

MUIRCROFT HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

*An exempt charity incorporated as an
Industrial & Provident Society Reg. No. 19876R*

THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Review of the Housing Allocations Policy	2
Scope of the Housing Allocations Policy	2
The Objectives of the Housing Allocations Policy	2
Publicity and Training	2

SECTION 2: THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

MCHA's Housing Register	3
People who are Eligible to Join MCHA's Housing Register	3
People who are not eligible to join the Housing Register	3
Rent Arrears and Rechargeable Debts	3
Home Owners	3
Tied Tenants	4
Institutional Care	4
Mutual Exchanges	4
Transfer Register	4
Community Safety and Social Inclusion	5
Size of Accommodation	5
The Banding Scheme	5
The A & B Lists of the Housing Register	5
Medical Priority	6
Lettings to each Band	7
Bedroom Standard	7
Disrepair and Unfitness	7
Threats and Harassment	8
Direct Matches	8
Transfer and General Register	8
Local Lettings Policies	8
Change of Circumstances	8
Closing the Housing Register	9

SECTION 3: ADMINISTERING THE HOUSING REGISTER

Joining the Housing Register	9
Confidentiality	9
False Information	10
Confirmation of Acceptance or Rejection	10
Home Visits	10
Renewing and Updating Applications	10
Applicants' Choices	11
Suspending Applications	11
Cancelling Applications	12

Reinstating Applications	12
Advertising Properties	12
Bidding for Properties	12
Priority within Bands	13
The Successful Bidder	13
Review of Decisions	13
Housing Appeals Panel	14
Complaints Procedure	14

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Review of the Housing Allocations Policy (HAP)

The HAP policy will be reviewed in June of each year.

Scope of the HAP

The HAP covers eligibility for the Association’s Housing Register. The Association is required to offer fifty percent of empty properties at Muir House and seventy five percent of properties at Priest Croft to New Forest District Council for a nomination.

The Objectives of the HAP

The principal objective of the HAP is to ensure that the homes are allocated within the law, fairly and consistently, to eligible housing applicants both according to their needs and choices.

Other objectives are:

- To make the most effective use of the Association’s stock,
- To minimise the time properties are empty.

The Association is committed to equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice in service provision, and seeks to promote social inclusion. We will make every effort to ensure that housing applicants are treated fairly and sensitively. Applicants who are eligible to join our Housing Register will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion or belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or marital status.

The HAP will be amended and updated in order to conform to new housing and other relevant legislation and case law. We will also seek to ensure that the HAP conforms to best practice guidance issued by the Communities and Local Government department and other relevant organisations.

Publicity and Training

All staff will make every effort to ensure that stakeholders and housing applicants can access information about the Association’s HAP. It will be available in hard copy and on the Association’s website. It will also be included in the application pack that is sent out to potential applicants.

Staff will provide briefings, presentations, or training sessions as required for Board Members, and to other agencies and/or individuals as appropriate.

SECTION 2: THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

MuirCroft Housing Association's Housing Register

The Housing Register includes housing applicants who are new applicants and transfer applicants. The term "applicant" will usually include couples where spouses or partners could be joint tenants. The term "household" includes all individuals included in the application. A household may therefore be an individual or a couple.

The terms "bid" and "bidder" will be used to describe how an eligible applicant applies to be considered for an available property. Making a bid means that an applicant wants to apply for the advertised home. It does not mean that any money or other consideration is involved.

People Who Are Eligible to Join MCHA's Housing Register

In order to be eligible to join the Housing Register, and to bid for advertised properties, new applicants must be aged at least 60 years and not excluded by law.

MCHA tenants are eligible to join the Housing Register as transfer applicants provided they can demonstrate a housing need for transferring and are not excluded by law.

People who are not eligible to join the Housing Register

The following households are not eligible to join MuirCroft Housing Association's Housing Register:

- People who are excluded by law
- People whose behaviour puts them and/or others at serious risk
- People whose behaviour is or has recently been unacceptable as defined in the Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation.

Rent Arrears and Rechargeable Repairs Debts

Applicants who owe rent or other housing related debts to a local authority or Housing Association will be expected to repay these, or demonstrate that they are making regular repayments of the debt, before they are eligible to bid for a property. Applicants who have outstanding housing related debts will normally be expected to maintain regular payments for a period of 6 to 12 months, depending on the amount of the debts and the period that they have been outstanding, before they are eligible to bid for a new home.

