

Loreburn Group

Choice Based Lettings Policy



Creating Great Places to Live

Policy	Choice Based Lettings									
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1. Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1 This policy has been created with input from our customers, staff and relevant external partners. The decision to complete a full and in-depth consultation across a range of interested parties including customers, applicants and the general public was to ensure our revised policy is fit for purpose, in line with our customers' expectations, transparent and fair to all applicants.
- 1.2 We have taken on board feedback and suggestions made across the various consultations and used these to make changes not only to our policy; but also, our internal processes, application form and our Loreburn Lettings system. Our consultation findings are available upon request.
- 1.3 Loreburn aims to provide a streamlined, customer focused, and personalised service which puts our housing applicants at the heart of our allocations process. We are committed to working together with external partners to deliver improved choice, empowerment and increased levels of tenancy sustainability for our customers throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

2. Legislative Background

- 2.1 Loreburn HA is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator as a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). This policy has been developed in line with good practice from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, and the Chartered Institute of Housing. By taking account of good practice, we have made sure that our policy is fair and gives reasonable preference to those in housing need. This policy is also compliant with, and takes account of, the following Scottish and UK legislation on housing:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003;
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993.

- 2.2 In addition, the policy protects the rights of individual applicants by meeting the legal Requirements set out in:

- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection;
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981;
- Children Scotland Act 1995;
- Civil Partnership Act 2004;
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

3. Associated Policies

- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Risk Flag Policy
- Void Property Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Prison Discharge Protocol
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Arrears Policy
- Estate Management Policy
- Pets Policy
- Income Maximisation Policy
- Lone Working Policy

4. Aims & Outcomes of this Policy

- 4.1 We recognise that the availability of affordable rented accommodation will never fully meet the demand, and we are committed to supporting customer choices and ensuring we are making best use of our limited housing stock helping to create well balanced and sustainable communities for our customers.
- 4.2 In accordance with the **Housing (Scotland) Act 2014** Loreburn H A will identify and prioritise applicants most in need, including:
- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
 - People who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions
 - Social housing tenants who are under occupying their current home

5. Policy Objectives

- To improve the means by which local people gain access to social housing by providing an innovative, easy to understand allocation system, which empowers customers to make informed choice about their housing options
- To achieve the local lettings targets as agreed with Dumfries and Galloway Council
- To work closely with Dumfries and Galloway Council Housing Options and Homeless Service to help to reduce the use of temporary accommodation

and assist with homelessness prevention by offering support on income maximisation and ensuring our customers are aware of their individual housing options.

- To allocate our available properties responsibly, making best use of our stock to help reduce pressure on other local services including the NHS and the Social Work Department
- To ensure an allocations service that embraces equality and diversity in an open, transparent, and accountable way. Focusing on being fully accessible to all applicants, providing support and assistance where required; enabling applicants to feel empowered to act with autonomy.
- To maximise tenancy sustainment
- To reduce the number of days between re-lets and minimise loss of rental income.
- To promote and encourage more interest in our low demand property areas.

6. Registering for Housing

- 6.1 In accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 any persons aged 16 years or older can apply for housing with Loreburn HA. This, however, does not guarantee an offer of housing.
- 6.2 To register for housing with Loreburn HA applicants must complete an online application form at www.loreburnlettings.org.uk; which allows applicants to conveniently apply for housing; add relevant documents to their application; make any necessary amendments; and place bids on our available properties at any time.
- 6.3 In line with our commitment to make services accessible and to comply with our equality commitments, we will provide assistance to any customer or their nominated person/agency, who has difficulty in applying for housing.
- 6.4 Once a completed application is submitted through Loreburn Lettings the applicant will be provided with the following information:
- Their individual login credentials (User ID and Password)
 - Their provisional band award, Category, and Sub-Category including an explanation of each
 - The assessed bedroom eligibility for the household
 - Information on how to make amendments to the application, search for available properties, and place bids.
- 6.5 Applicants will have access to place bids on available properties immediately. Some sections of the application require an additional assessment by staff which will also confirm the banding award and any supporting documents required.

- 6.6 It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the information they enter is accurate. Providing false or misleading information can result in an application being suspended or an offer of housing withdrawn. See Section 30.
- 6.7 The full Choice Based Lettings process is set out at **Appendix I**.

7. Property Size Criteria

- 7.1 Loreburn determine an applicant’s bedroom eligibility (i.e. the number of bedrooms required) using the following criteria, which is based on who will be living **permanently** within the household.

This is set out below:

Household size	Number of bedrooms you can be considered for					
	Bed-sit	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Single Person	•	•	#			
Couple		•	•			
Couple or single adult and 1 other person			•			
Couple or single adult with 2 children both under 8			•			
Couple or single adult with 2 same sex children both under 12			•			
Couple or single adult with 2 opposite sex children and 1 is aged 8 or over				•		
Couple or single adult with 3 mixed sex children all under 8				•		
Couple or single adult with 3 same sex children all under 12				•		
Couple or single adult with 3 mixed sex children and 1 is over 8				•		
Couple or single adult with 3 mixed sex children and 1 is over 12				•	•	
Couple or single adult with 3 mixed sex children and 2 are over 8				•	•	
Couple or single adult with 3 children all over 12					•	
Any larger household					•	•

Although our policy enables single applicants to bid for 2-bedroom properties, Loreburn will prioritise couples and families to ensure we are making best use of our limited housing stock.

- 7.2 Applicants may only bid for the size of property identified in Property Size Criteria, unless given prior permission to bid for larger or smaller properties. Exceptions may be considered if an applicant:
- provides evidence an additional bedroom is required on medical/welfare grounds.

- provides foster care or have been pre-approved to provide foster care or to adopt children.
 - provides evidence that they have access to children who do not reside with them on a full-time basis but stay a minimum 3 nights per week to qualify for an extra bedroom or a member of their household is pregnant and can provide proof of pregnancy from an independent source i.e. a doctor or midwife. Whether this entitles an applicant to an extra bedroom will depend on individual circumstances and the household composition.
 - there is no stock of larger properties available for household size.
- 7.3 Any exceptions to policy are considered and authorised at the discretion of the relevant Community Team Manager taking into account external advice, local knowledge and any supporting evidence provided by the applicant(s), and this may also affect banding awards.

8. Applicant Choice

- 8.1 Applicants are free to choose the areas they wish to be considered for and the type of property they would prefer, however property size will be dependent on Property Size Criteria (see Section 7).
- 8.2 Loreburn will not put any limits on the number of bids an applicant can place, or the areas and developments they choose to bid within. However, there may at times be limitations to applicant choice including:
- **Demand** - placing a bid will only ensure an applicant appears on a property's bid list, not that they will be specifically considered for the property. Applicants in lower priority groups may need to consider expanding their housing options and area choices to increase their chances of being made an offer of tenancy.
 - **Medical Requirements** – we may not have any available property which meets an applicant's medical needs or have access to Scottish Government Grant funding to carry out necessary adaptations. Without agreement and support of a medical professional we would not consider an offer of tenancy which does not meet the applicant's medical requirements.
 - **Legal Orders** – for example, an anti-social behaviour order or similar, may prohibit an applicant from accessing a particular area or development.
 - **Availability** – we may not have the property type or size that an applicant needs in the area that they require, and applicants may need to widen their housing search area to increase their options. A full list of housing stock can be found on our website www.loreburn.org.uk.
 - **Homeless Referrals** – received from Dumfries and Galloway Housing Options and Homeless Service will only be made one suitable offer of tenancy and may lose their priority banding if they refuse an offer.

- **Social Mix** – in order to create and maintain safe and balanced communities, Loreburn will have the final say on allocations, taking into account advice from Police and local agencies.

