



Blackwood
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A Guide to the Allocation of Housing in Angus



Our Common Allocation Policy

This is the Common Housing Allocations Policy for the partners of the Angus Common Housing Register. These partners are Angus Council, Blackwood Homes, Caledonia Housing Association and Hillcrest Housing Association Ltd.

When we talk about '**we**', '**our**' or '**us**' in this policy, we mean Angus Council, Blackwood Homes, Caledonia Housing Association and Hillcrest Housing Association

Our Aims, Objectives and Principles

Our aims

Our aim is to meet housing need fairly.

Our objectives

We will meet our aim by:

- giving more priority to people in the greatest housing need;
- making best use of the housing that becomes available for rent each year;
- working to create communities where people want to live.

Our principles

Our allocation policy is based on six key principles:

- we will apply our policy consistently: this means we will apply our policy to every property we allocate, wherever that property is, and whoever allocates it;
- we will be clear about what we do and when we will do things. We will be clear about how we do things and will explain why we do things wherever we can;
- we will be open and honest with you and talk clearly and directly about your housing options. We will be clear about what we can and cannot do to help you;
- we will follow what the law says we must do and what the law allows us to do. Wherever we can, we will follow what guidance recommends we should do;
- we will respect diversity and promote equality in everything we do. No one will be treated unfairly because of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, or ethnicity;
- we will use all the information we receive about you and everyone you apply with in line with the law and hold that information securely.

Acting within the law

Everything we do is based on what the law says we can do, what we should do, what we need to do and what guidance says we could do. We developed this policy to meet legal requirements set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended) and regulations made by the Scottish Parliament.

Good practice guidance

We must meet the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. The standards and outcomes are outcomes 7, 8, 9 and 10: Housing Options and Access to Social Housing. They are -

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;
- 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 their prospects of being housed.

We will act in line with guidance published by the Scottish Government particularly 'Social Housing Allocations: A Practice Guide' wherever possible.

Applying for Housing

Anyone 16 years and over can apply for housing unless they are subject to immigration control. Your application for housing starts from the day you apply. Everyone applying for housing goes onto the housing list. Where your application goes on the list depends on your housing need. If you have no home because you lost it through no fault of your own, you have a high housing need, but you will have to wait longer for an offer of housing if you have a low level of housing need.

You can get a copy of our application form from any of our offices or you can download a form from our website at www.angus.gov.uk/housing or call Angus ACCESSLine on 08452 777 778 and they'll post a form to you.

Our policy is designed to meet housing need in Angus and the needs of people who live outside Angus but need to move here.

When you apply for housing -

We won't think about

whether you live in Angus and how long you've lived in Angus;

if you live, or used to live in a rented home and –

you owed a landlord money for rent or other costs like cleaning, repairs, or redecoration but you paid the money back; or

someone you are applying with owes the landlord money but you were not the tenant of that property;

your age unless we have made major adaptations or designed a property for a disabled person, where someone will get a housing support service with the property (such as sheltered housing), or where the property is designated as 'amenity housing' (which is property specifically for older people);

your income (you and every adult that will live with you);

whether you or anyone that will live with you owns any property;

whether you are legally separated or divorced;

who you live with at the time you apply for housing.

We will think about -

you owe a landlord more than 1/12th of the annual rent, and you have not agreed to repay what you owe and haven't made at least three monthly payments towards the money you owe when you said you would pay;

you work, you've been offered work, or you want to move to Angus to get work and you can show us what steps you've taken in your search for work;

you need to get support from, or give support to, a family member or carer;

you have a social or medical reason to move to Angus;

you are being harassed or abused where you live.

Local Lettings Plans

Local Lettings Plans (or LLPs) look at the supply and demand for housing in each area of Angus taking into account specific local needs and circumstances. Each plan sets out a target for the number of lets to each category of the housing list.

This allocation policy sets out how we will allocate housing across Angus but LLPs explain the percentage of allocations teams will make to different categories on the housing list. The LLPs are based on a study of who needs what size and type of housing in each area and the size and type of housing that became available over the last year.

Sometimes, we have stock that is less popular or need to find some way to let that property quickly. Our teams use LLPs to develop local solutions for any problems like low demand they've identified with the housing in their area. We call these 'lettings initiatives.'

A Common Housing Register (or CHR) is a computer based system containing details about everyone that wants to be considered for housing in a certain area run by at least two landlords. People apply to the CHR using a common application form instead of using one application form for each landlord.

When you complete a common application form, Angus Council (AC) Blackwood Homes (BH), Caledonia Housing Association (CHA) and Hillcrest Housing Association (HHA) consider you for housing. We will pass on your details to other social landlords in the Angus area if you ask us to.

Common Housing Register Data Processing Team process your application form. They are available by phone to answer any questions about the application process or the progress of your application. You can also talk to an ACCESS Assistant or Housing Advice Assistant at our offices.

