



Guidance Title: Common Housing Register Guidance

Business Function: Sanctuary Scotland

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Part 1: The North Lanarkshire Common Housing Register Points System

Suspension reasons

In addition to or in replace of those already stated in the [Lettings - Sanctuary Scotland Policy](#):

- Addition: The applicant may be suspended if they are in prison;
- Replacement: Where the applicant has refused *two* reasonable offers of housing. However, an applicant who refuses an offer will not be suspended if the offer is refused for reasons of ill health or if a close relative has recently died;
- Where the applicant has tenancy, related convictions and Sanctuary are not satisfied that such behaviour has ceased is unlikely to re-occur; for example, the applicant has previous eviction for ASB, current granted or waiting on application for ASBO, reached NOP stage or have been served with NOP.

House types and sizes

Children of the same sex, with a minimum of six years age gap between them will normally be allocated one bedroom each.

CHR applications for two bedroom properties will be prioritized in the following way:

- On the 'general' or 'transfer' list, if there is a single applicant with the same number of points as an applicant with children, the applicant with children will have priority;
- If the property is being offered to someone on the 'aspirational transfer' or 'homeless' list, it will be offered to the applicant who has been in their current accommodation the longest or who has been on the homeless waiting list for the longest period of time, regardless of their household composition.

Access

For all separated parents with access to children, the children will be classed as household members for each household regardless of the number of nights per week that the children may occupy the house for.

Lettings areas

There is no limit to the number of CHR applications in terms of the number of letting areas an applicant can apply for. However, CHR applicants may be considered for a property outside the area requested on their application if they are classified as homeless or have priority points for:

- Current property is being demolished
- Applicant is escaping domestic abuse
- Applicant is covered by a council protocol
- Applicant has been discharged from the armed forces or has been issues with legal documents to leave accommodation within two months.

However, CHR applicants may have limits on the type of housing they are offered if they have specific health reasons and may be given priority points if a specific type of property may help to improve health needs. An applicant can choose to apply for other types of property, but they would not receive priority points for health reasons in this instance.

Application reviews

Applicants will be required to respond to a letter within 14 calendar days of receipt stating whether they still wish to be considered for housing and listing any changes in circumstances. Failure to respond to the review will result in the applicant being removed from the list.

Change of circumstances

If an applicant has a change of circumstance which may impact on their points allocation, applicants will be signposted to the relevant point of contact in North Lanarkshire Council or within Sanctuary who can update the application if access to the system is available.

Banding

CHR applicants are grouped into one of four groups and are given points based on their current housing circumstances which determines their priority within a group and overall.

CHR applicants who are deemed eligible for housing will first be grouped into one of four categories:

- Homeless
- Transfer
- Aspirational transfer
- General.

A property will then be allocated to an applicant within one of these groups whose needs, and preferences match the property and who is highest on the housing list. An applicant's place on our housing list is dependant upon the number of points that the application is given in terms of the pointing system as detailed below. The points system is designed to ensure that a property is given to those identified as being in the most housing need. Where applicants have the same number of points, priority will be given to the applicant who has been in need for the longest period. Where an applicant's circumstances change, the applicant's priority date will be from the date of this change in circumstances.

There are a number of exceptions to this:

- If the property being offered is adapted, or properties specifically set aside for amenity housing then an offer will first be made to the applicant who needs the adaptations or an adapted property with the highest number of points. If there is no one in the group who meets this criteria, then it may be offered to an applicant in a different group so that the property can be matched to the most suitable person.

- If a ground floor property is deemed particularly suitable for people with medical needs, then it may be offered to the person who's housing issues could be alleviated by living in such a property and they have the highest number of points.
- An applicant with health needs will be prioritised where they have the same number of points another applicant in their group. If multiple applicants have different health needs and the same number of points, the property will normally be offered to the person with the most urgent health need (the highest number of points for health).
- If an applicant within a group needs to move for social reasons (to be near work, give/receive support for example) then they may be prioritised if they have the same number of points as another applicant in the same group.

