List

The SVR will accept applications from ex-service and merchant marine personnel and their spouses or partners. Up to 10% of SVR properties may be let to the community as a whole providing there are no veterans on the waiting list.

The SVR will seek to ensure equality of treatment for all applicants without prejudice or discrimination based on class, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, age, disability or illness.

Application for social housing can be made jointly between members of a household. Where a joint application is made, a joint tenancy will normally be offered. For the Housing Support Services see specific guidance at Appendix 1.

The SVR will retain the right to exclude those from the waiting list who have been evicted by any other social or private landlord for anti-social behavior. In addition individuals who are in rent

arrears with the SVR will be similarly excluded until a mutually agreed repayment arrangement is set up.

The Assessment of Priorities for Housing

The SVR will assess all applicants for housing on a fair and consistent basis. The placing on the Housing List will be determined by the numbers of points awarded to the applicant, on the basis of their current circumstances. From 1st May 2019 SVR is required to give reasonable preference to:

homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs (but not if they only become such persons as a result of a local authority landlord having regard to a 'restricted person'^[5]);

people who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have unmet housing needs; and

tenants of houses which are held by a social landlord and which the social landlord selecting its tenants considers to be under-occupied.

The points system set out below aims to ensure that reasonable preference is given to applicants with these types of housing need, in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

To create a balanced and sustainable community whilst giving fair and open access to all applicants SVR will allocate 2/3 lets to homeless applicant and 1/3 to transfers in the first place and then general need applicants.

Medical Needs

The SVR will as and when required outsource professional medical advice in the assessment of medical needs. The medical assessment will be completely independent of the SVR any decision being final with no appeal.

Overcrowding

To calculate overcrowding points, the SVR considers that bedrooms are required for-

- Husband/wife or similar civil partnerships living together
- Each person aged 16 years or over
- Children aged 6 years or over of different sex from other children of any age
- No more than two persons of any age should occupy one bedroom
- Children of the same sex where there is an age difference of 4 years or more between the elder and the younger child.
- Applicants current accommodation will be assessed on the above basis and 30 points awarded for each bedroom needed, up to a maximum of 120 points.
- In cases where an additional bedroom need arises from pregnancy, overcrowding points will be added to the application from the date of confirmation of the pregnancy. However, in allocating

properties, preference will be given to instances where overcrowding currently occurs, rather than to instances of potential overcrowding.

- Any points awarded for overcrowding will be considered in relation to the actual number of bedrooms in the property under consideration.

Occasional Overcrowding as a result of Access to Children

In cases where an additional bedroom is required for frequent and regular overnight access to children a total of 15 points will be awarded. The award of such points will only be made where access visits result in overcrowding and will be subject to proof of frequent overnight access arrangements being provided from, for example the Court, a solicitor or other appropriate professional such as a social worker. The maximum points award in this category is 15 points.

Poor Housing Conditions

Where applicants are occupying housing which is below the tolerable standard, 10 points will be awarded for each of the standards failed as listed below. The maximum points awarded will be 100 points.

Points will be awarded when the property;

- Is not structurally stable
- Is not substantially free from rising or penetrating damp
- Does not have satisfactory lighting, ventilation or heating
- Does not have an adequate supply of piped wholesome fresh water available within the house.
- Does not have a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water within the house.
- Does not have a toilet within the house for the exclusive use of the occupants.
- Does not have an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water.
- Does not have satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food.
- Does not have a fixed bath or shower with a hot and cold water supply.
- Does not have a wash hand basin with a hot and cold water supply.
- Living in a mobile home which is overcrowded or lacking in basic amenities.

Insecure Tenure

Applicants who are living in insecure accommodation will be awarded 15 points. The definition of insecure accommodation includes lodging, arrangements, short assured tenancies, tied tenancies, HMF tenancies, and rural lease properties. Other situations, eg living with friends, may also be deemed to be insecure by the Voids & Allocations Officers.

Homelessness

Applicants who become homeless and the relevant local authority accepts the applicant is homeless, in priority need and unintentionally homeless under the terms of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness Etc (Scotland) Act 2003 will be awarded 75 points for homelessness.

