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ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Prospect Community Housing's vision is "Providing homes and building communities together". Our Allocations policy outlines how we prioritise applications for our housing and how we allocate our properties. It has the following principles:

- We will provide everyone with fair and open access to our housing list
- We will avoid discrimination on any grounds in the way we allocate our properties
- We will give reasonable preference to those in housing need
- We will make best possible use of the housing stock we have available
- We will offer as much choice as we can to everyone who applies for housing
- We will always strive to help create and support sustainable communities
- We will work in partnership to meet legal and good practice standards

Within these principles, we also have a range of objectives which this policy helps us to deliver:

- To ensure that a balance of applicants from a range of circumstances are given the opportunity to be housed
- To assist City of Edinburgh Council to relieve homelessness
- To provide a source of housing to other organisations assisting those in housing need, who have additional support needs, through nomination agreements
- To maximise opportunities for applicants to make informed choices by providing good information and realistic advice about their housing options
- To ensure that successful applicants are offered accommodation suitable for their needs
- To assist in providing the opportunity for our current tenants to move as their needs change
- To operate a system of allocating houses that is consistent, fair, easily understood and simple to administer
- To ensure we comply with legislation and best practice
- To be as efficient as possible in terms of allocating our properties, ensuring our properties are of an appropriate lettable standard and minimise the time that properties are vacant

2.0 THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

2.1 The relevant standards and outcomes for the Allocation Policy are:

Outcome 1: Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognized, is treated fairly and with response, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2: Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Outcome 4: Quality of housing

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- Tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by December 2020.

Outcome 7, 8 and 9: Housing Options

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

- People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them
- Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.

Social landlords ensure that:

- People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

Outcome 10: Access to social housing

Social landlords ensure that:

- People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and on their prospects of being housed.

- 2.2 This policy complies with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) 2014 Act and Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act.

3.0 APPLYING FOR A PROSPECT PROPERTY

Direct applications

- 3.1 We are members of the EdIndex common housing register and choice based lettings scheme. This means that any applicants who wish to apply for our properties, and are aged over 16, should complete and submit an EdIndex application form. EdIndex forms are available from our office and from other social landlords within Edinburgh. Once an Edindex application has been processed, the applicant is able to bid for any properties we advertise on the Key to Choice website.
- 3.2 Prospect tenants can also apply for rehousing by completing an Edindex application form. We can help with this along with offering an appointment to discuss housing options. Prior to an allocation, a transfer applicant will be expected to bring their current house up to a lettable standard.

Referrals agreements with local agencies

- 3.3 We are a community-based association and work closely with local support agencies and organisations. We have referral arrangements with a few of these which means we offer a property to nomination from each of them each year. Any applicants which are nominated to us should meet at least one of the priorities outlined in 4.1 below.

Our Management Committee may also choose to enter into nomination or referral agreements with other organisations. Properties identified as suitable for a referral applicant will not be advertised. These agreements are set out in our annual lettings plan.

Management Transfers

- 3.4 In situations where there is an urgent requirement to move a tenant, or where we would want to move a tenant so their property is freed up for someone else, a Management Transfer can be approved by the Housing Manager. Where a property is identified as being suitable for a management transfer, the property will not be advertised. Examples of where a Management Transfer may be approved are:
- Tenants who are suffering from severe harassment or other reason such as domestic abuse which means that they cannot remain in their current property.
 - Tenants who are under-occupying their property and agree to a move. If tenants are downsizing by just one bedroom, then they will only be considered for a property that is the correct size for their household. If tenants are downsizing by more than one bedroom, they may be allowed to still have an extra bedroom in the property they are moving to and still be considered for a Management Transfer.
 - Referrals from other Housing Associations who have a tenant in urgent need of a move (these would be agreed on a reciprocal basis).

Property Ownership

- 3.5 We will consider any ownership of property owned by the person applying for housing, a person who lives with or proposes to live with the applicant, where this is a suitable property that they can reasonably occupy. In these circumstances, we will not offer the applicant a property unless it is unsafe for them to occupy the property (i.e. a threat of abuse or it is structurally unsafe)

If we believe that the owner is likely to be able to live in their current home (e.g. if repairs are carried out or adaptations are made) a short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) will be granted.

We will ask applicants to confirm if they own property and if proven that they have given false information legal action may be taken to end the tenancy.

Applicants in arrears

- 3.6 All current or former tenants of Prospect or another landlord with existing arrears of over 1 month's rent will have to have established an agreement with their landlord to pay these arrears and to have maintained it for 3 months. Proof will be required of this. If the arrears are under 1 month of rent, this will be disregarded when considering the applicant for a vacancy. 'Arrears' covers rent arrears and any other housing related debt e.g. re-chargeable repairs.
- 3.7 Where applicants have existing arrears which require to be addressed, they will be bypassed for any accommodation that they are shortlisted for. The applicant will be advised in writing why they have been bypassed and what they must do to be considered for offers in the future.
- 3.8 The exception to the above are applicants with a homeless priority. For these cases arrears must be disregarded to comply with the Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act provisions for section 5 referrals.

Applicants with a history of Anti-social behaviour

- 3.9 Prior to making an allocation, we will seek a tenancy reference from the applicant's current or previous landlord. If action has been taken against them for anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance, consideration may be given to refusing to make the allocation, within the grounds of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. Alternatively, we will award a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement to a new tenant where that person, or other specified person within the applicant's household, has demonstrated antisocial behaviour within the previous 3 years. This decision will be made by the Housing Manager.