We aim to write to you within 28 days of getting your application to let you know where your application has been placed on the housing list and the number of points, if any, we've given your application.

We hold all the information you give us securely. We won't give your information to anyone that has no right to that information but we must by law give your information to others if it would prevent harm to others, if we are asked to do so by the police or the courts or if doing so would protect public money.

Making enquiries

We make enquiries about your application when we receive it but the enquiries we make will depend on where you're living at the time you apply and where you've lived for the three years before you apply.

We will ask your landlord for a reference if you've been a tenant anytime in the three years before you apply for housing with us, . We ask for a reference to make sure you don't owe the landlord any money, if you acted anti-socially, and to find out whether the landlord has taken any formal action against you to end your tenancy.

Suspending deferring and removing your application

Suspending your application

Every application we get goes on the housing list but we may suspend or defer your application in some circumstances. We may suspend your application if -

- you refuse two reasonable offers of housing;
- you withhold information that you should have told us about: for example, if you had a tenancy in the three years before you applied to us for housing and you didn't tell us, that's withholding information that you should have told us about;
- you give us misleading information: if you tell us that you left your last home because the tenancy ended but the tenancy ended because your landlord had you evicted because you didn't pay your rent, that's providing us with misleading information;
- you give us information that you know is wrong: if you tell us you never owned a property or you were never the tenant of a property when you were, this is providing information that you know is wrong;
- you do something that makes your housing situation worse such as leaving a property that didn't have all the bedrooms you need without having another property to go to;
- you are a tenant but you've breached your tenancy conditions and your landlord has given you a notice of proceedings for recovery of possession or has a decree or order from a court for your eviction;

- you or someone that lives with you are the subject of an ASBO: the application will be suspended until the conduct or behaviour has changed. For example, if an Anti Social Behaviour Order (or ASBO) has been made against you or someone that will live with you, we may suspend your application for three months initially. We will review your behaviour at the end of the three months. If you can show that no one is causing anti social behaviour, we may lift the suspension. If not, the suspension will stay in place;
- you refuse two offers of housing within a three month period and we think those offers were reasonable.

We will not suspend your application automatically. We want to keep the number of suspensions to a minimum. We will look at your case individually. When we decide if we should suspend your application, we will think about -

- all your circumstances at the time we think about suspending your application;
- your reasons for refusing an offer or offers of housing;
- how urgent your housing need is.

If we suspend your application, we will review it every three months.

Deferring your application

You can ask us to defer your application if you don't want to get an offer of housing for some reason. This means you stay on the housing list but won't get an offer of housing. People sometimes ask us to do this if their home comes with their job but they don't have to leave their home. If you ask us to defer your application, it is your responsibility to tell us when you'd like to be considered for an offer of housing. You must still respond to our letters when we review your application if you ask us to defer your application.

We will defer your application if you ask us to carry out an assessment of any additional needs you have. We need to make sure that you only get an offer of housing that's suitable for any additional needs you might have. For example, if you tell us that you have problems managing stairs, it may not be in your best interests to offer you a first floor flat. We will remove the deferral when we have assessed the additional needs you told us about.

We will defer your application if you owe a landlord money, you have no arrangement to repay what you owe and have not made at least three monthly payments towards what you owe. We will defer your application if you miss a payment.

Removing your application from the CHR

We will remove your application from the CHR if -

- you die;
- you ask us to remove you from the list;
- you do not reply to our letters when we review your application;
- you do not reply when we ask you for more information to support your application or we ask you to get in touch with us for some other reason.

You can ask us to remove you from the housing list in writing or by speaking to us. We will always confirm your request in writing.

Updating and maintaining the housing list

Reviewing applications

We will write to you every six months and ask you if you want to stay on the housing list. You must get in touch with us by letter, email or by phone to let us know that you want to stay on the housing list. If you don't get in touch with us in two weeks, we will cancel your application. We will write to you to let you know we've cancelled your application.

If you get in touch with us up to three months after we've cancelled your application, we will place your application back on to the CHR.

Change in circumstances

You must tell us if your circumstances change. You can call us, email us or write to us to tell us about the change. If someone joins your household or leaves it, or you move home, you need to complete a change of circumstances form. Where your application is placed on the housing list and the points you get (if any) may change if there is a change of circumstances.

You can get the form you need on our web site, from any of our offices or by asking for one by phone or email.

Categories on our list and the points you may get

Our policy is a category and points system. This means your application will go into one of five categories.

