

A meeting of the Management Committee will take place on
Thursday 26 May 2022 at 7.00pm held virtually using Teams

Please advise staff if you are unable to attend.

Joyce Bolan
Secretary

B U S I N E S S

1.0 GENERAL

- 1.1 Apologies
- 1.2 Declaration of Interest by Management Committee Members
- 1.3 Minutes of 24 March 2022 – **for approval**
- 1.4 Action List – for information
- 1.5 Matters Arising

2.0 GOVERNANCE

- 2.1 Secretary's Report – for information
- 2.2 Key Performance Indicators 2021/22 – for information
- 2.3 Management Committee Training Plan Update – **for approval**

3.0 PRIORITY ITEMS

- 3.1 Annual Return on the Charter – **for approval**
- 3.2 Future Performance Benchmarking – **for approval**

4.0 POLICIES

- 4.1 These Homes (Allocations) Policy Review – **for approval**

5.0 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Tenant Participation Annual Report – for information

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DATE OF NEXT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday 25 August 2022 at ELHA Head Office, Haddington, at 7.00pm

Action List

Report by Martin Pollhammer, Chief Executive – for information

The table below sets out the required actions agreed at the last meeting of the Management Committee on 24 March 2022, and confirms the actions taken as a result.

Minute Ref	Action Required	Action By	Action Taken
1.3	Publish the papers and minutes from the March 2022 Management Committee meeting on elha.com	ES	Complete
2.3	Peter Ewart to consider additional skills requirements and check current understanding with Management Committee members	PE	See Agenda Item 2.3
3.1	Confirm the process for amending the amount that can be donated in any one year	MP	Any changes to the Policy need to be approved by Members at the AGM
3.2	Confirm the Internal Audit programme for 2022/23 to TIAA	PO	Complete
4.3	Update the Authorisations / Standard Charges and Allowances Policy in the ELHA File Structure	ES	Complete

Secretary's Report – for information

1.0 Membership

No New applications for Membership have been received.

2.0 Use of Seal for Homologation

No use of the Seal to report.

Key Performance Indicators 2021/22

Report by Martin Pollhammer, Chief Executive – for Information

1.0 Introduction

The Association's Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the third quarter of 2021/22 are attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

2.0 ELHA Performance

The Association has reached its lowest level of rent arrears (2.45%) since September 2008, a significant achievement in the current climate. The decrease on the last quarter can be mainly attributed to staff accessing Covid Grants and Discretionary Housing Payments for tenants in the region of £20k, reducing the number of cases in excess of three months arrears from 48 at the end of Quarter 3, to 34 as at 31 March 2022.

The Association has missed the following targets:

2.1 Unit Reactive Maintenance Costs

Unit Reactive Maintenance Costs are £758 compared to the target of £683, but with a declining trend across the year. The main reasons for the overspend are the R3 Lockdown Support Fee for April 2021, the profitability adjustments, and catchup works from the 2020/21 pandemic restrictions.

2.2 Stock Condition Inspections Completed

As previously reported, the 20% sample Stock Condition Survey scheduled for 2020/21 would, in normal circumstances, have been completed in early Autumn 2021. As this survey involves extensive access being required to the homes of tenants, this was delayed due to the pandemic restrictions. It had been hoped that this could be added to the 20% scheduled for 2021/22 and carried out in Quarter 3 and 4 of the 2021/22 financial year, however, as restrictions continued and the climate, albeit improving, remained uncertain, this was not progressed at that time.

Given this delay in carrying out inspections, the annual sample size will be increased to 30% each year from the previous level of 20% until the programme is back on schedule. The first phase of this will be progressed by the Asset Manager in late Summer / early Autumn 2022.

2.3 Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs.

The anticipated continued improvement in performance in this area in Quarter 4 did not materialise, with the result that the target for the year was outwith the 6 days target at 6.5 days.

This is a disappointing outcome and is a result of continued labour resource issues and material supply and management difficulties being experienced by R3. These issues are not unique to R3, however, steps have been taken to address these with increased scrutiny of van stock levels and the monitoring of material deliveries to R3's warehouse to ensure timeous fitting of these once received.

The recent recruitment of two additional operatives by R3 should also allow greater flexibility in managing the labour resource to cope with short term absences which impact disproportionately on the non-urgent responsive repair service.

2.4 Gold Key Tenants

Gold Key Tenants have continued to increase rising by 0.1% during the quarter to 15.7% but still remain under target. Emphasis continues to be placed on contacting those tenants who do not have a My Home account and / or who are not paper-free through Healthy Happy Home Check visits which recommenced in January 2022. The focus will be shifted to encouraging Bronze Key Tenants to move up to Gold level once these initial visits have been completed.

2.5 Audit & Assurance Committee Attendance

Quarter 4 attendance was well above target, but the Year-to-Date figure remains below target. Both the November 2021 and February 2022 meetings had attendance of 86% (6 out of 7 attendees), but the full year's figures are impacted by low attendance in Q1 (6 out of 10) and Q2 (6 out of 9) which has meant the overall target (75%) has narrowly been missed, coming in at 73%.

Key Performance Indicators 2021/22

Performance Indicator	Quarterly Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021/22 Target	2020/21 Actual	Year to Date	Status
Rental Income									
Non-technical arrears as % of rental income	3.0%	2.86%	2.71%	2.74%	2.45%	3.0%	2.84%	2.74%	😊
Bad debts written off as % rental income	1.75%	0.98%	0.45%	-0.08%	0.08%	1.75%	0.67%	0.08%	😊
Voids as % of rental income	0.75%	0.53%	0.57%	0.53%	0.51%	0.75%	0.35%	0.51%	😊
Finance									
Interest cover (loan covenants)	110%	268%	229%	268%	245%	110%	288%	245%	😊
Gearing (loan covenants FRS102 definition)	<37%	24%	24%	24%	24%	<37%	25%	24%	😊
Current assets as a % of current liabilities	100%	149%	155%	165%	151%	100%	146%	151%	😊
Unit management costs	£1,769	£1,491	£1,572	£1,607	£1,659	£1,663	£1,693	£1,659	😊
Unit reactive maintenance costs	£683	£841	£849	£798	£758	£667	£794	£758	😞
Asset Management									
Stock condition inspections completed	cumulative	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	😞
Gas services completed within timescale	cumulative	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	😊
Planned maintenance contracts with >5% overspend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	😊
Average time taken to complete emergency repairs	< 2 hours	01:09	01:15	01:18	01:25	< 2 hours	01:28	01:16	😊
Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	< 6 days	8.76	7.4	5.7	7.5	< 6 days	5.70	6.5	😞
Repairs completed right first time	85%	92%	91%	93%	92%	85%	94%	92%	😊
Repair appointments kept	93%	97%	98%	98%	98%	93%	97%	98%	😊
Housing Management									
Properties allocated after 3 or more refusals	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	😊
Number of evictions carried out	no target	1	0	0	0	no target	1	1	😊
Number of ASBO's in force against tenants	no target	0	0	0	0	no target	0	0	😊
Bronze Key Tenants	43.0%	45.7%	45%	45.2%	44.3%	43%	0	44.3%	😊
Gold Key Tenants	20.0%	14.0%	15.1%	15.6%	15.7%	20%	14.6%	15.7%	😞
Platinum Key Tenants	20.0%	21.2%	21.0%	21.3%	23.0%	20%	20.7%	23.0%	😊
Corporate									
Number of accidents reportable to HSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	😊
% working days lost through long term sick leave	5%	0.0%	3.2%	4.80%	4.00%	5%	0.20%	3.0%	😊
% working days lost through short term sick leave	2%	0.91%	1.1%	1.50%	1.70%	2%	0.35%	1.3%	😊
Management Committee Attendance	75%	80%	77%	83%	71%	75%	87%	76%	😊
Audit & Assurance Committee Attendance	75%	60%	60%	86%	86%	75%	83%	73%	😞
% of Tenants using their My Home Account	83%	84%	84%	85%	85%	83%	82%	85%	😊
% of Tenants Paper Free	83%	81%	82%	82%	83%	83%	80%	82%	😊

😊 Performance Excellent 😞 Performance Satisfactory 😞 Performance Poor

Management Committee Training Plan Update

Report by Peter Ewart, Chair – for approval

1.0 Introduction

The Training Needs Assessment (TNA) is an annual exercise to assess the overall competence of the Management Committee, against various categories.

In 2022, this exercise has already taken place, with a Report being provided to the March 2022 Management Committee, where it was approved.

2.0 Updated Management Committee Training Plan 2022/23

The various categories against which the overall competence of the Management Committee is assessed, have remained constant for some time. It was therefore felt beneficial to introduce several new categories, including knowledge of skills and experience relating to digital, payment systems and software, which reflect a changing business skills set requirement across the housing sector.

The additional categories have been identified as:

- Understanding of software applications and digital information systems
- Understanding current government policy and support for homelessness
- Customer consultation, marketing and communications
- Provision of Housing and Support Services to Older People

A separate exercise to issue additional Training Needs Assessment (TNA) forms has therefore been completed, and responses have been received from all Management Committee members.

As highlighted in the March 2022 TNA Report, clearly no-one is expected to be fully competent within every area, but if the Management Committee as a whole has the required skills set, then this is sufficient. This does not preclude individuals from receiving tailored training to improve their skills, but the focus for the training programme is based on areas where the overall skill level within the Management Committee is lower.

As with the annual TNA exercise, the additional TNA form is scored based on understanding. Therefore, the higher the score (both individually and collectively), the higher the skills and knowledge level.

Description	Score
Have a full understanding	3
Have some understanding	2
Have little understanding (training required)	1

Appendix 1 sets out the responses made by individual Members.

As a Training Plan for 2022/23 has already been agreed, based on responses to the annual TNA Report, this updated Report, looks to address the responses from the additional exercise, and identify an appropriate training programme to reflect any proposed areas for development.

The average subject skill level based on 12 responses across the four new categories, is just over 8, or slightly above the 'Have some understanding' score of 2. Given this is the first time this information has been captured, there are no previous scores for comparison purposes, but this provides a good baseline for future comparison. Once appropriate training has been identified, and provided, it will also enable the effectiveness of such training to be measured against future scores.

This exercise has also provided clarity around where there is the greatest need to develop the overall competence of the Management Committee for these new categories. A score of 24 across the Management Committee would reflect that there is a general level of understanding across the Management Committee in each category. There are two out of the four new categories, where the overall score is below 24, see below:

- Score of 20 – Understanding of software applications and digital information systems
- Score of 23 – Understanding current government policy and support for homelessness.

The other two new categories both have a score above the general understanding score of 24, scoring 26, and 28 respectively. This demonstrates, in general terms, that there is an overall competence in the Management Committee, across these categories.

Where any individual has a low score within a specific category, any such training needs will be met by an individual training plan which will be discussed during the individual annual reviews with the Chair.

The existing Training Plan for 2022/23 is shown below:

Training Requirement	Delivery Method	Trainer	Provisional Date
Knowledge of Care & Support Organisations	Internal Trainer	Angela Brunton	4.00pm 29 September 2022
Employment and Human Resources	External Trainer	TBC	November 2022
Developing New Homes	External Trainer	TBC	February 2023

The priority for Management Committee based on the latest TNA Report, is to enhance the overall understanding of software applications and digital information systems. It is therefore proposed that a training session is arranged, probably with the Association’s IT provider (Waterstons) for later in the year, and possibly at the Management Committee Away Day in November 2022.

Additional Training Requirement	Delivery Method	Trainer	Provisional Date
Understanding of software applications and digital information systems	External Trainer	Waterstons (TBC)	November 2022 (TBC)

Consideration will also be given to identifying any specific training course, training materials, or conference events, which may become available, which would provide Management Committee members with the opportunity to improve their understanding of current government policy, and support for homelessness.

Recommendation

The Management Committee is asked to approve the updated Management Committee Training Plan for 2022/23

Training Needs Analysis 2022/23

Scores													Subject Skill Level
Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) Annual Conference	AF	BL	DR	ES	IA	JC	JB	KH	PE	PH	PM	SE	
Knowledge of tenants' needs and how to meet these	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	30
Understanding the responsibilities of a Management Committee Member	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	34
Knowledge of the Scottish Housing Association movement	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	29
Role of the Scottish Housing Regulator	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	31
Knowledge of care and support organisations	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	27
Business planning and strategy development	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	30
Participating in meetings constructively	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	34
Financial awareness	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	30
Employment and human resource issues	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	29
Developing new homes	3	3	3	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	29
Housing management and maintenance	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	33
Legal liabilities of the Association	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	30
Performance standards and monitoring	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	32
Governance	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	32
How Group Structure Works	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	31
Individual Skill Level	42	43	45	38	31	31	31	40	40	43	32	45	461

Scores: Have a full understanding= 3
Have some understanding= 2
Have little understanding= 1

2.8 2.9 3.0 2.5 2.1 2.1 2.1 2.7 2.7 2.9 2.1 3.0 30.7

	AF	BL	DR	ES	IA	JC	JB	KH	PE	PH	PM	SE	Subject Skill Level
Understanding of software applications and digital information systems	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	20
Understanding current government policy and support for homelessness	3	1	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	23
Customer consultation, marketing and communications	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	3	3	26
Provision of Housing and Support Services to Older People	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	28
	10.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	5.0	8.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	11.0	

Updated average subject skill level = 8.08.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

Report by Karen Barry, Director of Housing – for Approval

1.0 Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is responsible for monitoring social landlords' progress towards achieving the standards and outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) provides contextual information and performance information against 39 Charter Indicators and must normally be submitted to the SHR by 31 May each year.

