

ALLOCATIONS POLICY (SOCIAL HOUSING – GENERAL)

Classification: Strategic

Status: Approved

Policy Lead:	Director Community Services
Last Review Date:	December 2024
Review Due Date:	December 2027
Review Period:	3 years unless required earlier due to changes in the law, regulation, best practice or requirement of the Association

REFERENCE PAGE

Document Title:	Allocations Policy (Social Housing – General)
Aim:	To ensure the allocation of suitable housing to those with a clear and identifiable need and are able to secure housing within the communities where applicants wish to live.
Objective:	3 The Eildon Group will ensure the delivery of high quality, responsive and affordable housing and support services
Scope of Policy:	Customers
Nominated Officer:	Director Community Services
Approval Source:	Board
Legal & Regulatory References:	<p>This policy is based on the principles set out in the Scottish Government's "Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A Practice Guide", published February 2019.</p> <p>At a minimum we will comply with all relevant legislation including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, and a range of Statutory Guidance relating to allocations policies and procedures • Housing (Scotland) Acts 1987 and 2001 • The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 • Equalities Act 2010 • Human Rights Act 1998 • The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005
Procedural References:	<p>This policy has been considered alongside other Eildon policies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voids Management Policy • Decant, Home Loss and Disturbance Policy • Tenancy Management Policy • Unacceptable Actions Policy • Rent Arrears Policy • ASB Policy • Domestic Abuse Policy
Consultation Completed:	Yes - Staff & customers
Risk Implications:	1- Existing policy, minimal change
Equalities Assessment:	An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and identified some potentially negative impacts of the policy on people who share protected characteristics ie age, disability and marital status. These have been addressed within the policy to ensure equality of opportunity for all. The policy seeks to offer a range of support to applicants with specific requirements based on their individual needs. Positive changes have been made on how older people apply for sheltered housing, and we have made changes to improve opportunities for coparenting families, and applicants who wish to adopt or foster children.
Accessibility:	Accessible electronically/online and in print. All documents can be translated and made available in audio, braille and large print versions upon request.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Eildon Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord providing a wide range of affordable social housing for people in housing need throughout the Scottish Borders. We offer a range of housing types and sizes to meet the diverse needs of our customers across the communities we serve.
- 1.2. This policy relates to the application and allocations process for general needs tenancies including amenity housing for older people, and supported housing for older people where we provide onsite low level support to tenants. Separate arrangements are in place for our non-social housing such as Mid-Market Rent tenancies, and for housing where personal care and support are an integral part of the tenancy, such as Extra Care Housing for older people.
- 1.3. Eildon's [Tenancy Management Policy](#) sets out the arrangements for when Eildon tenancies may transfer to members of the tenant's household through succession or assignment, and mutual exchanges between social housing tenants. It also details our approach to tenant requests to sublet their property or take in a lodger.
- 1.4. Further information on the above and access to the policies referenced, along with information on our different housing types, can be found on our website - www.eildon.org.uk, or by contacting us directly.

2. POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Our Allocations Policy is designed to: -
 - Contribute to achieving stable and balanced communities.
 - Enable us to collaborate with registered social landlords to maximise opportunities and choice for people seeking social housing within and out with the Scottish Borders.
 - Meet our legal and regulatory obligations and support Scottish Borders Council through joint agreements to meet the needs of people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness.
 - Enable us to collaborate with strategic partners to develop initiatives to address specific housing needs, such as housing for key workers and resettlement programmes.
 - Be fair, transparent, understandable and consistent on who can apply for housing and how we allocate tenancies.
 - Provide good quality information and advice to support applicants to make informed decisions relating to their housing need.
 - Make best use of our housing stock, whilst offering applicants choice as far as is possible.
 - Consider health and social factors and the capacity to improve an applicant and their household's quality of life.
 - Ensure the accommodation we offer is suitable for the housing need of applicants and their household.
 - Support the mobility of applicants for reasons of support and employment.