9. Property Types

9.1 Loreburn offers a wide range of housing options across Dumfries and Galloway. We are committed to continually improving and adapting our existing stock while increasing housing opportunities for local people. We are keen to continue to develop innovative housing options to help address local need and we are committed to assisting our customers to remain in their homes for as long as is safe and physically possible. Therefore, we have various options to help support local people and address these challenges throughout Dumfries and Galloway:

- **General Needs** – most of our housing stock, containing a range of property styles including flats, houses and bungalows.
- **Amenity Housing** - mainly ground or first floor accommodation which are suited to older people or those with mobility issues. To qualify applicants must be aged 50 years or over or have a medical condition and through their application form can evidence they would benefit from this type of accommodation.
- **Later Living** – mainly flatted developments suited to older people or those with mobility issues, with the aim to allow applicants a high degree of independence within a safe environment. To qualify for one of our seven Later Living developments housing applicants must; be aged 55 years or over; or have a medical condition and can demonstrate they would benefit from this type of accommodation.
- **Adapted** - properties that have either been purposely built to address a specific need; or in which significant adaptations have been installed.

10. Applicant Categories

10.1 Applicant categories are automatically assigned at the time of registration by our Loreburn Lettings System. These categories identify and organise our housing applicants to enable Loreburn to meet our local housing obligations as set by Dumfries and Galloway Council. (**See Appendix III**).

Our categories are detailed below:

Applicant Category	Current Housing Circumstances	How applications are prioritised
Waiting List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private tenants • Other RSL tenants • Homeowners • Sharing owners 	Applicants are initially prioritised by band, secondly by best fit (i.e. applicants who

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tied tenants • Intentionally homeless – as assessed by Dumfries and Galloway Council • Leaving care • Living with family or friends • Sofa surfers • No fixed abode 	will fill the property) and lastly by application date order.
Transfer List	<p>Includes existing Loreburn customers looking for a move to a more suitable Loreburn property.</p> <p>Transfer applicants are visited at their home address by their current Neighbourhood Officer, to assess the property condition and discuss the transfer process. In line with our Rechargeable Repairs Policy any repairs which are identified as tenant responsibility will be confirmed in writing and a follow up visit will be arranged to check the works are completed to a satisfactory standard. Loreburn will not authorise a transfer if a property is in poor condition. However, support will be provided to help address the situation.</p> <p>Additionally, applicants must not owe a tenancy related debt of more than one month's rent or where rent arrears are in excess of one month, a payment plan must be in place and have been maintained for a minimum of 3 month's</p>	Applicants are initially prioritised by band, secondly by best fit (i.e. applicants who will fill the property) and lastly by application date order.
Section 5	<p>Includes applicants who have been assessed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintentionally homeless and in priority need (under part II of the housing Scotland) Act 1987 and 2001 Act); • Threatened with homelessness; and or • Vulnerable and in urgent housing need. 	<p>Applicants are prioritised in the date order they presented to Dumfries and Galloway Council Housing Options and Homeless Service.</p> <p>Loreburn will also take into consideration best fit where applicable – and liaise with the Homeless Service to make best use of our housing stock.</p>

11. Applicant Sub-Categories

11.1 We utilise several sub-categories to help ensure we are making the best use of our limited housing stock by prioritising applicants who will benefit most from any specific design features.

Sub-category	Description	Evidence
Wheelchair Accessible	Where a wheelchair is required for internal use – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ground floor accommodation • level access • widened doorways • lowered appliances etc. 	As assessed and confirmed by an Occupational Therapist or medical professional.
Wet Room	Where a wet room has been identified as being specifically required.	As assessed and confirmed by an Occupational Therapist or medical professional.
General Needs	Where there are no restrictions to property type.	
Strategic Needs	Where applicants have been identified by a professional agency as being in critical housing need, for example, cases of unmet complex medical requirements or Witness Protection cases.	As confirmed and/or referred by agencies such as Police Scotland, Police UK, National Witness Mobility Service, Dumfries and Galloway Council Social Work Department.

11.2 Properties which are restricted to one of the above sub-categories will be clearly highlighted on the property advert. If a restriction is added to a property advert only applicants within that sub-category or banding will be eligible to place a bid.

11.3 In lower demand areas, Loreburn HA may choose not to restrict bidding to avoid potential delays, keeping the number of days a property is vacant as low as possible. However, it may be indicated on a property advert that certain sub-categories will be prioritised in our shortlisting process, to ensure we are making best use of our available stock. In these instances, the Community Team Manager retains discretion and autonomy to make the final allocation decision, considering all relevant information including social mix, best use of stock and creating balanced and sustainable communities.

12. Applicant Banding

12.1 Loreburn Lettings does not award points like a traditional housing register. Instead Loreburn has four priority bands which reflect an applicant's current

housing need, taking into account the information included on the online form and any additional supporting evidence.

12.2 Banding is automatically assessed and provisionally awarded by the Loreburn Lettings system however, a further assessment process is completed by staff to confirm appropriate documentation has been provided for the banding award.

12.3 Where two applicants are awarded the same band, the applicant who best fits the property will be awarded priority, however if both applicants are equally matched to the property, then the applicant with the earliest start date will receive priority.

12.4 In regard to applicants who have been assessed by Dumfries and Galloway Council Housing Options and Homeless Service as in immediate housing need, the date that they presented to the Homeless Service is used.

12.5 **Exceptions**

12.5.1 **Underoccupancy** – in the instance of 2-bedroom properties, the application start date will be overruled and priority will be awarded to applicants of the same band whose households comprise of 2 or more members.

12.5.2 **Homeowners** – in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 (Section 5), Loreburn HA will take into account the ownership and/or value of inheritable property or land owned by the applicant themselves or a member of their household. Priority may be awarded to other applicants in the same band in this instance dependent on individual circumstances and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

12.6 Our priority bands are defined below.

Band	Reason	Qualifying criteria
Bronze	<p>Assessment indicated current housing is adequate.</p> <p>Insufficient identification provided for all relevant applicants.</p> <p>Insufficient supporting evidence supplied.</p>	<p>Applicant has failed to demonstrate any priority indicators in line with this allocation policy as detailed in Criteria for Banding section.</p>
Silver	<p>Assessment highlighted a low housing need.</p>	<p>Applicant has demonstrated one of the indicators set out in Criteria 1.</p>
Gold	<p>Assessment highlighted a high housing need.</p>	<p>Applicant has demonstrated two or more* of the eligible indicators set out in the Criteria 1.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Applicant has demonstrated any of the indicators set out in Criteria 2.</p>

		<i>*a further band award will not be assigned in relation to the same issues</i>
Platinum	Assessment highlighted an urgent housing need.	Applicant has demonstrated any of the indicators set out in Criteria 3 .

13. Criteria for Banding

13.1 An overview of the banding criteria is outlined below. Please note medical awards will only be given in instances where rehousing will alleviate conditions(s). See Appendix II for more information.

Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3
Medical - Low	Medical - High	Medical - Urgent
Non Priority Homeless	Insecure Accommodation	Priority Homeless referral from Dumfries and Galloway Council Homeless Service
Underoccupancy* (1 bedroom)	Underoccupancy* (2 bedrooms)	Domestic Abuse
Overcrowding (1 bedroom)	Overcrowding (2 bedrooms)	Serious Harassment/Hate Crimes
Below Tolerable Standards	Leaving Supported Accommodation	Looked after Children
Hardship - Support / Financial / Fuel Poverty		Person Leaving Active Service
		Witness Protection Cases
		Regeneration Projects

**Tenants of Registered Social Landlords only*

14. Supporting Evidence

14.1 Specific evidence is required in support of each circumstance to confirm eligibility for a particular Band. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure appropriate and accurate documentation is supplied.

14.2 **If appropriate evidence has not been provided, the band award will be downgraded.** Please see **Appendix II** for examples of supporting evidence.

15. Changes to Banding

15.1 Banding may be modified due to an established change of circumstances within the application. As well as the level of priority changing, the applicants qualifying date will be changed if the banding is upgraded, but not if the banding is decreased.

15.2 **Any amendment to banding (and date) will only be made when Loreburn are notified of a change of circumstance by the applicant.**

15.3 Applicants will be notified of any changes to banding and the justification for such change.

16. Awaiting Assessment

- 16.1 Loreburn Lettings relies upon accurate and timely information to be supplied by applicants in order to band applications correctly. To ensure accuracy, a manual assessment will be carried out within 5 working days, upon request and at annual reviews.
- 16.2 As our system is automated, the manual assessment confirms that the following have been provided and the correct band has been awarded:
- Full applicant information.
 - Current household and circumstances.
 - Proof of ID and proof of address.
 - Appropriate supporting evidence.
- 16.3 In regards to medical requirements, Loreburn HA will take into account advice from relevant professional, medical, and healthcare services to determine appropriate property type and it would need to be proven that rehousing to another property would play a critical role in addressing an applicant's health problems.
- 16.4 Changes in circumstances should be updated or reported as soon as possible to ensure the correct banding has been awarded. This can be completed by the applicant themselves or if preferred applicants can contact the Community Team to help update their information.