The SHR also monitors and reports on social landlords' compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) which was launched by the Scottish Government in March 2014 and which forms part of this Return. The EESH contributes towards the carbon emissions reduction targets set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Last year, reporting was based upon EESH2, however data collection for this has been paused until the outcome of the Scottish Government review of EESH2 is known. Reporting has therefore reverted back to EESH.

The information provided in the ARC is used by the SHR to:

- Form a view of the regulatory risk presented by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and consequently the level of engagement that the SHR will have with the landlord (other information, e.g. financial returns, are also considered)
- Inform the regulatory process by comparison with other RSLs
- Form the basis for thematic inspections
- Publish an annual statistical report to enable RSLs, and others, to analyse performance against comparable organisations
- Publish information aimed at informing tenants about their landlord's performance

It is the responsibility of the Management Committee to ensure that staff provide accurate information and submit the ARC on time, and at its meeting on 17 May 2022, the Governance Standards Working Group carried out a spot check of the data. A Management Committee member is required to authorise the online submission of the ARC and to confirm that its contents have been discussed at a meeting of the full Management Committee.

A copy of ELHA's ARC is attached to this report.

2.0 Performance

The Management Committee will note a significant deviation from previous ARC reporting in that compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard is now significantly below that which was previously reported, having fallen from almost 100% compliance to under 50%. This is a result of the changes introduced by the Scottish Government in respect of requiring all properties to have interlinked Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors fitted by the end of February 2022, and to have had an Electrical Inspection Compliance Report (EICR) carried out by the end of March 2022. The Scottish Government introduced these new requirements in April 2020, at the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Given that access to tenant's homes was severely restricted for the majority of the pandemic, the efforts to comply with these requirements were initially focused on the installation of Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors as this was assessed as providing the greatest benefit to tenants. There are 32 ELHA properties that do not comply with the new Standard at 31 March 2022. This was largely due to tenants not allowing access to have the work carried out. These 32 properties also require an EICR.

In addition, there are a further 691 ELHA properties that do not have a current EICR. The risk associated with not having a current EICR is considered to be low in comparison with the lack of Smoke and Carbon Dioxide detectors. EICR inspections can take between two and a half and three hours to complete, involving access to every room in the property. During the pandemic, it was not practical to ask tenants to allow access for, or staff to agree to undertake these kind of works.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) has raised the issue with how to report these issues in the ARC with the SHR. They have advised that where works are planned and requiring tenant access, properties should be considered as "in abeyance". This means they are not classed as failing the Standard, but equally they do not meet the Standard. This advice has been followed and an appropriate note added to the ARC. The SFHA further clarified that although this is a significant change to the reported figures, this should not be considered a Notifiable Event.

It has been noted in the ARC submission that the Association will address these deficiencies in the 2022/23 financial year. Initial efforts to do so have not proved to be entirely positive as it has not yet been possible for R3 to recruit additional electricians and, given the current workloads within the construction industry, it has also not been possible to attract additional sub-contractor resource to supplement in-house resources. For this reason, the focus of the Planned Maintenance Programme for 2022/23 will be on the fitting of windows rather than kitchen and bathroom replacement. This will allow the electrical resource that would have been employed replacing kitchens and bathrooms to be applied to the installation of the remaining Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors and carrying out EICR's.

3.0 Performance Review

The Scottish Housing Regulator uses the ARC return to compile Landlord Performance Reports for each RSL. This includes some key comparative data.

The Association commissions an independent consultant to review the published ARC data and undertake a review of ELHA performance, including benchmarking performance against other RSLs. This report will be presented to the November 2022 Management Committee meeting.

This ensures the Management Committee is able to review the Association's performance in a wider context, but routine performance management is reported through the Key Performance Indicator report (see **Agenda Item 2.2**), and Complaints Analysis reports, as well as other more detailed performance reporting to the Audit & Assurance Committee, therefore no further analysis of the ARC return has been undertaken at this stage.

Recommendation

The Management Committee is asked to approve the Annual Return on the Charter for submission to The Scottish Housing Regulator.



Landlord name: East Lothian Housing Association Ltd

RSL Reg. No.: 103

Report generated date: 17/05/2022 17:28:31

Approval

A1.1	Date approved	
A1.2	Approver	
A1.3	Approver job title	
A1.4	Comments (Approval)	



Comments (Submission)

Empty box for submission comments.



Social landlord contextual information

Staff

Staff information, staff turnover and sickness rates (Indicator C1)

C1.1	the name of Chief Executive	Mr. Martin Pollhammer
C1.2.1	C1.2 Staff employed by the RSL: the number of senior staff	4.00
C1.2.2	the number of office based staff	43.90
C1.2.3	the number of care / support staff	0.00
C1.2.4	the number of concierge staff	0.00
C1.2.5	the number of direct labour staff	30.80
C1.2.6	the total number of staff	78.70
C1.3.1	Staff turnover and sickness absence: the percentage of senior staff turnover in the year to the end of the reporting year	0.00%
C1.3.2	the percentage of total staff turnover in the year to the end of the reporting year	15.76%
C1.3.3	the percentage of days lost through staff sickness absence in the reporting year	2.61%

**Social landlord contextual information****Lets**

Number of lets during the reporting year, split between 'general needs' and 'supported housing' (Indicator C3)		
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C3.1	The number of 'general needs' lets during the reporting year	65
C3.2	The number of 'supported housing' lets during the reporting year	10
Indicator C3		75



The number of lets during the reporting year by source of let (Indicator C2)
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C2.1	The number of lets to existing tenants	10
C2.2	The number of lets to housing list applicants	26
C2.3	The number of mutual exchanges	21
C2.4	The number of lets from other sources	3
C2.5.1	C2.5 The number of applicants who have been assessed as statutorily homeless by the local authority as: section 5 referrals	0
C2.5.2	nominations from the local authority	5
C2.5.3	other	31
C2.6	the number of other nominations from local authorities	0
C2.7	Total number of lets excluding exchanges	75

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (Social landlord contextual information)

**Overall satisfaction****All outcomes**

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord (Indicator 1)

1.1.1	1.1 In relation to the overall tenant satisfaction survey carried out, please state: the number of tenants who were surveyed	703
1.1.2	the fieldwork dates of the survey	11/2019
1.1.3	The method(s) of administering the survey: Post	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1.4	Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1.5	Face-to-face	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.1.6	Online	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2.1	1.2 In relation to the tenant satisfaction question on overall services, please state the number of tenants who responded: very satisfied	327
1.2.2	fairly satisfied	337
1.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17
1.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	17
1.2.5	very dissatisfied	0
1.2.6	no opinion	5
1.2.7	Total	703

Indicator 1	94.45%
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Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (Overall satisfaction)



The customer / landlord relationship

Communication

Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions (Indicator 2)

2.1	How many tenants answered the question "How good or poor do you feel your landlord is at keeping you informed about their services and decisions?"	703
2.2.1	2.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that their landlord was: very good at keeping them informed	364
2.2.2	fairly good at keeping them informed	323
2.2.3	neither good nor poor at keeping them informed	12
2.2.4	fairly poor at keeping them informed	4
2.2.5	very poor at keeping them informed	0
2.2.6	Total	703

	Indicator 2	97.72%
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Participation

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes (Indicator 5)

5.1	How many tenants answered the question "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in your landlord's decision making processes?"	703
5.2.1	5.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	259
5.2.2	fairly satisfied	390
5.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	51
5.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	3
5.2.5	very dissatisfied	0
5.2.6	Total	703

	Indicator 5	92.32%
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Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (The customer / landlord relationship)



Housing quality and maintenance

Quality of housing

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – Stock condition survey information (Indicator C8)

C8.1	The date your organisation's stock was last surveyed or assessed for compliance with the SHQS	06/2019
C8.2	What percentage of stock did your organisation fully assess for compliance in the last five years?	61.00
C8.3	The date of your next scheduled stock condition survey or assessment	08/2022
C8.4	What percentage of your organisation's stock will be fully assessed in the next survey for SHQS compliance	30.00
C8.5	Comments on method of assessing SHQS compliance.	

We employ external consultants to carry out our stock condition surveys and had surveyed 100% of our stock at the end of 2019. The pandemic prevented the scheduled inspection of two tranches of 20% of our stock in 2020 and 2021 which would have maintained a 100% inspection level. We will now carry out 30% re-inspections of our stock each year to attain the 100% level previously achieved.

Following the revision to the SHQS for Smoke and CO detectors in February 2020 and for Electrical Inspection Checks (EICR'S) in March 2022, we have 32 properties which fail on two aspects, smoke and CO detectors and EICR's and 691 which fail on one aspect, the lack of a current EICR.

This will be remedied in the 2022-23 financial year now that access to properties is no longer affected by pandemic restrictions, with a programme of inspections set out which will ultimately culminate in forced entry being made should access to carry out this work not be afforded.



Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – Stock summary (Indicator C9)

		End of the reporting year	End of the next reporting year
C9.1	Total self-contained stock	1,344	1,344
C9.2	Self-contained stock exempt from SHQS	35	35
C9.3	Self-contained stock in abeyance from SHQS	723	0
C9.4.1	Self-contained stock failing SHQS for one criterion	0	0
C9.4.2	Self-contained stock failing SHQS for two or more criteria	0	0
C9.4.3	Total self-contained stock failing SHQS	0	0
C9.5	Stock meeting the SHQS	586	1,309

C9.6	Total self-contained stock meeting the SHQS by local authority
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	End of the reporting year	End of the next reporting year
Aberdeen City	0	0
Aberdeenshire	0	0
Angus	0	0
Argyll & Bute	0	0
City of Edinburgh	0	0
Clackmannanshire	0	0
Dumfries & Galloway	0	0
Dundee City	0	0
East Ayrshire	0	0
East Dunbartonshire	0	0
East Lothian	586	1,309
East Renfrewshire	0	0
Eilean Siar	0	0
Falkirk	0	0
Fife	0	0
Glasgow City	0	0
Highland	0	0
Inverclyde	0	0
Midlothian	0	0
Moray	0	0
North Ayrshire	0	0



North Lanarkshire	0	0
Orkney Islands	0	0
Perth & Kinross	0	0
Renfrewshire	0	0
Scottish Borders	0	0
Shetland Islands	0	0
South Ayrshire	0	0
South Lanarkshire	0	0
Stirling	0	0
West Dunbartonshire	0	0
West Lothian	0	0
Totals	586	1,309



Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) (Indicator 6)
--

6.1.1	The total number of properties within scope of the SHQS: at the end of the reporting year	1,344
6.1.2	projected to the end of the next reporting year	1,344
6.2.1	The number of properties meeting the SHQS: at the end of the reporting year	586
6.2.2	projected to the end of the next reporting year	1,309

Indicator 6 - Percentage of stock meeting the SHQS at the end of the reporting year	43.60%
Indicator 6 - Percentage of stock meeting the SHQS projected to the end of the next reporting year	97.40%



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (Indicator 7)

7.1	How many tenants answered the question "Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?"	703
7.2.1	7.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	392
7.2.2	fairly satisfied	261
7.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	35
7.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	15
7.2.5	very dissatisfied	0
7.3	Total	703

	Indicator 7	92.89%
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**Repairs, maintenance & improvements**

Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (Indicator 8)		
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8.1	The number of emergency repairs completed in the reporting year	245
8.2	The total number of hours taken to complete emergency repairs	261

Indicator 8		1.07
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Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (Indicator 9)

9.1	The total number of non-emergency repairs completed in the reporting year	2,748
9.2	The total number of working days taken to complete non-emergency repairs	20,982

Indicator 9		7.64
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Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time (Indicator 10)

10.1	The number of reactive repairs completed right first time during the reporting year	2,514
10.2	The total number of reactive repairs completed during the reporting year	2,748

	Indicator 10	91.48%
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How many times in the reporting year did not meet your statutory duty to complete a gas safety check (Indicator 11).