3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- 3.1 All information provided in connection with an application will be treated as confidential. In processing your housing application we will ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection (UK GDPR Regulation (EU) 2016/679), as well as any domestic laws subsequently enacted.
- 3.2 Our Privacy Notice (Allocations) explains what information we collect, when we collect it, how it is used in the allocation process, where it is stored, how long we will keep it and when we may be required to share it with third parties in support of your application. When applicants apply for a home with Eildon During the course of our activities, we will collect and process personal data (which may be held on paper, electronically or otherwise), about you. We take the security of applicant data seriously, restricting access on a need to know basis. recognise the need to treat it in an appropriate and lawful manner. Further information can be found here [Eildon Privacy notice | Eildon \(eildonhomes.org.uk\)](#)
- 3.3 An applicant has the right to ask for a copy see any of information held by us in our records. we have stored on our records about them. We will respond to any request for information to view personal information held by us in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and General Data Protection (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) through Subject Access Requests. Further information can be found on our website [Freedom of Information | Eildon Housing](#)

4. HOUSING LIST - ACCESS AND ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1 UK citizens who are aged 16 years or older are eligible to apply for housing. However there may be restrictions for UK citizens who lived abroad and are returning to live in the UK, as well as to people who have never lived in the UK previously. Where this applies we will provide personalised advice and assistance, based on the applicant's circumstances, in accordance with current immigration legislation and guidance.
- 4.2 Applicants can apply on their own, jointly with a partner, or with other people aged 16 years and over to be registered on our housing list. Admittance to the housing list differs from the right to be allocated a property.
- 4.3 No restriction is placed on acceptance of applications due to ability to pay or property ownership.
- 4.4 Applicants can register for housing by completing the online application accessed through our website www.eildon.org.uk or by phoning 03000 200 217. We will offer assistance to anyone who requires help to complete our online application. This can be requested through our website or by phoning us.

- 4.5 Upon request we will ensure information is adapted to meet communication preferences including language translation, adapted for Easy Read, large print and audio to meet the specific needs of applicants.
- 4.6 We will process all new applications within one working day, subject to having access to all relevant information. Applicants can begin applying for properties as soon as they are registered.

5. HOUSING OPTIONS ADVICE & SUPPORT

- 5.1 Each quarter we will publish information on our website to assist applicants to make informed decisions on location and housing types relating to stock turnover and lettings activity based on geographic locations.
- 5.2 Personalised housing options advice will be offered to applicants who have been awarded Platinum Priority; who are at risk of homelessness; other applicants who requests this service; or where assistance is required to discuss housing options available to widen opportunities.

6. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

- 6.1 To enable us to meet the objectives of this policy and ensure we support people in greatest housing need, we operate a priority system covering four priority groups - **Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze**.
- 6.2 Where an applicant has been awarded Gold, Silver or Bronze Priority and has not placed a bid within 12 months of being awarded priority, a housing options review will be undertaken to determine if the priority should be retained.
- 6.3 In the case of Platinum Priority, each case will be reviewed 3 months after priority has been awarded as part of a wider review of housing options, and every 3 months thereafter.
- 6.4 We operate two systems to allocate properties to applicants applying for social housing with Eildon – **Priority Housing List and Choice Based Lettings**.
- 6.5 **Priority Housing List** – Applicants assessed as being in critical housing need will be placed on this list and will be awarded a Platinum Priority. Applicants on this list will not be required to bid for properties. Instead they will be directly matched to an empty property which meets their health, housing and personal needs. The table on page 4 summarises the priority groups which fall within our **Priority Housing List** and the level of priority awarded:

- 6.6 In order to assist with achieving a balanced mix of tenants needs across our new build developments, we will aim to ensure we have no more than 40% of allocations, where possible across all housing types within the development, to applicants within the Platinum Housing List, with the remainder of properties being advertised through Choice Based Lettings.

Furthermore, for each of our new build developments a Local Lettings Initiative will be developed which will take account of the needs of the current community and whether allocations should give preference to certain households groups, based on the property types and sizes. More information can be found in Section 20.

Priority Groups	Priority Level			
	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Statutory Homeless	✓			
Specified Critical Needs (Homeless Prevention)	✓			
Management Transfers including decants (Eildon tenants only)	✓			
Wheelchair and specially adapted housing	✓			
Sheltered Housing	✓			
Health Assessment	✓		✓	✓
Overcrowding		✓		
Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions		✓		
Under-occupancy of social housing		✓		
Armed Forces Veterans	✓	✓		
Prevention of Homelessness			✓	
Social, community and family support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer Support • Employment or Education 			✓	✓
Transfer with no priority need (Eildon tenants only)				✓

- 6.7 **Choice Based Lettings** - Each week we will advertise available properties on our website, social media and on occasion in local newspapers. We may also ask partners to advertise through their social media to widen access such as other housing providers or community groups.