In cases where a transfer applicant's rent arrears and/or other housing related debts have been serious and/or persistent, the applicant will be asked to maintain a debt free period before they are eligible to bid.

Home Owners

For general needs social housing it is usual practice for people who own a home to be expected to use it, or to sell it and buy or rent privately another property which meets their needs. However MCHA specialises in sheltered housing and recognises that many applicants will be home owners and therefore will accept them onto the housing register in the following bands; those with

sufficient resources to buy accommodation in the locality which meets their needs will be placed into the lowest band and should continue to seek alternative accommodation; those whose equity and capital would be insufficient to allow the applicant to purchase another suitable home will be placed into the middle band. This applies to shared owners as well as freeholders and long leaseholders.

Where an applicant benefits from a legacy or their financial circumstances change enabling them to purchase a suitable home, they will be placed in the lowest band.

Tied Tenants

Tied tenants may join the Housing Register. If they are approaching retirement, in the year leading up to their retirement they will be placed into the top band, if they are not able to purchase a property.

Institutional Care

Applicants will not normally be eligible to join the Housing Register, if they need institutional care. However if they are leaving institutional care, and appropriate support will be available to help them live independently, they may apply.

Mutual Exchanges

Tenants of social landlords can move locally or to more distant areas by exchanging their properties as well as by applying for a transfer. Secure tenants (i.e. Council tenants) have a statutory right to mutually exchange with their landlord's consent; assured tenants (i.e. Housing Association tenants) usually have the same contractual right. A mutual exchange does not usually create a new tenancy for either party, but represents an assignment of existing tenancies. Where an exchange takes place between tenants of different social landlords, MCHA will take the opportunity to issue the tenant with their most up to date tenancy agreement. Tenants who move in this way accept the property in the condition it is in.

Consent to exchange can only be withheld on certain limited grounds, for example, if the proposed assignee does not meet the age criteria, is subject to a Possession Order, or Notice of Seeking Possession, if the accommodation is substantially larger or smaller than that required, or if the accommodation is not suitable for the needs of the assignee. Section 106 Planning Requirements relating to local connection criteria attached to particular properties would also apply. This means that both parties would have to meet any existing local connection criteria before the exchange could be approved.

Transfer Register

MCHA tenants are eligible to join the Housing Register and will need to complete a full application form.

Notice on their existing flat will need to be given in accordance with their Tenancy Agreement.

Community Safety and Social Inclusion

It is important to balance the needs of the individual applicant with the needs and rights of neighbours and the local community. MCHA will work closely with colleagues from Social

Services, Probation, Health and voluntary agencies in order to minimise any risks to and from applicants. As a small association it may not always be possible to offer suitable accommodation to meet the needs of all applicants. Applicants falling into this category will be advised in writing that MCHA has no suitable accommodation for them and therefore they have not been included on the housing register. Such a decision will only be taken following a full risk assessment.

In some cases where there is a significant risk to or from an applicant, it is likely that direct matches will be considered rather than the applicant making bids. This is to ensure the safety of the applicant and the existing residents.

Size of Accommodation

Applicants will be clearly advised what size of accommodation they will be eligible for when they join the Housing Register. Applicants may be eligible for more than one size of home, depending on their household composition. The table below shows the size of home for which applicants may bid.

Size of property	Household size and type
Studio flat/bedsit	Single person aged at least 60 years
One bedroom flat	Single person aged at least 60 years of age or couple where one person is aged at least 60 years of age

The Banding Scheme

The A and B Lists of the Housing Register

The A list is the active list for applicants who are seeking re-housing within twelve months from the date of their application. Applicants on this list are split into the three bands detailed earlier. Whilst applicants on the A list are ready to move within twelve months this does not mean that accommodation will become available within this time.

The B list is the inactive list. Applicants who wish to register a future interest in MCHA's accommodation but do not wish to move for more than twelve months will be placed onto this list. There are no bands to this list. When an applicant on the B list wishes to move onto the A list they must put this request in writing to MCHA. Their application will then be verified and a home visit is likely to take place. If the applicant is successful in being moved onto the A list the original date of registration will move across with them giving the applicant extra priority over applicants who have registered more recently. Acceptance onto the B list does not guarantee acceptance to the A list.

The banding scheme is used to award priority to eligible applicants. It takes into account applicants who should be given "reasonable preference" as defined in Section 167 of the 1996 Housing Act, and those who may be in priority categories defined in the 2002 Homelessness Act.