If people have equal points, applicants who have had their current level of housing need for the longest period of time will normally be prioritised. In addition, the following considerations will be made to make offers that meet peoples needs and make best use of stock:

- Offering two bedroom properties to household with children
- Offering housing to people in areas that are suitable for them
- Offering housing to certain people so that their lifestyle does not cause disruption or challenges for neighbours.
- Offering housing to different types of households to avoid housing large numbers of people who have the same needs in the same area, helping to create balanced communities.
- Avoiding offering flats or high rise accommodation to people with pets.

Housing is unsettled ('insecure housing')	
<i>Applicants will only receive one set of points in this section</i>	
Applicant's property is being demolished	150 points
Applicant has a definite date to lose their accommodation within two months. (For example, they have discharge papers to leave the armed forces or have been issued with legal documents to leave your accommodation within two months (for example, Notice to Quit or Eviction Notice).	150 points
Applicant does not have any accommodation available and is living outside, living in temporary housing but not applying as homeless, or has been awarded a homeless - non-priority homelessness assessment decision.	80 points
Applicant must move out of their current accommodation within two months.	80 points
Applicant is living with people who are not going to be part of the household when they move.	30 points
Applicant's housing situation is unsettled for any other reason.	10 points
Priority points through an agreed protocol	
Applicant has been assessed and accepted through an agreed council protocol (a protocol means a set of rules that North Lanarkshire Council and other organisations who provide support or a service for a particular group of people have agreed to follow).	150 points

Member of household is being abused or harassed <i>Applicants will only receive one set of points in this section</i>	
A member of the applicant's household is being abused or harassed by someone in their home.	150 points
A member of the applicant's household is being abused or harassed by people who do not live in their home.	50 points
Moving for health reasons <i>Applicants will only receive one set of points in this section</i>	
Applicant has an 'urgent' health reason to move (for example they cannot get out of hospital because their current property is no longer suitable, and it would be dangerous if they returned home).	90 points
Applicant has a 'serious' health reason to move (for example if they cannot get to the bathroom in their property and it would not be practical for the property to be adapted).	40 points
Applicant has any other health reason to move.	10 points
Home has too many or too few people in it (Over and under occupancy) <i>Applicants can receive more than one set of points in this section</i>	
There are too many people living in the applicant's home.	50 for the first extra room needed 10 for every other bedroom needed
Parents with access to children who stay in the home for one or two nights a week and need extra rooms.	50 points
The applicant is living in overcrowded conditions and because of this, children of opposite sexes have to share a room.	10 points
There are too few people living in the applicant's home (this applies to council and RSL tenants only).	40 points
Applicant's home is not suitable to live in <i>Applicants can receive more than one set of points in this section</i>	
The applicant's property is significantly below the tolerable standard (which means it falls below the standards set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987) and is not in a good enough condition to live in (for example the property has no hot or cold running water, mains electricity or it is structurally unstable).	50 points
The applicant's family have to live apart (for example they do not have any housing available which is large enough for the whole family and some family members have to live in different houses).	20 points
Applicant has a social reason for moving <i>Applicants can receive more than one set of points in this section</i>	
The applicant wants to transfer to another home (this only applies to our tenants who will be tenants on the transfer and aspirational transfer lists).	20 points
The applicant wants to move to give or receive support.	10 points
The applicant wants to move to access essential services that they need.	10 points
The applicant is moving to enable them to get to their place of work.	10 points

The homeless category

For applicants applying as homeless, North Lanarkshire Council will assess their needs using their homelessness assessment procedures. If they find an applicant to be unintentionally homeless they will go into the homeless category. Applicants in the homeless category will be prioritised based on the date they applied for housing through the homeless assessment process.

Sanctuary has adopted North Lanarkshire Council's pointing framework; therefore, nomination arrangements and Section 5 referrals are discontinued in favour of selecting applicants from the Common Housing Register.