Applicants choose to place a bid for properties of their choice. We will provide information relating to the properties available, where they are located and proximity to local services to help applicants make an informed decision before they place a bid. When bidding closes, we will offer a tenancy to the applicant who requires that particular size and type of accommodation with the highest level of priority and date when priority was awarded (see Section 16.7).

6.8 In assessing the type and size of housing required:

- Children who **on average** reside with their parents for 3 or more nights per week will be classed as permanent members of the household. Written confirmation of access arrangements will be required. This will include joint custody arrangements and access arrangements.
- Where an applicant is fostering, adopting or is a kinship carer with residency, we will consider children to be permanently living with the household and where appropriate, will award a separate bedroom for each foster or adopted child/children based on the criteria set out in Section 9.1. Written confirmation of the arrangements from a local authority panel will be required. This includes a formal proposal from a local authority on a commitment to agree fostering or adoption arrangements subject to the applicant being allocated satisfactory housing.

7. PLATINUM PRIORITY

7.1 Platinum Priority will be awarded based on the outcome of a housing options assessment. When Platinum Priority has been awarded, applications will be held on the Priority Housing List for the category their circumstances fall within, as follows:

- Statutory Homeless
- Specified Critical Needs (Homeless Prevention)
- Management Transfer (Eildon Tenants)
- Decants (Eildon Tenants)
- Wheelchair and Specially Adapted Properties
- Sheltered Housing
- Medical Priority - Platinum (see Section 8)
- Surviving partner or an adult non-dependent child of a deceased forces personnel, who served in the armed forces within the past 12 months.

7.2 Where a property meets the need of the top placed applicant on more than one category, consideration will be made on who will be offered the property on a “case per case” basis, taking account of the critical need of the applicant including health related issues, date when Platinum Priority was awarded, and stock turnover for the property type they require.

7.3 Statutory Homeless – Priority will be awarded to applicants assessed as statutory homeless and nominated for housing in accordance with the Section 5 Protocol in place with between Eildon and Scottish Borders Council (SBC).

We will work closely with SBC and the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership to deliver solutions to support homeless people to settle into permanent accommodation as quickly as possible and, where appropriate, to ensure a person centred support package is in place at the start of the tenancy for applicants with complex needs.

- 7.4 In accordance with the Section 5 Protocol, we will work with local registered social landlords and SBC to agree an annual target of lets to homeless people. This will be published as part of our annual performance indicators and reported to our Board and customers on a quarterly basis.
- 7.5 Specified Critical Need (Homeless Prevention) – Priority will be awarded to applicants who have specific needs and are at serious risk of homelessness, to be supported to find settled accommodation and prevent homelessness occurring. These arrangements include (but not limited to) young care leavers, offenders managed through the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), and people referred to us through Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements where Eildon and SBC have joint protocols in place on how these applications will be managed.
- 7.6 Management Transfers - An Eildon tenant who has an urgent need to transfer to another Eildon property will be awarded Platinum Priority. Any such moves will require to be approved by a senior manager within the Housing Services Team and will be limited to addressing serious issues and making best use of our stock.
- 7.7 Decants - An Eildon tenant who has an urgent need to be decanted on a temporary or permanent basis to another Eildon property due to serious damage or the need to carry out major modernization works to their home will be awarded Platinum Priority. Our [Decant, Home Loss and Disturbance Policy](#) contains fuller information on this issue.
- 7.8 Wheelchair and Specially Adapted Properties – We have a small number of properties located within our general housing developments which have been purposely built or adapted to meet the needs of wheelchair users and/or people with a disability. We will work with Occupational Therapists to assess the specific housing requirements of applicants in need of this specialist housing. Applicants assessed as requiring this type of property will be awarded Platinum Priority.
- 7.9 Sheltered Housing – We provide sheltered housing for older people aged 60 years and above. Occasionally we may consider applicants below 60 years of age where there is a specific need for sheltered housing. We seek to have a balance of support needs within each of our developments and will make an allocation taking account of the current mix of dependency levels, based on an applicant's current health, support and housing needs.