The Categories

Your application will go into one category. You may get extra points but the points you get depends on the category your application is in and your housing circumstances. These are the categories -

Category A. Duty to House: people affected by homelessness to whom the council has a duty to house under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended) and young people to whom the council has a duty under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995;

Category B. Medicals and Support Needs: people needing to move on medical grounds because their current home isn't suitable and can't be adapted; people needing specific accommodation such as sheltered housing or a wheelchair adapted house; people that have housing support or social care needs that can't be met in their current home or someone that needs to move in to Angus to provide essential care and support to someone living in Angus or to receive essential care and support from someone living in Angus;

Category C. Short-term accommodation: anyone living in Angus that is a tenant in the private rented sector with a Short Assured tenancy; living somewhere temporarily (such as living with friends or your parents); living in a home that comes with their job; has no home but has refused one reasonable offer of housing or did something that caused their homelessness; or a member of Her Majesty's Forces leaving the forces who intends to return to Angus or who lives in Angus and wants to stay;

Category D. Inadequate accommodation: anyone living in Angus with too few or too many bedrooms or without all the essential facilities they should have like an indoor toilet; or anyone that has to travel more than 1½ hours by public transport or 30 miles in a vehicle to get to their place of work, training or study in Angus; anyone that has accepted an offer of a job in Angus and our Economic Development division tell us that worker is an essential or 'key' worker;

Category E. Choice: for anyone that doesn't need to move and is a secure tenant, an owner or an assured tenant; or anyone that doesn't live in Angus with no medical or support need to move in to Angus.

You might get points based on your circumstances

We award points for seven main reasons -

- if we've decided you are homeless and your actions or behaviour didn't cause your homelessness or we have a duty to house you under the Children (Scotland) Act: an assessment of housing need will decide if your actions or behaviour caused your homelessness. You will get one point for every day that you're homeless if we decide you did not cause your homelessness;
- you need to move home because of your health or support needs or because you provide care and support to someone that lives in Angus and you need to be closer or you live outside Angus and you need to move here to get the care and support you need: an assessment of housing need will decide the number of points you get;
- if you have to share rooms like the toilet, the bathroom, a kitchen or a living room (see table category Short Term Accommodation) but you will not get any points for sharing with your partner or your children;
- if there are too many or too few people living in your home: you will get points for every bedroom you don't need or you don't have;
- if your home doesn't have all the essential facilities it should have such as an indoor toilet or running water: you will get points for every essential facility you don't have;
- if it takes you longer than 1½ hours by public transport or you have to travel more than 30 miles in a vehicle to get to the place where you work, train or study. We may also give you extra points if the council's Economic Development division tell us you have essential work skills and you'll be starting a new job in Angus. We call this 'a key incoming worker';
- if you are one of our tenants and you want to transfer to another one of our homes.

We will award points that apply to the category your application is in. For example, you will only get points for sharing facilities if your application is placed in the ‘Short Term accommodation’ category. You would not get points for being homeless.

The categories and points: a summary

This table summarises the categories we use, the type of application that falls into that category and the points you may get if your application falls into that category.

CATEGORY	THIS CATEGORY COVERS	DEFINITION	WHEN YOU’LL GET THE POINTS	POINTS
A. Duty to House	People affected by homelessness to whom the council has a duty to house under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended) and young people to whom the council has a duty under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.	Unintentional homelessness	One point for every day following the decision that you are affected by, but did not cause, your homelessness.	1 point per day
B. Medicals and Support	People needing to move on medical grounds because their current home isn’t suitable and can’t be adapted; people needing specific accommodation such as sheltered housing or a wheelchair adapted house; people that have housing support or social care needs that can’t be met in their current home or someone that needs to move to Angus to provide essential care and support to someone living in Angus.	Additional need points	Points will depend on the outcome of the housing needs assessment. Points will be awarded for - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk (and how any risk can be reduced if aids or services were put in place); • location and accessing services; • the benefit of sheltered housing (where appropriate.) 	1 – 4 low 5 – 9 medium 10 + high
C. Short Term Accommodation	<p>Anyone living in Angus -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that is a tenant in the private rented sector with a Short Assured tenancy; • living somewhere temporarily (such as living with friends); • living in a home that comes with their job; • that has no home but has refused one reasonable offer of housing or did something that caused their homelessness. 	e.g. a house of multiple occupancy	You live with someone you’re not related to and you share -	10 points (each room)
		Sharing facilities in lodgings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a toilet, bathroom or kitchen 	5 points
		Council law tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a living room 	
		Your home comes with your job (we call this having a ‘service’ or ‘tied’ tenancy)	90 days before your tenancy ends	40 points
			one point for every day thereafter	up to 120 points
		You don’t have all the bedrooms you need	For each bedroom you don’t have that our policy says you need	20 points
You do not have a fixed address and are temporarily in different homes		35 points		
A member of Her Majesty’s Forces leaving the forces who intends to return to Angus or who lives in Angus and wants to stay.		Your home comes with your service in Her Majesty’s forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for being in Her Majesty’s forces • 90 days before your tenancy ends • one point for every day thereafter 	10 points 40 points 1 point