Prospect Members and Staff

- 3.10 Members of Prospect, including Committee Members, will receive no special priority for housing but may apply in the same way any other individual. However, before a Committee Member, staff member or close relative, as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, is allocated a house, the allocation must be agreed by the Management Committee.

4.0 PRIORITIES FOR REHOUSING

- 4.1 We need to make sure that we give the right level of priority to people with certain needs. These are
- Homeless people and people threatened with homelessness
 - People who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions
 - Tenants of houses who are under occupying their homes.

We will give priority to these households through the Key to Choice, Edindex allocations system as follows:

Hospital discharge	Urgent Gold priority
Unsatisfactory housing due to medical condition	Gold priority
Homeless households	Silver priority
Overcrowding	Silver priority
Demolition or disposal of home	Silver priority
Exceptional housing need	Silver priority

Gold Priority

Gold priority (urgent) is only awarded in exceptional circumstances, for example to enable a hospital discharge. This priority is also awarded to prevent long term hospital and care home admissions and forms part of a wider support and care package.

Gold priority is awarded when the current property does not meet, and cannot be adapted to meet, the housing needs of the applicant or a member of their household.

Silver Priority

This level of priority can be awarded for:

- 1) Homeless households following an assessment by City of Edinburgh Council.
- 2) Overcrowded households. This will be awarded to households that require:
 - a) Two more bedrooms to adequately house their family in accordance with the following:
 - A couple will be expected to share a room
 - Each household member over 14 years will be entitled to a room of their own
 - Two children under 14 of the same sex share a room
 - Two children under 7 of different sexes share a room
 - b) At least one extra bedroom if they are currently housed in one bedroom accommodation and have one or more children under the age of 16.
- 3) Households who need to move due to demolition of regeneration works in an area.
- 4) Exceptional housing need. This can be awarded an assessment by an Officer Panel. This may also include people living in Below Tolerable Standard housing (usually lacking basic amenities such as hot water supply or no kitchen) and people living in unacceptable circumstances.

All priority cases will be ranked by date of the award of priority.

Under occupation

Where a Prospect tenant is living in a property which has one or more bedrooms more than they need, we will support them to move with our downsizing assistance scheme. This is explained at 5.11.

Letting Quota

4.2 All direct applicants to Edindex will be placed into one of two categories based on their circumstances.

Movers – those who currently have a tenancy with a social landlord or who own their own home.

Starters – any applicant who does not fit into the mover category. This will include homeless applicants, private rented tenants, those staying with family/friends etc.

All applicants who do not have a priority as outlined in 4.1 will be ranked by date of application for starters, and length of time at current address for movers.

4.3 We will apply quota groups to decide which properties will be advertised as starters, movers or starter and mover. We will also have a proportion of properties where preference will be given to Prospect tenants as follows:

Starters One half (50%) of all vacancies will be advertised for starters.

Movers One quarter (25%) of all vacancies will be advertised for movers.

Starters or Movers One quarter (25%) of all vacancies will be advertised for any applicant—starters or movers.

Transfers One quarter of the properties advertised for movers will indicate in the advert that preference will be given to existing Prospect tenants. If no tenants are successful in being offered the property, then other applicants who have bid will be considered.

The starter, mover and transfer quotas will be reviewed each year as part of the Lettings Plan.

5.0 LETTING PROPERTIES

Choice based approach

5.1 As members of the EdIndex common housing register, applicants for our properties complete one application form which enables them to register their interest in any of the properties advertised weekly on <https://keytochoice.co.uk/>. The City of Edinburgh Council assess and verify all EdIndex applications on our behalf and award any priorities accordingly. We advertise all our vacant properties on the Key to Choice website except those used for a management transfer or referral applications. As EdIndex partners we can access the database which creates a shortlist, in priority order, of applicants who have registered an interest in any of the properties we have advertised.

Bedroom Requirements

5.2 We take the view that it is more appropriate for the applicants to decide, rather than us telling them, who can share a double bedroom. Therefore, we will allocate our properties as follows:

- Single adult: any single person aged 16 or over qualifies for one bedroom, single or double

- Couple: two people aged 16 or over in a relationship together as partners qualify for one double bedroom
- Two household members qualify for a double bedroom
- One household member qualifies for a single bedroom

This means that the family decides whether they are happy to live in the property, i.e. whether they are happy for their children/grandparents/step-children to share. We use a choice based letting approach where applicants chose the property they bid for and want to live in. We think that these days, with so many different family set ups, it is more appropriate for the applicants to decide, rather than us telling them, who can share a bedroom.

- 5.3 Where medical conditions require alternative occupancy levels this will be considered on a case by case basis. Evidence may be required before a larger property will be approved.
- 5.4 Children involved in custody cases will be considered as permanent members of a household where regular access can be proved (i.e. at least 2 overnight stays per week or 8 weeks per year).
- 5.5 In cases of greater overcrowding/under occupation an allocation will be at the discretion of the Housing Manager and must be agreed to in writing by the applicant.