8. HEALTH NEEDS

8.1 We will ensure that all applications for medical priority are assessed in a fair and consistent manner. In assessing medical priority we take account of the locally agreed unified health assessment procedure agreed with SBC and local registered social landlords with medical priority awarded across three levels - Platinum, Silver and Bronze.

- **Platinum Priority** - Where an applicant has a health problem and is unable to return to their home, or unable to continue living in their own home because they would not be able to gain access to essential facilities unaided and/or they are at significant risk of doing so, or due to significant and enduring mental illness they are unable to return or continue to live in their current home and/or environment, and it is not practical to adapt their home to meet their needs.
- **Silver Priority** - Where an applicant has a health problem and is living at home and they are unable to gain access to essential facilities unaided, and/or they would be housebound because they could not get out of their home unaided, or their mental illness severely restricts their ability to continue to live in their current home and/or environment and it is not practical to adapt their home to meet their needs.
- **Bronze Priority** - Where an applicant has a health problem and is living at home and becoming less able to access essential facilities unaided, and/or they are becoming less able to get out of their home unaided, or they are becoming less able to cope in their current home and/or environment due to their mental illness, and it is not practical to adapt their home to meet their needs.

9. OVERCROWDING

9.1 Where the required number of bed spaces exceeds the number of bed spaces available, then overcrowding exists. All rooms in the existing accommodation which are bedrooms, and all persons living there, will be taken into account. Where a bedroom cannot accommodate two beds then it will be regarded as a single bedroom. Each person under the age 16 years and an unborn child will count as one person.

9.2 In assessing whether a household is overcrowded, we will use the criteria set out at Section 16.1. Gold Priority will be awarded to applicants who meet the criteria and who are assessed as being overcrowded.

10. ARMED FORCES VETERANS

10.1 Applicants serving in the Armed Forces can apply one year before their date of discharge and one year after. Gold Priority will be awarded to applicants serving in the Armed Forces who:

- Are currently serving with one of the recognised Ministry of Defence Armed Forces, with less than one full year to discharge
- Have been discharged from the Armed Forces within the last year of applying for housing and:
- Have completed at least a 3-year fixed term contract or one full tour of duty

10.2 Platinum Priority will also be awarded to the surviving spouse/partner or a non-dependent child aged 16 or older of a deceased Forces Personnel, who served in the armed forces within the past 12 months.

11. UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING

11.1 We will offer Gold Priority to applicants who live in accommodation which is assessed as being legally below the “tolerable standard” for healthy occupancy.

The property is lacking one or more of the following amenities:

- piped water supply, inside water supply,
- inside flushing toilet,
- hot water supply,
- cooking facilities,
- lack of adequate heating,
- fixed bath/shower

or, the property is in severe disrepair, and the property has been assessed by the local authority to be below the ‘Tolerable Standard’ in accordance with current legislation.

12. UNDEROCCUPANCY

12.1 Underoccupancy occurs when a person or family do not use one or more of the bedrooms available to them within their Eildon tenancy, or a Scottish Secure or Short Scottish Secure tenancy held with another Scottish based registered social landlord. We will offer advice to tenants (regardless of who their landlord is) where they under occupy their current social housing tenancy and where they wish to move to a smaller property. In such cases we will award Gold Priority to facilitate a move.

13. PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

13.1 We will award Silver Priority to applicants assessed by either Scottish Borders Council or ourselves as being threatened with homelessness. This includes (but not limited to):

- Applicants leaving tied accommodation due to no fault of their own;
- Applicants experiencing financial difficulties in making rent or mortgage payments within their current home;
- Relationship breakdown within the current family home

13.2 In assessing eligibility, we will require supporting evidence. All applicants will receive a personalised housing options advice either from Scottish Borders Council or ourselves to explore housing options.

14. SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT

14.1 We will award Silver Priority to applicants who have a specific need to live in one of our communities to provide ongoing practical and/or emotional support to close family members i. In assessing eligibility for awarding priority, we will require supporting evidence from a health or social care practitioner, or another appropriate professional.

14.2 We will award Bronze Priority to applicants who have a specific need to live in one of our communities to access employment, or a formal education establishment located in the Scottish Borders. In assessing eligibility for awarding priority, we will require supporting evidence from the applicant's new employer or educational establishment, as appropriate.

