

CATHCART CDHA Cathcart & District Housing Association STANDARD



The Newsletter of Cathcart & District Housing Association

ISSUE 7

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE STAFF & COMMITTEE AT CDHA

As we approach the end of 2011 we would take this opportunity to thank everyone for their assistance during the year. It has been another quick year. We have talked about some of the highlights in our Annual report which has been sent out with

this newsletter. We hope you find it informative and any points that anyone would like to raise please do so in January. We hope that you all have a lovely Christmas and the weather does not spoil the festive period for anyone.

PREPARING FOR WINTER

Last winter Scotland experienced some of the coldest weather and the worst snow and ice that we have seen for many years.

But even an average winter is likely to include cold snaps and snowfalls, ice, storms, high winds, heavy rain and fog. Some parts of Scotland can be affected more than others, and weather has the ability to disrupt our daily lives, whether that's by flooding, blocked roads, uprooted trees, power cuts or burst pipes at home.

The Scottish Government has published information about preparing for winter at www.ReadyScotland.org/ which contains some practical advice and simple steps people can take to protect themselves, their families and their businesses. The link to the specific Ready Winter information can be found here <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/ready-scotland/Winter>

Christmas Holidays:

The Office will be closed from 12.00 noon on Friday 23 December 2011 and will reopen at 9.00 am on Thursday 5 January 2012

During that time emergency numbers will be in operation and are noted below. We must stress that these numbers are for genuine emergencies only such as loss of power, boiler break down and burst pipes. Routine repairs will be carried out as soon as normal business hours resume in January.

The Police at Aitkenhead Road have emergency contact numbers for a member of staff if required.

CATHCART & DISTRICT HOUSING ASSOCIATION EMERGENCY CALL OUT NUMBERS

Electrician

Power-lite Electrical Services
07836 700754

Plumbers/Central Heating
City Building 0800 595 595

Joiners/Builders/Glaziers
City Building 0800 595 595

Door Entry/Aerials

Sound Services 0141 644 3445 /
07831 537415



CONSULTATION ON ALLOCATION POLICY

Cathcart & District Housing Association:

Periodically the Association requires to review their policy documents, in line with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Our allocation policy is currently going through that process and as this policy has a direct impact on our service users we require to consult on the contents of

the policy prior to its final approval. Any comments that we receive from our service users will be given consideration when agreeing the final format of the policy.

Below is a summary of the main contents of the policy, but if anyone wishes to see the entire document this is available in its draft form from our office.

Allocation policy summary

This document summarises the main parts of our allocation policy and provides applicants with information on our allocation policy objectives. Our allocation policy and practice is based on law and good practice guidance and the main aim of our policy is to let properties efficiently and fairly to those in housing need. We will provide good quality accommodation for people in housing need as well as seeking to create balanced communities. We will endeavour to meet, as far as possible, applicants' preferences, choices and aspirations.

In order to meet our legal requirements our policy aims to ensure that we

- Provide admission to the housing list for any person over 16
- make provision within the policy to deal with priority groups
- give clear information to all applicants
- Ensure equality for all in our allocation process
- Consult with our service users on the content of the policy

Allocation law is contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Admission to the housing list

People who can apply to be placed on the housing list

- Any person aged 16 years or older
- Those experiencing over crowding
- Those experiencing homelessness or threat of homelessness
- Existing tenants who wish to transfer
- Those experiencing a medical problem that could be helped by rehousing
- Those who live in insecure tenancies i.e. tied houses
- Those who need to live near another for support reasons

Allocating houses

- Every application is checked by two members of staff
- We carry out checks to ensure that the information on the application form is correct
- Every offer of housing is checked by two members of staff
- A computer system records application assessments and how we make offers of housing

- Staff performance is regularly monitored
- We have an equality and diversity policy which relates directly to our other major policies such as allocation
- Staff training is provided on an on-going basis.
- There is an appeals and complaints process if you are not satisfied with how your application has been handled.

Prioritising applications

We prioritise applications based on a detailed assessment of the housing needs and preferences of different applicants. An applicant in housing need might be –

- homeless, or threatened with homelessness
- in housing that is below the tolerable standard
- in an overcrowded house
- experiencing other forms of need, for example, have support or medical requirements

Summary of points categories

The points system is far reaching and aims to cover every aspect of housing need and to categorise in a way that means the people with the highest level of need will be housed at the earliest.

In relation to medical points these are only awarded to applicants whose condition will be directly alleviated by a change of house.

Homeless applications will receive a higher level of points if they are also registered with the City Council Homeless Casework team. If after two offers from the City Council Case work team, they have not accepted a property they will lose their additional homeless points with CDHA, but will remain on the general list.

Children under 10 of either sex are deemed to be able to share a room. Over 10 different sexes are entitled to separate rooms, but between 10 and 16 applicants of same sex can share. Applicants over 16 are pointed as requiring separate rooms.

Offers of housing

Once applicant details are confirmed and a vacancy arises that they qualify for, we make an offer of housing in writing. We allow applicants up to 48 hours to accept or refuse the offer.

Suspension policy

Applicants may be suspended from receiving an offer of housing in certain circumstances.

Reasons for suspension are detailed in the suspension section of policy. Examples of when offers may not be made are as follows:

- failure to meet the terms of either a current or previous tenancy
- deliberately providing false information on the application form to gain priority
- Continually refusing offers despite meetings with housing officers to redefine criteria.

Appeals

Applicants who are dissatisfied with decisions we make during the letting process may appeal our decision. Examples of when an appeal might be made are as follows:

- we have not taken all circumstances into account and the points awarded are not accurate
- we have made an offer that the applicant believes does not reflect their stated preferences
- we have failed to consider all relevant information when applying our suspension policy

We have an appeals process that all applicants can use and a copy can be obtained from the Association

Complaints

Complaints are different from appeals in that they generally involve some breach of policy. This breach may, of course, not be intended.

Examples of complaints could be:

- failure to notify applicants if they qualify for available housing
- providing inaccurate advice about this policy or about legal rules concerning allocation practice

We have a complaint policy and process and a copy can be obtained from the Association.

An applicant who has followed the Association's complaints process but wishes the complaint to be dealt with independently of the Association will be referred to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman.

We welcome your comments and you can pass these to us in a variety of ways

By e mail to info@cathcartha.co.uk
By telephone to Morna Smillie on 0141 633 2779. In writing to the Association at 3-5 Rhannan Road Cathcart Glasgow G44 3AZ

How to contact us:

Cathcart & District Housing Association Ltd, 3/5 Rhannan Road, Cathcart, Glasgow G44 3AZ. Tel: 0141 633 2779 or e-mail info@cathcartha.co.uk

www.cathcartha.co.uk