Specialist housing

- 5.6 We own some properties which are adapted for people who use wheelchairs. Priority will be given to applicants who can demonstrate the need for such accommodation.
- 5.7 We own a small number of properties where support is provided by an independent support provider. Given the expertise required to assess and compare the competing complex needs for this type of accommodation, we work in partnership with the support provider when shortlisting for these properties when they become vacant.

Sensitive allocations

- 5.8 Sensitive allocations or lets are aimed at ensuring that individual allocations do not lead to housing management problems and result in a sustainable tenancy. A suitable and sustainable allocation is one where there is a good probability of it providing a long term and stable solution for the applicant and surrounding neighbours.
- 5.9 We will treat certain properties as a sensitive let. A sensitive let can be used in a variety of circumstances where, in order to achieve sustainable tenancies and successful communities, we will not automatically take the applicant at the top of the shortlist.

In these circumstances, we will balance the applicants' housing need with the suitability of the available property and the needs of their prospective neighbours. An applicant can be bypassed if they do not meet the criteria for this sensitive let. This does not mean that they would be bypassed for other properties. A decision to bypass an applicant for this reason must be approved by the Housing Manager, with the reasons explained and recorded.

Downsizing Assistance Scheme

- 5.10 Tenants who wish to move to a smaller property, either through an internal transfer or to another social landlord (including Mutual Exchanges), can be considered for our Downsizing Assistance Scheme. This scheme offers £500 to the tenant to incentivise a downsize by helping to pay for removal costs, decoration, disconnection/reconnection of appliances etc. Thus, we can make better use of our stock and our tenants able to better manage their properties (in terms of rent levels, fuel

costs etc). Tenants who take advantage of this scheme will not also be eligible to benefit from the Bethany scheme that we operate.

5.11 Where a tenant is looking to downsize we may be flexible regarding debts and poor property condition up to £1000. This will be looked at on a case to case basis considering the following:

- The tenant has been engaging with Prospect.
- The total of any debt owed and estimated re-charges in property will not exceed £1000.
- The payment from the Downsizing Assistance fund will be used to offset the debt and will therefore not be paid to the tenant.
- Tenants who have conducted their tenancy satisfactorily (i.e. no debts and good property condition) will be given preference on any suitable vacancies that arise.

Lettings Plan

5.12 We produce an annual lettings plan which includes the following information:

- Anticipated allocations, including new housing.
- Quotas for starters, movers, transfers.
- Quotas for our referral agreements with local agencies
- Any restrictions or quota variations being applied to particular areas or types of housing.

6.0 SUSPENSIONS, CANCELLATIONS AND APPEALS

Suspensions and Cancellation

6.1 We will not suspend or cancel applicants from the list, as this will influence other landlords using Edindex. If we believe an application should be suspended or cancelled, we will pass the information to Edindex who will decide based on their published policy whether the applicant should be suspended or cancelled for all landlords.

Complaints or appeals

6.2 For any complaints or appeals that relate to how we have handled a situation, or decisions that we have made, our Complaints Policy will apply.

Any complaint or appeal regarding the processing of an application or the awarding of priority should be directed directly to Edindex who have their own complaints and appeals procedure.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 7.1 The Housing Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy and the associated procedures are implemented.
- 7.2 The Housing Manager will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every three years by the Management Committee.

Review approved by the Management Committee on 28 August 2019

Next review due by August 2022

PROSPECT EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT RECORD



Title of policy/ practice/ strategy	Allocations Policy		
Department	Housing Management		
Who is involved in the EQIA?	Catherine Louch		
Type of policy/ practice/ strategy	New <input type="checkbox"/>	Existing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Date completed	20 August 2019		

Stage 1: Screening Record

What is the main purpose of the policy?

1.2 ". Our Allocations policy outlines how we prioritise applications for our housing and how we allocate our properties. It has the following principles:

- We will provide everyone with fair and open access to our housing list
- We will avoid discrimination on any grounds in the way we allocate our properties
- We will give reasonable preference to those in housing need
- We will make best possible use of the housing stock we have available
- We will offer as much choice as we can to everyone who applies for housing
- We will always strive to help create and support sustainable communities
- We will work in partnership to meet legal and good practice standards

The relevant standards of the Scottish Housing Charter are:

- Outcome 1: Equalities*
- Outcome 2: Communication*
- Outcome 4: Quality of housing*
- Outcome 7, 8 and 9: Housing Options*
- Outcome 10: Access to social housing*

Who will the policy benefit and how?

This policy will impact on our applicants and those of our tenants who wish to transfer within our stock. The policy benefits these people by clearly setting out our priorities for allocating a limited resource when faced with high demand. The policy enables us to fairly meet the needs of applicants and transferring tenants in a transparent manner.

Different sections of the policy will impact on different communities or groups of people. This is outlined in section 3. We have taken account of changing household needs and aspirations when developing this policy and it has been framed by a good response to our consultation.

For each equality group, does or could the policy have a negative impact?

Protected characteristic	Negative	Positive/no impact	Don't know
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief (including no belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any potential barriers to implementing the policy?

None identified.

	Yes	No
Is a full EQIA required?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered no to the above question explain why a full EQIA is not required:

No impact on equalities identified:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	

Stage 2: Data and evidence gathering, involvement and consultation

Include here the results of your evidence gathering, including qualitative and quantitative data and the source of that information, whether national statistics, surveys or consultations with relevant equality groups.