15. EILDON TENANTS WITH NO PRIORITY

15.1 We will award Bronze Priority to Eildon tenants who wish to move to another Eildon property but have no priority need to move. However, the following conditions apply before we will award Priority:

- Applicants must have held their current tenancy for at least 12 months
- The condition of the current tenancy must be in a satisfactory condition
- There must be no history of neighbour problems or anti-social behaviour issues in the preceding 3 years at the time of applications
- Where there is tenancy debt, there must be a stable and acceptable repayment arrangement in place which has been maintained for a minimum of three months

16.ALLOCATION OF PROPERTIES

16.1 All Eildon housing is classified by bed-spaces required by the household from a single person upwards. Double bedrooms can only be occupied by two persons under the following circumstances:

- adult couples over the age of 16,
- children under the age of 10, of different sex
- children of same sex up to the age of 15

16.2 On occasion, applicants may require accommodation with a greater number of bed spaces and bedrooms than is available within their area of choice. Where this is identified, we will work with registered social landlords to consider the best options for the household. Where Eildon are the landlord of choice for the applicant, we may offer a tenancy which does not comply with the criteria as set out in Section 16.1 but which reduces current overcrowding. This will only take place in exceptional circumstances where we believe we are unable to meet their need in the near future taking account of stock and tenancy turnover data, and following a detailed housing options assessment with the applicant.

16.3 Where an applicant is pregnant, the unborn child/children will be treated as a permanent member of the household on confirmation of pregnancy.

16.4 Eildon's sheltered housing and elderly amenity housing is designed to meet the needs of older people. As such we apply an age criterion of 60 years and above. Occasionally we will consider applicants below 60 years of age where a personalised assessment of need demonstrates sheltered or amenity housing is the best housing option for the applicant.

16.5 Empty properties will be advertised weekly. The exceptions are:

- Properties which will be let to applicants who have a Platinum Priority
- New build properties which will have a different advertising cycle linked to when the development will be complete.
- Properties which are located in an area where we have a Local Lettings Initiatives in place (see Section 20),
- Properties included in a formal Nominations Agreement with SBC to meet specific housing needs, or
- Properties where we have decided a sensitive let is required (see Section 19)

16.6 Applicants can choose to place a bid for properties of their choice, up to a maximum of 5 properties per week.

16.7 When allocating properties, we will consider the following:

- Best Use - The applicant/s who would make 'best use' of the property – for example, by using all the available bedrooms, or any adaptations will be considered first.
- If there is more than one applicant who would make 'best use' of the property, we will offer it to the person with the highest-level priority .
- If there is more than one person with the same level of priority, then the offer will go to the person with the earliest priority date.
- If there is more than one applicant with the same level and date of priority or if there is more than one applicant applying and no priority are being used, then the offer will go to the person with the longest registration date with Eildon.

16.8 Prior to making a formal offer of tenancy, we will review and validate the current circumstances and information held on an applicant to discuss the potential offer. Occasionally we may include a home visit as part of this review.

16.9 Where an applicant has a current tenancy or has previously held a recent tenancy, we may seek a reference from the present or previous landlord regarding the conduct of the tenancy when an offer of a tenancy is being considered.

16.10 On occasion we may bypass an applicant for a shortlisted property who would otherwise receive a provisional offer of tenancy. This may be due to new information being disclosed during a home visit or when a provisional offer is being discussed with the applicant. Where this action has been taken, we will discuss the reasons with the applicant and advise what additional information we require to enable an offer to be considered in the future.

16.11 The applicant will be invited to view the property before signing a tenancy agreement. Where an applicant is unable to carry out a physical viewing for we can offer a virtual viewing.

16.12 An applicant will be given 3 working days to respond to an offer of tenancy after which the offer may be withdrawn. Should the applicant fail to view a property (physical or virtual viewing) and is unable to provide a reasonable explanation for not viewing it, the offer will be withdrawn.

16.13 Where it has been identified that false or misleading information has been provided, and the offer has been made based on this false or misleading information, the offer of tenancy will be withdrawn and the application suspended for up to 12 months (see Section 17).

16.14 Where it has been determined that an applicant provided false or misleading information and has been allocated a tenancy inappropriately based on this information, we will take legal action against the tenant which could result in eviction.

