



ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Date Approved by Management Committee	Next Review Due Date	Author
27 November 2019 Reviewed on 21 April 2021	November 2022	Theresa Toner

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the standards and guidance that Charing Cross Housing Association will follow to ensure that properties are allocated to those in most of need of them.
- 1.2 Charing Cross primary aim is to provide affordable and well managed rental accommodation to those in housing need, and are committed to providing balanced and sustainable communities. We aim to do this by pursuing the following objectives:
- Identifying those with high levels of housing needs
 - Ensuring our allocations process is open to all sections of the community
 - Making the best use of our stock and using our allocation process to assist in the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities
 - Having clear targets for the allocation of properties and ensuring that allocations can be readily monitored through information systems
 - Processing applications efficiently and effectively whilst ensuring confidentiality and access to information will be in line with legal requirements
- 1.3 References and Sources
- A Housing Practitioner's Guide to Integrating Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Second Editions, Scottish Refugee Council
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - General data Protection Regulations
 - Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (specific duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012
 - Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 20019 'Homelessness Section 5: Guidance on Good Reason'
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Legal Framework for Social Housing Allocations, Statutory Guidance for Social Landlords. Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 (Scottish Government)
 - Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009
 - Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005

- Minimum Period for Applications to remain in force – Suspension Under Section 20B of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. Statutory guidance Housing Scotland Act 2014 (Scottish Government 2018)

- Scottish Government's Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2005
- The Scottish Social housing Charter (2017)
- Scottish Government Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A Practice guide February 2019
- Suspending Housing Applicants : A Practical Guide (CIH (book) 2009)

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Housing Manager will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is implemented by all staff
- Ensuring that staff are designated to deal with the allocation of properties
- Monitoring systems and practices, in order to ensure that all applications and applications are dealt with in a consistent and fair approach
- Preparing local lettings plans for approval by the Director and Management Committee

3 IMPACT ON DIVERSITY

3.1 This policy applies to the allocation and letting of Charing Cross properties as outlined above.

3.2 Charing Cross demonstrates its commitment to diversity and promotes equality by ensuring that this policy is applied in a manner that is fair to the community as a whole. This will be done with due regard to the protected characteristics identified under the Equality Act 2010.

3.3 Charing Cross also evidences its obligations to diversity and equality by taking this into consideration when shaping policy and delivering our services. All our applicants are asked to provide diversity details and allocations regularly monitored to ensure that housing is being offered and allocated in a fair and consistent manner.

4 CUSTOMER CONSULTATION

4.1 Current applicants and tenants were invited to take part in a survey both online and via paper if requested.

5 MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

5.1 This policy will be monitored to ensure that operational arrangements are compliant with legislation and reflect best practice. The Director will commission cases to be audited on a regular basis. Records of ASB cases stored on the appropriate systems will be reviewed to ensure cases are dealt with in a timely, fair and transparent manner.

- 5.2 Until a new policy is formally adopted this document will remain in force and operational.
- 5.3 This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the policy review programme agreed by the management committee.
- 5.4 If there are significant changes to legislation or regulation or there are found to be failing in this policy, as a result of complaints or findings from any independent organisations, the Director will initiate an immediate review.

6 APPROVAL

- 6.1 The policy was approved by the management committee and will be subject to review as per our review timetable.

OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

1 ACCESS TO HOUSING

- 1.1 Applicants can gain access to Charing Cross' general needs and amenity housing through one or more of these routes:
- Charing Cross housing list
 - Local authority section 5 referrals
 - Existing tenant's wishing to transfer
 - Mutual exchanges
- 1.2 Charing Cross will accept applications for general rented properties from any applicant over the age of 16. There may be certain circumstances where it would be helpful to accept an application from someone six months prior to their 16th birthday (e.g. to help the transition of a young person leaving care, however they would not be allocated a property until they have turned 16.
- 1.3 The Association only has a small number of properties available for allocation each year, so cannot guarantee being able to offer a house to all applicants accepted onto the housing list. Even if the circumstances of an applicant merit a high priority, it cannot be guaranteed that a house will become available within a reasonable timescale
- 1.4 Eligibility for different property types
- General needs housing – this is accommodation that is suitable for anyone regardless of age, mobility or other impairment
 - Amenity housing – the allocation of these properties is age and needs defined through direct applications or local authority section 5 referrals.