Source	Qualitative evidence provided	Quantitative evidence provided	Which protected characteristics are covered?	Gaps identified/ action taken
Management information data		Annual staff and committee equalities data	Age, disability, gender, ethnicity. In some cases other protected characteristics	Membership data not collected. Implementation of Cx may assist with data collection.
Tenant satisfaction survey		Survey carried out in 2016	Age, disability, gender, ethnicity. In some cases other protected characteristics	Data becoming out of date. Implementation of Cx may assist with data collection.
Committee, Equalities Working Group and Tenants Forum minutes	Equality related issues identified and discussed		Various	
Review of complaints received	Tenant/service user experience	Statistical data on types of complaint	All protected characteristics	Implementation of Cx may assist with data collection and analysis of protected characteristics
Observations/conversations (anecdotal)	Staff/committee/tenant/service user levels of understanding, inclusive practice		All protected characteristics	
Edinburgh Census 2011		Statistical data	Age disability, gender, ethnicity, marital status, religion or belief.	Data becoming out of date.
EdIndex data		Statistical data provided for individuals on the housing waiting list	Age, disability, gender, ethnicity. In some cases other protected characteristics.	Data becoming out of date.
SHR Annual Return on Charter data		Statistical data on staff, committee and tenant profile for RSLs	Disability, ethnicity.	
Allocations Consultation with Prospect tenants and Prospect's Tenants' Forum	Tenants' Forum discussion	Allocations Consultation survey outcomes.	We do not know if those who responded span all the protected characteristics although it is possible.	

Stage 3: Assessing the impacts

How might the policy impact on people who share protected characteristics?

Protected Characteristic	Description of Impact
Age	<p>Positive impacts are as follows:</p> <p>Priority for rehousing is awarded to those with a medical need which means their current housing is unsuitable, this includes a number of older people.</p> <p>Priority for rehousing is awarded to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness which includes a number of young people.</p> <p>The Downsizing Assistance scheme benefits people who no longer have their family living with them and they can move to a smaller property with our support.</p>
Disability	<p>Positive impacts are as follows:</p> <p>Priority for rehousing is awarded to those with a medical need which means their current housing is unsuitable, this includes a number of physically disabled people.</p> <p>However, there is no priority awarded to those who have poor mental health, even where it is exacerbated by their current housing circumstances. This could be a negative impact of the policy.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>Positive impacts are as follows:</p> <p>Priority for rehousing is awarded to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness which includes a disproportionate number of people who experience gender reassignment.</p> <p>However, there is no priority awarded to those who have poor mental health which may be linked to gender reassignment, even where it is exacerbated by their current housing circumstances. This could be a negative impact of the policy.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership	<p>Positive impacts are as follows:</p> <p>Our downsizing assistance scheme benefits people who are separating or divorcing. The use of management transfers could benefit people entering new relationships.</p>
Pregnancy & maternity	<p>Positive impact is as follows:</p> <p>We have removed the specifications for ages at which children can share a bedroom. As we have a choice based lettings system, applicants can therefore apply for the property which will meet their family's needs and as long as the number of bed-spaces is greater than or equivalent to the number of applicants, this will be considered (whilst making best use of stock).</p>
Race	<p>Positive impacts are as follows:</p> <p>We have removed the specifications for ages at which children can share a bedroom. As we have a choice based lettings system, applicants can therefore apply for the property which will meet their family's needs and as long as the number of bed-spaces is greater than or equivalent to the number of applicants, this will be considered (whilst making best use of stock). This will benefit multigenerational households.</p> <p>We continue to have referral arrangements with local agencies which currently include SCOREScotland and the Asylum and Immigration team at CEC.</p>

Religion or belief (including no belief)	We have removed the specifications for ages at which children can share a bedroom. As we have a choice based lettings system, applicants can therefore apply for the property which will meet their family's needs and as long as the number of bed-spaces is greater than or equivalent to the number of applicants, this will be considered (whilst making best use of stock). This will benefit multigenerational households and/or those with more than two children.
Sex	Positive impact is as follows: We continue to have referral arrangements with local agencies which currently include Women's Aid.
Sexual orientation	Positive impact is as follows: Priority for rehousing is awarded to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness which may include a disproportionate number of people who are gay, lesbian, bi or trans.

How does the policy promote equality of opportunity?

The policy ensures that we meet Housing (Scotland) Act legislation so that when we allocate properties that we do not discriminate against any applicants on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

How does the policy promote good relations?

The policy includes priorities which assist us to allocate the scarce resources we have in a fair and transparent manner. The EdIndex and Key to Choice systems help us achieve this goal.

Stage 4: Decision making and monitoring

Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action

If, following the impact analysis, you think you have identified any unlawful discrimination – direct or indirect - you must consider and set out what action will be undertaken to mitigate the negative impact.

Does the assessment show a potential for differential impact on any group(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is there potential for unlawful direct or indirect discrimination?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified?

None required or identified.

Describing how Equality Impact analysis has shaped the policy making process

No changes have had to be made to the policy as a result of this analysis.

Monitoring and Review

We will carry out a review of this EQIA when the policy is next reviewed.