17. Proof of ID and Address

- 17.1 To confirm our housing applicants are eligible to apply for housing with Loreburn Lettings we request that all main and joint applicants submit two forms of identification. Each applicant should supply one form of photographic identification and one document confirming their current address.
- 17.2 **Please do not send original documents by post.**

Accepted forms of identification	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passport• UK Residence Permit• Driver's License• Provisional Driver's License• Utility Bill• Letter from HMRC or the Home Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bank or Building Society Statement• Benefit Award Statement• Birth Certificate• Marriage Certificate• Certificate of Registration or Naturalisation• Permanent Resident Card

- 17.3 For applicants who do not have photographic ID, a birth certificate will be required, as well as two documents to provide confirmation of their address.
- 17.4 **Applicants who fail to provide identification will be placed in the ‘Bronze’ band, even if they have demonstrated they are eligible to receive priority.**

18. Property Advert Information

- 18.1 Our property adverts outline key features and where possible include photographs of the property and/or the development it is situated in, to allow our applicants to make informed choice before placing a bid. We will include as much information as possible including:
- Property size (number of bedrooms and number of bed spaces)
 - Tenure type (house, flat, bungalow etc)
 - Weekly rental amount including any service charges
 - Heating type
 - EPC rating
 - Parking arrangements
 - Outside space (Communal, own garden etc)
 - Tenancy type
 - Any bidding restrictions
 - Bid opening and closing dates
- 18.2 Additional information relating to our developments and their surrounding areas including travel links and information relating to local schools and amenities can also be found on our Loreburn Website www.Loreburn.org.uk and appropriate links are added to each property advert.
- 18.3 Available properties will be advertised within 3 working days following receipt of a termination notice.

19. Property Advert Restrictions

- 19.1 Restrictions may be applied to a property due to the design or tenure type, for example, adverts may be restricted to:
- A particular band (e.g. platinum only)
 - A specific applicant category (e.g. waiting list bids only); or
 - A particular sub-category (e.g. wheelchair/wet room accessible only)
- 19.2 Loreburn will only restrict an advert in order to meet the local housing agreement or ensure we are “Creating great places to live” by allocating our available housing stock in a balanced and sustainable way. **All restrictions will be clearly stated on our property adverts.**

20. Bid Cycles

- 20.1 Available properties are advertised weekly on one of three bid cycles through our website www.loreburnlettings.org.uk. Applicants are required to check and view available properties regularly and where appropriate place bids.
- 20.2 If no properties are available on our website this may be due to low turnover, however applicant queries should be directed to our Community Team for clarity. Available properties are also showcased on our social media accounts to increase coverage, so we encourage applicants to follow us online.
- 20.3 When Loreburn are made aware of a customer’s intent to leave their Loreburn home, we will endeavour to advertise the new listing on the next available bid cycle to ensure we are re-letting our properties and making homes available to our customers as soon as possible.
- 20.4 **Our weekly 5 day bid cycles open and close as follows:**

	Bid Cycle 1	Bid Cycle 2	Bid Cycle 3
Open 12 noon	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Close 12 noon	Friday	Sunday	Tuesday

21. Exceptions to Bid Cycles

- 21.1 There may occasionally be exceptions to bid cycles, with properties advertised on alternative days. Possible reasons for this include but are not restricted to:
- New development sites
 - Office closures/holiday periods
 - Reasons out with Loreburn’s control
 - Difficult to let properties where after two exhausted bid cycles, a third bid cycle will run until an eligible bidder is established

22. Bid Types

- 22.1 A bid is an expression of interest in a particular property and once registered, an applicant may begin placing bids immediately on our available properties on our website www.loreburnlettings.org.uk.
- 22.2 **Please also note, the time and date in which a bid has been placed during the bid cycle will not affect the applicant’s position on the bid list.**
- 22.3 There are no restrictions to the number of bids an applicant may place, however applicants **must** have a genuine interest in being made a potential offer of tenancy.

22.4 Only bids placed during the specified cycle will be considered, and applicants are responsible for ensuring their bids are registered within the noted timescales. See 22.5 for exceptions.

22.5 There are 3 types of bid:

- **Website** - applicants independently place a manual bid through their Loreburn Lettings account on properties that meet their requirements.
- **Automatic** - bids are generated automatically by the Loreburn Lettings system in accordance to agreed property type, size, floor level and location specified by the applicant. Automatic bidding is reserved primarily for applicants who are unable to access a computer or the internet or have additional support needs and/or are in a position to move within one month's notice. Loreburn HA is not responsible for any applicant missing out on a suitable property which was not detailed on their area choices.
- **Proxy** - bids are placed on the applicant's behalf by a member of the Community Team when specifically contacted by an applicant. In exceptional circumstances, the Community Team Manager may authorise a bid to be placed on a property on behalf of a customer, even out with the normal bid cycle.

22.6 **Applicants must not deliberately bid on a property or move into a home that is unsuitable due to medical or health needs.**

22.7 It is the responsibility of applicants to notify Loreburn if:

- they are unable to access their Loreburn lettings account
- have forgotten their log in details
- or are having difficulty placing a bid for a suitable property.

23. Deciding Who Will Receive a Tenancy Offer

23.1 Once a bid cycle has ended, an applicant bid list is created of all interested applicants. If all relevant ID and supporting evidence is present the top bidder will be contacted to confirm interest and offered a pre-allocation check. If the applicant is no longer interested or does not make contact **within 1 working day**, we will move to the next applicant on the bid list until a suitable interested applicant is identified.

23.2 Should an application be found to contain information which is incorrect or out of date, we will bypass the applicant and they will not be considered for the allocation. In this circumstance we would suspend the application and contact the applicant(s) by email or phone and support them to update their information; explain why they are not being considered and reiterate the importance of updating their information to prevent them from being bypassed or suspended on future occasions. See Section 31 Suspended Applications.

23.3 **As it is an applicant's responsibility to ensure their information is kept up to date, Loreburn will not make exceptions to this rule.**

23.4 If an offer of tenancy is refused by an applicant then the **existing bid list will be utilised to establish the next suitable applicant**. The property will only be re-advertised once the bid list has been exhausted.

24. Tenancy Types

24.1 The majority of applicants are offered a Scottish Secure Tenancy in line with Loreburn's legal responsibilities.

24.2 **Joint applicants will only be offered a joint tenancy. Both applicants must be present at the viewing and sign up appointments; and both applicants must sign the tenancy agreement prior to keys for the property being released by Loreburn.**

24.3 In a limited number of situations, Loreburn may offer a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). A Short Scottish Secure tenant has many of the same rights as a Scottish Secure tenant. However, rights are more limited on eviction, subletting and succession. A Short Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement will state that a tenancy is for a fixed period of time (at least 12 months). If by the end of that time, neither party has requested that the lease ends, it will convert to a Scottish Secure Tenancy unless Notice has been serviced to extend the Short Scottish Secure Tenancy for a further 6 months.

24.4 Loreburn can only give Short Scottish Secure Tenancies in very specific circumstances as defined by law in Section 35, Schedule 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. The circumstances will apply if:

- The applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years
- The applicant or a member of their household is subject to an anti-social behaviour order

There has been anti-social behaviour within the previous 3 years at or in the vicinity of your home address by either you, any joint tenant, anyone residing or lodging at the property, any subtenant or any visitors to the property

- Loreburn are offering temporary accommodation for people taking up employment in the area
- Loreburn are offering temporary accommodation for tenants where work is being carried out on their house
- The applicant is homeless, and the property is let to you on a temporary basis for more than 6 months
- The applicant is in receipt of housing support services and the property is let to you on a temporary basis
- The property is leased from another body by the landlord

- The applicant is a homeowner who cannot occupy their home on a short-term basis. For example, if an owner needs to move while repairs are carried out to make their home safe.

