



Housing allocations policy

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	P2	8	TENANCY REFERENCES	P12
1.1	Policy statement and relationship with other Service policies	P2	9	APPLICATION CHECKS	P12
1.2	Partners	P2	10	FACTORS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT	P12
1.3	Statutory framework	P2	11	REMOVALS AND BYPASSING	P13
1.4	Data protection	P2	11.1	Bypass	P13
1.5	Advice and assistance	P2	11.2	Restrictions	P14
2	AIMS	P3	11.3	Removal of Application from Housing List	P14
3	TURNOVER	P3	11.4	Applications not Considered	P14
3.1	Stock availability	P3	12	EXCEPTIONS	P15
3.2	Some facts and figures	P4	12.1	Exceptional Circumstances	P15
4	EQUALITIES	P4	12.2	Local Lettings Initiatives	P15
5	ELIGIBILITY	P5	13	ALLOCATION OF HOUSING	P16
5.1	General	P4	13.1	New Build Houses	P16
5.2	Asylum Seekers	P5	13.2	Property Matching	P16
5.3	Migrant Workers	P5	13.3	Circumstances check prior to offer	P16
5.4	A2 Member States	P5	13.4	Offers of Housing	P16
6	TENANCIES	P5	13.5	Number of Offers	P17
7	ASSESSMENT OF NEED	P6	13.6	Cancellation	P17
7.1	General	P6	13.7	Acceptance of offer	P17
7.2	Size of house	P6	13.8	Referrals	P17
7.3	Areas of selection	P6	14	APPLICANTS WITH SUPPORT NEEDS	P18
7.4	Effective date of application	P6	14.1	Older people	P18
7.5	Service Veterans	P6	14.2	Support	P18
7.6	Room Allocation	P6	14.3	Care in the Community	P18
7.7	Supporting Information	P7	15	OTHERS	P18
7.8	Homelessness	P7	15.1	Successions	P18
7.9	Transitional points	P7	15.2	Exchanges	P19
7.10	Property needs assessment (Medical Points)	P7	15.3	Assignment	P19
7.10.1	General	P7	15.4	Sub-letting	P19
7.10.2	Mental illness	P8	15.5	Lodgers	P19
7.10.3	Recovering from addiction	P8	15.6	Applicants in prison	P19
7.11	Overcrowding	P8	15.7	Difficult To Let (DTL)/Promotional Properties	P19
7.12	Sharing	P8	15.8	Housing Options Advice (HOA)	P19
7.13	Unsuitable accommodation	P8	15.9	Re-Location Grant	P20
7.13.1	General	P8	16	REVIEW OF HOUSING APPLICATIONS	P20
7.13.2	Families in flats	P9	APPENDIX A CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITMENTS		P21
7.14	Social Support	P9	APPENDIX B HOUSING PROVIDERS IN WEST LOTHIAN		P22
7.14.1	Victims of harassment	P9	APPENDIX C LEGAL REQUIREMENTS		P23
7.14.2	Victims of domestic abuse	P9			
7.14.3	Social support	P9			
7.15	Insecurity	P10			
7.16	Family living apart/New forming families	P10			
7.17	Under occupation	P10			
7.18	The points framework	P11			

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy statement and relationship with other Service policies

West Lothian Council recognises that peoples' homes are one of the most important aspects of their lives. Housing can have a major influence on individual health and well being. Individuals prosper in strong and secure communities; and good housing and strong communities lie at the heart of delivering social justice and economic competitiveness.

West Lothian Council lets properties in accordance with regulatory requirements. Properties are allocated giving reasonable preference to those most in housing need such as applicants living in overcrowded circumstances or in properties below the tolerable standard, those with large families and people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness. The Council, as far as possible, aims to provide long term housing solutions for applicants requiring social rented housing. The need to create sustainable and stable tenancies and communities is an important aspect of the allocations process.

This policy fully aligns with other service strategies and policies.

1.2 Partners

There are three partners in the West Lothian Common Housing Register. These are

- Almond Housing Association,
- Weslo Housing Management and
- West Lothian Council.

West Lothian Council also work with other housing providers through the use of "Nomination" agreements. A list of these other housing providers is given at Appendix B.

1.3 Statutory framework

This policy takes fully into account the legal duties and recommendations contained within legislation (See Appendix C)

1.4 Data protection

The Council will not disclose information that is given to us in confidence without the consent of the applicant, unless we are required to do so under legislative requirements.

We will also control access to personal information when processing and sharing information with other agencies. When handling confidential personal information we will promote, support and protect the privacy, dignity and rights of our customers.

1.5 Advice and assistance

Housing and Building Services will work in partnership with other Services and partners to provide Housing advice and information to.

- Ensure applicants have enough information and advice about their housing options to make the right decision.
- Advise applicants how to apply for housing
- Advise applicants how we will deal with their applications
- Advise applicants how long it will take to process and decide on their applications
- Advise applicants what evidence must be provided with their application
- Ensure applicants have realistic information on their chances of being offered a house in the area you want.

2. Aims

The Council aims to provide affordable, quality housing based on a clear framework that gives priority to those applicants who are in most need of housing.

This policy places customers at the centre of all activity and ensures responsiveness to customer needs and aspirations.

The policy aims to create and maintain inclusive, balanced, sustainable communities throughout West Lothian while giving applicants as much choice and control as possible over where they live.