Stage 5 - Authorisation of EQIA

Please confirm that:

- ◆ This Equality Impact Assessment has informed the development of this policy:

Yes No

- ◆ Opportunities to promote equality in respect of age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race and religion or belief have been considered, i.e.:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- Removing or minimising any barriers and/or disadvantages;
- Taking steps which assist with promoting equality and meeting people's different needs;
- Encouraging participation (e.g. in public life)
- Fostering good relations, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Yes No

Declaration

I am satisfied with the equality impact assessment that has been undertaken for the Prospect Allocations Policy

Name: Catherine Louch

Position: Housing Manager

Authorisation date: 20 August 2019

APPENDIX A - Allocations Consultation 2019

1. Background

Section 4 of the 2014 Act provides a duty to consult applicants, tenants, registered tenant organisations and any other such persons as we see fit on any changes to our Allocations Policy. This appendix will outline the methodology and outcomes of our consultation.

2. Methodology

The consultation process included the following:

- Presentation and discussion at Tenants' Forum meeting (Appendix B)
- Questionnaire delivered to all Prospect Tenants with Summer 2019 newsletter (Appendix C).
- A link to access the survey online was promoted in the July 2019 Digimag which is emailed to the tenants we have email addresses for and who have chosen to receive our monthly Digimag.
- This link was also texted to all tenants we have mobile numbers for to access the survey online.
- As members of EdIndex, City of Edinburgh Council have consulted EdIndex applicants on our behalf; The EdIndex Board and partner landlords worked together to look at changes in legislation from enactment of the social housing provisions introduced in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and in particular how they may apply to the operation of the common housing register. A short EdIndex survey was carried out in May 2019 that set out how the existing categories for Choice and Group Plus Points systems meet the new reasonable preference requirements and asked for any views people may have on this. It also included a question covering the provisions that can be used relating to property ownership. The results from this are being taken into account in work currently underway on one of the EdIndex Business Plan commitments to introduce an on-line EdIndex application form and other service improvements that the Board may bring forward for wider consideration. The survey was promoted on the Key to Choice Website where around 10,000 bids for homes are made each week and included in a footer in email contacts from the EdIndex team. In addition, the consultation document and the link to the website was also circulated to all the partner landlords to promote on their own websites as appropriate, and it was also promoted through the Edinburgh Tenants' Federation. Lead elected member for housing were also informed of the document.

3. Results of the Consultation

Feedback to the consultation was higher than expected with 135 responses, representing a 15% response rate. The majority of those responding chose to do so by using the link which was texted out, with 35 paper copy responses received.

The vast majority of those who responded concurred with the proposals we were suggesting at each question. This aligned with the interesting and pragmatic discussion held with Tenant Forum members. The Forum members agreed with the proposals and were keen to maximise housing options in this area.

The outcome of the consultation is shown in Appendix D.

APPENDIX B – Tenants’ Forum Presentation

Allocations Consultation June 2019




What is our Allocations Policy?

- A set of rules to make sure that we let our properties fairly, consistently and in line with the law.
- 43 properties became empty 2018-19, on average 120 applicants bid for each property.
- Bear in mind – there are over 21,000 households on the Edindex housing register but only around 2,700 homes become available each year from the Edindex landlords.




Areas to consider – 1. Reasonable preference

The Act states we need to give an appropriate level of priority to households with certain needs

- homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have urgent housing needs
- people who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have urgent housing needs
- tenants of houses, which by a landlords’ allocation policy, are under occupying their home

What we’re proposing
Continue to give priority to households by awarding the following:

- Homeless households - Silver priority
- Unsatisfactory housing due to medical condition - Gold priority
- Hospital discharge – Urgent Gold priority
- Overcrowding - Silver Priority
- Demolition or disposal - Silver Priority
- Exceptional housing need – Silver Priority

What do you think about this proposal?



Areas to consider – 2. Property Ownership

Landlord can choose to take account of property ownership

- This means that we could decide that if an applicant owns a home in Scotland or another country, we could decide not to offer them a property.

What do you think about this proposal?



Areas to consider – 3. Management transfers

Currently we offer management transfers in the following cases:

- Severe harassment or other reason which means they cannot remain in their current property
- Referral from another Housing Association – i.e. for domestic abuse
- Under-occupying and want to downsize

What do you think about this proposal?



Occupancy standards – time for a change?

Current policy is
2 person bedroom for

- Couples
- Single parents
- Single applicants
- 2 mixed sex children under 8 years
- 2 same sex children under 14 years



Proposal

How many people can sleep in the property according to the number of rooms

Number of rooms available for sleeping	Number of people who can sleep in the property
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	7+
5 or more	2 for each room

What do you think about this proposal?



Proposal

- Single adult: any single person aged 16 or over qualifies for one bedroom, single or double
- Couple: two people aged 16 or over in a relationship together as partners qualify for one double bedroom
- Two household members qualify for a double bedroom
- One household member qualifies for a single bedroom




What do you think about this proposal?

Referrals – Proposing to keep this

- SCORE Scotland - households from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- CHAI - clients supported by CHAI
- Edinburgh Women’s Aid - women supported by Edinburgh Women’s Aid
- Asylum & Immigration Support Team - households with no recourse to public funds
- Prospect First - Housing First homeless applicants supported by Crisis and CHAI.

Downsizing – Proposing to keep this

- Continue to assist with downsizing to free up larger properties
- £500 incentive in cash or towards arrears or rechargeable repairs

What do you think about this proposal?