The categories and points: a summary

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CATEGORY	THIS CATEGORY COVERS	DEFINITION	WHEN YOU'LL GET THE POINTS	POINTS
D. Inadequate accommodation	<p>Anyone living in Angus -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •with too few or too many bedrooms; •that doesn't have all the essential facilities they should have like an indoor toilet; •anyone that has to travel more than 1½ hours by public transport or 30 miles in a vehicle to get to their place of work, training or study in Angus; anyone that has accepted an offer of a job in Angus and our Economic Development division tell us that worker is an essential or 'key' worker. 	You don't have all the essential facilities or services you need	<p>The property where you live -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •has a bad problem with rising or penetrating damp •doesn't have satisfactory provision for ventilation, natural and artificial light or heating •doesn't have adequate thermal insulation •doesn't have an adequate supply of fresh water •doesn't have a sink with hot and cold water •doesn't have an indoor toilet •doesn't have a fixed bath or shower and wash basin with hot and cold water •doesn't have a good drainage and sewerage system •the electric supply doesn't meet the relevant safety regulations •doesn't have facilities to allow you to prepare a hot meal (this doesn't mean your landlord has to provide you with a cooker. A microwave oven counts as 'facilities to cook a hot meal.') •doesn't have a proper entrance •is not structurally stable: for example it's subsiding and a demolition or closing order has been placed on your home 	<p>10 points</p>
		You don't have all the bedrooms you need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •For each bedroom you don't have that our policy says you need 	20 points
		You have too many bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •For each bedroom that tenants of council or any other Registered Social Landlord don't need 	30 points
		To help you if you travel a long way to work, training or study in Angus or we need your skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •you have to travel more than 1½ hours by public transport or more than 30 miles by vehicle to get to your place of work, study or training and your work, study or training is located in Angus •Where our Economic Development division tells us you are an essential or 'key' worker 	<p>5 points</p> <p>50 points</p>
E. Choice	For anyone that doesn't need to move and is a secure tenant, an owner or an assured tenant; or anyone that doesn't live in Angus with no medical or support need to move in to Angus.	No housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Our tenants that would like to transfer with no housing need 	1 point

Assessing extra needs

Assessing housing need

We will assess any additional needs you may have if you've told us about those needs at the time you apply for housing. An additional need could be homelessness, a medical, care or support need. An officer from our Housing Options Team may meet you to complete a full assessment of all your needs and may ask other organisations such as social work and health departments to provide more information to support your application.

You will not get priority to move homes just because you have a medical condition. Your medical condition must be a long-term condition, it should be unlikely to improve and no services, assistive aids or adaptations can be put into your current home to reduce or get rid of any risk.

The size of home you need

The size of home you need

We do not have all the homes we need for everyone that applies for housing with us so it's important we make the best use of the housing available. The size of property we'll consider you for is based on who will live with you. We use regulations set by the Department for Work and Pensions to decide the number of bedrooms you need.

Properties smaller than you need

We may offer you a house size smaller than you would normally qualify for if -

- we don't have any homes of a size suitable for your household and no other social landlord can help you: we will only do this if moving to a smaller property than you need would improve your current circumstances. For example, if you currently live in a four-bedroom house and need a six-bedroom house, we may consider offering you a five-bedroom home to reduce the overcrowding in your current home;
- we have very limited stock and turnover of the house sizes you qualify for.

Working out the size of home you need

We will work out the house size you need based on regulations set by the Department for Work and Pensions. Under those rules, each of the following are entitled to one bedroom:

- a couple;
- anyone aged 16 or over;
- two children of the same sex;
- any other child but not a child whose main home is elsewhere: we will use the criteria under 'Access to children' to decide if a child's home is elsewhere;
- a carer or group of carers providing overnight care.
- If you are a registered foster carer, you may be entitled to an additional bedroom or bedrooms, depending on your circumstances.

Access to children

Where parents who don't live together have shared care of their child or children, the child or children are only treated as living with the parent that is treated as responsible for them and provides their main home. For a person to be treated as responsible for a child or young person, the child or young person must normally be living with that person. If a child or young person spends equal amounts of time in different households, or there is a question as to with whom they normally live, they will be treated as living with the person who is receiving child benefit for them. This is consistent with those living in the private sector.

Pregnancy

We will count your unborn child or children as part of your household if you can provide us with proof of your pregnancy from someone independent like a doctor or a midwife. You may not get housing benefit to cover the additional bedroom rent if you are allocated a property before your baby is born.

Types of housing and areas where you want to live

Type of housing

We group the properties we have available for let into one of five categories. These are -

- general housing: flats and houses for rent not designed for any specific group or groups of people like older people or people with a physical disability;
- adapted housing: flats and houses that meet the needs of people with a physical disability;
- amenity housing: flats and houses that meet the needs of older people or people with a disability;
- sheltered housing: a group of self contained flats and houses linked to, and supported by, housing support staff providing housing support to tenants to help them live independently;
- supported accommodation: a group of self contained properties linked to, and supported by, social care staff.