The policy also aims to ensure that available housing stock is allocated in a way that is responsive to the needs and demands of the community.

The Council aims to offer housing applicants as much choice as possible whilst also ensuring that available stock is used to its best potential in terms of meeting housing need within the local area.





The Council, as far as possible, aims to provide long term housing solutions for applicants requiring social rented housing.

3. Turnover

West Lothian Council (WLC) is a local authority that manages approximately 13,000 properties, - WLC is the 13th largest local authority housing service in Scotland in terms of rented local authority houses. These properties include front and back door cottages, four-in-a-block, flats, common access flats, maisonettes, sheltered housing and flats above commercial premises.

3.1 Stock availability



Armadale Area

- Armadale 
- Blackridge 
- Torphichen 
- Westfield 






Bathgate Area

- Ballencrieff 
- Bathgate 
- Boghall/Kirkton 
- Whiteside/Birniehill 

Livingston North Area

- Deans 
- Eliburn/Livingston Village 
- Eliburn Tenant Co-op 
- Knightsridge 
- The Riggs 

Broxburn Area

- Broxburn 
- Dechmont 
- Ecclesmachan 
- Uphall 
- Winchburgh 








Linlithgow Area

- Bridgend 
- Linlithgow 
- Linlithgow Bridge 
- Newton 
- Philipstoun 
- Threemiletown 






Livingston North Area

- Craigshill 
- East Calder 
- Kirknewton 
- Mid Calder 
- Pumpherston 
- Uphall Station 
- Wilkieston 





Breich Valley

- Addiewell 
- Breich 
- Fauldhouse 
- Longridge 
- Polbeth 
- Stoneyburn 
- West Calder 

Whitburn Area

- Blackburn 
- East Whitburn 
- Greenrigg 
- Seafeld 
- Whitburn 

Livingston South Area

- Bellsquarry 
- Dedridge 
- Howden 
- Ladywell 

 Lower availability area  Medium availability area  Higher availability area

3. Turnover

3.2 Some facts and figures

Some background information on social housing in West Lothian.

	WLC	ALMOND	WESLO
No. of houses	13,161	2,345	2,056
Houses let last year(2009/2010)	954	152	100
No. of applicants on Housing List	8,859		
Average Points required	400	425	400

4. Equalities

The partners of the West Lothian Housing Register are all committed to equal opportunities.

Applicants seeking housing in West Lothian will be considered for access to the housing list irrespective of:

- Nationality, race and ethnic origin
- Religion and cultural background
- Sex and sexual orientation
- Disability or illness

• Age and personal living arrangements

Where appropriate we will take disability, illness and age into account when allocating properties specially built, adapted or otherwise designated for such groups.

The partners of the West Lothian Housing Register will take account of the requirements under section 106 of the Housing (Scotland) 2001 that:

- In providing housing accommodation and related services they will act in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and in particular, the observation of equal opportunity requirements
- Exercise Functions under the Act in a manner that encourages equal opportunities
- The partners will ensure that they take into account the needs and circumstances of all relevant groups, e.g. information for disabled people on the availability for suitable houses

5. Eligibility

5.1 General

Anyone aged 16 years or over is eligible for admission to the West Lothian Housing Register provided they are not prevented from doing so by immigration or other legislation. Once an application has been admitted to the list, the housing need will be assessed and the application prioritised in accordance to each partner landlords' allocations policy.

The right to be admitted to the list is not the same as a right to be allocated a house.

5. Eligibility

5.2 Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers who have received a positive decision from the Immigration Nationality Directorate and have been given either indefinite or exceptional (2 to 4 years) leave to remain in the United Kingdom, and become refugees, can apply to the West Lothian Housing Register for housing and will receive equality of access with all applicants to the West Lothian Housing Register. This also applies to asylum seekers from the eight Eastern European Accession countries.

5.3 Migrant Workers

Nationals of A8 Member States are identified as migrant workers and must therefore be registered under the Worker Registration Scheme when they find work or be self sufficient in order to obtain the right to reside.

5.4 A2 Member States

Citizens from Bulgaria and Romania who enter the UK will have a right of residence for the first three months on an unrestricted basis. These citizens will be able to remain after three months providing they are exercising a "treaty right" (application for registration certificate) i.e. as

- A student
- Self employed person
- Self sufficient person

They will not have the right to reside in the UK as a worker unless they have "obtained a permission to work" (an accession worker card) or are exempt (exercise a treaty right).

Applicants who fall into any of the above categories will be accepted onto the housing list but will not be offered permanent accommodation until all relevant checks confirming residency are carried out and relevant documents provided as evidence.

6. Tenancies

Partners of the West Lothian Housing Register offer Scottish Secure Tenancies or Short Scottish Secure Tenancies.

Short Scottish Secure Tenancies can be offered instead of a full Scottish Secure Tenancy where it is not appropriate to grant a full Scottish Secure Tenancy, and as a tool in tackling anti-social behaviour where relevant. A Short Scottish Secure Tenancy will only be offered if an appropriate assessment has been carried out.

7. Assessment of Need

7.1 General

Based on the application, the applicant will be categorised as one of:

- Homeless
- Transfer
- Applicant

The applicant's housing need will be assessed and points awarded. Homeless points are fixed, general needs are a total of all points awarded. These are described in Section 7.18

These categories take into account the reasonable preference criteria set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by the 2001 Act).