24.5 In all cases Loreburn H A will serve the tenant with a notice, informing them that the offer is a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. The notice will also state why the applicant is being offered a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy and the period for which the tenancy is being offered.

25. Pre-allocation checks

25.1 A pre-allocation check is carried out for all applicants prior to Loreburn making an offer of housing.

25.2 **Being considered for a pre-allocation check does not always result in an offer of tenancy being made.**

25.3 **If an applicant is being considered for a property, any other property bids they have placed are disregarded. An applicant may only be considered for one property at a time and therefore it is important that applicants are managing their bids appropriately and ensuring they are updating their bid preferences.**

25.4 The purpose of completing pre-allocation checks are to ensure our Choice Based Lettings policy is being adhered to by confirming:

- The application has been completed correctly and information provided is true and correct
- Relevant ID and supporting evidence have been provided and are valid
- The applicant is interested in progressing to the offer stage
- The applicant understands the financial obligations associated with taken on a tenancy
- There are no reasons to withhold an offer of tenancy or suspend the application e.g. because of outstanding rent arrears, evidence of anti-social behaviour, or any other breach of past tenancy agreements.

25.5 Some checks will have been completed by the Community Team, however additional tenancy sustainment information is also required to assess the affordability and longevity of any offer of tenancy. Our focus is on our applicant's experience, and ensuring we are allocating our properties appropriately by providing our applicants sufficient information and support to make an informed decision and assist them to sustain a Loreburn HA tenancy.

25.6 Applicants will also be contacted to obtain further information relating to their:

- Current income and expenditure,

- Proposed methods of rent payment,
 - Current employment or welfare details,
 - Current and ongoing housing support requirements.
- 25.7 Applicants do have the right to refuse to provide some of the information, however it is important to note this information is only used to assist the applicant to make an informed choice in relation to their housing application and any subsequent offer of tenancy.
- 25.8 As part of this process we will also offer:
- Income maximisation options and advice,
 - Help with additional grant or benefit applications,
 - We will also establish whether any furniture and/or assistance with decorating will be required.
- 25.9 If we are unable to make contact with the top applicant after 1 working days of the bid cycle closing, we will assume the applicant is no longer interested and will move on to the next eligible bidder.
- 25.10 Exceptions are made for Homeless Section 5 applicants where we will issue a provisional offer letter, to both the applicant and Dumfries & Galloway Housing Options and Homelessness Service, prior to but still subject to pre-allocation checks being completed, with a deadline of 1 working day to respond. If no contact is made within this timeframe the Homeless Service will be notified, the offer of tenancy will be withdrawn, and we will cancel the Section 5 referral.
- 25.11 If the information obtained from the pre-allocation checks highlights concerns over the ability to sustain a tenancy, or information is not disclosed by the applicant, then the applicant may be bypassed.
- 25.12 In the case of transfer applicants, the pre-allocation check is carried out by the Neighbourhood Officer during the home visit.

26. Tenancy References

- 26.1 Loreburn seek to obtain tenancy references for the previous 5-year period for all applicants where applicable
- 26.2 In order to progress with more urgent rehousing cases speedily Loreburn will seek to obtain references for all Platinum and Gold banded applicants at the point of registration; references will be valid for a period of 3 months. Reference requests for applicants in the Silver, and Bronze will be sought once a possible offer of tenancy is being pursued.
- 26.3 Information received on a tenancy reference may result in an application being suspended from Loreburn Lettings and/or prevent us from continuing to consider an applicant for an available property. (Please see Section 31 Suspended Applications)

26.4 If we are unable to obtain a recent tenancy reference within a reasonable length of time, discretion is reserved by the Community Team Manager whether to proceed with an offer of tenancy.

26.5 **We do not require or request tenancy references for:**

- **Section 5 applicants**
- **Applicants fleeing domestic abuse**
- **Transfer applicants** (who will receive a home visit)

27. Direct Offers

27.1 In some circumstances, Loreburn will offer a property to an applicant who has not bid for it. This is called a 'direct offer' and is designed to help a household to find social housing if they need to do so urgently or have been unable to find a home themselves using Loreburn Lettings.

27.2 To make the best use of this allocation route, Loreburn should be aware of exceptional circumstances before a suitable property becoming available. Accepted cases will be placed within the "Strategic Needs" sub-category, to ensure we are housing these applicants as a matter of urgency.

27.3 Support to obtain 'Strategic Need' status from external agencies including social work, Neighbourhood Officers etc is encouraged. Any supporting evidence or referrals should be sent to lhareferrals@loreburn.org.uk All 'Strategic Need' requests will be considered by the Community Team Manager and recommendations made to the Head of Housing.

27.4 Properties identified for Direct Offers may not be made available on our Loreburn Lettings website for bids from other applicants.

27.5 Direct offers are authorised by the Director of Housing Services or in their absence a member of the Loreburn Executive Team (LET), who will utilise their discretion, to ensure we are housing these applicants as a matter of urgency.

28. Management Transfers

28.1 In some circumstances, Loreburn will offer a property to an existing transfer applicant who has not bid for it. This is called a 'management transfer and is designed to help a household to move urgently to alleviate an urgent rehousing need or tackle housing management issues.

28.2 Properties identified for Management Transfers may not be made available on our Loreburn Lettings website for bids from other applicants.

28.3 Management Transfers are authorised by the Director of Housing Services or in their absence a member of the Loreburn Executive Team (LET), who will utilise their discretion, to ensure we are housing these applicants as a matter of urgency.

29. Sensitive Lettings

- 29.1 In some circumstances, careful consideration is given to the suitability of an applicant for the vacancy, based on the information the applicant has provided and the knowledge known about the property, its location, or neighbours.
- 29.2 Properties identified for Sensitive Letting may not be made available on our Loreburn Lettings website for bids from other applicants.
- 29.3 Sensitive allocations are authorised by the Director of Housing Services or in their absence a member of the Loreburn Executive Team (LET), who will utilise their discretion, to ensure we are housing these applicants sensitively.

30. Viewings

- 30.1 Only upon a provisional offer of the tenancy being made will a viewing of a property be permitted. Viewings will be arranged and accompanied by a Loreburn staff member.

31. Offer of a Tenancy

- 31.1 All provisional offers of a tenancy will be made by telephone and followed up by a formal offer letter which will be sent within 1 working day. Letters are usually sent by email, however hard copies can be accommodated where required.
- 31.2 Applicants are required to advise Loreburn within 1 working day if they are accepting the offer. This can be accepted verbally in the first instance, and then confirmed in writing by email or hard copy if no access to emails.

32. Refusing an Offer of Suitable Housing

- 32.1 If an applicant changes their mind and wishes to refuse an offer of tenancy, they must advise Loreburn within 1 working day.
- 32.2 Loreburn considers a refusal to be:
- no contact from the applicant following an offer of tenancy
 - applicant who has refused a suitable direct offer of tenancy
 - an applicant who didn't attend a pre-arranged viewing or tenancy sign-up without notice
- 32.3 Applicants who refuse two reasonable offers of tenancy within a 12-month period, will be suspended from Loreburn Lettings for a period of 12 months. See Section 33 Suspended Applications.

32.4 Due to the perceived urgency and level of housing need, should any applicants in our Platinum band refuse a suitable offer of tenancy; whether they have placed a bid on a property or had a suitable direct offer made to them by Loreburn, they will lose their priority status and their banding will be downgraded.

33. Reviews

33.1 Customer’s applications will be reviewed 6-monthly as part of a rolling monthly review process.

33.2 Customers registered in the Platinum and Gold Bands will be reviewed routinely to ensure they are bidding for suitable properties.