Evidence Requirements for Points

Evidence requirements for points for people with certain circumstances are set out below:

Circumstance	Evidence required
All applications	Two forms of identity. For example, we will accept a driving licence, a passport, an ID card the applicant was given when you started your job or your National Insurance card.
Property is being demolished	Evidence could include a demolition order, or proof of planning permission for the site the applicant currently live on. Evidence should be confirmed with the applicant's landlord if they have one.
Housing situation is unsettled for any other reason	A copy of a SSST or lease to confirm that a tenancy has less than six months to run.
Applicant is leaving the armed forces or has been issued with legal documents to leave their current accommodation within two months	We will need a copy of discharge papers, or a valid notice to quit, or a letter asking the applicant to leave.
Applicant needs rehousing because they are being harassed by someone in their home	None
Applicant needs rehousing because they are being harassed by people who do not live in their home	Evidence from the applicant's landlord, police or any other relevant organisation.
Applicant needs rehousing because their health is affected by current housing	None - we will assess health and housing needs through our health and housing needs assessment process.
Applicant needs a bigger home because they have access to a child who needs to stay overnight	A letter from the applicant's child's other parent, or a letter from a lawyer explaining the applicant's access rights to their child or children.
Applicant's home is significantly below the tolerable standard	Evidence from the applicant's landlord or from the local authority environmental health department.

Circumstance	Evidence required
Applicant needs to be near services they need	A letter from the service the applicant uses, such as a school or medical centre, explaining the applicant's reason for moving and that they need to live near this service.
Applicant needs to provide or receive support	A letter from the person receiving or providing support, explaining the reason for moving and that the applicant needs to be near them.
Applicant needs to be closer to their place of work	A letter from applicant's employer explaining the reason for moving and that the applicant needs to be near their place of work.

Victims of harassment and domestic abuse

For victims of harassment and domestic abuse there is significant evidence to suggest that abuse often continues after they leave the home that they shared with the abuser. In addition, victims of domestic abuse often flee their home to escape from the abuse they have been experiencing. Victims of harassment and domestic abuse will therefore be awarded 150 points whether they remain in the home with their abuser or not.

In circumstances of domestic abuse, reasonable offers of alternative accommodation will be made considering all of the applicant's individual circumstances. For example, taking account of any requests of housing within the letting area or adjoining letting area to the home they shared with their abuser, in order to maintain established support networks with family and friends.

Part 2: Inverclyde Common Housing Register

Accessing Housing

Applications can be made by completing the Inverclyde CHR application form, or applicants may access Sanctuary's housing indirectly through Inverclyde Council's Homeless Service, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and any agency approved for making referrals by the Inverclyde CHR participating landlords.

Verification

The Applicant must, when requested, provide confirmation of any of the relevant circumstances stated on their application. If satisfactory verification cannot be provided within a reasonable timescale of the request, in line with ICHR's procedures, the application will be reassessed, and points removed.

Change of Circumstances

It is the applicant's responsibility to amend their online application with any change in their circumstances as it may result in a change to their point's award. Following a change of address, the applicant will be required to amend their online application which will be reassessed. Failure to notify a change of address will lead to the applicant being suspended for three months and if there is no contact within the three month period the application will be cancelled.

Suspensions

In addition to the suspension reasons set out in the Lettings Policy, the following approaches will be applied to Inverclyde CHR applicants:

- An application may be suspended from receiving offers whilst satisfactory verification is outstanding; or
- Any applicant, who knowingly gives false information or withholds relevant information in order to increase their chances of housing, will have their application suspended from receiving offers for 1 year and any offer of housing cancelled. If a tenancy is granted before the deception is revealed the landlord association will take action to recover possession of the property; or
- Applicants who previously had suitable accommodation and have either voluntarily given it up or lost it as a result of their own actions may not receive any points for a period of 1 year from the date they officially left their property unless good reason can be demonstrated; or
- Applicants who, in the opinion of the ICHR, have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to gain priority may not receive any points for a period of 1 year from the date they officially left their previous address. This occurs when an applicant vacates suitable accommodation without good reason to take up residence in unsuitable accommodation without any reasonable cause.