7.2 Size of house

Applicants may choose a maximum of two house sizes to suit family circumstances. If more than one house size is chosen the applicant may be offered housing of either size, whichever becomes available first and meets their needs.

7.3 Areas of selection

There is no limit on the number of communities that can be selected. However, estate level selection may be considered only where an applicant's particular circumstances justify. If there are no reasons to apply a restriction to a particular estate the applicant will be listed for the whole community.

7.4 Effective date of application

The effective date of the application is the date and time of receipt, by the Council or Partner Landlord, of a completed application.

Where an applicant's circumstances change and their points have increased as a result, their effective date of application will be amended to reflect the date of change. This will ensure that priority is given to those who have had the greatest housing need for the longest period of time.

7.5 Service Veterans

Ex-Service personnel who have been seriously injured in action are given a high priority for adapted homes. This will be achieved through assessment of medical and other applicable housing needs.

Employment/residence connected to service will be considered in the same way as civilian employment/residence. This ensures service leavers can choose to apply as homeless in the area in which they have served, and where their families may have become settled.

Forces applicants may choose to advise when they are available for offer. This will prevent offers of housing being made before they receive notice of their discharge date.

7.6 Room Allocation

A bedroom can be allocated to each person in the permanent household aged eight (8) years or over, with the exception of couples who are living together and who wish to share a bedroom.

Two children under eight (8) years of age will normally be expected to share a bedroom but can be listed for an additional bedroom if the applicant wishes. Two children under the age of eight (8) sharing a bedroom will not be considered overcrowded.

Where the applicant is the parent of a child and is separated/divorced, and has shared residency or parental responsibilities for the child, the property allocated will meet the needs of the household, as assessed by West Lothian Council. Where the applicant is a parent and shares the care and upbringing of a child, and has parental responsibilities and rights, he/she will be entitled to be considered for a house with sufficient bedrooms to accommodate him/herself and the child/children, as assessed by West Lothian Council. Each case will be examined individually.

7. Assessment of Need

7.7 Supporting Information

To fully assess a Housing Application the Council may request additional supporting information from the Applicant.

7.8 Homelessness

Homeless points may be awarded if applicants are statutorily homeless and/or threatened with homelessness.

Points awarded within the homeless category are non-cumulative.

Homeless applicants will be allowed two (2) offers of housing of any type with any type of heating and in any community in the county.

The two (2) offers will be per application; therefore if an applicant has an active application when they are accepted as homeless, then this will be the application that will be considered through the homeless process. This means that where an applicant already has an active application at the time of homeless presentation and they have already had one offer of accommodation, then they will have one offer remaining. Where the applicant is applying for the first time then their application will have two (2) offers. The policy of two (2) offers of housing is per application not per change in circumstances. Account will be taken of any Health, Support or Housing Need recommendations.

7.9 Transitional points

Transitional tenancies will be utilised to assist previously looked after young people develop independent living skills and to prevent homelessness by improving sustainability. Tenants will be awarded "transitional points" when it is identified, through review, that they are ready for a move to permanent accommodation

7.10 Property needs assessment (Medical Points)

7.10.1 General

Points will be awarded where the property does not meet the applicant's needs but they have access to amenities such as toilet and washing facilities. An assessment of their property may be carried out to determine whether their property can be adapted to meet their needs or if the property cannot be adapted and is deemed unsuitable, a move to another property is required.

If an applicant resides in West Lothian and requires their property to be assessed, a West Lothian Council Occupational Therapist will visit and carry out a full assessment of how they manage within their property.

If an applicant resides outwith West Lothian, a WLC Occupational Therapist will not visit. The applicant would be expected to provide a report on an assessment of their current property: this can be done by contacting their local Occupational Therapist team who will visit them and assess how they manage within their property.

If an applicant is successful they will be awarded 200 (Medical A) or 150 (Medical B) points as appropriate and a property type which meets their functional needs will be recommended.

The processing time for Property Needs Assessment can be 6 to 8 Weeks.

7. Assessment of Need

7.10.2 Mental illness

An applicant must be on the current case load of a consultant psychiatrist and a member of the mental health team has confirmed that a significant improvement is likely as a result of re-housing, and that the mental illness is not expected to resolve using other treatments alone.

Note depression and anxiety that do not fulfill the above criteria will not be considered.

7.10.3 Recovering from addiction

The applicant must provide evidence that they are actively engaged in a recognised rehabilitation programme and that re-housing would be a very important contribution to recovery. The professional person leading the rehabilitation programme should confirm these items in writing.

7.11 Overcrowding

Applicants will receive points if their present accommodation does not meet the living standard set by West Lothian Council which is one bedroom for either:

- A couple/single person
- Up to two children under eight (8) years
- Anyone over eight (8) years of age and who does not choose to share a bedroom.

Overcrowding points in the low needs category will be awarded when an applicant demonstrates that one additional bedroom is required.

Overcrowding points in the medium needs category will be awarded when an applicant demonstrates that two additional bedrooms are required.

Overcrowding points in the high needs category will be awarded when an applicant demonstrates that three or more additional bedrooms are required.

Points will be awarded based on the actual number of additional bedrooms required.

7.12 Sharing

Sharing points will be awarded based on the Applicant's household and the number of people who share facilities. Applicants will receive points where they share one or more of the following facilities with anyone other than those included in their application.