11.1	The number of times you did not meet your statutory duty to complete a gas safety check.	0
11.2	if you did not meet your statutory duty to complete a gas safety check add a note in the comments field	N/A

Indicator 11	0
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Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (Indicator 12)

12.1	Of the tenants who had repairs carried out in the last year, how many answered the question "Thinking about the LAST time you had repairs carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the repairs service provided by your landlord?"	1,284
	12.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were:	919
12.2.1	very satisfied	
12.2.2	fairly satisfied	166
12.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	86
12.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	42
12.2.5	very dissatisfied	71
12.2.6	Total	1,284

	Indicator 12	84.50%
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EESH

Percentage of properties meeting the EESH (Indicator C10)

C10.1		Number of self contained properties			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total	
Flats	346	178	0	524	
Four-in-a-block	44	4	4	52	
Houses (other than detached)	614	139	11	764	
Detached houses	4	0	0	4	
Total	1,008	321	15	1,344	

C10.2		Number of self contained properties not in scope of the EESH			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total	
Flats	0	0	0	0	
Four-in-a-block	0	0	0	0	
Houses (other than detached)	0	0	0	0	
Detached houses	0	0	0	0	
Total	0	0	0	0	

C10.3		Number of self contained properties in scope of the EESH			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total	
Flats	346	178	0	524	
Four-in-a-block	44	4	4	52	
Houses (other than detached)	614	139	11	764	
Detached houses	4	0	0	4	
Total	1,008	321	15	1,344	

C10.4		Number of properties in scope of the EESH where compliance is unknown			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total	
Flats	0	0	0	0	
Four-in-a-block	0	0	0	0	
Houses (other than detached)	0	0	0	0	
Detached houses	0	0	0	0	
Total	0	0	0	0	



C10.4.21	Where EESSH compliance is unknown for any properties, please explain why	N/A
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C10.5	Number of properties in scope of the EESSH that do not meet the standard			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total
Flats	0	0	0	0
Four-in-a-block	0	0	0	0
Houses (other than detached)	2	0	0	2
Detached houses	0	0	0	0
Total	2	0	0	2

C10.6	Number of properties in scope of the EESSH that are exempt the standard			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total
Flats	0	0	0	0
Four-in-a-block	0	0	0	0
Houses (other than detached)	0	0	0	0
Detached houses	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

C10.7	Number of properties in scope of the EESSH that meet the standard			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total
Flats	346	178	0	524
Four-in-a-block	44	4	4	52
Houses (other than detached)	612	139	11	762
Detached houses	4	0	0	4
Total	1,006	321	15	1,342

	C10	99.9%
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Anticipated exemptions from the EESSH (Indicator C11)

C11.1	Number of properties anticipated to require an exemption from the first EESSH milestone in the next reporting year			
	Gas	Electric	Other fuels	Total
Flats	0	0	0	0
Four-in-a-block	0	0	0	0
Houses (other than detached)	0	0	0	0
Detached houses	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

C11.2	The reasons properties anticipated to require an exemption	
		Number of Properties
Technical		0
Social		0
Excessive cost		0
New technology		0
Legal		0
Disposal		0
Long term voids		0
Unable to secure funding		0
Other reason / unknown		0
Total		0

C11.3 If other reason or unknown, please explain

N/A

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (Housing quality and maintenance)



Neighbourhood & community

Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1 and percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2. (Indicators 3 & 4)

	1st stage	2nd stage
Complaints received in the reporting year	148	23
Complaints carried forward from previous reporting year	2	1
All complaints received and carried forward	150	24
Number of complaints responded to in full by the landlord in the reporting year	150	23
Time taken in working days to provide a full response	544	377

Indicators 3 & 4 - The percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1	100.00%
Indicators 3 & 4 - The percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2	95.83%
Indicators 3 & 4 - The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 1	3.63
Indicators 3 & 4 - The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 2	16.39



Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in (Indicator 13)

13.1	How many tenants answered the question "Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood you live in?"	703
13.2.1	13.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	319
13.2.2	fairly satisfied	346
13.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23
13.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	15
13.2.5	very dissatisfied	0
13.2.6	Total	703

Indicator 13	94.59%
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Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year (Indicator 14)

14.1	The number of tenancy offers made during the reporting year	102
14.2	The number of tenancy offers that were refused	30

Indicator 14		29.41%
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Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved (Indicator 15)
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15.1	The number of cases of anti-social behaviour reported in the last year	161
15.2	Of those at 15.1, the number of cases resolved in the last year	157

	Indicator 15	97.52%
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Abandoned homes (Indicator C4)

C4.1	The number of properties abandoned during the reporting year	3
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Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction and the reasons for eviction (Indicator 22)

22.1	The total number of court actions initiated during the reporting year	10
22.2.1	22.2 The number of properties recovered: because rent had not been paid	1
22.2.2	because of anti-social behaviour	0
22.2.3	for other reasons	0

Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction because rent had not been paid	10.00%
Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction because of anti-social behaviour	0.00%
Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction for other reasons	0.00%
Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction	10.00%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (Neighbourhood & community)



Access to housing and support

Housing options and access to social housing

Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year (Indicator 17)
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17.1	The total number of lettable self-contained stock	1,333
17.2	The number of empty dwellings that arose during the reporting year in self-contained lettable stock	75

	Indicator 17	5.63%
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Number of households currently waiting for adaptations to their home (Indicator 19)

19.1	The total number of approved applications on the list for adaptations as at the start of the reporting year, plus any new approved applications during the reporting year.	95
19.2	The number of approved applications completed between the start and end of the reporting year	26
19.3	The total number of households waiting for applications to be completed at the end of the reporting year.	35
19.4	if 19(iii) does not equal 19(i) minus 19(ii) add a note in the comments field.	
2 major adaptations to be completed (wet floor showers) awaiting funding. Remainder are minor adaptations to be completed or were completed prior to 1/4/22 but still to be claimed.		

Indicator 19

69



Total cost of adaptations completed in the year by source of funding (£) (Indicator 20)

20.1	The cost (£) that was landlord funded;	£5,264
20.2	The cost (£) that was grant funded	£52,041
20.3	The cost (£) that was funded by other sources.	£0

Indicator 20		£57,305
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The average time to complete adaptations (Indicator 21)		
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21.1	The total number of working days taken to complete all adaptations.	1,289
21.2	The total number of adaptations completed during the reporting year.	26

		Indicator 21	49.58
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Homelessness – the percentage of referrals under Section 5, and other referrals for homeless households made by the local authority, that result in an offer, and the percentage of those offers that result in a let (Indicator 23)

23.1	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5.	0
23.2	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under other referral routes.	42
23.3	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5 and other referral routes.	42
23.4	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5 that result in an offer of a permanent home.	0
23.5	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under other referral routes that result in an offer of a permanent home.	36
23.6	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5 and other referral routes that result in an offer of a permanent home.	36
23.7	The total number of accepted offers.	36

Indicator 23 - The percentage of referrals under section 5, and other referrals for homeless households made by a local authority, that result in an offer	85.71%
Indicator 23 - The percentage of those offers that result in a let	100.00%



Average length of time to re-let properties in the last year (Indicator 30)	
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30.1	The total number of properties re-let in the reporting year	72
30.2	The total number of calendar days properties were empty	1,849

Indicator 30		25.68
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Tenancy sustainment

Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year, by source of let (Indicator 16)

16.1.1	The number of tenancies which began in the previous reporting year by: existing tenants	11
16.1.2	applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority	46
16.1.3	applicants from your organisation's housing list	31
16.1.4	nominations from local authority	0
16.1.5	other	19
16.2.1	The number of tenants at 16.1 who remained in their tenancy for more than a year by: existing tenants	10
16.2.2	applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority	44
16.2.3	applicants from your organisation's housing list	30
16.2.4	nominations from local authority	0
16.2.5	other	19

Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to existing tenants sustained for more than a year	90.91%
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority sustained for more than a year	95.65%
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to applicants from the landlord's housing list sustained for more than a year	96.77%
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies through nominations from local authority sustained for more than a year	N/A
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to others sustained for more than a year	100.00%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (Access to housing and support)

**Getting good value from rents and service charges****Rents and service charges**

Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the reporting year (Indicator 26)

26.1	The total amount of rent collected in the reporting year	£6,931,186
26.2	The total amount of rent due to be collected in the reporting year (annual rent debit)	£6,880,198

	Indicator 26	100.74%
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Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year (Indicator 27)

27.1	The total value (£) of gross rent arrears as at the end of the reporting year	£331,241
27.2	The total rent due for the reporting year	£6,947,925

	Indicator 27	4.77%
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Average annual management fee per factored property (Indicator 28)

28.1	The number of residential properties factored	48
28.2	The total value of management fees invoiced to factored owners in the reporting year	£54

Indicator 28		£1.12
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Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year (Indicator 18)

18.1	The total amount of rent due for the reporting year	£6,947,925
18.2	The total amount of rent lost through properties being empty during the reporting year	£34,937

Indicator 18		0.50%
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Rent increase (Indicator C5)

C5.1	The percentage average weekly rent increase to be applied in the next reporting year	5.10%
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The number of households for which landlords are paid housing costs directly and the total value of payments received in the reporting year (Indicator C6)

C6.1	The number of households the landlord received housing costs directly for during the reporting year	478
C6.2	The value of direct housing cost payments received during the reporting year	£2,026,034



Amount and percentage of former tenant rent arrears written off at the year end (Indicator C7)

C7.1	The total value of former tenant arrears at year end	£100,138
C7.2	The total value of former tenant arrears written off at year end	£45,142

	Indicator C7	45.08%
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**Value for money**

Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money (Indicator 25)
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25.1	How many tenants answered the question "Taking into account the accommodation and the services your landlord provides, do you think the rent for your property represents good or poor value for money?"	345
25.2.1	25.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that their rent represented: very good value for money	104
25.2.2	fairly good value for money	139
25.2.3	neither good nor poor value for money	70
25.2.4	fairly poor value for money	22
25.2.5	very poor value for money	10
25.3	Total	345

Indicator 25	70.43%
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Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive (Indicator 29)

29.1	How many factored owners answered the question "Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the factoring services provided by your landlord?"	9
29.2.1	29.2 Of the factored owners who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	2
29.2.2	fairly satisfied	1
29.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
29.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	2
29.2.5	very dissatisfied	1
29.3	Total	9

	Indicator 29	33.33%
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Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (Getting good value from rents and service charges)

**Other customers****Gypsies / Travellers**

For those who provide Gypsies/Travellers sites - Average weekly rent per pitch (Indicator 31)

31.1	The total number of pitches	0
31.2	The total amount of rent set for all pitches during the reporting year	N/A

	Indicator 31	N/A
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For those who provide sites – percentage of Gypsy/Travellers satisfied with the landlord's management of the site (Indicator 32)
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32.1	How many Gypsies/Travellers answered the question "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's management of your site?"	
32.2.1	32.2 Of the Gypsies/Travellers who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	
32.2.2	fairly satisfied	
32.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
32.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	
32.2.5	very dissatisfied	
32.2.6	Total	

Indicator 32	
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Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2021-2022

Comments (Other customers)

Future Performance Benchmarking

Report by Martin Pollhammer, Chief Executive – for decision

1.0 Introduction

As noted at **Agenda Item 3.1**, ELHA undertakes an Annual Independent Performance Evaluation against a range of comparable organisations.

Following the most recent Evaluation in February 2022, the Management Committee asked Linda Ewart to review the external organisations that ELHA performance is compared against.

2.0 Future Peer Groups

Linda's initial review is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. This suggests Angus, Ayrshire, Berwickshire, Castlehill, Eildon, Fyne Homes, Loreburn, Osprey and Waverley as potential comparison organisations. From this list, it is suggested that no more than four RSLs are chosen.

The current RSLs used for performance comparison are neighbouring organisations (Places for People Scotland, Manor Estates, Melville and East Lothian Council), along with a Peer Group of Albyn, Eildon and Fyne Homes.

It is proposed that East Lothian Council is removed from the 'neighbours' group and another RSL 'local' added. The comparison with ELC will, however, be retained – as a standalone element of the annual review. The Management Committee may wish to consider whether the original neighbours remain valid comparators.

It is proposed that the peer group should be amended to provide a broader range of comparisons than the current group – and expanded to four instead of the current three.

For the 2022 Independent Review, it is proposed that, as a control and to support the transition to the new benchmarking group, comparisons with the existing Peer Group are undertaken alongside any new Peer Group that is established.

Recommendation

The Management Committee is asked to confirm the members of the Neighbours and the Peer Group for the purposes of the annual Independent Performance Evaluation.

elha performance: potential comparators

Table based on 2020/21 published SHR Landlord Reports (using ARC data)

RSL	Stock	Comments
elha	1342	
Abertay	1847	City of Dundee; Scottish Homes stock transfer; little/no new build; discrete geographical area – Fintry estate
Angus	1990	Angus / Dundee; roughly 70/30 split; geographically dispersed
Ayrshire	1660	Properties located in Ayr and throughout south Ayrshire; geographically dispersed; some stock transfer but significant development
Berwickshire	1880	Former Berwickshire Council stock; geographically dispersed
Castlehill	1902	Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Moray; variety of client groups and stock; geographically dispersed
Cloch	1371	Inverclyde; stock located in Greenock; defined urban communities
Eildon	2446	Scottish Borders; geographically dispersed in rural towns / villages / small settlements; significant ongoing development
Fyne Homes	1577	Argyll and Bute: geographically dispersed in small rural towns / villages; ongoing development; subsidiary companies providing alternative tenures; renewable energy; environmental activities
Glasgow West	1485	Glasgow; city centre; traditional tenemental stock plus stock acquired via second-stage transfer from Glasgow Housing Association
Glen Oaks	1348	Glasgow – Arden area of south Glasgow; established via Glasgow City Council community ownership programme;
Govan	1619	Glasgow – south city location; primarily traditional tenemental stock
Irvine (Riverside Scotland)	2306	Established to receive former New Town Development housing in Irvine; also has stock in south Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway
Linstone	1570	Paisley – Linwood: former Scottish Homes stock, including multi-storey flats; geographically contained
Loreburn	2391	Dumfries and surrounding areas; geographically dispersed; variety of stock

Milnbank	1669	Glasgow – east city-centre; combination of traditional tenements and former GCC stock acquired via second-stage transfer from GHA
Oak Tree	1793	Greenock – geographically contained; traditional stock
Osprey	1672	Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Moray – variety of stock; significant development; geographically dispersed
Paragon	1433	Grangemouth and Falkirk – former Scottish Homes stock
Parkhead	1727	Glasgow – east city centre; traditional tenements; geographically contained
Partick	1766	Glasgow – west city centre; traditional tenements plus significant development
Tollcross	2284	Glasgow – east city centre; traditional tenements plus recent development; geographically contained
Waverley	1547	Scottish Borders – throughout; variety of property types
Whiteinch and Scotstoun	1297	Glasgow – west: mostly traditional tenemental properties
Williamsburgh	1639	Paisley and Johnstone – traditional tenements plus some development

Potential 'best-fit' comparators for based on geography and stock composition.