34. Suspended Applications

34.1 In order to ensure appropriate and efficient use of our limited supply of housing to those who need it most, the following suspensions will apply:

Reason for Suspension	Time Period	How to reinstate application
Tenancy related debt where applicant owes us, or another landlord more than one month’s rent or tenancy related debt, and a repayment plan has not been maintained for a 3-month period. Note - transfer or mutual exchanges will normally require a clear rent account.	No specific time limits	Clear debt or acceptable payment plan maintained for at least 3 consecutive months
Anti-social behaviour where applicant or a household member has behaved in an anti-social manner and there is an ASBO, or a Notice of Proceedings (NOP) in place	12 months	Review following suspension ends
Convictions against applicant or household member of an offence punishable by imprisonment	12 months	Review following suspension ends
Eviction against applicant granted by Court	12 months	Review following suspension ends
Abandonment of a previous property and the tenancy was terminated	12 months	Review following suspension ends
False information where applicant has given false or misleading information on an application form	6 months	Review following suspension ends
Refusals where applicant has unreasonably refused 2 offers of housing, including not attending pre-arranged viewings, tenancy sign-ups etc, without notice	12 months	Reinstated after suspension ends
Breach of tenancy where applicant or a member of their household has broken	3 months	Review following suspension ends

some condition of a tenancy agreement, such as causing damage to a current home		
Threatening behaviour towards staff where the Director of Housing has independently assessed the applicant or person accompanying an applicant's behaviour and authorised a suspension	12 months	Review following suspension ends

35. Cancelled Applications

35.1 An application will be cancelled from Loreburn Lettings in the following circumstances:

- At the applicant's request.
- The death of an applicant.
- If the applicant fails to respond twice to a review or correspondence following suspension.

35.2 If an applicant gets back in touch within a set period, of up to 6 months, their application can be reinstated at their request and will retain the original application date.

35.3 The applicant will be notified of the reason why their application has been suspended or cancelled and of their right to request a review of that decision. (See Section 36 Appeals)

36. Annual Lettings Plans

36.1 Loreburn works with Dumfries and Galloway Council Strategic Housing to meet the requirements of the Annual Lettings Plan. The targets are used to help us measure our performance and to make sure we are transparent and accountable about the way we allocate properties and meet the needs of each group of housing applicants. (See Appendix III).

37. Local Lettings Initiatives

37.1 We will work with our colleagues at Dumfries and Galloway Council to deliver against the local lettings targets and local lettings plans. Section 4.4 of this policy sets out the objectives we want to achieve when allocating properties. Loreburn have used those objectives to build a priority status that meets all our legal responsibilities and prioritises the needs of applicants in a fair and consistent way. Across Dumfries & Galloway, we have different amounts of housing in each area and different levels of demand. House types and sizes, the availability of local services and the location of our homes can affect the demand for housing. Sometimes Loreburn will need to make an extra effort to encourage applicants to move to a local area and as part of this, sometimes we may use the way we allocate our homes to support local investment and regeneration plans or to make

sure we have a good mix of different household types and ages. To achieve this, Loreburn may at times introduce a local lettings initiative to address a specific issue within one of our communities, e.g.: -

- in areas of low demand, we may wish to relax the bedroom criteria in order to allow applicants to occupy larger properties
- in flatted accommodation, we may wish to reduce the number of households with children occupying properties in order to create a balanced mix of households
- for new build accommodation in rural locations, we may wish to give priority to local applicants who live in and contribute to the local community
- enable an existing community to become more sustainable, for example, by encouraging more families to move into the area
- enable sensitive lettings on developments which have had high levels of antisocial behaviour
- enable households to return to an area they left for redevelopment to take place

37.2 This list is not exhaustive and local lettings initiatives may be agreed in other circumstances where there is evidence that the local community would benefit from such a plan and there is no significant adverse impact on other communities. The equalities impact of site-specific local lettings schemes will be considered before they are agreed.

37.3 If Loreburn are considering whether to introduce a local lettings initiative, we will consult as appropriate e.g. with the local authority, local community, and/or other partners such as Integrated Health and Social Care. Loreburn will explain clearly:

- why we feel a local lettings initiative is needed and the evidence we have used to make the decision
- our specific aims and objectives

37.4 All local lettings and development specific plans will have clear criteria and possibly their own qualification requirements, which are openly published. When a property which is being advertised via the website and is subject to a local lettings plan, this will be stated clearly on the advert.

38. Community Safety – Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

38.1 Registered Social landlords have a legal duty to consider the housing requirements of all applicant including persons currently on the sex offenders

register and other high risk offenders including those being discharged from prison, who are subject to the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). These arrangements require that agencies including the Police, Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords, Health Boards, and the Scottish Prison Service work together to assess and manage the risks posed by such offenders.

- 38.2 The aim of MAPPA is to promote public safety and reduce the risk of harm. Allocations to individuals who are subject to these arrangements will follow on from multi agency scrutiny of assessed risk and applicant's information will be shared within this forum.
- 38.3. The SHORE Standards (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone) is a comprehensive set of standards supporting a prisoner's successful reintegration back into the community, ensuring the housing needs of individuals in prison are handled at an early stage. The mission within the standards is that everyone should have suitable accommodation to go to on the day they are released from custody.
- 38.4 The SHORE standards state: "Failure to consider an individual's housing needs in a planned way at the start of the imprisonment, during sentence and point of release can result in people losing their existing accommodation, incurring high levels of rent arrears and having nowhere to go on the day of liberation other than emergency accommodation".
- 38.5 Loreburn operates a collaborative approach with partners to ensure a successful housing pathway for prison leavers and works within the locally agreed Prison Discharge Protocol to ensure the best outcome for prison leavers.

39. Appeals

- 39.1 Loreburn is committed to providing customers with the best possible service and to working with them to find a solution to their housing need. If, however, customers are not happy with the service they have received, they can make a complaint. They may also be entitled to a formal or informal review of a decision that we've made.
- 39.2 Applicants may seek a review in the following circumstances:
- If they are told that they do not qualify for housing.
 - they disagree with the status that has been awarded to their application
 - they are told that their application has been suspended
 - a decision has been made to suspend an application for 12 months if the applicant refuses two suitable property offers, through either choice-based lettings and/or direct offers.
- 39.3 A request for a review should normally be made in writing, **within 14 days** of the applicant being notified of the decision and should give Loreburn as much information as possible. Loreburn will aim to complete the review within **7 days**.

An applicant may find that an independent legal or specialist housing adviser can help them with the process. If the applicant cannot make a request in writing, they can ask someone else to do this on their behalf or can telephone us and ask us to hear their case orally.

39.4 In considering whether or not to seek a review on the status an applicant has received, they should bear in mind that decisions on priority are based upon Loreburn's assessment of the evidence placed before it. Reviews will be considered by the Director of Housing Services.

40. Personal Information

40.1 Any personal information given to us as part of an application for housing under this policy will be handled according to the legal responsibilities placed on us by the Data Protection Act 2018. This means that any personal information will always be held on a secure IT system and accessed only by authorised individuals. The information will only ever be used for the following purposes:

- assessing a housing application
- statistical monitoring of housing supply and demand
- future consultation and customer surveys.
- multi agency scrutiny of assessed risk (MAPPA)
- supporting transfer applicants
- requesting tenancy references from previous landlords

40.2 This includes sharing information internally or third parties as required to support the application process. The application form contains a requirement for you to consent to such information being shared.

40.3 The information an applicant provides us will be treated by us as confidential. We may disclose information to other third parties who act for us for the purposes set out in our Fair Processing Notice or for purposes approved by the applicant and in accordance with our Data Sharing Agreement.

40.4. Applicants have the right at any time to:

- to ask for a copy of the information about them held by us in our records
- require us to correct any inaccuracies in their information
- make a request to us
- to delete what personal data of theirs we hold
- object to receiving any marketing communications from us

40.5 If you would like to exercise any of your rights above please contact our Data Protection Officer on 01387 321300.

41. The Scottish Housing Regulator

41.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is the independent regulator of registered social landlords and local authority housing services in Scotland. The SHR has

a legal responsibility to: *"safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities"*.

41.2 The SHR monitors how well landlords are delivering their housing services, managing their finances and performing good standards of governance. If needed, the SHR will intervene to make improvements where there is evidence that this is needed.

41.3 Loreburn provides evidence each year that their performance meets the standards set out by the SHR in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This means that the SHR will monitor, assess, compare and report on the performance of all landlords in relation to:-

- how easy we make it for you to apply for housing;
- how well we communicate with you and give you advice;
- how well we manage our allocations process

41.4 Loreburn are fully open and accountable for the way we allocate our housing and therefore will maintain a clear audit trail which allows us to demonstrate how and why we make decisions when allocating our homes. We will ask for approval from our Management Committee if we propose to allocate a property to:-

- one of our current employees;
- a recent employee (e.g. someone who has worked for us in the last 12 months);
- one of our Board members;
- a close relative of our staff or Board.