MCHA will assess eligible applicants and place them in one of three bands of housing need.

The criteria for each band within the active A list is given below.

Band	Criteria
Band One	Statutorily homeless

	Present accommodation declared unfit by Local Authority Environmental Health Officer
	Occupying tied accommodation and due to retire in twelve months
	Applicants qualifying for Band Two but awarded medical priority.
Band Two	Applicants in insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise in unsatisfactory conditions.
	Applicants qualifying for Band Three but awarded medical priority.
	Present accommodation unsuitable and applicant has insufficient resources to secure alternative suitable accommodation.
	Applicants who need to move to a particular locality, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves and they have insufficient resources to secure suitable accommodation.
Band Three	No housing need
	Those with sufficient resources to secure suitable alternative accommodation.

Medical Priority

Many applicants consider that they should receive additional priority on medical grounds. While it is important to be flexible and sensitive to people who are in very difficult situations, it is also necessary to be fair to others who are waiting on the Housing Register in unsatisfactory accommodation and who are also under stress. Decisions about medical priority must be made in relation to applicants' housing circumstances. The fact that an applicant has a serious disability or terminal illness does not in itself justify priority on medical grounds. Information from the home visit should be taken into account in assessing medical priority. This is particularly helpful in making a judgement about whether the applicant's situation is significantly worse in comparison with other applicants.

The Medical Panel will decide whether an applicant is eligible for additional priority on medical grounds. When making this decision, the Panel will consider:

- Whether the personal difficulties of the applicant are housing related, or can be mitigated by re-housing;
- How the applicant's circumstances compare to those of others on the Housing Register;
- Whether the applicant has caused or contributed to their current situation;
- What other options are available to the applicant.

In order for an applicant to qualify for priority on medical grounds, it must be clear that the applicant's current property has a direct and serious effect on their physical and/or mental health, and that a move to alternative accommodation will alleviate the problem. Priority on medical grounds will also be awarded in cases where an applicant has a serious disability; their home is unsuitable for their needs and cannot be adapted or improved. Short term illnesses or injuries, or convalescence from surgery where a good recovery is expected, will not qualify for medical priority.

Applicants who wish to apply for priority on medical grounds must complete the relevant form and give details of their circumstances. They then take the form to their GP or other health professional for supporting information. MCHA will not pay any charges related to the provision of health professionals' advice or information supporting a housing application.

If priority is awarded on Medical Grounds the applicant will move up one band.

Medical priority may be withdrawn if the circumstances leading to the award of priority no longer apply.

Lettings to each Band

MCHA aims to re-house applicants from all three Bands on the active A list of the Housing Register. The table below shows how this will be achieved. The percentage of lettings to each Band will be reviewed annually.

Band	Percentage of Lettings
Band One	25%
Band Two	50%
Band Three	25%

Bedroom Standard

Applicants who are statutorily overcrowded will qualify for Band Two unless;

- They have created the situation by inviting additional people to live in a home which was previously suitable or,
- They have moved to accommodation which is too small for their needs to increase their priority for housing,
- They have been awarded medical priority and been moved up one band to Band One.

The standards set out in the Housing Act 1985, or succeeding legislation will be used to assess whether a room is large enough to be shared, and by how many people.

Disrepair and Unfitness

Wherever possible, disrepair and unfitness in the applicant's home should be remedied, rather than additional priority being awarded for poor housing conditions. Priority on the grounds of poor housing conditions should only be awarded if:

- It is impossible or unreasonable for the landlord/owner to undertake repairs to remedy the problems
- The applicant has not caused or contributed to the problems
- The applicant has not deliberately moved to a property in poor repair in order to increase their priority for re-housing.

No priority will be awarded for poor decoration, any problems caused by the applicant, or poor use of the available accommodation by the applicant.

Threats and Harassment

Wherever possible appropriate remedies (for example mediation or legal action) should be taken to resolve situations where an applicant is experiencing threats or harassment. However if it is not possible to pursue legal or other remedies, additional priority may be awarded if an applicant is experiencing threats of or actual violence, intimidation, nuisance, harassment or other forms of antisocial behaviour.

MCHA must be satisfied that the applicant has not caused or contributed to the situation where a dispute has escalated. Evidence will usually be required from the applicant and/or independent agencies to support allegations of antisocial behaviour.