- Living room
- Kitchen
- Toilet
- Bathroom

Sharing points in the low needs category will be awarded when an applicant demonstrates that one bedroom is required.

Sharing points in the medium needs category will be awarded when an applicant demonstrates that two bedrooms are required.

Sharing points in the high needs category will be awarded when an applicant demonstrates that three or more bedrooms are required.

7. Assessment of Need

7.13 Unsuitable accommodation

7.13.1 General

Applicants who live in upper flats, maisonette-flats and 4-in-a-block type properties, with a common stairwell, are living in unsuitable accommodation if:

- The person or partner has reached pensionable age (60 years)
- Another member of the person's household has reached pensionable age (60 years)
- There is at least one child, less than eight (8) years old, in the household

Points will not be awarded to applicants who are prepared to accept an offer of the same type of accommodation.

7.13.2 Families in flats

Families living in common access flats, first floor and above, who require to move to different accommodation will be awarded points for every child aged under eight (8) years.

7.14 Social Support

7.14.1 Victims of harassment

Applicants will be awarded points, in the high or medium needs category, if they claim that they are suffering from harassment regardless if any doubt exists. Further investigations will be performed and, if these prove that the claim is unfounded the points will be removed.

Points in the high needs category will be awarded if the harassment is on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, age, disability or beliefs, violence and unprovoked assault.

Points in the medium needs category will be awarded if the harassment is on the grounds of extreme behaviour including drug-dealing, threatening and abusive behaviour, frequent serious disturbances and vandalism

7.14.2 Victims of domestic abuse

An applicant will be awarded points, in the medium needs category, for domestic abuse, regardless of any doubt. Definition:- Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse) can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threat, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends). Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women. (National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan)

Points in the high needs category will be awarded where they claim that they are living with a violent partner. Points in the medium needs category will be awarded where they claim that they have been forced to move because of violence and further claim that they continue to be pursued.

7.14.3 Social support

Points in the low needs category will be awarded to applicants leaving care, joint applicants forced to live apart and applicants who require to give or receive support.

A Single Shared Assessment will be carried out to capture applicants' needs, including Housing Support. The package of assistance will be tailored to the individual's needs and assist in ensuring sustainability.

7. Assessment of need

7.15 Insecurity

Where the applicants existing tenure is insecure and they meet West Lothian Council's definition of insecurity of tenure they will be awarded insecurity points.

West Lothian Council's definition of insecurity of tenure is:

- Private let applicant been given notice to quit
- Owner Occupier forced to sell property e.g. (property re-possessed/marital breakdown)
- Tied Tenant (forced to leave)
- Leaving HM Forces

These points will only be awarded upon receipt of written evidence from employer, solicitor, landlord or mortgage lender.

7.16 Family living apart/New forming families

In accordance with Homeless legislation, households with dependant children, which are forced to live apart, and want to live together, will be regarded as one household. In these cases the children must live with the parents on a permanent basis.

7.17 Under occupation

Applicants will be awarded non-housing needs points for accommodation that is under-occupied. The same bedroom requirement assumptions are made for under-occupation as over-crowding. This will ensure that best use of resources is made while still meeting housing need.

For example where an applicant lives in a three-bedroom property and requests a two bedroom property they will be awarded points based on one-bedroom of under occupation. Similarly, where an applicant lives in a four-bedroom property and requests a two-bedroom they will be awarded points based on two-bedrooms of under occupation.

Minimum living standard is one bedroom for either:

- a couple/single person
- up to two children under eight (8) years
- no person over eight (8) years of age should be expected to share a bedroom, unless they choose to

These non-needs points will be awarded based on the degree of under occupation i.e. the number of bedrooms not used. Additionally, to ensure best use of resources, points will only be awarded to existing WLC and RSL tenants.

7. Assessment of need

7.18 The points framework

The table below shows the points awarded in each category.

Category	Description	Points
Homeless	Homeless	400
Transitional	Previously looked after by a Local Authority and as part of planned transition into own tenancy	400
Housing Needs		
Housing Needs HIGH	Medical grade A	200
	Overcrowding 3+	
	Sharing 3+	
	Housing below tolerable standard	
	Social Support (Harassment and Victims of domestic abuse) 1	
Housing Needs MEDIUM	Medical grade B	150
	Overcrowding 2	
	Sharing 2	
	Social Support (Harassment and Victims of domestic abuse)2	
Housing Needs LOW	Overcrowding 1	100
	Unsuitable accommodation	
	Sharing 1	
	Insecurity	
	Social Support (applicants leaving care, joint applicants forced to live apart and to give or receive support)	
	Family living apart/New Forming Families	
	Families in flats (per child under 8 years)	
Non-Needs		
Attained points	The use of waiting time points has been removed in line with legislative requirements. These points have been re-defined for existing applicants and will be treated as a protected points award effective from the introduction of the Allocation Policy.	Varied
Under-occupation	Points awarded per room under-occupied. i.e. If under-occupied by • one room • two rooms • three rooms Where two applicants qualify for an offer priority will be given to the applicant with the greater number of Needs points, then by date of application.	100 150 200

8. Tenancy references

Tenancy references will be obtained for anyone on the application who currently hold, or have previously held tenancies with any social landlord during the last three years.

9. Application checks

The Council will take reasonable steps to verify information provided in support of an application for a tenancy.