These Homes (Allocations) Policy Review

Report by Karen Barry, Director of Housing – for approval

1.0 Introduction

The These Homes (Allocations) Policy is a core document that sets out all aspects to how the Association allocates its properties.

The Management Committee approved key changes to the Policy at its November 2020 meeting to allow for the development of These Homes, a new Digital Lettings Service, which was introduced in March 2021. These changes related to the Priority Pass system. At its meeting in February 2021, the Management Committee approved a final revision of the These Homes (Allocations) Policy which took account of the Scottish Government Guidance 'Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A Practice Guide' and included the previously agreed changes to the Priority Pass system.

These Homes has now been operating very successfully for just over a year with 14 landlords currently participating. Homes for Life Partnership will be sponsored by the Association and expected to join in October 2022, making this Digital Lettings Service quite possibly the largest Common Housing Register in Scotland.

At local level These Homes continues to operate successfully and requires no changes in practice. However, given the substantial changes made to the Policy, it was agreed that it should be reviewed after one year to check how the changes were settling in before reverting to the usual five-year review cycle.

The review has confirmed that the new Priority Pass is operating as it should (see Section 2.0 below) however it has also highlighted that some further changes are required, mostly for clarification but also because of a change in legislation to the Tolerable Standard (See Section 4.0). Changes are tracked on the **Policy Document** attached.

2.0 Priority Pass System

The Association is legally required to give Reasonable Preference (a level of priority) to applicants in certain circumstances as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 which amended Section 20 of the 1987 Act, relating to:

- Homeless persons or persons threatened with homelessness with unmet housing needs
- Those living under unsatisfactory housing conditions with unmet housing needs
- Tenants who are under-occupying

The Guidance also states that the relative priority given to each reasonable preference group will depend on the profile of housing need in each landlord area, and that landlords have discretion to decide how much priority each reasonable preference group is given, though homeless households must not receive lesser preference than the other specified groups. The Association is allowed to give priority to other groups for example, those seeking their First Affordable Home, but such groups must not dominate the Policy at the expense of the three reasonable preference groups on the previous page.

Following last years’ review, when taking the above into account, it was agreed that the These Homes Priority Pass system needed to be updated. Changes introduced in March 2021 included:

- Removing the Cumulative Pass and Silver First Affordable Pass (honouring those that had already been awarded)
- Introducing a Domestic Abuse Pass, a Transfer Pass for living in a flat and a Gold Plus Medical Pass where the Association refused to install a medical adaptation
- Amending the Overcrowding Pass
- Ceasing to award Passes for a fixed period and withdrawing priority if someone does not apply for a suitable property that has been advertised

The table below shows the Priority Passes that have been awarded during the year and therefore reflects the Housing Need profile for East Lothian at 31 March 2022.

2.1 Active Priority Passes as at 31 March 2022

Pass Type	Pass Level	Number
Homelessness	Platinum	381
Medical	Gold & Silver	273
Overcrowding	Gold, Silver & Bronze	271
First affordable home	Silver & Bronze	204
Harassment	Silver & Bronze	169
Need to be in a community	Silver & Bronze	149
Domestic abuse	Gold	142
ELHA transfer	Gold+	87
Living in a flat	Bronze	47
Unsuitable housing	Gold & Bronze	15
Under occupation	Gold & Silver	8
Cumulative	Gold+	5

Unsurprisingly, the highest number of Priority Passes awarded during the year are for Homelessness, Medical Needs, Overcrowding and First Affordable Homes which are well known issues in East Lothian.

The county has a significant housing shortage and homelessness problem, an ageing population and many low and middle-income households in the area are priced out of the local housing market because locally, the economy is dependent on service industries, tourism and farming, and wages are often low.

2.2 Priority Pass Use

The table below provides a breakdown of the Priority Passes that have been used for the completed relets during 2021/22 and shows a comparison to the preceding year. Of the Passes used, the Homelessness Priority Pass is the highest which (along with the Homeless Nominations) reflects the Nominations / Section 5 Protocol Agreement with East Lothian Council to provide 50% of available properties for homeless households. This is followed by Overcrowding priority (18%), Medical (10%), Domestic Abuse (8%) and a fairly even spread across the rest of the groups.

This and the Table at Section 2.1 demonstrate that the Association meets the requirement that no particular group dominates the Policy at the expense of the three reasonable preference groups, suggests that allocations are in line with the Housing Need profile for East Lothian, and that the Policy is fair and equitable.

Pass Level	2021/22	2020/21
Platinum Homeless	30	27
Homeless Nomination	5	2
STRENGTH Project	1	
Gold Plus Transfer - Harassment	1	1
Gold Plus Transfer - Flat to House	4	
Gold Plus Transfer - Overcrowding	3	
Gold Plus Transfer Medical	1	1
Gold Domestic Abuse	6	
Gold Medical	2	1
Gold Overcrowding	2	
Silver Medical	4	3
Silver Overcrowding	8	11
Bronze First Affordable Home	1	3
Bronze Overcrowding	2	
Bronze NTBIAC		1
ELCAP Nomination		1
No Priority Pass used	2	2
Total	72	53

Taking a closer look at the key changes to the Priority Pass system it is evident that the new / amended Priority Passes are operating as envisaged and are having a positive impact:

2.2.1 Domestic Abuse Priority Pass

With a national focus on domestic abuse and a recognition that it is good practice to award a high level of priority to anyone experiencing such abuse, it was agreed it should be a specific housing need group, where previously it has been included as part of the Harassment Priority Pass.

The change has increased an awareness of domestic abuse and there is a clear demand for this type of Priority Pass which was not so well highlighted in the previous system. At 31 March 2022, the Association had awarded 142 Gold Domestic Abuse Priority Passes to applicants who preferred not to go down the homelessness route, and who would otherwise qualify for Platinum Priority. During the year, six (8.3%) allocations were completed to applicants experiencing abuse.

It is very positive that some of the most vulnerable applicants are being rehoused, however, it should be recognised that such allocations are not straight forward and can be complicated, i.e. where the applicant has a chaotic lifestyle, co-occurring mental health issues or where there is a need to ensure that appropriate support is in place. This can mean a possible delay in the tenancy starting, having a knock-on effect to relet timescales. In addition, this is a high-risk group and there has already been two failed tenancies this year, having a knock-on effect on tenancy sustainment rates which would otherwise have been almost 100% for the year.

2.2.2 Transfers – Living in Flats

The introduction of the Bronze Transfer Pass – Living in Flats has created an opportunity for tenants, particularly those with young children, who want to move to a house when they would otherwise have no priority and little chance of a mutual exchange. It has also provided an incentive to not to leave items in the stair, thus reducing estate management issues, and tenants with no tenancy breaches can qualify for a Gold Plus Transfer Pass.

This additional Priority Pass has therefore had a positive impact for staff, tenants and other applicants. Four tenants were transferred to an ELHA house during the year, freeing up accommodation, allowing the Association to address the housing need of another four applicants.

2.2.3 Overcrowding Priority Passes

The Policy was amended to make clear that the assessment and award of overcrowding was solely for households who have outgrown their accommodation; not for those who had given up or lost accommodation and moved in with family or friends where there was no room for them, and whose primary housing need was homelessness.

In 2020/21 and in previous years, a disproportionate number of allocations were made to Silver Overcrowding Priority Pass holders as demonstrated in the table at Section 2.2. The change has therefore closed a loophole in the Priority Pass system, ensuring a more equitable spread of allocations across housing need.

2.2.4 Withdrawal of Expiry of Priority Passes

Ceasing to award Priority Passes for a fixed period and withdrawing priority if someone does not apply for a suitably advertised property has had no impact on relet times, likely due to the high demand for housing. This change allows for increased choice by an applicant who would otherwise have to apply for every property that was suitably advertised, which can only lead to greater sustainment rates and more satisfied tenants.

3.0 Other Key Changes

Nearly all the other changes made in 2021 were in relation to making the Policy clearer, ensuring compliance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and the revised Guidance. However, one other change was in relation to the banning of dogs from communal flats or properties with no private garden. The dog ban was introduced in 2017 and saw a significant reduction in complaints and management issues.

Following the results of the Allocations Policy consultation, when it was recognised that the dog ban restricted access to a lot of the Association's housing, particularly for responsible dog owners, it was agreed to lift restrictions slightly and limit the banning of dogs to communal flats only, and that this would be monitored over the year to see if the number of complaints escalated.

During the last year, 6 out of 165 complaints were received in relation to pet nuisance, compared to 4 out of 147 in the preceding year. The pandemic restrictions in the last two years have increased the number people at home therefore not leaving dogs unaccompanied, so is difficult to establish whether reducing the ban has had any significant impact. This decision will therefore continue to be monitored closely over 2022/23 and beyond.

4.0 Further Changes Required

The review has also identified further changes required to the Policy most which are self-explanatory, and are provided for further clarification:

Page 7, Local Connection

Local connection is by far the most contentious part of the Policy and accounts for 31% of These Homes appeals received during the last year, with one applicant completing the full Appeals Procedure by contacting the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (who agreed with the Association's decision).

Taking local connection into account was introduced in 2011 due to the extreme lack of available homes in East Lothian. The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 states the grounds when local connection cannot be taken into account, however the wording in the Act is open to interpretation by both applicants and staff.

In view of this and following advice from TC Young, the wording has been expanded to clarify the grounds and evidence required to demonstrate when someone is seeking employment in East Lothian; and to define what is meant by 'relative'; now based on the definition of 'family' in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Page 11 - Registration Process

When developing These Homes, it was anticipated that a 'substantial' paper form would be required to mirror the online application for those applicants who did not want to complete this. In practice, this is not the case with very few applicants requiring a paper form. In addition, it made no sense to ask an applicant seeking a paper form to download it from These Homes.

Pages 15 and 29 - Unsuitable Housing

The Tolerable Standard is defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and is a basic level of repair a property must meet to make it fit to live in. In February 2022, following the introduction of new fire safety regulations, the definition of Tolerable Standard was further amended.

Amendments on Page 29 seek to further clarify the Standard and the evidence required to enable the award of Gold and Bronze priority. Recommended changes also include that if an applicant lacks three or more basic amenities, this would be considered as a significant breach of the Tolerable Standard and Gold Priority would apply. There are only nine (less than 0.3%) applicants on the Housing Register who may be affected by this change.

Page 38, Appendix 6

In previous years the Nomination / Section 5 Protocol Agreement was reviewed annually and submitted to the Housing & Property Services Sub Committee for information. This practice ceased following difficulties getting East Lothian Council to agree to timely reviews. Though this is currently on track and forms part of the Core Annual Tasks in the Business Plan Action Plan, in the spirit of being open and transparent, the Agreement has been appended to the Policy to ensure that both applicants and Management Committee are aware of the content.

As none of the recommendations for change are significant, there is no legal requirement to consult tenants or applicants regarding these.

Recommendation

The Management Committee is asked to:

- (a) Approve the changes made to the These Homes (Allocations) Policy; and
- (b) Move the Policy to a five yearly review cycle.

Date Issued	22 April 2004
Department	Housing Management
Title	These Homes (Allocations) Policy
Responsible	Director of Housing
Last Review Date	May 2022
Next Review Date	May 2027

1.0 Introduction

East Lothian Housing Association is a Housing Association registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator and with Charitable Status. We provide quality, affordable, and sustainable housing and associated services for people in East Lothian.

Most of our homes are allocated through our digital lettings service, These Homes. Some are not, and these include:

- Workshop homes
- Houses for sale, whether Shared Ownership or Low Cost Home Ownership
- Allocations that have been agreed under a separate lease with one of our partner agencies or other similar agreement

More information about these types of homes can be found at Section 1.5 and in **Appendix 1**.

1.1 Our Aims

We aim to ensure that:

- People have fair and open access to our Housing Register
- Reasonable preference is given to those in housing need
- Our homes are allocated in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner that does not unfairly discriminate or exclude people
- We recognise the needs of the communities we work in

- We make the best use of our available homes
- Our policy is clear and easily understood
- Applicants are given reasonable choice, and our allocations result in sustainable tenancies

1.2 Legislative / Regulatory Framework

This Policy and the procedures, publications and websites that support it, are based on the principles set out in the Scottish Government’s Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: Practice Guide, published in 2019. In addition, we aim to fully comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator’s Social Housing Charter Indicators which support the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and in particular, the following outcomes:

Equalities	Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that: Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.
Communication	Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides
Participation	Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with
Housing options	Social landlords work together to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 option • People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.
Access to social housing	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
Tenancy sustainment	Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations

<p>Homeless people</p>	<p>Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary accommodation when this is needed and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to</p>
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We will comply with all relevant legislation including:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended)
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equalities Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018

1.3 Context

East Lothian is an area of exceptional housing pressure. Situated to the East of Edinburgh, the area is predominately rural, with a coastline characterised by beaches, seaside towns and golf courses.