Sharing Amenities

Where applicant shares amenities with other people who are not to be housed with the applicant and his/her family, points will be awarded for the amenities which are shared with that household:

- Inside toilet 4 points
- Outside toilet 5 points
- Sink 2 points
- Wash hand basin 2 points
- Kitchen 3 points
- Cold Water 2 points
- Hot Water 2 points
- Bath/Shower 3 points
- Electricity 2 points

For applicants in flatted accommodation, points will be awarded where applicants:

- Share garden/drying area ground 2 points
- Share common access to front door 2 points
- Access their property by means of an external stairwell 2 points
(shared or exclusive use)

Exceptional Circumstances

Where there are exceptional circumstances which cannot be recognised by the award of points under the factors detailed above, exceptional circumstances points may be awarded at the discretion of the Housing Manager, following confirmation of the particular circumstances of each case with any appropriate agency.

Points may be awarded on a range of up to a maximum of 100 points.

An award of points under this heading of the policy is intended to deal with extremely urgent and/or exceptional circumstances which cannot be recognised elsewhere in the policy (including medical needs), the award of such points will normally be made for one offer of housing.

ALLOCATION PROCEDURE AND POLICY FOR HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

Allocation Procedure

General A fundamental principle of SVR is that it exists to help veterans of the armed forces/merchant marine and their respective spouses/partners who find themselves in need and who are willing to accept single living accommodation in one of the SVR Housing Support Services.. This particular client group will invariably have support needs which SVR management staff will have to be cognizant off and be prepared to adapt procedures to ensure that the individual applicant is given the best possible opportunity to present his/her case for access to the accommodation.

Request for Accommodation

There are primarily three routes by which the SVR client group can approach the Housing Support Services for accommodation:

- Direct walk in by client.
- Direct application by client by phone, letter, email
- Referral by third party eg family, SSAFA etc, local authority

Applicants for accommodation are to be offered an interview appointment within 3 working days (or as contracted for commissioned services) of the initial contact. In each case the overriding priority is to engage with the potential resident at the earliest opportunity and it is essential that no artificial barriers delay this meeting.

The identity of any applicant is to be verified, wherever possible, prior to interview and where practicable any background information on the applicant sought. If the applicant's identity is verified and he/she has no other accommodation, then the lack of background details must not be used as a bar to being interviewed and subsequently offered accommodation provided he/she has had a positive outcome from the assessment. In such a situation, risk management of a particular resident will need to be addressed and staff controls put in place to minimize any potential risk.

If an applicant misses an interview for whatever reason, every effort is to be made to reschedule the interview at the earliest opportunity.

Interview Process

- A manager or senior support worker/team leader and one other support staff member should be present at all interviews for accommodation.
- Notes of the interview are to be taken and subsequently kept, stating why an applicant has been accepted or refused for accommodation.
- If an applicant presents him/herself for interview and who, in the manager's opinion, is unfit through, for example, alcohol, drug misuse or intimidating manner, then the interview is to be cancelled and a new date set. The manager must also inform the applicant for his/her reason for cancelling the interview.

Allocation Policy

- The SVR operates a non-discriminatory allocation policy within the Rules of the Association.
- Accommodation will be primarily allocated to such former members of any part of the Armed Forces of the Crown/Merchant Marine, their spouses and the widows and widowers of former residents as are in necessitous circumstances. Up to 10% of rooms may be allocated to non-veterans should accommodation be available and no veteran is on the waiting list but all other entry criteria remain extant.
- The allocation of accommodation to married couples and widows will be subject to suitable accommodation being available.
- Due to the communal living nature of the Housing Support Services the properties are not suitable for those on the Sex Offenders Register nor will accommodation be offered to those with convictions for arson.
- Physical, financial (for Housing Benefit application purposes only) and social circumstances will be considered when allocating accommodation. Priority will be given to applicants who are homeless or who have an immediate accommodation need.
- Applicants for accommodation must be a minimum of 17 years of age and must be mentally and physically capable of looking after themselves.
- Disabled applicants will be considered for accommodation but their acceptance may be dependent upon the extent of their disability and the availability of suitable accommodation.
- Consideration for accommodation will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of the application form.
- The Manager of the Residence, or in his/her absence the Senior Support Workers/Team Leaders will be responsible for accepting residents and allocating accommodation.
- A register of all applications for accommodation will be maintained. This register will clearly indicate the main reasons on which the application was accepted or rejected.
- Allocation of accommodation will be subject to the applicant accepting the Support Agreement & Accommodation Rules.