Before a property can be offered we will in particular:

- Confirm the applicant's present housing circumstances are recorded correctly
- Check the condition of house and garden if the applicant is a tenant
- Establish the current state of the applicant's rent account

If we find that circumstances have changed in such a way as to affect points or the property type the applicant could be considered for, or that the applicant is in breach of tenancy agreement, the offer may be withheld and the application bypassed. If this is due to the condition of their tenancy, the applicant will be given a timescale during which the tenancy must be brought to standard.

If it comes to our attention that the applicant has provided false information about family circumstances in order to secure a tenancy, the tenancy will be terminated.

10. Factors not taken into account

Factors, which will not be taken into account by the West Lothian Housing Register when considering Applications are:

- Outstanding liability (such as rent arrears) attributable to a house of which you were not the tenant
- Any rent or other arrears accrued by you on a previous tenancy which are no longer outstanding
- Any rent or other arrears which are outstanding but where:
 - o The amount outstanding is not more than 1/12th of the annual amount payable (or which was payable) by you to the landlord in respect of the tenancy (this refers to gross rent and not net rent)
 - o You have agreed arrangements with the landlord for paying the outstanding liability and have kept this arrangement for a minimum of three months and are continuing to do so
- Any outstanding debts, which are not rent arrears or service charges

11. Removals and bypassing

11.1 Bypassing

Applicants may be bypassed for an offer of housing for then following reasons:

Age restriction	Applicants for sheltered housing who have not reached 60 years.
Awaiting information	Council still awaiting information relating to applicants
Current arrears/ former debt	Where applicant has current/former arrears of more than 1/12th of the annual rental amount.
Already on DTL offered	Where applicants already on Difficult To Let list
Forces/tied tenancy	Where applicant remains in forces with no notice of discharge date.
Nominated to housing association	where applicant has been nominated to a Housing Association and is likely to be given an offer (Central Allocations will always contact the Housing Association to determine the stage of nomination).
Household composition	Where bedroom sizes in the vacant property do not meet the requirement of the applicant household.
On holiday	Where applicant has advised they will not be available for offer.
Lesser date of application	Where more than one applicant qualifies for an offer with the same points level In these circumstances the offer will go to the applicant with the earlier date of application and applicants with the later date of application will be by-passed
Managers decision	Where in extreme circumstances manager requests by-pass
Medical reason	Where offer does not meet applicants medical need.
Not eligible	Where applicant qualifies for an offer that does not meet their needs i.e. where a couple have been asked to be considered for a one bedroom property and are matched against a property that is designated or only single applicants e.g. single person one bedroom property
Not within selection	Where property selected does not meet applicants selection
Previously offered	Where applicant has already been on offer and refused property
Support needs	Applicant with support needs not ready to move
Schedule one offender	where applicant has been assessed in accordance with multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)
Tenancy conditions	Upon advice of CBHO that applicant's tenancy is poor and not suitable for offer.
Wrong points	Where applicant's circumstances have changed which alters points total and means they no longer qualify for offer.
Arrangement in place	Where applicant has an arrangement in place regarding rent arrears and is paying but the arrangement has been in place for less than three months
Serious breach of your tenancy agreement or eviction as a result of a serious breach -	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Current or former debt (see Factors not to be taken in to account for more detail); •Current or former house and garden in kept in poor condition; •Causing a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours; •Convicted of a serious crime, such as supply of illegal drugs;

The bypass will remain in place until:

- An arrangement is made to clear outstanding debt;
- The house/garden is up to an acceptable standard;
- Proof of satisfactory conduct/ability to manage your current tenancy for a minimum of six months.

If bypassed for either the reason of debt or condition of tenancy, the applicant will be notified in writing from Central Allocations.

11. Removals and bypassing

11.2 Restrictions

Situations can occur where an applicant requires a “restriction” in area or house type, for example where:-

- Medical evidence/assessment identifies the need for a certain house type. Applicants will be assessed and a Property Needs Assessment form completed where they meet the criteria.
Note that Homeless applicants who are successful in house type restriction will not be awarded additional points if homeless points already awarded.
- The applicant has high support needs and must reside in a particular area to ensure continuity of support. This would include where a family member identified as main carer provides support. (Evidence may be from Health, Social Work, Housing, and Education and or in some instances proof of receipt of carer’s allowance. Criteria will link in with Support criteria)
- The applicant cannot live in a particular area as a result of harassment, assault etc. (Supporting evidence in form of police reports, incident with Safer Neighbourhood Team, Neighbourhood Response Team etc must be provided).
- The applicant requires to be administered medication direct from the hospital within a limited period of time and thus requires to be accommodated within that area. (Applicants will be required to provide appropriate supportive evidence from a Consultant).
- The applicant will be placed at a significant disadvantage in relation to their social networks and ability to sustain accommodation in a new area.
e.g. “The strength of a homeless person’s social networks should be an integral part of the assessment of their needs and of the support offered to them in temporary accommodation and during permanent resettlement.”
(Scottish Executive 2001)

All requests for “restrictions” must be fully evidenced. Each case will be assessed and approved, or otherwise, by a panel of Housing Need Managers .

11.3 Removal of Application from Housing List

In accordance with legislation an application will only be removed from the housing list in the following circumstances:

- Where the applicant has requested this in writing
- Following the death of the applicant
- Where the applicant fails to respond to a review of the housing list or repeatedly fails to respond to correspondence.
- Where the applicant’s needs have been met through being housed by WLC or other Local Authority or RSL
- Where an applicant’s need has been met through any of
 - o Assignment
 - o Succession
 - o Mutual Exchange

West Lothian Council will inform you in writing when your application has been removed from the housing list.