You can apply for one or more property types but we will only offer some types of property to those who need them after an assessment of need.

Areas of preference

We divide the city and main towns of Angus into 'lettings areas.' You can apply to live in one or more of these lettings areas. The choices you make become your 'areas of preference.'

We do not allow you to select where you'd like to live at street level. If you select the area and are offered a property on a street where you don't want to live, we will count this as a reasonable offer.

Some of our properties are in rural villages or small settlements. We call these landward properties. Although all landward properties are grouped by the housing team responsible for them (such as Arbroath Landward), you can choose one or more landward properties by the village or settlement where they're located.

We may offer you housing outside the town or city where you want to live if we need to. We call this 'overriding your area preferences.' If we do this, we will write to you and tell you why but we will only do this if -

- we do not have the size of property you need or the type of property you want in your areas of preference;
- our statistics show that the size of property you need or the type of property you want does not become available in your areas of preference very often or availability is very low and there are already people waiting for the size of property you need or the type of property you want;
- you have asked us for a specific house type and you do not need it or your needs could be met in another type of housing.
- We will not offer you housing outside the town or city where you want to live without changing your areas of preference in that town or city first.

Using our discretion

Using Discretion

We know that our allocation policy can't cover everyone's circumstances and that situations may arise that it won't cover. The Head of Housing (Angus Council) or the Director of Housing (Hillcrest Housing Association Ltd) Blackwood Homes, Caledonia Housing Association and Hillcrest Housing Association have a special power to use 'discretion' where you need to move or be housed urgently.

Discretion will only be used where -

- housing is needed quickly; and
- our allocation policy won't allow us to offer housing quickly; and
- there are good reasons or special circumstances to offer housing quickly in urgent cases.

‘Good reasons’ and ‘special circumstances’ include -

- **significant compassionate grounds:** such as the death of a family member occurring in, or around, the house. In these circumstances, it may be very difficult for the remaining family to distance themselves from the event and professional advice suggests a change of home is fundamental to the future well being of a family member but it would take too long to offer another home following the normal route of medical assessment. We would also consider requests for rehousing from the terminally ill living outside Angus who wish to return to Angus to be closer to their family;
- **management reasons:** such as where we need to carry out substantial works to your home and we need to move you out temporarily or you have succeeded to the property but it was specially adapted for the original tenant and you don’t need those adaptations but someone else does;
- **community safety issues:** such as witness protection measures or prisoners returning to Angus covered by Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) presenting a high risk to public safety.

If the Head of Housing (Angus Council) or the Director of Housing (Hillcrest Housing Association Ltd), Blackwood Homes, Caledonia Housing Association and Hillcrest Housing Association agrees to use their discretion, you will be offered a suitable home as an urgent case.

If you refuse an offer after we’ve given you discretion, you will lose your priority status and your application will return to the category where it was before discretion was used.

You or someone like an advice worker can make an application for discretion through the Common Housing Register team or our housing managers or Senior Housing Officer (Prevention Assessment) can make a discretionary application.

Bypassing applications and when we will do this

Bypassing your application

Where we don’t make an offer of housing to the first or next person on the shortlist for a property that’s available to let, we call this ‘bypassing.’ Our officers think about the property they have to offer to decide who would benefit most from that property. For example, if a property adapted for the needs of a wheelchair user is available to let but the next person on the list doesn’t need a wheelchair, we would bypass that person. Our officers would continue to bypass applications until we found someone with a need for the property. Our officers would offer the property to that person.

Whenever our officers bypass an application, they must record why the application was bypassed. This helps to ensure our policy is transparent, officers act fairly and are responsible for the decisions they make. Any decision to bypass must be based on need and our policy intention of ensuring that best use is made of the housing stock.

We do not use this policy to ‘screen out’ households our officers believe may need greater support or involvement from staff or who officers believe may create problems in the communities where they live.

Our strategic housing team review bypass reasons each year to ensure that bypasses are made fairly.