17. SUSPENDED REGISTRATIONS

- 17.1 A suspension is where Eildon decides that an application will be put on hold and an applicant will not be able to receive an offer of housing until certain circumstances have changed, conditions are met or a set period of time has passed. During any period of suspension, the applicant will remain registered on the list unless they ask to be removed. Suspensions will be kept under regular review.
- 17.2 We aim to keep registrations suspended to a minimum, to be clear about when they will apply and for how long. Signposting to independent advice will also be provided.
- 17.3 Any decision to suspend an application will be taken on the basis of available factual information, with a clearly documented audit trail. Any decision to suspend an application will be communicated by email to the applicant, setting out who has made the decision, why the decision has been made, how long it will last, what action the applicant needs to take in order for the decision to be changed. Applicants will also be advised of their right of appeal against this decision.
- 17.4 **Circumstances Where a Suspension Will Apply**

	Suspension Reason	Suspension Timescale
1.	<p>Rent arrears and other tenancy related debt</p> <p>Applications will be suspended where the applicant or a member of their adult household:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has tenancy related debt of more than one month of the annual amount • an arrangement to repay the debt has not been kept for at least three consecutive months <p>Where there is confirmation that the arrears are a result of delays relating to welfare benefit payments, the registration will not be suspended.</p>	<p>Up to 12 months</p> <p>Once the tenancy debt has been paid in full or a repayment arrangement has been entered into and maintained for a minimum of three months, the suspension will be lifted.</p>
2.	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour such as annoyance, harassment, violent or intimidating behaviour.</p> <p>Applicants will be suspended where we have received documented evidence that an applicant or a member of their household have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acted in an anti-social manner or has been responsible for harassment in the vicinity of a property • caused extensive and or deliberate damage to a current or previous tenanted property • used a house or allowing it to be used for immoral or illegal purposes (such as drug dealing, prostitution, fire raising) 	<p>Up to 24 Months (timescale will depend on the severity of the behaviour)</p> <p>Where we impose a suspension for anti-social behaviour the suspension will remain in place until the applicant has not acted in an anti- social manner for a period of up to 12 months from the incident/s depending on the nature and severity of the behaviour.</p>

	Suspension Reason	Suspension Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> behaved in a threatening or violent way towards an Eildon staff member or third party acting on our behalf during the application process. <p>Suspended applications will be subject to regular reviews. Any action taken by Eildon will be based on our Unacceptable Actions Policy. This may result in certain restrictions being put in place in how Eildon contact our staff.</p> <p>We will retain tenancy information for former tenants of Eildon where we had instigated legal action due to serious anti-social behaviour. This information will be retained for 5 years from the date the tenancy ended. Where we receive a housing application from a former Eildon tenant with this tenancy history within 5 years of their tenancy ending, we will automatically suspend their application.</p>	
3.	<p>Abandoning or Neglecting a Property such as wilful damage, vandalism, undertaking significant alterations without approval.</p> <p>Applicants will be suspended where we have received documented evidence of legal action taken by a current or previous landlord for tenancies held in the last five years.</p>	Up to 12 months
4.	<p>Fraud, Misleading or False Information</p> <p>Applicants are required to declare on their application form that all information supplied is true and are asked to take care to submit accurate information about their circumstances.</p> <p>Where we can demonstrate that an applicant has deliberately sought to distort or omit information to gain advantage, their application will be suspended. Where an offer of a tenancy has been made we will withdraw the offer.</p> <p>Any priority awarded will be reviewed and may be removed from the application, subject to approval by a senior manager within the Housing Services Team.</p>	Up to 12 months
5.	<p>Refusal of Second Offer of Housing</p> <p>Applicants who refuse two reasonable offers of accommodation will have their application suspended.</p>	6 months

	Suspension Reason	Suspension Timescale
	<p>Where the application has been awarded priority, a review will be undertaken at the end of the suspension period to agree if the priority is still appropriate.</p> <p>The only exception is where an applicant has been awarded Platinum Priority and refuses two reasonable offers. Where this occurs, the application will be cancelled. Applicants will be unable to reapply for 6 months from the date their application was cancelled.</p>	

18.CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES

- 18.1 Changes in circumstances could affect the applicant's priority for housing and the size and type of housing they require. Where a change of circumstances has been identified a registration may be placed on hold, pending verification or receipt of additional information required to verify the change.

19.SENSITIVE LETS

- 19.1 Occasionally we may have an empty property where we will decide to allocate it out with this policy to address local housing management or other local issues to provide a sustainable solution for the applicant and surrounding neighbours. We will only take this action in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of a senior manager within the Housing Services Team.