11.4 Applications not Considered

Applicants in the HM Forces, HM Prison or Tied Tenants, will not be considered for an offer of housing until they indicate their availability.

West Lothian Council will contact these applicants on a six monthly basis to determine if there has been any change to their circumstances which may affect their position

12. Exceptions

12.1 Exceptional Circumstances

Situations can occur which cannot be dealt with adequately under the current allocation policy and for which General Needs Points cannot be granted. These will be addressed through an Assisted Move process and examples where this may apply are:

- Extreme neighbour problems where the only solution is to move one party;
- An extreme situation where the current property is not suitable or adaptable as determined by the Occupational Therapist and current points do not give swift access to the type of property required
- Serious Harassment not covered under the General Needs Policy
- Care in the Community
- Witness Protection
- Regeneration e.g. major improvements/demolitions
- Overcrowding when space standards have been exceeded. This would be in extreme circumstances and would need appropriate evidence

The list of examples given is exhaustive and it should be noted that each case will be assessed individually.

12.2 Local Lettings Initiatives

There are occasions where a Local letting Initiative is required in order to achieve the Scottish Government objectives for communities which are:-

- Delivering good quality, sustainable and affordable housing for everyone
- Regenerating our communities
- Building safer communities by tackling anti-social behaviour
- Tackling poverty and helping vulnerable people
- Promoting equal opportunities and active citizenship

A Local letting Initiative is where we have a separate Allocations system for a specific geographical area and is:-

- Specific to a limited area
- Time bounded for a period of 12-18 months
- Monitored on a monthly basis

This approach can only be achieved through working in partnership with communities and customers. Customers' involvement in this process is essential to ensure successful, balanced and sustained communities.

The use of Local Lettings Initiatives will ensure:

- Open/improved access to affordable rented housing within communities
- Promote stability and sustainability within communities
- Maximisation of resources including working in partnership with others through review of allocation policies and nomination agreements to ensure compatibility and optimum choice for applicants
- Assessment of the needs of people, communities and local priorities
- Co-ordination of West Lothian Council's supporting peoples' strategy with the provision and management of particular needs and to identify how best housing support needs can be met and used more effectively

13. Allocation of Housing

13.1 New Build Houses

To promote turnover of properties available to let and increased permanent outcomes for more applicants on the Housing list the allocation of new-build will be "Transfer-Led".

In the first instance, new-build houses will be offered to West Lothian Council tenants on the Transfer List. However when the Transfer List is exhausted lets will be in accordance with the needs framework described at Section 7 of this document.

All second lets will be allocated in accordance with the needs framework.

13.2 Property Matching

Vacant houses, other than new-build, will be matched to the person with the highest number of points requesting that type of property within the specific geographic area.

If a property has major adaptations the Allocations Team, prior to Short-listing, will ensure that the property can be matched to applicants with specific needs. Where an adapted property cannot be matched to an applicant with specific needs it will be allocated in accordance with mainstream policy.

Where two (or more) applicants have the same number of points, priority will be given to the applicant who has the earliest list date and time of application. The only exception will be where an applicant has been awarded non-needs points (i.e. under-occupation or attained points): in this instance only, where two or more applicants have the same total points, the non-needs points will not be taken into account and the applicant with the highest number of cumulative needs points will receive the offer.

13.3 Circumstances check prior to offer

Prior to offer of a property we will contact the applicant:

- To confirm the applicant's present housing circumstances are recorded correctly
- To check the condition of house and garden if the applicants is a tenant
- To establish the current status of the applicant's rent account

If the applicant's circumstances have changed in such a way as to affect the points awarded, or the property type, or that they are in breach of tenancy agreement, the offer may be withdrawn.

13.4 Offers of Housing

An offer of housing may be made as soon as Allocations receive notification that a property is becoming available to let. Where possible properties will be pre-let and in some instances viewing can be arranged before the previous tenant moves out.

Offers may be issued in advance of minor repairs being carried out to the vacant property.

Applicants will be given 24 hours to reply to West Lothian Council. If the applicant fails to reply the Council will assume the applicant is not interested in the property and this will be treated as a refusal of offer of accommodation. This will be regardless of whether it is an offer of a West Lothian Council property or that of another Housing Provider.

The Council will take into account situations where the applicant may find it difficult to respond within the 24-hour timescale. Each case will be looked at individually.

We will carry out accompanied viewing with all prospective tenants.

13. Allocation of Housing

13.5 Number of Offers

Applicants are entitled to two offers of housing that corresponds with their needs. In the event of a refusal the reasons will be established and taken into account before making a further offer.

If two reasonable offers are refused, the applicant will remain on the Housing List following a review of their circumstances. The Applicant will be bypassed for offers of accommodation in accordance with West Lothian Council's bypassing rules (see Sect 11).

Failure to respond within the given timescale will mean that the Council will assume the Applicant is no longer interested in housing and the application may be cancelled on the grounds of failing to respond to correspondence.

In certain circumstances, and in accordance with West Lothian Council's bypassing rules (see Sect 11), an offer of housing may be withdrawn or made without penalty.

13.6 Cancellation

If an application is cancelled the Applicant has six months from the date of cancellation to contact the Council to request re-instatement to its original status.