As well as being a significant destination for tourists and day trippers, East Lothian has good road and rail links to Edinburgh, and therefore attracts large numbers of (predominantly higher income) commuters. It is also an area to which many people often choose to move in older age.

Locally, the economy is dependent on service industries, tourism and farming, and wages are often low. This means that many low and middle-income households in the area are priced out of the local housing market. The area has a significant homelessness problem.

Land supply is severely constrained, both by the local environment, but also as there is usually opposition to new developments in most towns and villages, even where that development is affordable rented housing. As a result, land prices are often exceptionally high.

Our problems are therefore quite different to many other areas. It is unlikely that on any scale East Lothian will suffer from low demand issues in the foreseeable future, any such issues are likely only to relate to specific properties and in exceptional circumstances.

Our housing stock includes:

- General needs housing- flats and houses with between one and six bedrooms
- Care / Supported housing with access to support to enable independent living
- Amenity and sheltered housing for older people
- Housing for wheelchair users, specifically designed to meet the needs of people who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids

In addition, we own several Workshop Homes, Shared Ownership properties, Garages, Garage Sites, and other non-residential properties. Some of these may be advertised on These Homes from time to time but are not allocated in accordance with this Policy.

Our area of operation is from Musselburgh to Innerwick across the Local Authority district of East Lothian. Since we were founded in 1988, we have built around 70% of our homes, and we acquired the remaining 30% from Scottish Homes in 1996 through a large-scale voluntary stock transfer. This means that the age profile of our housing stock varies significantly.

Across Scotland, there are not enough houses for all who need them, and the situation is particularly acute in East Lothian. This Policy is therefore designed to make best use of the very limited housing supply we have, by giving preference to applicants in housing need and prioritising transfers for our own tenants, so that each vacancy has the potential to address the housing needs of more than one applicant.

We also know there is a high demand for one-bedroom homes in East Lothian. We prefer to build homes with a minimum of two bedrooms, though there will be exceptions where we cannot do this, for example, in a restricted town centre site or a conversion of an existing property. If we build two-bedroom homes in a new development, we will agree to under-occupy a proportion of these, taking account of the demand and property type.

1.4 General Principles

1.4.1 Choice and empowerment

We want to maximise opportunities for access to housing and allow applicants to make informed choices. We operate These Homes, where available homes are advertised, and applicants apply for the ones they want. We aim to keep the service as easy to use as possible, and to provide clear information and advice so that applicants can make informed choices.

1.4.2 Housing Need

We recognise housing need through a system of Priority Passes, which is explained in Section 3 below.

1.4.3 Lettings to Staff and Management Committee Members

Our policy must operate fairly, and Management Committee members, staff or people close to them must not be given any preferential treatment in the allocations process, neither should they be disadvantaged. We have Codes of Conduct in place for both our Management Committee and Staff members, and an Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy which they must all follow. These processes are in place to ensure that Management Committee and Staff members do not gain any unfair advantage through their connection to ELHA. If a Management Committee or staff member or someone close to them is allocated a tenancy, we will ensure that:

- The allocation is in accordance with this Policy **and**
- Neither the applicant, nor anyone connected to the applicant, is involved in any way or in any part of the allocation process **and**
- The offer is approved by our Management Committee in advance **and**
- The tenancy is recorded as an interest in our Register of Payments and Benefits within five days of the tenancy commencing

1.4.4 Sustainable Communities

Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. We want to create and maintain such communities and will try to achieve this by avoiding over concentrating any particular client group in any particular area. Wherever possible, we will try to identify any imbalance, and any action required to address it, before a home is advertised. We will include information about any criteria to be applied in the advert.

If we need to by-pass an applicant in the interests of maintaining a sustainable community, we will always try to balance the interests of the individual with the interests of the community and will bear in mind the requirement to give reasonable preference to certain categories of applicant. We will record the reasons for the decision and report such allocations to our Audit & Assurance Committee to ensure the decisions we make are fair and consistent.

1.4.5 Lettings Plans

Lettings plans are used to create or promote sustainable communities and are usually time limited. Homes subject to a Lettings Plan may be advertised for a specific client group or household type, and when allocating them, consideration will be given to the requirements of the Lettings Plan. As a result, some applicants may not be made an offer, even if they have more priority than another applicant. See **Appendix 5** for more information.

1.4.6 Sustainable Tenancies

We have a Tenancy Sustainment Policy that seeks to identify and address potential problems at the point of allocation, so that we can ensure appropriate support is provided to enable the applicant to successfully remain in the tenancy. We will carry out an affordability assessment before any new tenancy starts and will address any affordability issues by referring new tenants to our Money Advisor for income maximisation, debt, and budgeting advice.

1.4.7 Partnership Working

We work in partnership with East Lothian Council to ensure that:

- 50% of our available properties are allocated to statutorily homeless households. We have a Nomination / Section 5 Protocol Agreement in place for this purpose
- Access to our joint Mutual Exchange list is available to anyone seeking to swap their home with another tenant
- The National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) operates effectively in East Lothian
- We meet our obligations under the East Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which sets out how the Council and its key partners anticipate will develop their approach to rapid rehousing over a five year period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024

We will work with the Council, other Housing Associations, and organisations wherever this will help in addressing housing need in East Lothian, for example by leasing accommodation to partner organisations to help meet particular needs.

We are currently one of several social landlords working throughout Scotland that use These Homes to advertise our available homes. By completing one registration form applicants can choose to be registered with one or all of the landlords offering homes for rent in the areas they wish to be housed in. We encourage feedback from tenants and applicants and use this to improve our service.

1.4.8 Moving to Other Areas

We aim to help people who want to move around the country, and we will consider applicants who need to move to East Lothian for work, family or medical reasons or to escape harassment or abuse. We do not subscribe to any of the home swap schemes that require us to pay to participate, but we will pay for individual ELHA tenants who wish to join such schemes.

We administer an online exchange register open to anyone looking for a Mutual Exchange (where two or more tenants agree to swap their homes), called East Lothian X-Changes <https://www.elha.com/mutual-exchanges>. We will support our tenants who want to move, by providing details of landlords in their areas of choice. We will actively consider requests from other landlords throughout the UK to house applicants with high levels of housing need.

1.4.9 Connection to East Lothian

We will assess the needs of everyone who applies to us for a Priority Pass in the same way, however, when allocating properties, applicants with a local connection to East Lothian) will be prioritised over those with no connection to the area. Local Connection is defined in Section 20(2)(aa) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, which also states the circumstances when local connection must not be taken into account ~~These include if the applicant:~~

We cannot take local connection into account unless an applicant:

- ~~• Is employed, or has been offered employment in the area, or wishes to move into the area to seek employment and we are satisfied that this is the intention~~
- ~~• Wishes to move into the area to be near a relative or carer~~
- ~~• Works in East Lothian, has been offered employment in the area, or they want to move to the area to look for work. We would need to be satisfied that the applicant looking for work had a specific need for working in the area that could not be met in their own area, and would ask for evidence to support this, for example, confirmation of interview and rejection of employment letters~~
- ~~• Would like to move to East Lothian to be nearer a carer or to be closer to family. Family is defined in the Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act as spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew niece, stepchild or a person who has been brought up by another person and treated as their child.~~
- Has special social or medical reasons for requiring to be housed in East Lothian
- Is subject to harassment
- Is subject to or at risk of domestic abuse

If an applicant meets our criteria for a Priority Pass but does not either currently live in East Lothian or have a local connection to East Lothian, then the Priority Pass will not be awarded, and they will not be given priority over other applicants who do have a local connection to East Lothian.

1.4.10 Home Ownership

We have the right to take account of whether an applicant owns or has owned property before deciding to allocate them a home unless in the following circumstances:

- The property has not been let, but the owner cannot secure entry to the property, for example, it would not be safe to enter due to severe structural faults or where there are squatters living in the property
- Where it is probable that occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone currently living in the property
- Where it is probable that living in the property will leave to abuse from someone who previously resided with the applicant whether in that property or elsewhere
- Where occupation of the property may endanger the health of the occupants and there are no reasonable steps that can be taken by the applicant to prevent that danger

When offering a tenancy to a person who is a homeowner, we will consider whether the housing needs of that person can be met through the temporary allocation of a home by a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST), which will be for an initial period of six months, which may be extended.

If we propose to offer a SSST we will advise the applicant of this, and the reasons for our decision at the time of the offer. The applicant may appeal this decision.

1.4.11 Temporary Tenancies

Most of the tenancies that we offer will be Scottish Secure Tenancies that provide long term security of tenure, however, in some limited circumstances, we may offer a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) instead. The circumstances in which we may offer a SSST are:

- Where an applicant is a homeowner who cannot live in their property because repairs are required to make their home safe or adaptations are necessary to meet the needs of the applicant or a member of their household, or the property is being sold to enable the purchase of an alternative, more suitable property
- Where, in the previous three years, an applicant or a member of their household has been evicted from a previous tenancy because of antisocial behaviour or has had an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) served against them, or where a course of antisocial behaviour has been carried out
- A temporary let is needed for a person moving into the area to take up employment, to enable them to seek accommodation
- A temporary let is needed pending development affecting a property
- A temporary let is needed for a homeless person for a tenancy 6 months or over
- To someone receiving housing support services
- Where the property leased by us from another body where the terms of the lease preclude us from subletting under an SST

If we grant a SSST which we decide not to either extend or convert to a Scottish Secure Tenancy, we will notify the tenant of the reasons for our decision and the tenant has the right to a review of this.

1.4.12 Joint Tenancies

We advise all applicants of their right to apply for a joint tenancy with a person who is either living with them or intending to live with them.

1.4.13 Kinship Carers, Foster Carers & Those Adopting

We will consider giving priority to those applicants who have been approved for adoption or are approved for fostering or kinship carers.

Though our assessment of housing need is always based upon current circumstances, we will consider giving priority where supporting evidence can be provided. We may work with the Children and Young Peoples Services to decide at what stage it is appropriate to give priority.

1.4.14 Pets

We do not limit the number of domestic pets in our homes but there are exceptions to this rule:

- We do not normally allow dogs in flats within a communal stair, with the exception of Assistance Dogs (when we advertise flats to which this ban applies, we will clearly state this in the advert to ensure that applicants are aware of the ban)
- In some new developments the Deed of Conditions, a legal document which sets out a structure to make sure that the development is maintained in the future for the benefit of all residents, may restrict the number and type of pets allowed; the rules in a Deed of Conditions takes precedent over the clauses in a tenancy agreement

1.4.15 Equal Opportunities

We will not unfairly discriminate against anyone. We will make information available in different formats as ~~required~~appropriate and will provide free access to translation services in our office if they are needed. We will monitor our allocations to ensure that nothing in this Policy leads to unfair discrimination.

1.4.16 Confidentiality

We will treat all personal information as completely confidential and use it only for the purpose of operating this Policy. We will obtain or pass on information only in accordance with the declaration signed by applicants as part of the registration process or with the applicant's consent, or if we are required to do so by law or by our Regulators.

1.4.17 Appeals

Applicants have the right to appeal any decision made in accordance with this Policy. Our Appeals Procedure is described at Section 6.

1.5 Allocations Not Covered by this Policy

There are occasions when we will not advertise some of our available homes and allocate them differently. We will do this in various circumstances including where:

- We cannot identify suitable applicants for a specially adapted property through advertising
- We are seeking to accommodate people coming to the UK under an official Resettlement Programme (any allocations like this will be reported to our Audit & Assurance Committee)
- We have referral arrangements in place with specialist agencies or organisations providing support to people with particular needs (any allocations like this will be reported to our Audit & Assurance Committee)
- Tenants choose to exchange properties with another landlord or ELHA tenant (these are known as Mutual Exchanges and the processes we use to manage these are set out in our Tenancy Management Policy)
- A person succeeds to, or is assigned a tenancy (how we deal with these situations is also set out in our Tenancy Management Policy)
- We may lease properties to other organisations or enter into nominations agreements with agencies providing support to people with particular needs (any allocations like these will be reported to our Audit & Assurance Committee)

1.6 Management Allocations

In exceptional circumstances, we may allocate some of our homes on management grounds (this means we will not normally advertise the property but will allocate it direct to one applicant), for example where there are:

- High level support needs, severe harassment or domestic abuse
- Applicants with exceptional circumstances not otherwise covered by this Policy
- Individuals needing a particular type of property that may not come up for allocation very often so that their health or support needs can be addressed
- A series of possible moves that can meet the housing needs of several applicants, and the first suitable property to facilitate this is available
- Issues relating to an adapted or wheelchair property that means we need to move someone from that house

- Significant antisocial behaviour, harassment or abuse issues and we urgently need to move someone away from that situation

We will avoid re-housing vulnerable applicants in properties where we are aware of an issue that we feel may make it more difficult for them to sustain a tenancy. This happens rarely.

Management allocations will be kept to a minimum, and a full record of the reasons for them will be set out in a report that will be retained with the allocation paperwork and will be reported to our Audit & Assurance Committee.