20. LOCAL LETTINGS INITIATIVES

20.1 In certain circumstances we will create a Local Lettings Initiative to address housing need within a specific community. This includes:

- All new build developments with each Local Lettings Initiative focusing on local needs within the community;
- Areas of low demand where we wish to relax the allocation criteria in order to maximise bids;
- Flatted accommodation where we wish to reduce the number of households with children occupying properties in order to create a balanced mix of households;
- Areas where there are significant issues and concerns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

20.2 Local Lettings Initiatives for new-build developments will set out our approach to meeting specific local needs and achieving a balanced mix of tenants which may include preference to local applicants who live in and contribute to the local community. Where possible we will consult with local groups such as community councils, as well as consider initiatives, in partnership with SBC and other partners, in taking a more targeted approach for key groups of applicants, This would normally be applied for first lets only.

20.3 The introduction of a Local Lettings Initiatives will be approved by Eildon's Executive Team and published on our website, and referenced when we advertise properties through our Choice Based Lettings system. The effectiveness of the Local Letting Initiative will be monitored on a regular basis and where no longer required, will be ceased.

21. MUTUAL EXCHANGES

21.1 We encourage requests for mutual exchanges between Eildon tenants, and with tenants of other registered social housing landlords. We will not unreasonably refuse permission for a mutual exchange however there may be occasion where we are unable to agree a mutual exchange due to specific criteria in place for the property or development such as a Local Lettings Initiative, or the property has been designed for people with specific needs. Conditions regarding exchanges are detailed in the our [Tenancy Management Policy](#)

21.2 We subscribe to Homeswapper (www.homeswapper.co.uk), a national mutual exchange scheme which allows our tenants to advertise their exchange online at no cost and identify potential exchange opportunities.

21.3 We will also offer advice to applicants and tenants who want to move to another local authority area by providing details of landlords in their areas of choice. We will also actively consider requests from other landlords throughout the UK to house applicants with high levels of housing need.

22. PERSONS CONNECTED TO EILDON

- 23.1 Any member of staff or their family (for example sister, stepbrother, cousin, uncle etc.) is entitled to apply for housing with Eildon. Our application form will ask applicants whether they work for Eildon, have a family member who works for Eildon or if they are related to a member of our Board of Management. If the connection relates to a staff member, the member of staff concerned will not be involved in assessing any priority or allocating any property.
- 23.2 Where a relative of a staff or Board member is shortlisted for an offer of housing, a senior manager within the Housing Services Team, not involved in the shortlisting process, will review and verify the proposed allocation. Details of the allocation will be entered into our Payments and Benefits Register and reported to the Board at its next scheduled meeting. A full audit trail will be kept.

23. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

- 23.1 All applicants have the right to appeal against a decision relating to their application. This could relate to the level of priority awarded, where the applicant feels we have unfairly suspended their application, or where the applicants considers we have made an unreasonable offer of housing. Such appeals will be considered by a senior manager within the Housing Services Team, not connected with the original decision resulting in the appeal. All such appeals will be considered and responded to within 5 working days of the appeals being made.
- 23.2 If the applicant remains dissatisfied the appeal will be escalated to a more senior manager who will independently reassess the circumstances within 20 working days, in accordance with Stage 2 of Eildon's Complaints Procedure. Where applicants remain dissatisfied after conclusion of a Stage 2 review, they have the right to take their appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for an independent review.

24. ANNUAL REVIEWS

- 24.1 We will review applications annually, on the anniversary of their housing registration, to ensure the information held by Eildon is still relevant and up to date. If the applicant fails to respond to this contact, we will make contact one further time. If there is no response, we will cancel the application and remove the registration from our housing list.

25. CANCELLED APPLICATIONS

- 25.1 We will cancel applications where an applicant requests a cancellation of their application or when we become aware of the death of the applicant.

26. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

26.1 Senior Managers within the Housing Services Team will monitor feedback from customers on the operation of the policy, and report quarterly basis to the Executive Team:

- Number and type of applications
- Bids, refusals and lets
- Number and reasons for suspensions, , management transfers and sensitive lets
- Complaints and appeals
- Effectiveness of Local Lettings Initiatives

27. REVIEW

27.1 We will review this policy every three years or earlier due to changes in the law, regulation, best practice or requirements of Eildon.