- Any request to have your application re-instated must be received in writing.
- Any request outside the six-month timescale will be refused

13.7 Acceptance of offer

Once an offer of accommodation has been made, accepted and the Applicant(s) signed up, the tenant's needs will be considered met.

All new tenancies will be in joint names unless otherwise requested.

13.8 Referrals

Unless expressed otherwise Applicants may be nominated for Housing to a Registered Social Landlord.

In accordance with Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, and to assist in meeting demand, Homeless Applicants will be referred to Registered Social Landlord. This will take account of needs preferences and availability of housing.

The Council will work with other services and agencies such as social work and health services, to make sure that housing needs are linked to your wider needs (for example, if it would be beneficial to your health or if it would improve your situation as a result of your health if you moved). Other agencies and council services sometimes refer people to us for housing.

14. Applicants with Support Needs

14.1 Older people

The Council will promote independent living through assisting older people with support needs to reside longer in their own homes as an alternative to other forms of institutional care. This may require completion of a Care and Support Plan.

14.2 Support

Housing Support Workers can assist Applicants to deal with the practical tasks of maintaining their own home. Their role is to offer a flexible and responsive approach to supporting the individual.

The Community Based Housing Officers (Support) can:

- Help with budgeting issues
- Help with claiming benefits
- Give guidance in the use of domestic or household appliances
- Advise on how to obtain help with preparing meals
- Give guidance on neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour
- Assist with resettlement
- Assist with making contact with other professional help

14.3 Care in the Community

West Lothian Council works closely with Lothian Health Board, West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership, housing providers, housing support providers and voluntary agencies to help meet the housing, care and support needs of vulnerable young people and adults living in West Lothian including:

- People with physical disabilities
- People with learning disabilities including Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- People with mental health problems
- People with drug and alcohol addictions
- People with AIDS and those who are HIV positive

The Council will allocate a number of vacant houses to people in these Community Care Groups. These allocations will be in agreement with Social Policy and are outwith the General Needs policy.

15. Others

15.1 Successions

In the event of the death of a tenant, someone who was living in the house as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death may be qualified by law to inherit the tenancy. This is called Succession. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the right to a second round of succession i.e. when a succeeding tenant dies the property can be inherited again by a qualifying person.

Succession will result in removal of any active application from the Housing List.

- Give guidance on neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour
- Assist with resettlement
- Assist with making contact with other professional help

15. Others

15.2 Exchanges

Tenants have the right to exchange their house for another house that is the subject of a Scottish Secure Tenancy, but ONLY with the written consent of the landlord and, if different, the landlord of the other house.

The Council participates in "Homeswapper" (www.homeswapper.co.uk/). This service is available to all council tenants.

Mutual exchange will result in removal of any active application from the Housing List.

15.3 Assignment

A tenant has the right to request to assign the tenancy to a person who has been living in the house as their only or principal home for at least 6 months, with the written consent of the landlord. Grounds for refusal must be reasonable.

Assignment will result in removal of any active application from the Housing List.

15.4 Sub-letting

A tenant has the right to request to sublet their home. Grounds for refusal of such a request must be reasonable.

15.5 Lodgers

A tenant has the right to request to take lodgers into their home. Grounds for refusal of such a request must be reasonable.

15.6 Applicants in prison

Applicants in HM Prison are entitled to suspend their housing application to prevent being made an offer of Housing.

To bring ex-prisoners and offenders back into the community, protocols have been developed to make communities safe allow the individual circumstances of each ex-prisoner who applies for housing to be considered.

15.7 Difficult To Let (DTL)/Promotional Properties

Some housing has been identified as promotional properties. These will be flatted properties, in common access blocks, which are higher than 2 storeys and where no major refurbishments have been carried out.

A difficult to let property is one where property has been offered and refused 4 times.

15.8 Housing Options Advice (HOA)

Advice and assistance about housing options may be offered to customers through an HOA. These may be offered to:-

- New applicants for housing and specifically those who are awarded less than 300 points and whose stated reason(s) for applying is:
 - o Experiencing domestic abuse
 - o Current accommodation too small or too large
 - o Homelessness
- Homeless customers

15. Others

15.9 Re-Location Grant

As an incentive to relocate to a smaller property and free up a larger Council home a grant of £1000 or equivalent in removal or decoration costs is available in certain circumstances.

The Relocation grant is for West Lothian Council tenants who are moving to

- A property that is at least two bedroom sizes smaller than their previous property.
- Sheltered, residential, housing with care or amenity housing. In this instance, tenants can move from any size of property.

The grant is £1000.00. West Lothian Council is entitled to deduct any money owed to the Council, such as rent arrears or other charges outstanding at the time of termination of tenancy from the grant awarded.

Where the tenant is over the age of 60 years they qualify for the grant of £1000 plus removal and redecoration costs.

There is a limited budget for the scheme therefore the payment of the grant will be subject to the availability of funds.

The grant will not be awarded for Mutual Exchanges.

16. Review of Housing Applications

Where there has been no recent contact the Council will contact applicants in review of their application. Failure to respond to this review within the given timescale will result in the application being cancelled. Any further application will be considered as being new and will be re-assessed taking into account any new circumstances.