41.5 In giving us approval, Management Committee will satisfy themselves that a clear audit trail is in place to support the selection of the applicant before we make such an offer.

41.6 Whilst we recognise that Councillors play an important role in supporting their constituents and monitoring letting outcomes their role is restricted by legislation which states that councillors must not be directly involved in any decision on the allocation of housing in the electoral division or ward they are responsible for (Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993). This does not mean that Councillors cannot provide information in support of and on behalf of constituents' housing applications and we will respond to any requests accordingly.

42. Monitoring

42.1 Monitoring will be used to ensure:

- Those in the 'reasonable preference' categories are given priority for housing
- Lettings are broadly proportionate to the profile of local communities

- Lettings within 'the Bands' accords with the stated aims of the policy
- Customers in special needs groups are successfully accessing housing.
- There is overall customer satisfaction with Choice Based Lettings

43. Staff Training and Development

43.1 The successful implementation of this policy and supporting procedures is dependent on the knowledge and skills of staff implementing it. Regular training will be provided to relevant staff to ensure a consistent approach and ensure they can carry out the roles and duties linked to the application of this policy effectively.

44. Complaints

44.1 Loreburn has a commitment to valuing complaints and ensures the organisation benefits from feedback to identify areas for change or improvement.

44.2 Loreburn has a Complaints Policy which ensures there are robust and effective procedures in place for complaints to be properly managed and acted upon.

44.3 Anyone dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint having exhausted Loreburn's complaints procedure has the right to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

45. Equality and Human Rights

45.1 Loreburn aims to ensure that equality, fairness, dignity and respect are central to the way we work and how we treat our customers. We support diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of our work as an employer and service provider.

45.2 Loreburn will not discriminate against tenants, staff, visitors, suppliers or others based on their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment (collectively referred to as 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010).

46. Risk Management

46.1 Loreburn has a Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Procedure. These documents set out how the organisation will manage risk as an integral part of its governance and management systems, ensuring risks are identified, evaluated and controlled effectively.

46.2 Identifiable risks arising from this policy will be monitored and managed by the internal processes set out herein and by regular review of this and all other associated policies and procedures, ensuring risks are mitigated and Loreburn complies with all legislative requirements and regulatory and best practice guidance.

47. Responsibilities Chart

The below chart illustrates the responsibilities of all staff pertaining to this policy:

Responsibilities	CEO/ MC	LET	Head of Housing	Managers	All Staff
To set the policy and direction with regards to Choice Based Lettings	✓				
Ensure Loreburn HA staff have a robust understanding of Choice Based Lettings		✓			
Policy Champion			✓		
Arrange necessary training			✓	✓	
Ensure feedback is used to improve service			✓	✓	
Ensure policy is reviewed in line with requirements of Policy Framework			✓		
Ensure effective and clear communication with staff, key stakeholders and customers			✓	✓	✓
Reporting any concerns to line manager					✓

48. Policy Review

48.1 The Policy Champion is the Head of Housing.

48.2 The Policy Champion is responsible for completing the Health and Safety Assessment and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Assessment Checklist.

48.3 This policy will be reviewed by the Policy Champion every two years or sooner as required due to legislative or substantive change.

Policy Assessment Checklist

Health & Safety Assessment

Does this policy have the potential to affect:

Lone Working Yes

Safety and/or wellbeing of staff Yes

Safety and/or wellbeing of customers Yes

Have the above items been considered in the preparation of this policy? Yes

Comments:

All staff are required to adhere to Loreburn's Lone Working Policy. The CBL allocation process aims to ensure that all properties being allocated meet customers individual needs including assessment of physical and mental health requirements.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Assessment

Does this policy have the potential to affect:

Staff's rights to equal opportunities Yes

Tenants' / Customer's rights to equal opportunities Yes

Tenants' / Customer's ability to access to homes and/or services Yes

Have the above items been considered in the preparation of this policy? Yes

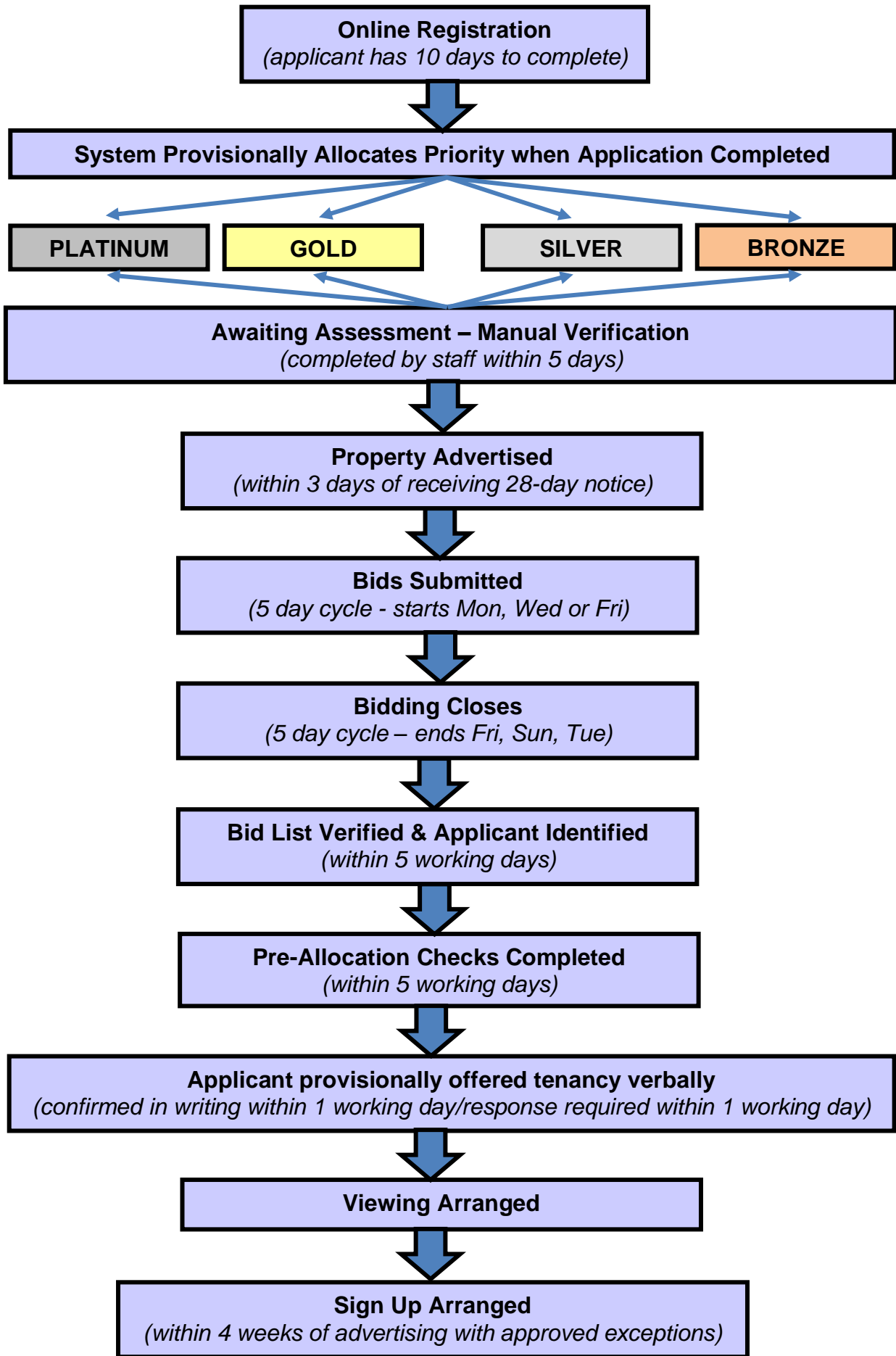
Comments:

The policy follows the guidance of the Housing Scotland Act 2014 to prioritise housing need. The CBL Policy aims to ensure staff can gain a full understanding of prospective tenant's individual needs and ensure limited housing stock is best matched to an applicant's needs to secure the best opportunities of tenancy sustainment.