When we might bypass

Officers may bypass under these general headings -

- **bedspaces:** our officers will bypass your application where the dimension or size of the bedroom or bedrooms of the property you shortlist for would not accommodate everyone in your household. Some of our properties have small, single bedrooms that would be unsuitable for two people we expect to share a room (like two brothers or sisters);
- **category:** our Local Lettings Plans determine the percentage of all lets officers should make to which categories of the housing list. Officers may decide the property would suit the needs of someone with a medical condition because it is on the ground floor. In this case, officers would bypass every application in every category other than the Medicals and Support category;
- **condition of property:** if you are our tenant and we are thinking about offering to transfer you to another one of our homes, your present home must meet our relet standard before we make the offer. Our officers will visit your home to check this. If your home does not meet our standard, this is your responsibility and our officers will bypass your application;
- **discretion:** if a property becomes available that would meet the needs of someone who holds priority for a discretionary allocation;

emergency: where a property is needed because an applicant is affected by an event like a fire, flood or other natural disaster and we need to house the applicant in the property temporarily;

existing refusal: if you previously refused an offer of a property in the same street, or the property offered has, or lacks, a characteristic such as a bath (instead of a shower) or no garden and you've refused an offer on this ground before;

floor level: if the property is a flat or maisonette accessed from the first-floor, our officers would bypass anyone that needs to live on the ground floor;

garden: if the property has its own garden or a defined space or area of a communal garden and an applicant has no interest in maintaining it, officers may bypass applicants;

pets: if you have a pet, our officers may bypass your application when shortlisting for properties where tenants are not allowed to keep any pets;

properties for specific needs: if the property is a sheltered property, our officers bypass everyone with no need to live in sheltered housing. Our officers would do the same for supported housing, an adapted property or an amenity property;

property type: if the property is a flat or maisonette, our officers may bypass anyone stating they will only consider a house or cottage.

public protection: if the property would be suitable for an offender under the MAPPA;

sensitive lets: if officers need to ensure that vulnerable people are not placed in tenancies where there is an increased risk that the tenancy will fail, there are local community factors that would make it unsuitable (such as placing someone with a history of anti-social behaviour into the area where they were anti-social) or they need to create a balanced housing mix within particular buildings or areas (such as reducing the likelihood that the incoming tenant's lifestyle would clash with the lifestyles of existing tenants), they will allocate sensitively;

social mix: offering housing to different types of households to avoid housing in the same area large numbers of people who have the same needs. Our officers will review and take account of the existing types of household in an area when making an offer to make sure that we do not create streets, estates or areas with an unreasonable number of the same type of families or groups of people, such as elderly people. This helps us contribute towards building communities where people want to live;

special lettings initiatives: our Local Lettings Plans allow us to offer some properties in different ways such as advertising an empty home, with little or no demand, for rent on our web site. We may also offer new build council homes to existing tenants without all the bedrooms they need. When our officers allocate to our own tenants without all the bedrooms they need, they will make an offer of the vacant property to someone else in housing need. They will try to make the final offer in such a chain of allocations to someone affected by homelessness;

support needs: our officers will bypass on this ground for supported properties only on advice from the Department of Social Work and Health. Allocations to supported accommodation will depend on the number of support hours available.

Offering you a property

Officers use our computer system to prepare a 'short list' of applications when a property is ready to let.

If we decide to offer you the property, we will make you a formal offer of housing. We may call you to tell you we have an offer for you (if you've given us your phone number) or we may send you a written offer. If we offer you housing by phone, we will always confirm the offer in writing.

The letter we send to you will set out clear steps for you to follow to arrange to view the property when it is available. We will tell you -

- the address of the property;
- the number of bedrooms it has;
- what type of property it is (such as a flat or a house);

- how much rent you will have to pay if you accept the offer;
- the date we expect the property to become available;
- the last date you must contact us by if you want to view the property.

You must tell us within three working days if you'd like to view the property. If you don't respond to our offer, we will treat this as a refusal of our offer.

You will get up to two offers of housing but if you refuse those offers, we will consider suspending your application. This means that your application stays on the housing list, but you won't get another offer. We may suspend your application for three months.

Every offer we make will be a reasonable offer. This means that the property we offered you -

- had all the bedrooms you need as defined by this policy; and
- met all the recommendations our housing options team made after an assessment of your needs.

Wherever possible, we will offer you the type of housing you'd like but we can't always do this because we don't always have enough of the type of properties people would like to live in.

You will get one offer of housing from the 'Duty to House' category. If you refuse that offer, you will lose your priority status and your application will move to another category. A further offer of housing will be made from that category.

Home visits

When we're thinking about making you an offer of housing, we will normally visit you at home. We do this to check that the information you gave us when you applied for housing is still correct.

Accepting our offer

We will ask you to tell us within 24 hours of viewing the property if you are going to accept our offer or refuse it.

If you accept our offer, we will sign you up as our tenant. If you made a joint application, you will have a joint tenancy. All joint tenants must be present when we ask you to sign your tenancy agreement. We will give you advice, information and support throughout the process of becoming our tenant. We will clearly explain your rights and responsibilities under the tenancy agreement before you sign it.

Refusing our offer

If you refuse our offer, we will ask you to tell us why you refused the offer. If your reason for refusing the offer is reasonable, your refusal will not count against you. You can refuse the offer reasonably if -

- you can't accept the offer because of your health or you've been in hospital;
- a close relative, close friend, carer or someone you cared for has recently died; or
- the property doesn't meet any needs identified by our Housing Options team.