2 LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

- 2.1 To ensure the best use of stock and to meet the needs of applicants and local communities, Charing Cross operates local lettings plan, which are reviewed at least on an annual basis by Management Committee
- 2.2 The Local Lettings Plan will set out the expected number of properties for letting during the coming year and set targets based on community population and mix.
- 2.3 The Local lettings Plan will also incorporate agreed targets with the local authority for section 5 referrals and other protocols

3 INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

- 3.1 Where there is information for available, the Association will attempt to provide applicants with an estimate of the likely waiting time for their choice of property and demand in their area of choice.

4 SUSPENSIONS

4.1 Where Charing Cross has accepted direct applications, applicants will be suspended from the waiting list for the following reasons

- Where applicant has rent arrears, or any other debts attributed to a current or previous tenancy
 - The applicant has tenancy related convictions and the Association is not satisfied that such behaviour has ceased and is unlikely to re-occur
 - On grounds of conduct: where the applicant has had an order for recovery of possession on certain grounds made against them; and/or a previous tenancy has been terminated on the grounds of abandonment or neglect of the property
 - Applicant has provided false or misleading information
 - Applicant has intentionally worsened their own circumstances to promote their application for housing
 - Where a direct applicant has refused two reasonable offers of housing. A reasonable offer is defined as an offer for a property which is based on application information and preferences, will meet the applicant's housing need
 - Applicants have voluntarily suspended themselves
 - Where an applicant is not eligible for assistance (i.e asylum seeker)
 - An applicant has been violent or aggressive to staff
- The length of the suspension will be considered by the Association when looking at the applicant's history
- Suspensions will be subject to regular review. Applicants may appeal in writing against a decision to suspend/refuse access to the Housing Manager within 10 working days. If the applicant is not satisfied, they can then follow the Association's complaints process.

4.2 Suspensions cannot be applied to a homeless household with the local authority has a duty to rehouse (section 5 referrals) or applicants with a homeless priority.

4.3 Arrears and other tenancy related debts.

4.3.1 Where the tenant or applicant owes more than one twelfth of the annual amount payable in relation to a current or former tenancy, their application will be suspended from the housing list unless there is an appropriate arrangement to pay debts and the arrangement has been maintained for the previous three months. The Housing Manager has the discretion to approve an offer of housing to an applicant who does not meet these conditions where there are special circumstances.

4.3.2 If the applicant was not the tenant, and instead was a member of the household, the Association will not take into account the tenancy related debt when assessing their application.

4.3.3 Where tenancy debt are over five years old, applicant will not be suspended. Any tenant who is allowed to start a tenancy with arrears owing to us, must sign an undertaking to pay off the arrears within a reasonable time period which will be determined by the Association.

4.4 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

4.4.1 Applicants will only be suspended for ASB which is serious and tenancy related (i.e. breach of tenancy agreement). The criteria for this would be referred to section 16(3) of the Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act.

4.4.1 Where applicants have caused serious ASB issue within three years, or terminated or abandoned a Charing Cross Housing Association or other landlords' tenancy where they were responsible for wilful damage a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy will be considered.

4.5 Threatening or abusive behaviour

4.5.1 If an applicant behaves in a threatening or abusive manner towards a member of staff, the Association will consider a suspension based on the seriousness of the behaviour. Careful judgement must be used as the behaviour may be a symptom of mental ill-health or a momentary expression of frustration.

5 SECTION 5 REFERRALS AND OTHER PROTOCOL REFERRALS

5.1 The Association will seek to enter into formal partnership arrangements with the relevant local authority.

5.2 The partnership arrangements will set out nomination agreements between the two bodies and the basis on which Association will assist the local authority in meeting housing needs and its statutory homelessness duties.

- 5.3 The Association will provide both temporary and permanent accommodation for homeless people upon the request of the local authority as part of its duty to secure permanent accommodation under the homelessness legislation.
- 5.4 Where this is not possible, there must be a good reason as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 'Homelessness Section 5: Guidance on Good Reason', for example:
- 5.5 The Association is unable to make suitable housing available within six weeks of the request and the local authority is satisfied that it can source appropriate accommodation from another provider in a reasonable period; the only housing available is a type which is not appropriate for the applicant, for example sheltered housing, specialist accommodations, or significantly adapted properties for occupation by people with a disability. Where the local authority withdraws the referral (this could be related to the first bullet point as an example); or where the applicant has voluntarily suspended their application.
- 5.6 There are no other grounds on which a section 5 referral can be refused.
- 5.7 Note: It is not appropriate to place a victim of domestic abuse near the area where the perpetrator lives unless the victim has specifically requested this due to access to local schools, friends or family nearby.
- 5.8 Any dispute arising from the operation of these arrangements will be resolved either through the dispute process agreed with the local authority or through the use of an Arbiter.
- 5.9 Referral arrangements with voluntary or other agencies that specialise in providing support to particular groups of people may also be agreed. Such arrangements will be identified within Local Lettings Plans.