Agile Working Assessment

Agile working requirements have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this policy: Yes

APPENDIX I – Allocation Process



APPENDIX II – Criteria for Banding Awards

BRONZE	
	Applicant has failed to demonstrate any priority indicators in line with this allocation policy as detailed in Criteria for Banding section.
Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment indicated current housing is adequate. Insufficient identification provided for all relevant applicants. Aspirational move only 	Insufficient supporting evidence supplied to support application

SILVER - Criteria 1	
<i>Note – 2 or more Silver Criteria 1 will award a Gold banding (excludes Non Priority Homeless)</i>	
1.	<p>LOW MEDICAL NEED</p> <p>The applicant or household member has a health condition or disability which could be eased through a move to a more suitable property. Daily tasks and activities are made more difficult by the current housing accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Medical priority is not awarded based on an applicant’s specific health condition or disability as detailed in their application form. Instead we determine medical priority by how the applicant’s current housing or living arrangements affects their health and well-being. If an applicant has a condition or disability which they are unable to sufficiently evidence will be improved or alleviated through re-housing, medical priority will not be awarded.</i> <i>Medical priority can be awarded for any household member. To receive medical priority applicants must complete the Medical Form section of our online application form; provide evidence of the health condition or disability and detail why a move to alternative accommodation would improve their current housing circumstances.</i>
Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person with mobility problems living in accommodation which presents low level physical barriers such as steps to the front door. A person who has difficulty accessing or travelling to medical facilities and/or 	<p>Applicants must complete the medical section of the application form</p> <p>GP supporting letters</p>

<p>appointments or requires support from families or friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person suffering from mental health condition as a result of their current accommodation having a detrimental effect on their well-being, which could be alleviated by a move to more suitable accommodation. 	<p>OT or social work referral.</p>
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SILVER - Criteria 1 *(does not contribute to Gold banding)*

2. **NON PRIORITY HOMELESS**

Assessed by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

- **If an applicant has had to vacate their property as a result of a notice or finds themselves homeless through no fault of their own they should approach Dumfries & Galloway Council Homelessness Department immediately.**

Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sofa Surfers • Those moving between friends and relatives • Those who have accommodation but the local authority do not consider it reasonable to occupy • Those who have accommodation, but cannot secure access to it due to undergoing repairs/adaptations or other reasons • People who are living in non-residential caravan sites; 	<p>Written confirmation of no permanent address</p> <p>Documentation provided by a residential caravan site detailing that permanent residency has not been granted.</p>

SILVER - Criteria 1

3. **UNDER OCCUPANCY – ONE UNUSED BEDROOM**

Priority for under-occupancy is awarded to existing **social housing tenants who have **one** unused bedroom in their current property. Private tenants, homeowners etc will not be awarded this priority under any circumstance.**

- *Under-occupancy is defined as residing in a property which is too large for the number of permanent inhabitants.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of this priority criteria is to improve the availability and make best use of existing social housing stock. 	
Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A single person in a 2-bedroom registered social landlord property, requesting to downsize to a 1-bedroom property will receive this priority. Under-occupancy priority will only be awarded if an applicant is being considered for a smaller property. Should an applicant wish to be considered for a property of equal size to their current accommodation; this priority will be removed at the time of shortlisting. 	<p>Full list of current household members - including any persons currently living with you who will not be moving with you or anyone who you wish to live with but are unable to due to your current housing circumstances.</p> <p>Tenancy references may be requested to confirm details.</p>

SILVER - Criteria 1

4.	<p>OVERCROWDING – ONE BEDROOM</p> <p>Applicants will receive priority for overcrowding if their current accommodation does not adequately accommodate the number of people permanently residing within it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Applicants who will be overcrowded due to pregnancy will receive priority from 25 weeks.</i> 	
	Examples	Evidence required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who are overcrowded by 1 bedroom are deemed to be overcrowded. Overcrowding priority will only be awarded if an applicant is being considered for a larger property. Should an applicant wish to be considered for a property of equal size to their current accommodation; this priority will be removed at shortlisting 	<p>Full list of current household members - including any persons currently living with you who will not be moving with you or anyone who you wish to live with but are unable to due to your current housing circumstances.</p> <p>Tenancy references may be requested to confirm details.</p> <p>MAT B1 form or other confirmation from your midwife or doctor.</p>

SILVER - Criteria 1

5. **HARDSHIP**

An applicant will be awarded priority for hardship if they can demonstrate that their current home or accommodation is having a negative effect on their quality of life and a move to more suitable housing would have a positive effect on their lifestyle.

- *Excluding travelling to access medical appointments or to receive support as this is captured within our medical priority.*

Examples

Evidence required

Support/ Social Isolation:

Priority will be awarded if an applicant requires housing to be nearer to family, friends to provide support

Applicants must detail the support required and demonstrate why reliance on public or own transport is not a viable option.

Financial:

- Applicants requiring to take up/continue employment opportunity not available elsewhere will only be considered where they do not live within a reasonable commuting distance.
- Non-social housing tenants who are assessed as facing housing related financial hardship where re-housing will alleviate the situation eg homeowners defaulting on mortgage/private lets unable to afford full rental costs
- Existing social housing tenants who suffer financial hardship as a result of housing benefit changes under Welfare Reform

Confirmation of employment details from employer.

Copy of current tenancy agreement; and

Bank statement or HB award letter

Fuel Poverty:

Priority will be awarded if an applicant is struggling to afford utility and fuel costs in their current accommodation

(i.e bills total more than 10% of their total household income).

Confirmation of household income; and Utility bills;

Top up receipts for key meters.

SILVER - Criteria 1

6. **BELOW TOLERABLE STANDARDS**

To receive priority applicants must provide documentation detailing their main and principle home has been declared as below tolerable standards by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Environmental Health Service.

Examples

- Structural problems;
- Severe rising or penetrating damp or water penetration;
- Unsatisfactory natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating;
- Unsatisfactory thermal insulation;
- No adequate piped supply of wholesome water within the house;
- No inside toilet for the exclusive use of the people living in the house;
- No sink with an adequate supply of both hot and cold water within the house;
- No inside toilet for the exclusive use of the people living in the house;
- No fixed bath or shower and wash-hand basin, with hot and cold water;
- No effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water;
- Unsatisfactory or unsafe electricity supply;
- Unsatisfactory facilities for the cooking of food;
- Unsatisfactory access to external doors and outbuildings.

Evidence required

Notice from Environmental Health

Applicants must contact the Council and request an assessment, Loreburn HA will not request or arrange an appointment on an applicant's behalf.

GOLD - Criteria 2

Note – 2 or more Silver Criteria 1 will award a Gold banding (excludes Non Priority Homeless)

1. **HIGH MEDICAL NEED**

The applicant or household member has a serious health condition or disability meaning the current accommodation is unsuitable. Rehousing would alleviate the health and/or mobility of the person(s) and improve the current household situation.

- *Medical priority is not awarded based on an applicant's specific health condition or disability as detailed in their application form. Instead we determine medical priority by how the applicant's current housing or living arrangements affects their health and well-being. If an applicant has a condition or disability which they are unable to sufficiently evidence will be*

<p><i>improved or alleviated through re-housing, medical priority will not be awarded.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Medical priority can be awarded for any household member. To receive medical priority applicants must complete the Health & Wellbeing section of our online application form; provide evidence of the health condition or disability and detail why a move to alternative accommodation would improve their current housing circumstances.</i> 	
Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person who has difficulty accessing or using household facilities for example a bathroom/toilet without support or assistance on a different floor A person with a disability requiring substantial adaptations where their current accommodation cannot be reasonably and practicably adapted to meet their needs A person suffering from mental health condition as a result of their current accommodation having a serious detrimental effect on their well-being, which would be alleviated by a move to more suitable accommodation. 	<p>Applicants must complete the medical section of the application form</p> <p>GP supporting letters</p> <p>OT or social work referral.</p>

GOLD - Criteria 2

2. INSECURE ACCOMMODATION

Priority will be awarded to applicants who are at risk of becoming homeless.