2.0 Admission to the Housing List

All applicants aged 16 or over are eligible for our housing list. Any priority that we award will depend on their housing and housing related need as defined by our priority system which is explained in Section 3. We will grant applicants living out-with East Lothian priority if they need to move to East Lothian for work, family, or health reasons, or to escape harassment or abuse. We will also assess the housing needs of applicants with no connection to East Lothian, but will prioritise applicants with a connection when allocating properties.

2.1 Registration Process

To register with These Homes, applicants must complete an online registration at-. Help is available at our office or over the telephone for anyone who needs support doing this. A paper form is is also available, ~~for download from thesehomes.com however it should be noted that this is a substantial form and it is better to complete it online~~. An applicant can register online or in person at our office and apply for a suitable advertised home on the same day they apply.

Our registration form is kept as simple as possible and collects only information essential to our allocation process, housing need assessment and equalities monitoring.

At the point of registration, applicants are asked to tell us if they are homeless, overcrowded, have health problems or are living in accommodation suffering from disrepair. If they do, they will be asked to provide further information during registration, to allow us to assess if they qualify for priority. Applicants to the housing register are issued with a unique registration number on the day they register. Unless we have to verify any information provided in the registration, the applicant can begin applying for suitable advertised properties as soon as they are registered, except in the following circumstances:

- The applicant has debt relating to a previous or current tenancy and no re-payment arrangement is in place, or they have an arrangement but have not maintained it for 3 months or 13 consecutive weeks; they declare or we become aware of a history of antisocial behaviour or a criminal conviction relating to, or involvement

in, the supply and use of illegal drugs or the applicant requires support to maintain a tenancy

- Applicants who will not be assessed as having a housing need until a later date (for example, where the applicant is in tied accommodation, hospital or prison and this situation is not likely to change for at least one month), will be placed on the housing register but will remain suspended until the applicant contacts us to confirm that they are in a position to accept a tenancy
- Applicants leaving the armed forces can choose to have their circumstances assessed up to six months before their date of discharge then have their registration suspended so that they can benefit from an earlier date of registration or Priority Pass award, but they will remain suspended until they contact us to confirm that they are in a position to accept a tenancy

In all the above cases where an application is suspended, the suspension will last only for as long as it takes to obtain full information or rectify the situation. Further information about suspended applications is provided at Section 4.1 and **Appendix 4**.

We may ask for supporting documentation of relevant personal circumstances, for example, proof of residence or evidence of harassment, at any time during the registration / allocation process. We may also make relevant enquiries to confirm information given to us by the applicant.

We will make it clear to applicants who own their own home that it is a legal requirement that they must occupy a tenancy as their only or principal home. We will assess the priority of homeowners in exactly the same way as others.

3.0 Assessment of Housing Need

3.1 Priority Pass System

Priority is awarded through a system of Priority Passes. All applicants will be encouraged to apply for priority to reflect their housing need.

There are five levels of Priority Pass; Platinum, Gold Plus, Gold, Silver and Bronze.

Applicants can apply for as many Priority Passes as they feel they may be entitled to. Priority can be awarded from one or more of the categories listed below, which are further defined in **Appendix 2**. A Priority Pass will only be awarded once in each category and will be the highest level of pass that the applicants' circumstances merit.

Homelessness	We recognise housing need due to homelessness by the award of Platinum Priority Passes.
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	<p>Any applicants where East Lothian Council has accepted a legal duty to house them in terms of the current homelessness legislation are awarded a Platinum Priority Pass, our highest level of Priority Pass.</p> <p>Most of our allocations to homeless households are made through These Homes. We have a Nomination / Section 5 Protocol Agreement in place with East Lothian Council to ensure that our agreed quota for allocations to statutorily homeless households is met (See Appendix 6).</p>
<p>Harassment and Abuse</p>	<p>We recognise housing need due to harassment or abuse by the award of Silver and Bronze Priority Passes.</p> <p>Harassment can be on the grounds of race, sex or sexual orientation, disability (including mental health problems), colour, religion or belief.</p> <p>We have a separate policy on harassment which applies to our tenants.</p> <p>Applicants suffering from harassment to the extent that they cannot occupy or have to leave their home will be encouraged to apply to East Lothian Council for assessment under the homelessness legislation, as this could result in the award of a Platinum Priority Pass, our highest level of priority.</p>
<p>Domestic Abuse</p>	<p>We recognise housing need due to domestic abuse from a current or ex-partner, by the award of Gold Priority Passes.</p> <p>We recognise that not all applicants will want to approach their local authority as homeless but know that victims and children are potentially at severe risk and continue to remain in that position whilst they remain in their home.</p> <p>We have a separate policy on domestic abuse which applies to our tenants, and we will seek to support victims who want to remain in their home but may need to move temporarily.</p>
<p>Medical</p>	<p>We recognise housing need due to health problems by the award of Gold and Silver Priority Passes.</p> <p>We will consider awarding priority for re-housing on health grounds only where a move may result in a significant improvement in the applicants' health or make their health issue much easier to cope with. We do not assess the severity of the medical condition; we only look at the impact a change of accommodation would have on their health or support needs.</p> <p>Assessments are based on permanent residential</p>

	<p><u>accommodation only, where the applicant is registered for Council Tax.</u></p> <p>In assessing applications on health grounds, we will always consider whether or not the applicant’s current accommodation could be adapted to meet their housing needs.</p> <p>Medical Priority Passes are awarded based upon the information provided in the registration form and we provide guidance to staff to assist them in making these assessments. We will seek further information about the applicant’s condition, the impact of re-housing and the type of property required from a health professional at the point of allocation, if this has not already been provided.</p> <p>Minor ailments or conditions that will not be improved by re-housing will not attract priority on health grounds.</p> <p>We may place restrictions on the type of property to be offered to an applicant who has been awarded priority on health grounds. For example, someone awarded priority due to difficulties managing stairs in their current accommodation will normally only be able to apply for homes on the ground floor.</p> <p>We will not normally allocate a home that would require significant adaptations to meet an applicant’s needs unless we have no properties available that would meet the applicant’s needs without adaptation. In these circumstances we will consider each case on an individual basis, in partnership with East Lothian Council’s Social Work Department.</p>
<p>Overcrowding</p>	<p>We recognise housing need due to overcrowding by the award of Gold, Silver and Bronze Priority Passes. This section also covers the priority given to large families (who need four or more bedrooms) whose principal housing need is likely to arise from overcrowding.</p> <p>We only assess overcrowding for households that have outgrown their accommodation. If an applicant is living with family or a guardian, we will not take account of overcrowding that may already exist within the family but will only consider the needs of the applicant.</p> <p>The following occupancy levels are used to assess overcrowding and to allocate housing of an appropriate size:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All adults (over the age of 16 years) are entitled to a bedroom of their own, unless living with a partner, when they will be expected to share a double bedroom • Two children of the same sex can share a double bedroom until one of them reaches the age of 16 • Children of the opposite sex can share a double bedroom until one of them reaches the age of 8 • In some cases, an adult / child’s medical condition may mean that they need sole use of a bedroom (we will normally ask for proof of this requirement) • An extra bedroom will be allowed if a carer needs to stay with the applicant for at least three nights per week (we will normally ask for proof of this requirement) • If an applicant has residential access to a child or children for at least three nights per week, the applicant will be allocated one extra bedroom, if required, to accommodate the child or children (we will normally ask for proof of this requirement) • If an applicant has access to a child or children for four nights a week or more, the child or children will be treated as permanent members of the household, and we will allocate a home of the appropriate size to accommodate them • In recognition of the fact that overcrowding resulting from access to children is only for part of the week and is therefore not as bad as overcrowding due to children who live there full time, access overcrowding will attract lesser priority • A living room should not have to be used as a bedroom unless it is to accommodate a child or children on residential access of less than three nights per week (and there are no issues with the heating system that would stop this) • No more than two people should share a bedroom unless the applicant chooses to share a room with a child or children on residential access of less than three nights a week • A box room or a room without natural light is not counted as a bedroom available to the household
<p>Under-Occupation</p>	<p>We recognise housing need due to changing family circumstances resulting in an applicant now requiring a smaller</p>

	home by the award of Gold and Silver Priority Passes. As this approach aims to free up larger homes for those who need them, this priority is only awarded to our tenants.
Unsuitable Housing	<u>The Tolerable Standard is a basic level of repair a property must meet to make it fit for a person to live in, defined by legislation.</u> We recognise housing need resulting from living in a home that is below tolerable standard (BTS), suffering from dis-repair or lacking amenities by the award of Gold and Bronze Priority Passes.
Social/Family Support and Employment (Need to be in a Community and Need to be in a Rural Community)	We recognise housing need due to the need to be in a particular community within East Lothian by the award of Silver and Bronze Priority Passes. Priority may be awarded where an applicant needs to move to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take up or keep a permanent job (priority will normally only be awarded where the applicant is the main earner and the job is more than one hour's travel from their current home) • Be nearer amenities or services (we will consider the reasons why the applicant finds it difficult to access amenities or services, including availability of public transport) • Maintain contact with children • Give or receive support (we will consider the nature and frequency of the support provided or received)
First Affordable Home	People are often forced to continue living in their family home due to a lack of affordable housing options. We recognise housing need for this reason by the award of a Bronze Priority Pass. Priority is awarded to anyone living in the family home who has a total income of less than £30,000 a year and who have never held a social housing tenancy.
Living in Flats	We recognise housing need due to living in a flat for more than two years and the applicant wants to move to a house, by the award of a Bronze Priority Pass. This particularly benefits families with young children who would otherwise have no housing need, where there is no suitable play or storage facilities. The added benefit of this is to free up homes for those who need them, therefore this priority is only awarded to our tenants.
Transfers	Our tenants are subject to the same conditions of access, assessment and acceptance as external applicants (including the requirement to have kept a repayment agreement for any arrears or debts amounting to more than one month's rent for at least three months), with the following exceptions:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will inspect our tenant’s home before a Priority Pass is awarded and will tell our tenant about any work they need to complete to bring the condition of the property up to a satisfactory standard, acceptable to us • If our tenant needs to complete any work to fulfil the obligations of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, then their application will be suspended until they notify us that the work is complete, and we have inspected it • If a transfer applicant has not applied for a Priority Pass then we will carry out a pre-inspection of their home before any conditional offer of housing is confirmed • Transfers will not be approved unless the property to be vacated is in a condition where it can be immediately re-let • Transfer applicants may be awarded priority for under-occupying their existing home • Transfer applicants may be awarded priority for living in a flat for more than two years • If a transfer applicant and another applicant have the same level of Priority Pass, the transfer applicant will be offered the home first, regardless of the date of registration or date of award of the Priority Pass • Transfer applicants who have a clear rent account; maintain their home to an acceptable standard and have no history of neighbour problems or anti-social behaviour will be eligible for a Gold Plus Priority Pass (this gives them priority over all but Homeless applicants, or in situations where the property has been medically adapted, and our tenant does not need these adaptations but there are other applicants that do)
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3.2 Limitation of Passes

We are committed to offering applicants as much choice as possible, however, in some circumstances awarding priority will result in restrictions on the type of property or area for which the applicant will receive priority.

We will limit Priority Passes awarded for social or family support or employment to a specific area.

We may also limit a Priority Pass to a particular type of property, for example to ground floor accommodation where a pass has been awarded for health related mobility problems, or to wheelchair accommodation where this is required by the applicant.

Applicants who have had their Priority Pass limited by us can still apply for homes that fall out-with the pass limitations, but their Priority Pass will not be recognised for those homes.

3.3 Suspension of Priority Passes

Where we consider that an applicant has intentionally or carelessly worsened their housing circumstances (for example, by moving from a house that was large enough for their household to one that is too small, causing overcrowding), their entitlement to a Priority Pass will be suspended for an initial period of twelve months with discretion to extend this suspension period to a maximum of two years.

The twelve months suspension will begin on the date the applicant worsened their circumstances. The applicant will still be able to apply for available homes but will have to re-apply for a Priority Pass at the end of the suspension period.

Except for Platinum Priority Passes, if an applicant has used a Priority Pass, to apply for a property and they refuse a reasonable offer, their Priority Pass will be withdrawn for a period of twelve months. It is the applicant's responsibility to re-apply for priority at the end of this period.

If a homeless applicant refuses an offer of a home, we will follow the procedure set out in the Nomination / Section 5 Protocol Agreement and inform East Lothian Council ([See Appendix 6](#)). The application will be suspended until the Council has completed its investigation.

4.0 Administration of the Housing List

4.1 Suspended Applications

We aim to keep suspended applications to a minimum and be clear about when they will apply and for how long. We may suspend applications for an initial twelve months with the discretion to extend the suspension for further periods of six months up to two years in the following circumstances, if an applicant has:

- Provided false or misleading information in connection with an application
- Carelessly or intentionally worsened their current housing circumstances to gain greater priority
- Acted in an antisocial manner in their community
- Acted in an antisocial manner towards a member of our staff or any of our Management Committee members during the application process
- Had an ASBO issued to them or a member of their household within the last two years
- Been convicted of an offence that was committed in, or in the vicinity of, their home

- Been evicted from a previous tenancy
- Turned down one reasonable offer of housing
- Deliberately given us false information or omitting relevant information with the intention of being assessed with greater housing need than is the case
- Housing debt of more than one month and no arrangement is in place to pay off their debt or has not kept to an agreed arrangement for at least three months or 13 consecutive weeks (debts older than five years, which have not previously been pursued by the former landlord will be disregarded)

We may also suspend applications for the following reasons:

- The applicant has a change in circumstances
- We are waiting further information
- There are support issues
- The applicant is unable to take up a tenancy
- The condition of the property is not acceptable (ELHA transfers only)

We will regularly review suspended registrations to minimise the time any applicant is unable to apply for available properties.