Allocations Policy Consultation

We are reviewing our Allocations Policy and want to hear our tenants' views on the approach they think we should take.

Currently there are over 21,000 households on the Edindex housing register but only around 2,700 homes become available each year from the Edindex landlords. Our Allocations Policy is based on

- Legal and regulatory requirements for social housing landlords
- Statutory priorities for households in urgent need such as those at risk of homelessness
- Priorities for the local community



The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 has introduced some changes to make sure that those people most in need are helped to find a home. We are therefore updating our Allocations Policy and are keen to find out our tenants' views on what we are proposing. Everyone who takes part can enter a prize draw to win £50 Love To Shop vouchers. Please return your completed survey in the freepost envelope enclosed with this mailing by 31st July.

1) Property ownership

Changes to the Act mean that Prospect Community Housing can now choose to take account of property ownership. This means that if an applicant owns a home in Scotland or another country, we could decide not to offer them a property.

What we are proposing:

If an applicant already owns their home, we will not offer them a Prospect property, due to the high demand for social rented housing in this area.

What do you think about this proposal?

I agree with this proposal I don't agree with this proposal

Any Comments

2) Reasonable Preference

The Act states that we need to make sure that we give the right level of priority to people with certain needs. These are



- Homeless people and people threatened with homelessness
- People who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions
- Tenants of houses who are under occupying their home

What we're proposing:

We will continue to give priority to these households through the Key to Choice, Edindex allocations system which has the following priorities.

- Hospital discharge – Urgent Gold priority
- Unsatisfactory housing due to medical condition - Gold priority
- Homeless households - Silver priority
- Overcrowding - Silver Priority
- Demolition or disposal - Silver Priority
- Exceptional housing need - Silver Priority

What do you think about this proposal?

I agree with this proposal I don't agree with this proposal

Any Comments

3) Number of people in a property

As part of our review we want to look at how we decide what number of people can live in a property. We currently work this out based on the number of bedrooms in the property and we have age restrictions for children sharing. This means we offer properties based on a two person/ double bedroom being suitable for:

- Couples
- Single parents
- Single applicants
- 2 mixed sex children under 8 years
- 2 same sex children under 14 years



We run a choice based letting approach where applicants chose the property they bid for and want to live in. And these days there are many different family set ups.

What we are proposing:

It is more appropriate for the applicants to decide, rather than us telling you, who can share a double bedroom. We are therefore proposing to change our policy to:

- Single adult: any single person aged 16 or over qualifies for one bedroom, single or double
- Couple: two people aged 16 or over in a relationship together as partners qualify for one double bedroom
- Two household members qualify for a double bedroom
- One household member qualifies for a single bedroom

This means that the family decides whether they are happy to live in the property, i.e. whether they are happy for their children/ grandparents/step-children to share.

What do you think about this proposal?

I agree with this proposal I don't agree with this proposal

Any Comments



4) Downsizing

We encourage and support our tenants who have spare bedrooms they no longer need to downsize to a smaller property. This means that larger properties become available for larger families. As part of this support we offer a £500 incentive in cash or towards arrears or rechargeable repairs to the tenant who is downsizing.

We are proposing to continue with this approach.

What do you think about this proposal?

I agree with this proposal I don't agree with this proposal

Any Comments

5) Referrals to local agencies

We are a community-based association and work closely with local support agencies and organisations. We have referral arrangements with a few of these which means we offer a property to a nomination from each of them once a year.

We are proposing to continue doing this and not make any changes.

What do you think about this proposal?

I agree with this proposal I don't agree with this proposal

Any Comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you would like to be entered into a prize draw to win £50 Love to Shop vouchers for taking part, please provide your name and address.

Name _____

Address _____

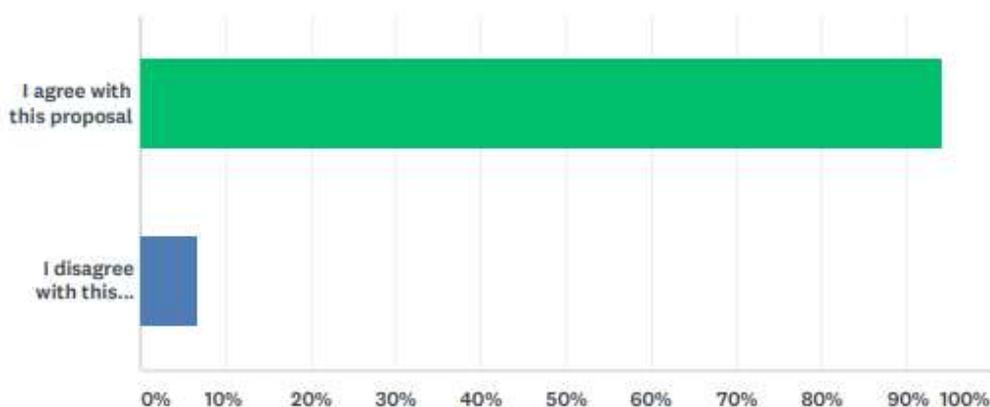
APPENDIX D – Prospect Consultation Outcome Report

1) Property ownership

Changes to the Act mean that Prospect Community Housing can now choose to take account of property ownership. This means that if an applicant owns a home in Scotland or another country, we could decide not to offer them a property.