Nominations

We have agreements in place with other social landlords about how they allocate housing. Social landlords may ask us to give them details about anyone on our housing list who needs or wants housing in the area where the social landlord have homes for rent. We call these agreements 'nominations agreements.'

Social landlords try to offer at least fifty percent of any new homes they build to people from our housing list.

A Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)

We will offer you a Scottish Secure Tenancy unless -

- you or someone you live with have an anti-social behaviour order against you or them;
- you are moving to Angus to take up or seek employment;
- where you're living is scheduled for development and we need you to move to allow us to get the work done;
- you are affected by homelessness and we're offering the property to you temporarily for no more than six months;
- you need housing support to help you maintain your tenancy;
- we are sub-letting the property to you: this means we lease the property we're offering you from another social landlord.

If any of the above reasons apply, we will offer you a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. We will discuss this with you before you accept the tenancy.

Appeals

If you're unhappy with any decision we make about your housing application, you can appeal against our decision.

All appeals are considered by independent officers that had no part in making the decision you're unhappy with.

You must appeal within 21 days of being told about the decision you're unhappy with. Appeals should be in writing but if you have difficulties reading or writing, or your first language is not English, contact us by phone. You must tell us why you think the decision is wrong whatever way you contact us.

We will write to you with a decision on your appeal in 28 days.

You can ask for help from Shelter or the Angus Citizens Advice Bureaux if you need help with your appeal.

Complaints

You can complain about the service we provide if you're unhappy with it.

Contact us

- Write to us** Strategic Housing Team
William Wallace House
Orchard Bank Business Park
Orchard Loan
Forfar
DD8 1WH
- Call us** On 01307 476066
- Email us** HousingComplaints@angus.gov.uk
- Visit the web** <http://tinyurl.com/bskpxa3>

Information and Advice

Only a small number of homes become available for let each year. This means that not everyone that applies for housing will get an offer of housing. Some people, especially those who choose more popular areas and house types, may be waiting a long time before they get an offer of housing.

You will get good quality housing information and advice from our officers. The advice we give you will be realistic. This means that in some cases, our officers will tell you that there is no prospect we can house you because of the size of property you need or where you want to live. Although we can't tell you how long it will be before you get an offer of housing, we can tell you how long it took to get housing last year. We will break this information down further given the size of property you need, the type of property you've requested and your area preferences.

You will find information on where we have homes for rent, the number of properties we let last year and how long people wait for housing in our application packs and on our website together with information about other social landlords with housing in Angus.

You should be able to make informed choices about your housing options. It's our job to make sure you get good quality housing information and advice when you need it, in a way you'd like to receive it, so you can make those choices. This could be reading that information online, picking up a leaflet from one of our offices, talking to someone on the phone or by asking questions by mail.

We will make sure our allocation policy is available in places where everyone can read it easily. We will do the same for our Local Lettings Plans. We will give you information about where we have housing, how long it takes to get housing and whether we are able to provide the housing you need. You can get information about alternative housing options such as owner-occupation and opportunities for renting in the private rented sector.

Getting a copy of this policy

Everyone can have a copy of the allocation policy, free of charge, if they want one. You can get a copy of our policy from our offices and on our website. We will also send copies of our policy to advice organisations and agencies.

Other housing providers

Although we are the largest providers of social housing in Angus, we are not the only providers. We are the only organisations using the Common Housing Register but we hope that other social landlords will join us soon.

Several organisations provide social housing in Angus. If you tell us that you'd consider housing from another social landlord with homes in Angus, we'll pass your details to that organisation as long as you've given us your permission to do so.

Reporting what this policy achieves

We need to make sure that this policy achieves what it sets out to do and that people are treated fairly. To do this, we will collect information through our allocations system and report on our performance each year.

We will use the annual reviews of our Local Lettings Plans to demonstrate what we achieve under our allocation policy. These are the kinds of things we may report on under each of our policy objectives -

- giving more priority to people in the greatest housing need: the number and percentage of allocations we make to each of the categories on our housing list. We will know we are giving more priority to people in the greatest housing need if we can show that we allocate more properties to people in higher categories.
- making best use of the housing we have by matching people to properties available to let: demonstrating how we minimise refusals and improve our 'offer to let' ratio. Ensuring that specialist stock such as adapted and sheltered stock is allocated to those needing it most. Demonstrating how local teams achieve the targets in their community based lettings plans and how offices have used initiatives in those plans to help them allocate all their stock effectively;
- creating communities where people want to live: reporting on what local teams achieve by using their community based lettings plans to address areas where demand for housing is weak, to ensure refusals are minimised and what incentives offices have used, and their success, to encourage people to live in less attractive areas.