House sizes

In addition to the criteria for bedroom allocation as described in section 8.8 of the Lettings Policy, the following approach will be taken to determine the correct property size for the applicant(s):

- An applicant who is staying 'care of' a tenant of any Registered Social Landlord and who is not a permanent member of the household will not be accepted as a member of the household until formal permission has been granted to the tenant for them to reside at that address. Points will not be awarded until permission to reside has been obtained from the relevant participating landlord.
- Where there are applicants residing with tenants of Inverclyde CHR participating landlords' and concern is raised over arrears, rechargeable repairs, anti-social behaviour or any other significant breach of tenancy, the application may be suspended from receiving offers for a year and any offer of housing made may be withdrawn.

A different approach should also be taken to the Letting Policy suspension reason for refusing an offer:

- Applicants who unreasonably refuse *two offers* within a 6 month period, after successfully bidding for the available properties will have their application suspended from receiving further offers for 6 months. This suspension takes effect from the date of the second refusal. The applicant shall be deemed to have unreasonably refused an offer if the offer meets the criteria stated on their application form for their choice of area, size, type and floor level and they have no good reason for refusing.

Areas

Applicants may bid for a maximum of three properties covering all participating landlords during any week.

Application Reviews

Applicants who choose not to bid within a reasonable time period will be contacted for a review of their application.

Awarding Priority

Priority on the housing and transfer list is determined by the housing need, subject to priority order set by Sanctuary and assessed in line with the Points System laid out in **Appendix 1** below. Offers will then be made to the applicant with the highest points total on the list for the appropriate sized property and area. Where applications are awarded the same points total, the priority will be determined by the length of time on the list.

Offers

Applicants will be given 24 hours working days to accept or refuse an offer. This runs from the date of the viewing unless this has been unreasonably delayed in which case it runs from the date on which the provisional offer of accommodation is made. Provision to extend this time will be made, by agreement, in exceptional circumstances.

Acceptance of an offer must be in writing.

Applicants will be given 24 hours from the date of the viewing unless this has been unreasonably delayed in which case it runs from the date on which the provisional offer of accommodation is made. Provision to extend this time will be made, by agreement, in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Inverclyde Common Housing Register Allocation of Points

Where applicable, points will only be awarded where the relevant evidence is provided.

Priority Reason	Definition	Evidence/Verification Required	Points Awarded
Overcrowding	Points will be awarded in this category for every bedroom required for the household that their current property lacks. One extra bedroom if have access to children	Verified at pre-offer visit. Letter confirming access to child/children and number of nights	35 Points per bedroom lacking. Maximum award of 70 points
	Extra bedroom required for an overnight carer	Confirmation of carer status: a letter confirming the applicant or household member is in receipt of relevant benefits. (Attendance Allowance, DLA or PIP at appropriate level). Require evidence, a letter regarding care being provided.	
	Extra bedroom required due to medical condition or where medical equipment means that an additional bedroom is required	Housing report to be provided by Occupational Therapist or evidence from a similar medical practitioner confirming need for additional bedroom.	
Under-occupation	Points will be awarded for each bedroom that the household does not require. This will be assessed in conjunction with the number of bedrooms the applicant applies for (this means if you require a 1 bed property as per the policy but decide to apply to under occupy a property by requesting a 2 bed property you will not be awarded points unless you live in a 3 bed property or larger).	Verified at pre-offer visit. Points only apply to the householder.	10 Points per excess bedroom
Homelessness	Applicants who are assessed by a local authority as statutorily homeless and there is a duty for them to be re-housed in permanent accommodation	Determination letter from Local Authority confirming that you are deemed statutorily homeless	20 points