What we are proposing:

If an applicant already owns their home, we will not offer them a Prospect property, due to the high demand for social rented housing in this area.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I agree with this proposal	94.07% 127
I disagree with this proposal	6.67% 9
Total Respondents: 135	

#	ANY COMMENTS
1	Well if somebody owns a property means it's not need a Prospect Housing
2	Totally agree
3	They may feel threatened in their own home by bad neighbours or abuse
4	This is to give others struggling to have an accommodation.
5	...except, owning a house in another country won't really help anyone's housing need here and now...
6	If they own a property they don't need social housing.
7	YES if they pay there rent
8	Home ownership in a small handful of circumstances shouldnt stop prospect helping. Domestic abuse, marraige splits. Each case should be considered.
9	I think everyone should be treated equally regarless of their assets
10	I think there is no point trying to get social housing if you already have bought a home
11	I agree but depends on the surcomsances
12	Absolutely -they already own a home so why would they need to rent another one?

2) Reasonable Preference

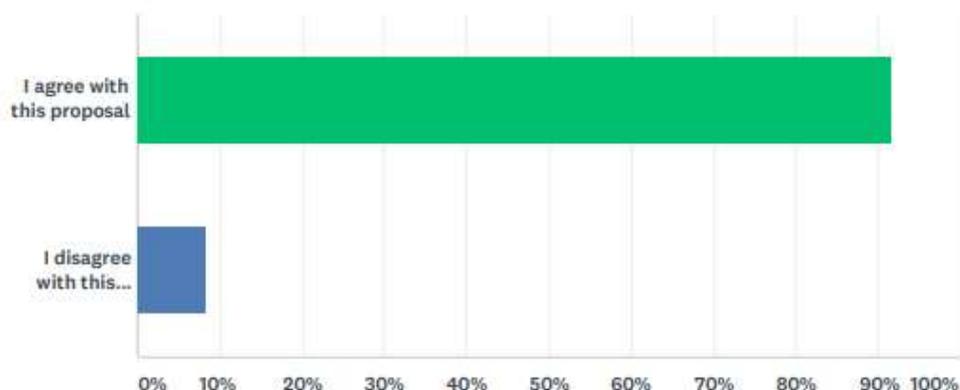
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- Hospital discharge – Urgent Gold priority
- Unsatisfactory housing due to medical condition - Gold priority
- Homeless households - Silver priority
- Overcrowding - Silver Priority
- Demolition or disposal - Silver Priority
- Exceptional housing need - Silver Priority



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I agree with this proposal	91.73% 122
I disagree with this proposal	8.27% 11
Total Respondents: 133	

#	ANY COMMENTS
1	Object to Tenants who are underoccupying their homes, abit vague
2	Course if somebody is on hospital discharge and other of above mentioned I do agree with this policy.
3	Needs to be implemented better. Disorganised.
4	Homelessness may not be their own doing shouldn't be considered less of a priority
5	I think Gold should be awarded to people who have an identified illness and on DLA, this is proof alone of an illness. Also to people who may be in danger from a previous relationship or even a neighbour dispute. I don't think The Council or Housing Associations realise exactly how distressful and damaging to someone's health
6	All deserves gold priority

3) Number of people in a property

As part of our review we want to look at how we decide what number of people can live in a property. We currently work this out based on the number of bedrooms in the property and we have age restrictions for children sharing. This means we offer properties based on a two person/ double bedroom being suitable for:

- Couples
- Single parents
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- 2 same sex children under 14 years

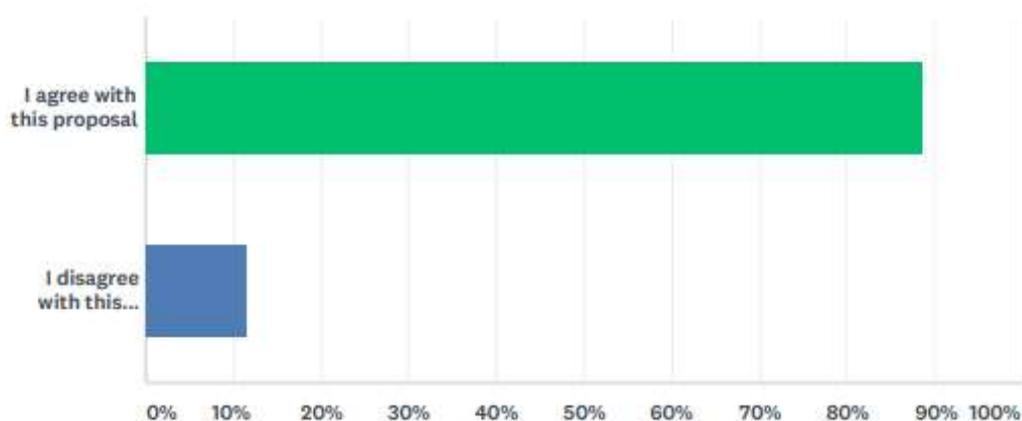
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- One household member qualifies for a single bedroom

This means that the family decides whether they are happy to live in the property, i.e. whether they are happy for their children/grandparents/step-children to share.