If an applicant reports repeated experiences of threats, intimidation, nuisance, harassment or other forms of antisocial behaviour during their housing history, staff must consider whether the applicant has provoked this behaviour, or whether they are unusually sensitive to or liable to misinterpret others' behaviour. In these circumstances a move is unlikely to resolve the issues and support or treatments are more appropriate options.

Direct Matches

In some circumstances it is not appropriate for properties to be advertised or for applicants to make bids. In these cases direct matches will be made. Examples of circumstances where direct matches will be made are:

- Homes which are particularly suitable for an applicant with special needs, where alternative homes are unlikely to meet their needs
- Homes which have been specifically built or adapted for a particular applicant
- Cases where community safety considerations relating to an applicant mean that particular care must be taken in their re-housing.

This is not a comprehensive list as it is rarely possible to anticipate every possibility where CBL may not be an inappropriate means of letting. In each case where a direct match is made, this will be approved by the Chief Executive and recorded on the applicant's file.

Local Lettings Policies

MCHA aims to give the best support service to all residents of its sheltered accommodation. In order to do this the number of residents with high support needs at each scheme is monitored. Where the level has reached that which allows the best service to be offered to all residents a local lettings policy will apply. No applicant with high support needs will be accepted into that scheme until such time as the level drops. Properties advertised whilst the local lettings policy applies will be clearly labelled together with the reason.

Change of Circumstances

If an applicant is moved to a different priority band due to a change in circumstances, their application will retain its registration date.

Closing the Housing Register

MCHA reserves the right to close the Housing Register if the number of applicants greatly exceeds the likely number of vacancies within a given time. Applicants will be notified that the housing register is closed and advised to seek alternative accommodation. Further they will be offered the opportunity for their application to be held on file for consideration when the housing register is re-opened.

SECTION 3: ADMINISTERING THE HOUSING REGISTER

Joining the Housing Register

In order to join the Housing Register, applicants must complete a Housing Application Form and provide appropriate verification of their circumstances. Applicants may be asked to provide original documents to prove:

- their date of birth and those of members of their household
- their National Insurance Number and those of members of their household
- their residence or employment
- details of their current housing circumstances
- details of their income and assets
- evidence to support priority on health or social grounds

Applicants' who own, have previously owned or who have or have had a legal or financial interest in a property, will be asked for evidence relating to the value of the property, its disposal and any equity received.

References will be sought for applicants' who are tenants of a Registered Social Landlord or Local Authority with regard to the conduct of their tenancy.

Confidentiality

Details relating to each applicant, including the fact of their being registered, must be kept confidential. Information about an applicant and/or members of their household, or the progress of their application, may not be passed to anyone who is not part of the applicant's household, without their permission. This permission should preferably be in writing. The Data Protection Act 1998 and Section 166 of the 1996 Housing Act (and superseding legislation) should be observed.

Applicants will be asked to authorise information sharing with relevant agencies, for example Housing Benefits, Social Services, Probation, and a range of voluntary and statutory agencies, where this is necessary. Applicants have the opportunity on their application form to nominate a family member or friend who MCHA may contact to discuss their application if appropriate or necessary.

Issues relating to child protection, or community safety, must always take precedence over confidentiality. Similarly if there is evidence to suggest that an applicant is involved in criminal activity and/or fraudulently claiming welfare benefits, this information will normally be disclosed to the relevant agency following consultation with the Chief Executive.

Applicants are entitled to see their files if they wish to do so. If the file contains information from third parties, for example letters from doctors, other agencies or individuals, each third party must be contacted for their consent before these documents are made available to the applicant.

False Information

MCHA reserves the right to remove an applicant from the Housing Register if there is evidence that they, or a person acting on their instigation, have given false information or withheld information

relevant to their application. If MCHA receives evidence that an applicant has gained a tenancy through providing false information or withholding relevant information, the Association may take possession proceedings.

Confirmation of Acceptance or Rejection

Housing applications should be acknowledged within 5 working days.

Within 15 working days of receipt of a housing application, the applicant should be advised in writing either:

- that a home visit has been arranged to verify their application and circumstances (details of what information will be required at the home visit must be included); or
- that their application has been accepted (the letter should include details of the applicant's provisional band or list); or
- that further information is required before their eligibility can be assessed (details of what information is required must be included); or
- That they are not eligible to join the Housing Register and the reason(s) why not.