6 HOUSE TYPES AND SIZES TO BE ALLOCATED

- 6.1 The Association will attempt to allocate houses of the types expressed as a preference on the application form.
- 6.2 The Association will not as a matter of course allow an applicant to move into a property which is too small for their needs
- 6.3 General guide to house size with the following table is a general rule to the minimum size of houses offered to applicants.

Household	Minimum size
Single person	1 bedroom
Couple	1 bedroom
Single parent or couple + 1 child	2 bedroom
Single parent or couple + 2 children	2 or 3 bedroom*
Single parent or couple + 3 children	3 or 4 bedroom*
Single parent or couple + 4 children	3,4 or 5 bedroom*
Single parent or couple + 5 children	4,5 or 6 bedroom*

*Depending on ages and sexes of children

6.4 Sharing bedrooms

6.4.1 The minimum number of bedrooms that are required by a household with children will be based on the following:

- 1 bedroom for each two children of the same sex under the age of 16
- 1 bedroom for each two children under 10 years
- Once a child reaches the age of 16, they will be classed as an adult and will be allocated a separate bedroom
- Where a member of the applicant's household is pregnant, the unborn child will be counted in the household calculation size when proof is provided

6.5 Over-crowding priority

6.5.1 Any household currently living in conditions where they do not meet the minimum standards set out above will be over-crowding points.

6.6 Additional bedrooms

6.6.1 The following households will be offered properties with one extra bedroom (in addition to the minimum requirement in the sections above).

- Households with a medical need for an extra bedroom. This must be for a documented and evidenced medical need. For example, a couple where an applicant requires a medical bed which can only accommodate one. Evidence would have to be from a third party such as a support plan, social work, occupational therapy etc
- Applicants who have access to their child(ren) 50% of the week shall be added to the most appropriate waiting list. This must be evidenced for example by solicitor's letter, receipt of child benefit
- Households with a need for an extra bedroom for a permanent carer that is part of a support plan and requires a bedroom for support purposes. This would require evidence such as a support plan from social work
- Households who require an extra bedroom due to fostering (if a fostering application is pending, the Association will consider granting an extra bedroom before a child becomes a member of household. This may depend on how far advanced the application is and the views of any relevant

- organisation such as the local authority handling the application. Any decision to award an extra bedroom should be approved by Housing Manager). This would also apply for those households who have kinship care arrangements as defined by the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009.

7 CATEGORIES OF POINTS

7.1 Over crowding

7.1.1 The degree of overcrowding being experience by an applicant's household will be assessed according to the number of bedroom's exclusively available to that household within their present accommodation.

7.1.2 15 points shall be awarded for the first bedroom lacking and 10 points for each additional bedroom lacking thereafter as shown in the table below:

Issue	Points awarded
Lacking 1 bedroom	15
Lacking 2 bedrooms	25
Lacking 3 bedrooms	35
Lacking 4 bedrooms	45
Lacking 5 bedrooms	55
Lacking 6 bedrooms	65

7.1.3 Only the applicant's household needs will be considered in assessing overcrowding.

7.2 Under occupation

7.2.1 under occupation points are calculated on the number of bedrooms which are not used by the applicant.

7.2.2 20 points will be awarded for each unoccupied bedroom as shown in the table below:

Issue	Points awarded
1 unoccupied bedroom	20
2 unoccupied bedrooms	40
3 unoccupied bedrooms	60
4 unoccupied bedrooms	80
5 unoccupied bedrooms	100

7.2.3 The household or circumstances of the applicant must have changed since they accepted the tenancy of their current accommodation before they can be eligible for under occupation points.

7.3 Medical points

7.3.1 Having a medical or health condition does not automatically mean an applicant or one of their household will qualify for points.

7.3.2 Points will be given where the applicant or a member of their household have a medical/health condition which will be alleviated by rehousing. Their current accommodation must be exacerbating or adversely affecting their health.