Priority Reason	Definition	Evidence/Verification Required	Points Awarded
Threatened with Homelessness	If a valid notice to quit has been served on the property in which the applicant resides, or a court order has been served on the applicant requiring them to leave their current home for reasons outwith their control	Valid notice to quit and a decision letter stating that are statutorily homeless	15 points
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Points will be awarded in this category only where the relevant application is completed, or a medical certificate is provided by a relevant medical practitioner. Medical A and Medical B points will only be awarded where the accommodation occupied is by its design, condition or location is aggravating the applicant's medical condition or is preventing the applicant from living independently in their home and therefore there is an urgent and immediate need for rehousing. Location factors will not be taken into account for mental health conditions. Medical points cannot be awarded for the existence of a medical condition alone. Medical points will not be awarded where the ICHR conclude that the applicant's condition is not affected by the applicant's present accommodation or unlikely to be improved or assisted by rehousing. <p>Only one set of medical points per person, per application will be awarded; although an applicant may fit more than one of the criteria noted below only one award of points will be given; the highest award of points will always be awarded where an applicant fits the criteria of more than one medical points award e.g. if the applicant qualifies for Medical B points and Medical A points the maximum award of points will be 150 points.</p>		
Medical A - Housebound/ Danger to Occupy Home	Applicants or a member of their household who are practically housebound and who require level access accommodation.	Medical self-assessment application. Verified at pre-offer visit. Occupational therapist housing report.	150 points to each member of the household where the criteria applies
Medical A - Housebound/ Danger to Occupy Home (continued)	Applicants who are unable to return home and/or to their environment and cannot be discharged from NHS care.	Medical self-assessment application and letter from hospital occupational therapist/social worker confirming unable to discharge.	150 points to each member of the household where the criteria applies
	Where you cannot access your bedroom, toilet or bathroom due to the physical attributes or design of your home.	Medical self-assessment application and letter from occupational therapist	

Priority Reason	Definition	Evidence/Verification Required	Points Awarded
	Where a consultant psychiatrist has stated it is a danger to remain in your current home due to the impact on your mental health which is directly related to the physical attributes or design of your current home.	Medical self-assessment application and risk assessment completed by consultant psychiatrist.	
Medical B - Medical Condition aggravated by the current accommodation	<p>Applicants or members of their household who have a chronic medical condition and whose accommodation is causing <u>serious</u> aggravation to their medical condition that is likely to result in the condition deteriorating.</p> <p>Where a consultant psychiatrist has stated your current home is having a significant detrimental effect on your mental health.</p> <p>Where you are having difficulty accessing your bedroom, bathroom or toilet facilities as a result of a chronic medical condition.</p>	<p>Medical self-assessment application. Verified at pre-offer visit.</p> <p>Medical self-assessment application and risk assessment completed by consultant psychiatrist. Must be linked to the physical attributes or design of current home.</p> <p>Medical self-assessment application. Verified at pre-offer visit.</p>	30 Points to each member of the household where the criteria applies
Tied Accommodation	If an applicant is in tied accommodation and their contract of employment has expired or is due to expire (through no fault of their own) within the next six months.	Confirmation from employer that property is tied accommodation, contract is due to expire and that you will be asked to leave accommodation.	30 Points
Army Discharge	If you are a member of the Armed Forces or a veteran who has left the Armed Forces within the last 12 months, a widow, widowers or partner of service personnel killed in action for up to one year after their partner has been killed.	Confirmation from HM Armed Forces Commanding Officer of discharge date.	30 Points

Priority Reason	Definition	Evidence/Verification Required	Points Awarded
Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions	<p>Points will only be awarded under this category in exceptional circumstances where the design of the property does not include the items highlighted.</p> <p>If the issue is due to disrepair which they (as the owner) have failed to address or their landlord failing to meet their legal obligations, applicants will be given advice on how to pursue issues of repairs in their home with their landlord or the local authority.</p> <p>Only one award of unsatisfactory housing conditions points can be made per application.</p>		
Lacking facilities	Applicants whose property by design does not have an inside toilet, fresh or hot water supply, access to bathroom facilities (bath or shower) or provision for kitchen facilities.	Verified at pre-offer visit.	100 points
Below tolerable standard	Applicants whose current accommodation is structurally unstable or where there is a significant breach of the tolerable standard and the local authority or landlord is unable to arrange suitable repairs within a 6 month period due to issues outwith the applicant's control.	Proof that a valid Statutory (Housing (Scotland) Act 2006) Work/Demolition Notice or a repair notice under section 108 or a demolition order under section 115 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, which has been served on the owner(s) of the property by the local authority confirming the nature of the defect(s).	