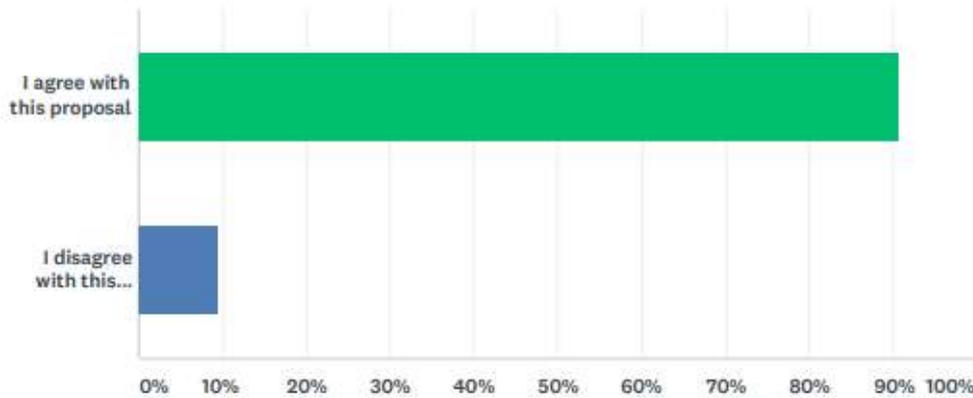
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I agree with this proposal	88.46%	115
I disagree with this proposal	11.54%	15
Total Respondents: 130		

1	I've the experience of share my bedroom with my older brother and younger isster, it's important to take account the ages of the person to share a room
2	i just wonder what impact it may have on people/families should they refuse a property because they consider the number of single/double bedrooms unsuitable
3	Same sex children age should be lower 12 years under.example two boys sharing i.e. Primary School 6 years and the other is 12 years. (At high school) take into account. Puberty!!
4	I think couples should be allocated two bedrooms if they apply for it. 9 out of ten couples have grandchildren, or an illness which means they can't be in the same bed as each other. I.e Sleep apnoea, dementia
5	Giving the size of single bedrooms these days children over 5 shouldn't be forced to share unless there is more than 1 double bedroom in the property.
6	Two adults eg mother and son could also be entitled to a double bed room if necessary, especially if the tenant is paying full rent

4) Downsizing

We encourage and support our tenants who have spare bedrooms they no longer need to downsize to a smaller property. This means that larger properties become available for larger families. As part of this support we offer a £500 incentive in cash or towards arrears or rechargeable repairs to the tenant who is downsizing.

We are proposing to continue with this approach.



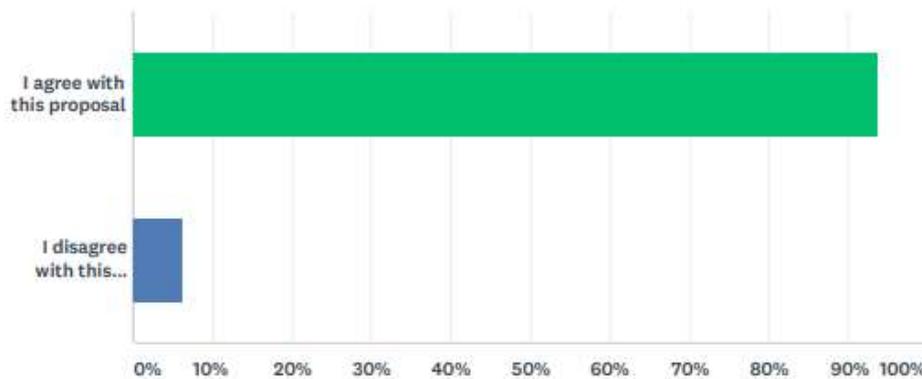
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I agree with this proposal	90.63%	116
I disagree with this proposal	9.38%	12
Total Respondents: 128		

#	ANY COMMENTS
1	Just alright there are occasions that you feel smaller on your place and they're are occasions that you do not use rooms in your home..
2	People should not be pressurised to move out if they are happy in their home. My sister was pressurised and harrassed into moving to a house with no room to swing a cat.
3	£500 is not enough for the sentimental value nor the removal costs and costs of decorating another house! Offer something more suited to the movers needs or let them stay where they are!!!
4	Neither agree nor disagree
5	? are tenants 'under-occupying' their homes more likely than not to owe prospect (more or less than £500) ?
6	Aye fair enough. So long as repairs not due to abusing the property. 500 nothing really when moving and having to redecorate etc
7	I think maybe a bit more would help a family downsize. Time they hire a skip or someone to move the stuff having to the tip.
8	My mum is currently want too Downsize her council house . This would be fab

5) Referrals to local agencies

We are a community-based association and work closely with local support agencies and organisations. We have referral arrangements with a few of these which means we offer a property to a nomination from each of them once a year.

We are proposing to continue doing this and not make any changes.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I agree with this proposal	93.75% 120
I disagree with this proposal	6.25% 8
Total Respondents: 128	

#	ANY COMMENTS
1	Equal opportunities for everyone
2	Have that date of information is very reasonable as you ready know the person will be the right.
3	It is not clear what is meant by this
4	Which Agencies do you support and what criteria do these Agencies fulfill?.
5	very proud of prospect's relationships with local organisations!
6	That is open to misuse. Which agencies? Are the people being referred in the most need or ones who shout the loudest. Its good that there is something like it but think it needs looked at.
7	Everyone should need to go through edindex no one should be allowed to jump the queue