7.3.3 The Association has within its stock, suitable accommodation that will alleviate the medical need.

7.3.4 Points will not normally be awarded for

- Stress, anxiety or depression unless the sufferer is receiving ongoing and long-term assistance from psychiatric services and it can be clearly demonstrated that their current housing is aggravating the problem
- The health or medical condition being exacerbated by environmental factors (such as general neighbourhood problems or neighbours' disputes) UNLESS the applicant's existing landlord supports the application and explains why they are unable to remedy the problem or move the applicant within their own stock

7.3.5 Points are awarded based on the severity of the medical issue and the extent to which housing would alleviate the problems or improve standard of life as per following table

Issue	Points awarded
Causing the person mental/emotional issues to such a degree that long term psychiatric services are involved. Person finds it difficult to access shops etc around the property	15
Current accommodation aggravating the medical condition and making it difficult for them to use facilities in the home and move around independently.	30
Current housing conditions severely restricting mobility within the home. Severely restricted to daily activities	40
Very severe mobility problems which render person housebound. Unable to be discharged from hospital due to unsuitable housing. Medical condition rendering it impossible for person to use facilities in their home	60

7.4 Sharing Amenities

7.4.1 Sharing amenity points are awarded to applicants who share someone else's home or live in a hostel sharing basic amenities as per table below;

Issue	Points awarded
Sharing a living room	10
Sharing a kitchen	10
Sharing a bathroom	10

7.5 Lacking amenities

7.5.1 Lacking amenity points are awarded to applicants who do not have the basic amenities. Points will be awarded as per table below:

Issue	Points awarded
No separate kitchen e.g. bedsit/studio	5
No kitchen	10
No inside toilet	10
No shower/bathroom	10
Inadequate hot water supply	10
No heating	10
No living room e.g. bedsit/studio	10

7.6 Insecurity of tenure

7.6.1 Insecurity of tenure points are awarded to applicants who either have no accommodation of their own or who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Points will be awarded as per the table below:

Issue	Points awarded
Homeless or potentially homeless and requiring permanent accommodation as defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and 2001. A written decision notice should be provided to the Association in order for these points to be applied	60
Resident in tied/service accommodation and contract ending due to either retirement or ill health	60
Living with friends or relatives and not under the threat of homelessness	20
Living in private rented accommodation and not under the threat of homelessness	20

7.7 Demolition or Modernisation works

7.7.1 The association is committed to assisting other registered social landlords and local authorities adhere to their development and modernisation programmes. Points will be awarded to those applicants who can provide evidence that their current accommodation has been identified and/or is being purchased by the local authority or registered social landlord for the following:

- Clearance
- Demolition
- Extensive improvement or modernisation works that requires the property to be vacated for a minimum of 6 months

The intention with these points is not to assist with decanted accommodation but instead to re-house the applicant permanently

The maximum points awarded in this section would be 100

7.8 Social/ Community/Family Support/Employment

7.8.1 Points will be awarded to those applicants where a move to the Charing Cross community will assist with providing/receiving support from family/friends in the community and that the travel taken at the moment to achieve the level of support is causing severe difficulties.

7.8.2 This could take the form of regular childcare, daily respite care, assistance with household. This would need to be fully evidenced for example being in receipt of carers allowance. Evidence of the travelling difficulties would also be required.

7.8.3 Points applied for moving for employment would also be under the same evidence requirements. Evidence of the difficulties faced by current travel would have to be provided.

Issue	Points awarded
The applicant and their household have a specific need to move to the Charing Cross community to provide or received support	40
The applicant and their household have a specific need to move to the Charing Cross community for employment reasons	40

7.9 Harassment/ Domestic Abuse/ Anti-social behaviour

7.9.1 Harassment should not be confused with neighbourhood issues, general nuisance, vandalism or other forms of anti-social disputes. Harassment goes beyond neighbour disputes and is on-going violence which may be physical or verbal, and which is aimed at a specific person or household purely on the basis of a personal factor such as nationality, race, religion or sexuality.

7.9.2 Points will be awarded for harassment when the applicant can demonstrate that their quality of life is seriously affected because of harassment of themselves or a member of their household. Evidence may be requested such as letters of support from current landlord, police reports etc

7.9.3 Points will be awarded for issues within the neighbourhood and this will reflect the severity of the problem in the neighbourhood at large and the direct effect it is having on the applicant and/or applicant's family

7.9.4 Points will only be awarded in this section when the applicant remains in the address shown on the application at the date of award

7.9.5 Points will not normally be given if the applicant or a member of their household is judged to be the instigator and perpetrator of the dispute and is being unreasonable in their expectations or is unjustified in their accusations and complaints.