Reporting what we achieve

We will provide regular reports on -

- the number of people waiting for housing, the size of housing they need, the type of property they want and where they would like to be housed;
- who gets offers of accommodation and whether they accept or refuse those offers;
- if people refuse housing, why they refuse and what properties they refuse;
- where properties become available for let and why people terminate their tenancies;
- the number of allocations we make to each category on the housing list;
- the amount of time people wait for an offer of housing.

Reviewing our policy

We introduced this policy in April 2013. We will review our allocation policy every three years. The policy will be reviewed by officers from Angus Council, Blackwood Homes, Caledonia Housing Association and Hillcrest Housing Association.

We will ask everyone for their views about any changes we are thinking of making following our review of the policy.

Employees and relationships with elected members and members of the committee of management

If you're related to, or have a relationship with, one of our officers, an elected member (councillor), or a member of the committee of management, you must tell us this and who you are related to or who you have a relationship with.

We will have to ask for approval to offer you housing from the Head of Housing (for Angus Council properties) or the Committee of Management for Blackwood Homes, Caledonia Housing Association and Hillcrest Housing Association

Definitions for the words and terms we use

When we use the term 'couple', we mean two people in a relationship with the same characteristics of the relationship between husband and wife, including a same sex couple.

'Family' includes any 'step' relationships and a half-blood relationship is treated as a full blood relationship. Relationships are by blood, marriage, civil partnership or adoption.

The law that applies to this policy

The law tells us what we have to do and what we can do. These are the laws that apply to our allocation policy -

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended)
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (as amended)
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Civil Partnerships Acts 2005
- Equalities Act 2010

Allocations Policy Review Plan

Timetable for review

Timeframe Stage

0-2 months	Stage 1:	Subgroup of CHR Review Group considers what changes required to existing policy
3 months	Stage 2:	Development Day with partners
4 months	Stage 3:	Revised allocations policy drafted and issued to respective Senior Management teams for comment
4.5 months	Stage 4:	Redrafted policy issued to partners
5 months	Stage 5:	Consultative draft produced and placed on the Council and other partners websites.
7 months	Stage 6:	Final draft produced and reported to NS Committee and partners' management committees
8-11 months	Stage 7:	Amendments made to Northgate and procedural documents. Revised policy documentation published
12 months	Stage 8:	New policy implemented

Timescale for the process is likely to be around 12 months.

Triggers

- 1) new legislation
- 2) change to good practice guidance
- 3) change to local priorities
- 4) periodic review (3 years)

Glossary

Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)	ASBOs are preventative orders designed to protect individuals from further anti-social behaviour that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress. Breach of an order is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
Bypass	When an officer skips an application next in line for an offer for one of the reasons outlined in the policy
Common housing register (CHR)	A register of all applicants for social housing used by two or more landlords within an area.
Deferral	A period when an applicant does not want an offer of housing or where an applicant has unaddressed housing-related debt
Housing list	A list of applicants for housing that is used by the local authority to allocate its housing stock.
ICT system	Information and communication system
Local Lettings Plans (LLPs)	Local Lettings Plans (or LLPs) look at the supply and demand for housing in each area of Angus taking into account specific local needs and circumstances. Each plan sets out a target for the number of lets to each category of the housing list.
Notice of Proceedings (NOP)	The formal notice provided to tenants informing them that their landlord is taking legal proceedings to seek a court order for recovery of possession of a property
Registered social landlord (RSL)	A landlord providing social rented housing that is registered and regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator.
Scottish secure tenancy (SST)	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 establishes the Scottish Secure Tenancy as the tenancy for all tenants of social landlords in Scotland.
Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC)	The Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.
Short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST)	Section 34 and schedule 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 establish the basic conditions when a short Scottish secure tenancy can apply to some tenants of social landlords in Scotland in place of a full SST.
Suspension	A suspension happens when someone has been assessed for and accepted onto a housing register but is told that he or she will not be eligible for an offer of housing until a certain period has elapsed, their conduct has changed, or a change in circumstances has occurred.
Tenancy agreement	A legal document or contract between landlord and tenant setting out the rights and responsibilities of each.

**To contact any council service telephone the ACCESSLine on:
08452 777 778**

housing@angus.gov.uk website: www.angus.gov.uk

**Hillcrest Housing Association Office is located at:
1 North Grimsby, Arbroath, T: 0300 123 2640**

E: angus@hillcrestha.org.uk website: www.hillcrest.org.uk

Blackwood Homes

North Office 23 Raeden Court Midstocket Road Aberdeen AB15 5PF

**T: 01224 327 408 E: housing@mbha.org.uk
W: www.mbha.org.uk**

Caledonia Housing Association

118 Strathern Road Broughty Ferry Dundee DD5 1JW

**T: 0800 678 1228 E: info@caledoniaha.co.uk
W: www.caledoniaha.co.uk**

**This leaflet can be
translated, on request, into
other community languages.**

**For people with visual
impairment, large print,
audio or braille versions can
also be provided.**