- If an applicant has had to vacate their property as a result of a notice or finds themselves homeless through no fault of their own they should approach the Dumfries & Galloway Council Homelessness Department immediately.**

Examples

- People who have been formally asked to leave their current accommodation;
- People living in tied accommodation which is coming to an end due to termination of contract, redundancy, or retirement;
- Being served a repossession notice on an owner-occupied home

Evidence required

Valid notice to quit from your current landlord,

Notice to terminate employment or a letter from your employer;

Other types of insecure

	accommodation will be considered and assessed on an individual basis.
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GOLD - Criteria 2

3. SEVERE UNDEROCCUPANCY – TWO OR MORE UNUSED BEDROOMS

Priority for under-occupancy is awarded to existing **social housing tenants** who have **one** unused bedroom in their current property. Private tenants, homeowners etc will **not** be awarded this priority under any circumstance.

- *Under-occupancy is defined as residing in a property which is too large for the number of permanent inhabitants.*
- *The purpose of this priority criteria is to improve the availability and make best use of existing social housing stock.*

Examples

- A single person in a 3-bedroom registered social landlord property, requesting to downsize to a 1-bedroom property will receive this priority.
- Under-occupancy priority **will only be awarded** if an applicant is being considered for a smaller property. Should an applicant wish to be considered for a property of equal size to their current accommodation; this priority will be removed at the time of shortlisting.

Evidence required

Full list of current household members - including any persons currently living with you who will not be moving with you or anyone who you wish to live with but are unable to due to your current housing circumstances.

Tenancy references may be requested to confirm details.

GOLD - Criteria 2

4. SEVERE OVERCROWDING – TWO OR MORE BEDROOMS

Applicants will receive priority for overcrowding if their current accommodation does not adequately accommodate the number of people permanently residing within it.

- *Applicants who will be overcrowded due to pregnancy will receive priority from 25 weeks.*

Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who are overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms are deemed to be overcrowded. Overcrowding priority will only be awarded if an applicant is being considered for a larger property. Should an applicant wish to be considered for a property of equal size to their current accommodation; this priority will be removed at shortlisting 	<p>Full list of current household members - including any persons currently living with you who will not be moving with you or anyone who you wish to live with but are unable to due to your current housing circumstances.</p> <p>Tenancy references may be requested to confirm details.</p> <p>MAT B1 form or other confirmation from your midwife or doctor.</p>

GOLD - Criteria 2

5. LEAVING SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Examples	Evidence required
Applicants who are living in a supported housing property (usually for at least 6 months) and who have been assessed as being ready for independent living	Written confirmation from supported accommodation provider

PLATINUM - Criteria 3

1. URGENT MEDICAL NEED

The applicant has been referred to Loreburn by a local authority or agency due to a complex medical requirement or disability. The persons health is severely affected by their current accommodation or it has been declared as unsafe for the person to return home.

- Medical priority is not awarded based on an applicant's specific health condition or disability as detailed in their application form. Instead we determine medical priority by how the applicant's current housing or living arrangements affects their health and well-being. If an applicant has a condition or disability which they are unable to sufficiently evidence will be improved or alleviated through re-housing, medical priority will **not** be awarded.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical priority can be awarded for any household member. To receive medical priority applicants must complete the Health & Wellbeing section of our online application form; provide evidence of the health condition or disability and detail why a move to alternative accommodation would improve their current housing circumstances. 	
Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bed-blocking - A person who cannot be discharged from hospital until a suitable adapted property is provided A person who is elderly or disabled or has a progressive illness and is likely to require admission to hospital or residential/nursing care in the immediate future, and re-housing would enable the person to remain at home A person who has a severe mental health or learning disability which significantly affects their ability to lead a normal life and which puts them at risk of admission to hospital or residential care. 	<p>GP supporting letters</p> <p>OT or social work referral.</p> <p>Hospital referral.</p>

PLATINUM - Criteria 3

2.	<p>PRIORITY HOMELESS</p> <p>Applicants who have been made homeless through no fault of their own.</p>	
	Examples	Evidence required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants who have been assessed by Dumfries and Galloway Council Homelessness Department as unintentionally homeless (under Part II of the 2014 Housing (Scotland) Act). Urgent homeless prevention where an applicant has children or is pregnant, or is a single person who in the local authority's opinion may be at risk of being physically homeless. 	<p>Section 5 referral form</p> <p>Housing Options and Homeless Officer referral</p>

PLATINUM - Criteria 3

3.	<p>DOMESTIC ABUSE</p> <p>Priority is awarded in these circumstances without the need of evidence, we will be discreet and follow the wishes of the applicant at all times in regard to contact methods. Any enquiries that we carry out will be</p>	
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<p>performed with care and sensitivity. In doing this, we will always aim to ensure that the safety of an applicant's household is not jeopardised in any way. We will also aim to identify housing options that consider the best interests of an applicant's household including access to family and support networks.</p>	
Examples	Evidence required
<p>Loreburn are committed to supporting applicants experiencing domestic abuse, whether the abuse is physical, financial, sexual or emotional.</p> <p>We do not discriminate against gender; age; or family composition.</p>	n/a

PLATINUM - Criteria 3

4.	SERIOUS HARRASSMENT/HATE CRIME	
	<p>If an applicant or household member is unable to stay in their current home as a result of serious harassment or hate crimes, this must be detailed in their application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If at any stage a person feels that it is unsafe to remain in their current accommodation, they must contact the Police. They should also contact Dumfries and Galloway Council Homelessness Department who may be able to provide temporary accommodation.</i> • <i>Serious harassment may include physical attacks and/or damage to property; as well as verbal abuse and other types of behaviour that could cause harm or make a person feel distressed or threatened.</i> 	
	Examples	Evidence required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious harassment also includes hate crimes, where abuse may be directed because of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender; • Racial origin; • Sexuality; • Age; • Disability; or • Other personal factors 	<p>Confirmation from Dumfries and Galloway Council's Community Safety Team</p> <p>Confirmation from current landlord</p> <p>Police Scotland crime reference number</p>

PLATINUM - Criteria 3

5.	<p>LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</p> <p>Priority is awarded to young people leaving care. Loreburn are committed to working with Dumfries & Galloway Council to ensure suitable properties are identified in order to support young people secure and maintain permanent accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We take account of existing support networks and recognise the progress, attainments and abilities of the young person when considering re-housing options.</i> 	
	Examples	Evidence required
	First tenancy.	Social work referral.

PLATINUM - Criteria 3

6.	<p>PERSONS LEAVING ACTIVE SERVICE</p> <p>Priority is awarded to support personnel who have recently left or are due to leave the armed forces, to secure permanent accommodation.</p>	
	Examples	Evidence required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons currently serving with one of the recognised Ministry of Defence Armed Forces, with less than one full year to honourable discharge; Persons discharged from one of the Armed Forces within the previous 6 months of applying for housing; Persons who have been discharged on medical grounds; or be the surviving spouse/partner or a non-dependent child (aged 16 years or above) of a deceased Forces Personnel (either serving or served within the past 6 months). 	Discharge letter from Ministry of Defence Armed Forces

PLATINUM - Criteria 3

7.	<p>WITNESS PROTECTION CASES</p> <p>Witness protection safeguards the wellbeing of a threatened witness or any person involved in the justice system, including defendants and other clients, before, during and after a trial, usually by police.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>While a witness may only require protection until the conclusion of a trial, some witnesses are provided with a new identity and may live out the rest of their lives under government protection.</i> 	
	Examples	Evidence required

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witness in a high profile or sensitive court case. 	<p>We will only consider referrals made by Police Scotland, Police UK or the National Witness Mobility Service.</p>
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PLATINUM - Criteria 3

8. REGENERATION PROJECTS

Priority will be awarded to applicants whose current property has been identified for regeneration or disposal.

- Loreburn will seek to identify properties which are or equal to or better suited in size and composition; wherever possible.
- It is likely that restrictions will be placed on suitable properties to allow only applicants from this category to bid.

Examples	Evidence required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A development has been identified as a non-viable asset. 	n/a

APPENDIX III – Annual Lettings Targets (2020/2021)

The 2020/2021 local agreement is as follows:

Applicant category	Percentage
Section 5 referrals	40%
Waiting List	35%
Transfer applicants	15%
Priority cases	10%

In order to maintain our commitment and support our current housing customers Loreburn have a separate lettings plan for our new build developments which is detailed below:

Applicant category	Percentage
Section 5 referrals	25%
Waiting List	65%
Transfer applicants	
Priority cases	10%