7.9.6 Points will be awarded as per the table below

Issue	Points awarded
Applicant or member of household is in imminent danger i.e. they at risk of violence if they remain in their present accommodation. This could be due to harassment, abuse or anti-social behaviour.	60
Evidence of serious and ongoing incidents of anti-social behaviour and/or neighbour nuisance in the immediate vicinity of the applicant's home. Acceptable evidence would be confirmation from statutory bodies such as police	40
Evidence of ongoing neighbour dispute that is judged to be detrimentally affecting the household's ability to live peacefully. Support evidence will be required from a statutory body such as police	20
Where there is evident of an ongoing neighbour dispute that is viewed as minor in nature and judged to have arisen from lifestyle clash.	10

Supporting evidence will be required as per policy	
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7.10 Special Circumstances

7.10.1 The Housing Manager has the discretion to award points to applicants with exceptional circumstances not covered in the policy

7.10.2 They will only be valid while the applicant remains in the address shown on the application. If there is any change to circumstances the points will be removed and the applicant informed. The applicant is free to reapply for these points.

7.10.3 Any Special Circumstances points awarded are subject to regular review by the Housing Manager. The Housing Manager will remove Special Circumstances Points if the applicant no longer qualifies for them.

7.11 Removal of points

7.11.1 Points are awarded under certain categories only when the Association is satisfied that the problems being experienced are so severe that the only means of resolved the situation is urgent re-housing. This includes:

- Statutory homeless
- Intentionally homeless
- Hostel or homeless unit
- Imminent danger
- Harassment
- Domestic abuse
- Very high medical and health needs
- Special circumstances

Many of the housing needs bulleted in 7.11.1 are already recognised and awarded priority by our Allocations Policy. It is therefore suggested that 'Special Circumstances' points be used to facilitate the rare, but sometimes necessary management transfers which will be reported on. This is where the housing needs recognised by the Policy do not adequately reflect the housing need of the transfer applicant and an immediate move is required due to unique and difficult circumstances. These points will often be awarded in at a traumatic time to prevent the tenant becoming homeless.

7.11.2 These points are awarded to allow applicants to be re-housed as soon as possible and housing aspirations are of secondary importance. Refusals of suitable re-housing, will therefore, result in a review of the applicant's eligibility for the priority points and unless the refusal is directly linked to the reason for awarding the points may result in these points being removed. The applicant will not be considered for priority points for a period of 12 months.

7.11.3 Priority points may also be removed if the cause of the problem that led to the points being awarded has been resolved by other means and/or no incidents have occurred in the previous 12 months

8. TRANSFERS

8.1 Tenants of the association may apply for a transfer. In assessing transfer applications, points are awarded under various categories to reflect housing needs as per the policy. The total number of points will define their position on the list.

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8.2 If a joint tenant applies and the other tenant is not moving with them, the joint tenant's application is not treated as a transfer. Instead they will be added to the direct list.

8.3 The Association recognises that following relationship breakdown, a tenant may apply for separate housing. Written confirmation in the form of a solicitor's letter, court order or other proof will require to be submitted. In View of the Association's limited stock, applicants must also apply to other housing providers for additional housing areas to maximise their re-housing prospects.

9 RESPONDING TO APPLICATIONS

9.1 In line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 all applications are assessed and pointed in accordance with the Association's Allocations Policy.

9.2 Applicants will receive written notification once their application has been accepted onto the housing list. The Association will aim to turn around an application form (from receipt to issuing registration letter) within 3 calendar days.

9.3 Information will be provided to applicants in writing of how many points they have been awarded, the size of property they are being considered for and the current position on the list.

10 MAKING, RECEIVING, ACCEPTING AND REFUSING AN OFFER OF HOUSING

10.1 All applicants who apply for housing will be shortlisted based on the priority criteria given to reasonable preference groups set out in this policy. Applicants at the top of the list will then be considered for a property if they are eligible, they meet the household size for the property and are not subject to a suspension.

10.2 Reasonable offers

10.2.1 A reasonable offer is defined as an offer for a property which is based on application information and preferences, will meet the applicant's housing needs. When determining whether an offer is reasonable, the Association will also take into accounts;

- Stock availability and demand

- Legislative requirements
- Based on the reason for the refusal and the information provided about the property, was it reason that the applicant should have recognised that the property was unsuitable before accepting an offer
- If there been any change in the applicant's circumstances.