Appendix A Customer Service Commitments

We will	When	Measures
Arrange a joint visit to the house and discuss any issues with you, including repair and decoration.	Accompanied visit arranged within 24 hours of making you an offer	Lettings Survey
Make sure the house is in an acceptable condition.	At the time of the accompanied viewing.	Lettings Survey

Appendix B Housing Providers In West Lothian

Name and address	Areas	Family General Needs	Single	Elderly	Wheel Chair
Almond Housing Assoc. Shiel House, Craigshill, Livingston EH54 5EH (01506) 439291	Craigshill, Eliburn, Howden, Ladywell, Whitburn	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ark Housing Association The Priory, Canaan Lane, Edinburgh EH10 4SG (0131) 447 9027	Linlithgow, Uphall	✓	✓		
Barony Housing Assoc. Ltd Canal Court, 40 Craiglockart Avenue, Edinburgh, EH14 1LT, 0845 140 7777	Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn, Polbeth	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bield Housing Association Ltd 79 Hopetoun Street Edinburgh EH7 4QF (0131) 273 4000	Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Broxburn, Fauldhouse, Livingston, Linlithgow, Uphall, W. Calder, Whitburn, Winchburgh		✓	✓	✓
Cairn Housing Association 64A Leven Road, Coatbridge, ML5 2LT (01236) 435210	Bathgate, East Whitburn	✓		✓	
Dunedin Canmore Housing Assoc. 8 Newmart Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1RL (0131) 478 8888	Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Craigshill, Polbeth, Stoneyburn, Torphichen, Uphall, West Calder	✓	✓	✓	✓
Castle Rock Edinvar Pentland House Almondvale South, Livingston EH54 6NG (01506) 436 530	Armadale, Bathgate, Blackridge, Broxburn, Deans, Dedridge, Eliburn, Fauldhouse, Uphall, Carmondean, Knightsridge, West Calder, Winchburgh	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Ltd 95 McDonald Road Edinburgh, EH7 4NS (0131) 557 0598	Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn, Livingston Village Whitburn			✓	
Horizon Housing Association Ltd Leving Hse, Fairbairn Pl, Livingston EH54 6TN (01506) 424140	Blackburn, Fauldhouse, Livingston, Whitburn, Winchburgh	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trust Housing Association 12 Newmart Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1RL (0131) 444 1200	Blackridge, Dedridge, East Calder, Winchburgh	✓		✓	
Link Housing Association Watling House, Callendar Business Park, Falkirk, FK1 1XR (0845) 140 0100	Addiewell, Bathgate, Breich, Linlithgow, Uphall, West Calder	✓	✓		
Margaret Blackwood Housing Association 77 Craigmount Brae, Edinburgh, EH12 8XF (0131) 317 7227	Armadale, Broxburn, Deans, Mid Calder, West Calder	✓	✓		✓
Weslo Housing Management 66 North Bridge St Bathgate EH48 4PP (01506) 634060	Addiewell, Addiebrowhill, Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Broxburn, East Calder, Fauldhouse, Kirknewton, Linlithgow, Livingston Station, Mid Calder, Polbeth, Pumpherston, Stoneyburn, Uphall, West Calder, Whitburn, Winchburgh	✓	✓		
West Lothian Housing Partnership 3 Michaelson Square Kirkton Campus, Livingston EH54 7DP (01506) 777719	Bathgate, Blackburn, Boghall, Craigshill, Stoneyburn, West Calder	✓	✓	✓	✓

Family General Needs
 Single
 Elderly
 Wheel Chair

Appendix C Legal Requirements

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- Race Relations Act 1976,
- Race Relations (Amendment Act) 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- CRE Code of Practice for Rented Housing
- Recommendations from the McPherson Report
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Civil Partnership Act 2005
- The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Access to Personal Information (Housing)
- The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981Scotland) Regulations 1993;

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط وبخط كبير ويلفات الجالية.
الرجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الهاتف 01506 775000

এই তথ্য আপনি ব্রেইল, টেপ, বড় অক্ষরে এবং কমিউনিটির বিভিন্ন ভাষাগুলিতেও পাবেন। অনুগ্রহ করে ইন্টারপ্রেটেশন অ্যান্ড ট্রান্সলেশন সার্ভিসের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন। টেলি: 01506 775000

這份資料是可以凸字、錄音帶、大字印刷及社區語言的式本提供。請聯絡傳譯及翻譯服務部，電話：01506 775000

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ (ਬ੍ਰੇਲ) ਨਿਰੂਪਿਤ ਟੇਪ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲਿਖੀ, ਟੈਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਫਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੀਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਟਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ : 01506 775000

یہ معلومات بریل (اندھوں کے رسم الخط)، ٹیپ، بڑے حروف کی طباعت اور کمیونٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبانوں میں دستیاب ہے۔ براہ مہربانی انٹرنیٹنگ اینڈ ٹرانسلیٹنگ سروس سے ٹیلیفون نمبر 01506 775000 پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Informacje te mogą być przelozzone na jezyk Braille'a, dostepne na tasmie magnetofonowej lub wydane duzym drukiem oraz przetlumaczone na jezyki mniejszosci narodowych. Prosimy o kontakt z Uslugami Tlumaczeniowymi pod numerem 01506 775000

Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages. Please contact the interpretation and translation service on **01506 775000**.

Text phones offer the opportunity for people with a hearing impairment to access the council. The text phone number is **18001 01506 464427**. A loop system is also available in all offices. Published by West Lothian Council.