Appendix 4 provides more detailed information in relation to suspensions.

4.2 Withdrawal of Registrations

We will withdraw applications only under the following circumstances:

- At the applicants' request
- Where the applicant does not respond to an annual review and reminder letter
- If mail is returned marked "gone away" or not known at this address
- If the applicant does not respond to requests for information
- If the applicant dies

We will re-register applicants on request, taking into account any changes in their circumstances. Their date of registration will normally be the date they re-apply, but applicants can ask to have their registration re-instated with their original registration date if there are exceptional circumstances and can appeal if any initial request is refused.

4.3 Review of Register

We will review applicant registrations annually on the anniversary of the date of registration.

The review form will be short and only ask the applicant if they want to remain on the register and to report any changes in their circumstances. We will give applicants 28 days to respond.

If an applicant doesn't respond to an annual review, we will send a reminder, giving the applicant a further 14 days to respond. If the applicant does not respond to the reminder, we will withdraw their registration.

5.0 The Allocation Process

5.1 Advertising and Applying for a Property

We will normally advertise every second available home stating that Platinum Priority Passes are valid for the property, in line with our commitment to help alleviate homelessness. Platinum Priority Pass holders can apply for other available homes, but their Priority Pass will not be recognised.

Once we have been notified of a tenancy termination, we will decide if the property will be allocated in line with this section, or if it will be removed from the normal allocation process as outlined in Sections 1.6 (allocations not covered by this policy) and 1.7 (management allocations).

Available homes will be advertised weekly on thesehomes.com and elha.com, in our Head Office window, and on Facebook. We will also provide copies of our adverts to local Council housing offices, in libraries and the Citizen's Advice Bureaux for display. A dedicated phone line is also available giving details of available properties and allowing applicants to apply by phone.

We will assess properties individually and decide what constitutes "Best Use". For example:

- Adverts will include the number of bedrooms (a household makes "Best Use" of a property if it needs all of the bedrooms)
- We may take into consideration the mix of family sizes within the building or immediate area to maintain a balanced and sustainable community
- An advert for sheltered housing will specify that normally only applicants aged over 60 will be considered

- An advert for amenity housing will state that normally only applicants aged over 50 will be considered
- An advert for a property with significant adaptations will specify that we will give priority to applicants whose medical needs mean that they need the adaptations regardless of whether or not they need all of the bedrooms

We will specify any best use criteria and a closing date for applications in the advert.

We will maintain a list of support providers and others such as Social Workers and Occupational Therapists who may be helping clients to find a new home and will send weekly lists of our available homes to them by e-mail.

Registered applicants may apply for as many advertised properties as they wish at any one time. They will be able to note their interest on thesehomes.com, by telephone, letter, or in person at our office.

When a registered applicant applies for more than one advertised home, we will assume that the order in which they apply is their order of preference.

No applications will be accepted after the advertised closing date and time.

5.2 How Properties are Allocated

An overview of the allocation process is attached at **Appendix 3**. Applicants with a connection to East Lothian will be prioritised over those with no connection. We will allocate advertised properties after the closing date for applications using our selection criteria as follows:

5.2.1 Best use

The applicants who will make best use of the home by using all of the bedrooms or by using other features such as ground floor access, other adaptations, or suitability for wheelchair use, and who meet any age limitations.

5.2.2 Priority Homeless

If the home has been advertised stating that Platinum Priority Passes are valid, only applicants with Priority Passes at that level will be considered in the first instance. If there are no applicants with a Platinum Priority Pass, we will revert to the procedure outlined in the Nomination / Section 5 Protocol Agreement with East Lothian Council. Only if no applicants are identified through this route, will we continue to work through the applications list.

5.2.3 Priority Pass Level

If more than one applicant makes best use of an advertised home, then the applicants are placed in order according to the level of Priority Pass that they hold. If more than one applicant has the same highest level of Priority Pass we will consider the applicant who has held this highest level of Priority Pass the longest, unless one of these applicants is an ELHA transfer applicant, in which case the home will be allocated to the transfer applicant first, regardless of the date of Priority Pass award.

5.2.4 Date Priority Pass Awarded

Where there is more than one applicant with the same level of Priority Pass the home will be allocated to the applicant whose Priority Pass was awarded earliest.

5.2.5 Date of Registration

The date of registration is the date the applicant was accepted onto These Homes. We consider the date of registration only if there are no applicants with a Priority Pass. The property is allocated to the applicant with the earliest date of registration unless one of the applicants is a transfer applicant, in which case the property will be allocated to the transfer applicant first.

5.2.6 Same Date of Registration or Priority Pass Award

If the date of registration or award of Priority Pass is the same for two or more applicants, we will allocate the property to the applicant with the lower registration or Priority Pass number, since this means that they applied before the other applicant, but on the same day.

Our Management Committee delegates responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this Policy to our staff. Our staff will check the accuracy of the list produced by the These Homes software and confirm the allocation. All allocations will involve two members of staff.

5.3 Offers and Refusals

We will contact the successful applicant by telephone on the closing date for applications wherever possible. Applicants who applied for homes on thesehomes.com will receive an email informing them that they were unsuccessful. Applicants applying by other means that have not been contacted within two days of the closing date should assume that they have been unsuccessful.

Any offer we make will be conditional upon the applicant's housing circumstances being confirmed, the applicant providing proof of residency, any evidence relating to the award of a Priority Pass being provided and, if appropriate, previous tenancy references being received. We will enclose a copy of our Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement with our offer to the applicant being considered for the property.

We will give the successful applicant three working days from the date of our conditional offer to confirm the date and time for a home visit or office interview if one is to be carried out (see home visits below). If the applicant does not contact us within three working days, and they have not previously indicated that they would not be available, for example telling us that they are on holiday or in hospital, then we will withdraw our conditional offer and move on to the next applicant.

5.3.1 Home Visits

We will normally carry out home visits to all successful applicants living within a reasonable distance of our office when they will be asked to provide proof of residency and their housing history (so that we can take up references). If they cannot supply us with this information, we will move on to the next applicant.

For those who have used a Priority Pass to secure their conditional offer, we will also check the information provided at registration. If the applicant has declared tenancy debt equivalent to more than one month's rent charge, we will also check that their re-payment arrangement is still being maintained.

If the applicant lives too far away for a home visit, we will telephone them to check the details provided, at registration or ask a housing provider in their area to carry out the home visit on our behalf. If a telephone interview is carried out the pre allocation interview form will be sent out to check and agree before an offer is made.

5.3.2 Offer

We will send out an offer only after we have completed our required checks such as residency and, if appropriate, Priority Pass information and tenancy references. If the home is ready to let, our offer letter will suggest dates for the applicant to view the property and to sign their tenancy agreement. If the property is not ready, these dates will be arranged over the telephone when it is. The letter will also provide information and advice about rent and Housing Benefit / Universal Credit and inform the applicant what will happen if they refuse the offer. Again, the applicant must respond within three working days or the offer will normally be withdrawn.

If we withdraw an offer, or if the successful applicant refuses the offer, then we will contact the second qualifying applicant and follow the steps outlined above until the property is successfully allocated.

Where a successful applicant has used a Platinum Priority Pass and refuses an offer, we will notify East Lothian Council's Homeless Department and follow the process set out in the Nomination / Section 5 Protocol Agreement.

If an applicant has used a Priority Pass to apply for a property and they refuse an offer, then unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will withdraw the Priority Pass for a

period as detailed in Section 3.13 above. If a Priority Pass has not been used, there is no penalty for refusing an offer.

6.0 Appeal and Complaints Process

All applicants have the right to appeal against any decision made concerning their registration, the assessment of their housing need, the decision to suspend an application or Priority Pass the withdrawal of a Priority Pass or the withdrawal of their registration or an offer of housing. Appeals and Complaints will be dealt with by staff at an appropriate level. Staff members who made the original decision or were involved at a previous stage of the process will not be involved in appeals and complaints.

6.1 Stage 1

Appeals should be made in the first instance within two weeks of the disputed decision. We aim to acknowledge receipt of the appeal within two working days and to provide a full response within ten working days.

6.2 Stage 2

If the applicant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 decision, or has additional information, they can appeal again. Stage 2 appeals should be submitted within two weeks of the Stage 1 decision. We will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within three working days and aim to provide a full response within 20 working days.

6.3 Stage 3

If the applicant is not satisfied with the Stage 2 decision, their final appeal will be dealt with at Stage 2 of our Complaints Handling Procedure.

If the appeal or complaint is against a decision not to make an offer of housing, the property will **not** be held until the conclusion of the appeal and/or Complaints process. If the appeal or complaint is successful and the decision not to make the offer was due to an error or misunderstanding by us, the applicant will be offered the first available suitable property, and the allocation will be treated as a Management Allocation (see Section 5.0). If the appeal or complaint is successful because the applicant has provided information not previously available to us, this will be explained, and any penalties applied will be withdrawn.

We will tell applicants about their right to appeal or the next stage in the process in all decision letters.

7.0 Information and Advice

We meet the Scottish National Standards for Housing Information and Advice, developed by the Scottish Government. We will make sure that all our These Homes information is written in Plain English. We have a procedure for providing information in alternative formats for those who need it.

All the information about how These Homes works is available on both elha.com and thesehomes.com. It will also be made available to applicants applying by other means. If requested, we will provide tailored advice to an applicant about their housing prospects and other housing options. Where appropriate, we will seek and make referrals to other sources of housing support and advice.

Whilst the numbers of people applying for each property advertised on These Homes will be available to applicants, more detailed information about our allocations will be available on elha.com.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

Our Audit & Assurance Committee is responsible for monitoring the operation of this policy, and for bringing any concerns about its operation to the attention of our Management Committee.

Quarterly and annual performance reports are considered by our Audit & Assurance Committee, as well as reports on any allocations made in accordance with Section 1.6 or 1.7 of this policy. Our performance is also published on our Performance 365 microsite at elha.com.

The Director of Housing will ensure that this policy is reviewed by the Management Committee at least every five years.

Appendix 1

1.0 Non-Standard Allocations

We own several Shared Ownership, Workshop Homes, Garages, Garage Sites and other non-residential properties which are not allocated through These Homes. We also allocate some Low Cost Home Ownership properties on behalf of East Lothian Council:

1.1 Shared Ownership

We have a small stock (less than 50) of Shared Ownership properties developed between 1990 and 1997.

If a Sharing Owner decides they want to sell their share in a property, they are responsible for ensuring the property is marketed. Unless we agree to join with the Sharing Owner in a sale on the open market, we will offer to advertise their home on These Homes but will simply provide a Shared Ownership application form to any applicants and refer them direct to the Sharing Owner to arrange viewing. Our Shared Ownership Policy gives more information about this.

1.2 Workshop Homes

We own three workshop homes in Athelstaneford and Stenton. The allocation of these workshop homes is led by the business needs of the applicant and is carried out in partnership with the Economic Development Unit at East Lothian Council.

1.3 Garages and Garage Sites

We have a small number of Garages and Garage Sites available for rent close to our housing in various locations throughout East Lothian.

When a garage becomes available, we will advertise it on elha.com, Facebook and in our Head Office window. Applications will be accepted on elha.com, in writing, or by phone.

Applications will be prioritised using the following criteria:

- First priority will be given to our tenants
- If no tenants apply, priority will be given to applicants living close to the garage
- Disabled applicants will be prioritised within the above two groups
- If there is more than one applicant with equal priority, the garage will be allocated to the person who applied first

Before confirming the offer of a garage, we will ask for appropriate information from the applicant to confirm their ability to pay. Garage sites will also be advertised and allocated in a similar way.

1.4 Low Cost Home Ownership

We allocate Low Cost Home Ownership properties in East Saltoun and Ormiston on behalf of East Lothian Council. The way we allocate these homes is governed by a separate agreement between us and East Lothian Council.

Our responsibility is to advertise a property that an owner wishes to sell and find an eligible purchaser, according to the set criteria, and we will normally advertise these properties for sale in the local press.