Home Visits

Home visits provide excellent customer care, and allow a detailed assessment of the applicant's needs. They also minimise the risk of fraudulent applications or false information leading to inappropriate priority. The purpose of the visit is to confirm or amend the applicant's band, verify the information given on the application form, discuss with the applicant any queries they have and provide housing advice.

The home visit is an opportunity to seek clarification about any health or social needs, and to offer an opportunity for the applicant to discuss personal issues which they might be reluctant to disclose on their form, or might be unaware of their relevance to the housing application. It also offers an opportunity for the visiting officer to assess if an applicant's circumstances are genuinely exceptional, warranting additional priority, or whether they are unfortunate but not unusual.

Following the home visit, the visiting officer should write to the applicant, confirming their priority band, and advice given at the visit.

Renewing and Updating Applications

Each applicant registered on the active A List and the inactive B List will be sent a renewal form each year. The renewal form will comprise a summary of the applicant's personal details and priority band. The applicant should sign that the details in the summary are correct, or make appropriate amendments, and confirm that they still wish to be included on the Housing Register. The form must then be returned to MCHA, and their application will be updated. If there are significant changes to the application, a duplicate application form will be sent or a home visit arranged.

If no response is received to the renewal request, a reminder will be sent one month after the original. This should advise the applicant that if no response is received to the reminder within one month, their application will be cancelled.

If an applicant's circumstances change, they should not wait until renewal before advising MCHA about this. Applicants must keep their applications up to date, and should inform MCHA of any changes in their circumstances in writing. This is important because the latest known information will affect the applicants priority and eligibility to bid for a home. If the applicant has failed to advise MCHA of significant changes in their circumstances, they may miss out on opportunities to bid, or may be unsuccessful in their bid if their circumstances no longer give them sufficient priority.

Applicants' priority band may change, either increasing or reducing, as their circumstances change. Medical priority, as well as all other categories, may be reduced or withdrawn if they are no longer valid.

When applications are renewed, MCHA will check if the applicant has been bidding for suitable properties during the previous year. If they have not, the applicant will be contacted to find out why, and to give advice on making bids. Applicants who make no bids in two years may be moved onto the inactive B list.

Applicants' Choices

Information will be available from MCHA, about the number, sizes and types and distribution of sheltered flats and recent turnover statistics.

There will normally be no penalties for applicants who decide not to accept a property after making a successful bid. If an applicant persistently makes bids but refuses a tenancy, staff should assess if the applicant needs support in bidding.

Suspending Applicants

Applicants may be suspended from the Housing Register in the following circumstances:

- they owe rent arrears, including where arrears are as a result of Housing Benefit overpayments, to a Registered Social Landlord or Local Authority,
- They have other housing related debts (including rechargeable repairs) with a social landlord,
- They have failed to provide information necessary to process and prioritise their application,
- They have deliberately worsened their living conditions or relinquished reasonable accommodation in an attempt to increase their priority for housing,
- They are in breach of their tenancy conditions,
- They have threatened, abused or assaulted a member of staff.

In cases of minor housing related debts, the period of suspension will be only the time that the applicant is in debt. If the housing related debts are large, the applicant may be expected to keep to a repayment schedule, and/or to maintain a debt free period after repayment of the debt, before their application is reactivated.

The period of suspension following repayment of housing related debts, or for breach of tenancy conditions or unacceptable behaviour, will be decided by the Chief Executive, where appropriate in consultation with the applicant's current or former landlord. The period of suspension will not count towards the applicant's waiting time on the Housing Register.

Cancelling Applications

Applicants may ask for their application to be cancelled at any time. Applications will also be cancelled in the following circumstances:

- No response is received to a reminder for renewal,
- The applicant accepts an offer of accommodation,
- Contact with the applicant is lost,
- The applicant ceases to be eligible to remain on the Housing Register.

MCHA will send written confirmation of cancellation to the applicant's last known address.

Where an applicant on the A list makes no bids for a period of two years MCHA will check with the applicant to establish if there is a valid reason for their not bidding.

Reinstating Applications

Applications may be reinstated in cases where they have been cancelled because contact with the applicant has been lost, if the applicant can provide genuine and valid reasons to justify this. However this will only apply within three months of cancellation. Reinstated applications will retain their original date of registration.

Staff will advise applicants at the time of their initial application, and on each renewal, of the importance of keeping their application details up to date. If applicants fail to advise MCHA of a change of address, and contact is lost, they will have to reapply as a new applicant. This means that they will lose priority for the time they had previously waited on the Housing Register.