- 10.3 Applicants will be given up to two working days from the date of the offer letter to respond either by refusing the offer or by making an arrangement to view the property. Failure to do so will result in the offer being withdrawn in writing by the Association and recorded as a refusal.
- 10.4 An applicant must normally accept an offer and sign the tenancy agreement within one working day of viewing the property, although this may be extended by a further working day in special circumstances. Failure to do so will result in the offer being withdrawn and recorded as a refusal.
- 10.5 The Association does appreciate that applicants may want to view and sign for a property on the same day and in exceptional circumstances staff will facilitate this request when required.

11 CONFIRMATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES

- 11.1 The onus of proof of circumstances lies with the applicants in most circumstances.
- 11.2 Applicants unable to provide adequate evidence as their housing needs or circumstances will have their application cancelled.
- 11.3 Responsibility for notifying changes of address and other change of circumstances lies with the applicant. Failure to notify changes may materially affect the points awarded.

12 REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

- 12.1 A review of direct applications will be carried out on at least an annual basis.
- 12.2 Applicants will be required to respond to a letter within 28 calendar days of receipt stating whether they still wish to be considered for housing, and listing any changes in circumstances. Failure to do so will result in the applicant being removed from the list. Removal from the list will be confirmed in writing to the applicant. If an applicant contacts the Association within one month of being removed from the list, giving good reason for not responding they will be reinstated.
- 12.3 Removed applicants contacting us after the 28 calendar day deadline with no good reasons for not responding, must reapply by completing a new application form. This will be regarded as the new date of application, unless the Housing Manager considers there to be mitigating circumstances.
- 12.4 Tenancy references
 - 12.4.1 With the applicant's consent, the Association will seek references from an applicant's current and former landlord for tenancies that have ended within three years or less from the date the applicant is considered for a property.

13 CANCELLATION OF APPLICATIONS

13.1 There are a very limited number of circumstances where an application may be removed from the housing list. These are:

- The applicant asks us to cancel their application;
- The death of an applicant; or
- The applicant repeatedly fails to respond to a review of the list or to other correspondence

13.2 Any applicant whose application is cancelled or suspended will be notified in writing stating the grounds on which the decision has been made. If any applicant is aggrieved by such a decision, they have the right to appeal in writing to the Housing Manager within 15 working days of the date of notification being issued. The Housing Manager will review the case and respond within 15 working days. If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the next stage is to follow the Association's complaints handling procedure.

14 GRANTING OF TENANCIES TO EMPLOYEES, GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS AND RELATIVES OF PERSONS CONNECTED TO THE ASSOCIATION

14.1 Housing applications from employees and relatives of persons connected with the Association will be treated in line with all other applications. All applicants shall be asked to state whether or not, to their knowledge, they are related to a Committee or staff/agent member, and the Association will comply with all relevant legislation, regulatory guidance and best practice in dealing with any of these applications.

15 HIGH RISK OFFENDERS

15.1 Some offenders will require accommodation (for example on release from prison) and may require specialist support. As housing association, Charing Cross has a duty under Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements to work collaboratively with local authorities and other agencies. This may involve assisting with the provision of accommodation while maintaining confidentiality and ensuring that information is shared in a sensitive and lawful way.

16 TENANCIES GRANTED

16.1 In all cases, excluding those categories below, a Scottish Secure Tenancy will be offered:

- Where a Short Scottish Secure tenancy is appropriate in line with Schedule 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

16.2 Applicants who are married, in a civil partnership or intending to co-habit will be offered joint tenancies unless specifically requested otherwise.

17 APPEALS

17.1 Applicants can appeal against the following decisions:

- A decision on an applicant's priority
- A decision to cancel an application
- A decision to suspend an application
- An offer of a property

17.2 Appeals will normally be heard by the Housing Manager who will review the case and respond within 15 working days.

17.3 If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision after appeal, then they will be signposted to the Association's complaints handling procedure

18 CONFIDENTIALITY

18.1 Confidentiality regarding an applicant's personal circumstances will be respected at all times. Members of Staff who are related to, or have a close connection with, any applicants will declare the fact and have no further involvement in the allocations process.

18.2 Applicants shall have the right to inspect the information on their files, subject to the Association's legal obligations and rights to protect third parties. Upon request, the Association will give applicants a full explanation as to how their application has been assessed.

18.3 The Association will ensure that applicants are informed of any changes made and that its information leaflets are updated accordingly