Advertising Properties

MCHA will aim to advertise all vacancies where the Local Authority has no nomination rights. Advertising will generally take the form of writing to all applicants on the A list.

Bidding for Properties

MCHA will write to all applicants on the active A list notifying them of; the vacancy, the address, the rent, service and support charge, the date(s) for viewings (if possible), the proposed tenancy start date, the closing date for bids, the designated priority Band, and whether any local lettings policy applies.

In order to bid for a property the applicant will need to complete the tear off slip and return it to the MCHA office by the closing date.

Priority within Bands

Where there is more than one eligible bidder in a particular band, priority will be given under two criteria in the following order:

- Time Waiting;
Where two or more eligible applicants bid for a property, the bidder who has waited longest on the Housing Register will have priority.
- Date Bid Returned;

Where two or more eligible applicants bid for a property and have the same date of registration priority will be given to the applicant who first returned the completed bid form.

The Successful Bidder

At the end of each bidding cycle, MCHA will review the bidders for each property, and check that they are eligible. They will then prioritise eligible bidders in each Band by date of registration of application.

The eligible bidder in the designated priority band with the earliest registration date will usually be the successful bidder. If there are no bids from the designated priority band the eligible bidder with the earliest registration date from the higher band will be considered (where there is a higher band). In the absence of any eligible bidders in the higher Band eligible bidders in the lower band will be considered and then if applicable eligible bidders in the lowest band. Where more than one eligible bidder has the same registration date priority will be given to the applicant who returned the bidding form first.

Where a local lettings policy applies bidders falling into this category will be overlooked.

Some applicants may lack the confidence or ability to take an active role in bidding for properties. In these cases, the applicant may ask another third party or MCHA to bid on their behalf. If MCHA believe that an applicant may have difficulty in making their own bids, they will offer support to the applicant. Where an applicant has asked a third party to bid on their behalf, MCHA will liaise with the third party and offer advice and information about using the CBL system.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chief Executive may agree that a particular property is especially suitable for an applicant who is not in the highest band or who has not waited longest in the band. In this case, s/he may authorise that a particular applicant may be given priority over other bidders. In these very rare cases, the decision must be recorded in writing on the applicant's file.

Review of Decisions

Applicants may ask for any decision about their housing application to be reviewed with the exception of decisions about lettings and allocations.

Applicants should be advised of their right to a review of any decision about their housing application. They must make a request for a review in writing, within 21 days of their notification of the decision they wish to have reviewed. The applicant should specify what decision they wish to be reviewed, the reason why they wish it to be reviewed and provide any additional evidence to support their case.

The review should be undertaken within 21 days, by the Chief Executive. The applicant must be advised in writing of the outcome of the review. If there is likely to be a delay in completing the review, the applicant must be advised of this in writing, with the reasons for the delay and the expected completion date of the review.

Applicants cannot request a formal review of a decision about lettings or allocations. This is because it is unreasonable to delay lettings and allocations in case of appeal, and because the

reasons for a particular bidder being offered a property cannot be explained to another applicant without breaching confidentiality. However applicants may ask the Chief Executive to review a letting or allocation, and check that it was made in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy. Allegations that an applicant has obtained an allocation or tenancy through false information will be investigated if there is evidence to do so.

Housing Appeals Panel

This Panel considers complaints which have not been satisfactorily resolved through a review of a decision as described above. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a Review undertaken as outlined above, they may request an appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel. The request must be made in writing within 14 days of the notification of the Review decision.

The type of appeals the Housing Appeals Panel might consider would be:

- Whether the applicant is a qualifying person and may join the Housing Register (except where the applicant is prohibited by law),
- A decision to suspend or cancel an application, except where this is at the applicant's request, or when a cancellation is because the applicant has accepted an offer of accommodation,
- The applicant's priority band award (this includes additional priority for medical reasons).

Complaints Procedure

The Association has a complaints procedure which can be used by any applicant, or other customer of the Association, if they feel that they have not been treated satisfactorily. Applicants should be advised about this procedure.

Notes: The Medical Panel = Housing Manager (HM) plus Chief Executive (CE) or, one of the HM/CE plus two Board Members.

The Housing Appeals Panel should consist of no less than two elected Board Members and the CE. The CE would provide advice about the situation to the panel but would not be involved in the decision.

Last updated: 10th June 2011