Appendix 2

Definition of Priority Passes

Need	Priority Level	You qualify if:
Homelessness and Harassment	Platinum	East Lothian Council have accepted a duty to rehouse you under homeless legislation
	Silver	You need to leave your home due to persistent serious harassment*
	Bronze	You are suffering from intermittent harassment, but do not need to leave your home*
Domestic Abuse	Gold	You or a family member are a victim of domestic abuse and you have to leave your home but do not wish to approach the local authority as homeless
Need to be in a Community	Bronze	<p>You need to move to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take up or sustain permanent employment in East Lothian and your accommodation is more than one hour travel from your place of work • To be closer to your children in East Lothian who you have access arrangements for, but access is very difficult or impossible due to location • To be closer to shops and amenities which you currently have difficulty accessing • Provide or receive support to/from a family member living in East Lothian
	Silver	As above, but with the added requirement of moving to a rural location only**
Overcrowding / Under-Occupancy	Gold	<p>You need two or more extra bedrooms (overcrowding within the host family is disregarded), or</p> <p>You are an ELHA tenant and your home has two or more spare bedrooms</p>
	Silver	<p>You need one extra bedroom or you are a couple or have two children and sharing a single sized room (overcrowding within the host family is disregarded), or</p> <p>You are an ELHA tenant and your home has one spare bedroom</p>
	Bronze	You need an extra bedroom to allow residential access to children for at least 3 nights a week*

<p>Unsuitable Housing</p>	<p>Gold</p>	<p>Your current accommodation <u>is in significant breach of the Tolerable Standard</u>, has severe disrepair or defects, for example, severe dampness, rainwater penetration or structural defects^{***} <u>and the landlord is unable to arrange suitable repairs within a 6 month period due to issues out with the applicants/landlord's control. Proof will be sought for example, sight of a valid Statutory Work/Demolition Notice or Demolition Order which has been served on the owner by the Local Authority confirming the nature of the defect, or a report from a qualified person such as Surveyor, Architect or Environmental Health Officer</u></p> <p>-or</p> <p><u>Your accommodation</u> it-lacks one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flushing toilet • An adequate water supply • <u>A fixed bath or shower</u> <p><u>We may contact your landlord or carry out a house inspection to confirm the lack of amenities</u></p> <p>If you live in <u>accommodation which is not a house or flat, for example</u> a caravan, we will take into consideration how you came to be there (we will check whether you have intentionally worsened your circumstances - see Section 3.13) and where the caravan is situated <u>and if this is your permanent residential accommodation</u></p>
	<p>Bronze</p>	<p>Your current accommodation lacks one or more of the following basic amenities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>A wash hand basin</u> • <u>A hot and cold water supply at the bath / shower and wash hand basin</u> • <u>Satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting and ventilation</u> • A whole house heating system • <u>A kitchen area including a sink and somewhere suitable for someone to instal their own cooker</u> • <u>Satisfactory thermal insulation</u> • <u>An electric supply that meets safety regulations</u> • <u>Satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings</u>

		<p><u>If you lack at least three of these basic amenities we will upgrade you to Gold level.</u></p> <p><u>We may contact your landlord or carry out a house inspection to confirm the lack of amenities</u></p>
Medical	Gold	<p>You (or household member) have a severe medical condition which is made worse by your current accommodation and would be markedly improved by re-housing, or</p> <p>Re-housing is essential to allow discharge from hospital or to prevent admission to a nursing or residential home, and it is not practical to adapt your home to meet your needs, or</p> <p>Without re-housing the essential activities of daily life such as bathing, cooking and going out etc. are not possible, or</p> <p>You are an ELHA tenant (or household member) who requires a medical adaptation and we have not agreed to this work</p>
	Silver	<p>You (or household member) have a medical condition which would be markedly improved by re-housing, or</p> <p>Re-housing would substantially reduce the risk of physical injury, or</p> <p>Your present home makes essential activities of daily living difficult, and it is not practical to adapt your home. <u>****Verification from a health professional will be required</u></p> <p>Limits may be set by us for these Priority Passes, e.g. if a Pass is awarded due to difficulty managing stairs the Pass will be limited to ground floor accommodation</p>
First Affordable Home	Bronze	<p>You (and your partner) have a total annual income of under £30,000 and have little or no access to the local housing market. You have not held a social housing tenancy before, and you are living with your parents</p>
Transfer	Gold Plus	<p>You are an ELHA tenant, you qualify for any form of Priority Pass and</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear rent account • Maintain your home to a good standard • Have no history of neighbour problems or antisocial behaviour
	Bronze	You are an ELHA tenant and have been living in a flat for more than two years

* The level of pass awarded to applicants depends on the evidence provided during the pass application process.

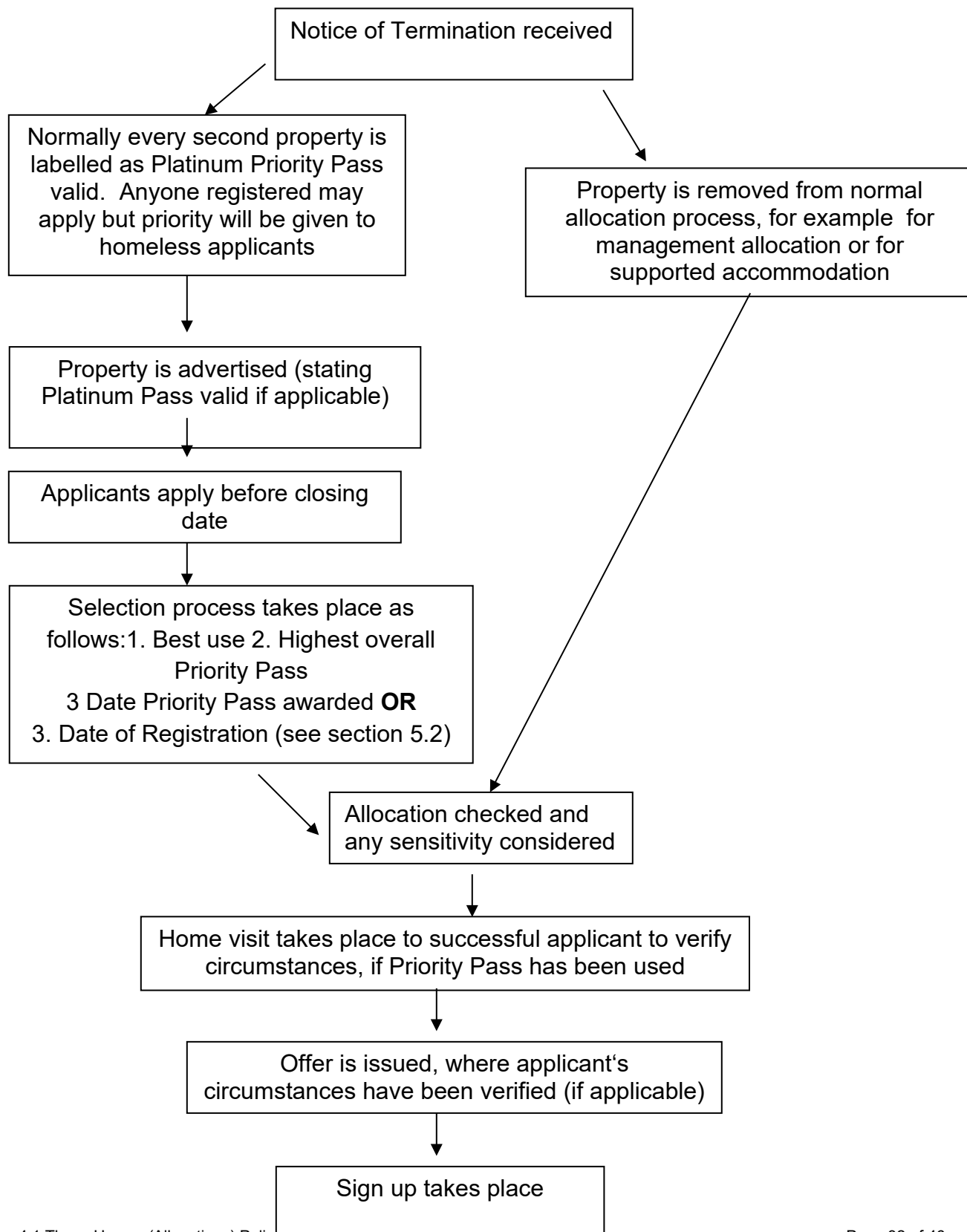
** Rural locations: Athelstaneford, Dirleton, East Linton, East Saltoun, Elphinstone, Garvald, Gifford, Innerwick, Ormiston, Pencaitland and Stenton

~~*** We may contact the landlord or carry out a house inspection~~

~~**** Verification from a health professional will be required~~

Appendix 3

OVERVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION PROCESS



Appendix 4

1.0 Suspended Applications

When we suspend an application, we will tell the applicant that they have been put on hold and explain why. We will also tell the applicant what, if anything, they need to do to have the hold status removed.

Where we need to take action, such as make further enquiries, we will make sure that this is done as quickly as possible and that, if required, follow up action is taken immediately.

We will regularly review held registrations in order to minimise the time any applicant is unable to apply for available properties.

We may suspend applications in the following circumstances:

1.1 Change of Circumstances

If the applicant buys a property or moves to a secure tenancy, we will suspend the application until we establish whether they wish to remain on the Housing Register.

1.2 Awaiting Information

If we need more information to assess an application, we will suspend the application until we receive the information. We will make sure that requests for information are regularly followed up so that the time the application is suspended is kept to a minimum.

1.3 Rental, Service Charge or Chargeable Repairs Debts

Where the applicant has current or previous rental, service charge, chargeable repairs, legal expenses or any other tenancy debt amounting to more than one month's rent, they must have made an arrangement for re-payment and maintained payments for at least three months.

If no arrangement has been made, we will tell the applicant that their registration will be suspended until this requirement has been met.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the re-payment arrangement is kept, to inform us when the arrangement has been kept for three months and to let us know if the arrangement is broken. We will check that any re-payment arrangement continues to be maintained before confirming any offer of housing.

Debts older than five years, which have not previously been pursued by the former landlord, or where the debt was not the responsibility of the applicant as a tenant, will be disregarded.

1.4 Anti-social behaviour

Where there is clear evidence of anti-social behaviour in a current or previous tenancy, we will suspend the application until we have fully investigated the circumstances. If we are satisfied that an applicant's circumstances or conduct has significantly changed, the suspension will be lifted.

In considering whether to suspend an application for antisocial behaviour, we will take account of the nature of the behaviour (for example, threats or harassment, fire raising, relevant criminal convictions) and:

- The nature, frequency and duration of the behaviour
- The extent to which the behaviour was the responsibility of people other than the applicant
- The effect the conduct had/is having on other people
- What the applicant has done to address the situation
- The applicant's ability to maintain a tenancy, either with or without support

1.5 Providing False Information or Omitting Relevant Information

Where we consider that an applicant has knowingly or carelessly given false information or withheld information that would have a bearing on their application, we will suspend the application for a period of twelve months.

1.6 Support Issues

If an applicant states that they need support to maintain a tenancy or appears unlikely to be able to maintain an independent tenancy without support, the application will be suspended for as long as it takes us to confirm that an appropriate support package has been identified and confirmed to be available to the applicant.

1.7 Applicant not able to Take up a Tenancy

If an applicant is unable to take up a tenancy, for example, because they are in hospital, prison or haven't yet left the armed forces, we will suspend their application until they are able to move.

1.8 Aggressive or threatening behaviour

If an applicant is aggressive or threatening towards a member of our staff or Management Committee, we will suspend their application for a minimum of twelve months. In all such

cases we will work with the applicant, by letter if necessary, towards a mutual understanding of their expected behaviour and attitude.

1.9 Condition of Property (Transfers only)

Where a transfer applicant must bring the condition of the property up to a satisfactory standard (where it relates to a breach of their tenancy agreement) they will be suspended until the work has been completed to our satisfaction (see section 3.11).

Appendix 5

1.0 Lettings Plans

We assess all applications in accordance with this Policy but, sometimes, we will adopt a Lettings Plan for a specific geographical area or neighbourhood or type of property. Where we do this, this will be clearly stated in the advert. Lettings Plans will always be intended to create or promote sustainable, stable, and balanced communities. We may adopt a Lettings Plan in situations such as:

- Where we need to prioritise applications for an area that is in high demand
- Where we are trying to promote demand in an area where there are empty properties
- Where we are seeking to stabilise a community that has been affected by incidents of antisocial behaviour
- Where we are trying to promote local employment by providing accommodation for incoming or key workers
- Where we want to ensure a mix of family size, e.g. in new developments or areas with limited children's play areas
- In accordance with East Lothian Council's Housing Strategy

All Lettings Plans will be time limited, and their effectiveness will be regularly monitored. However, given the nature and location of several of our developments, the Management Committee approved the decision to make the following Lettings Plans permanent:

- Sheltered Housing - Osborne Court, Cockenzie

Osborne Court is a sheltered housing scheme with 16 properties, including eight upper flats. Given the age of the tenants who are housed in this development (over 60s) their needs can change, and some find it increasingly difficult to climb the stairs. This generally means that an upper flat can become unsuitable and the tenant needs a transfer to ground floor accommodation.

If a ground floor property in this development becomes available, we will offer it to any first-floor residents at Osborne Court who require ground floor accommodation, without advertising the actual vacancy. If such a transfer is accepted, the resulting first floor vacancy is advertised as normal. It is possible that the need for such a transfer is not known about before a ground floor flat is advertised and that this only comes to light once the property has been made available through These Homes.

If this happens then we will offer the ground floor flat to our tenant and the resulting vacant upper flat to the first suitable applicant on the list. Managing stock this way ultimately meets the needs of two applicants and potentially reduces the needs for medical adaptations

- The Granary & Hardgate Court – Haddington,

These flats are situated adjacent to a main road and a communal car park. Given the number of health and safety concerns arising from a lack of storage space, children playing in the carpark and the location of the main road, it was agreed that a sensitive approach to allocations should be taken to letting all future vacancies in these blocks with priority being given to families with children aged 12 years or older.

Appendix 6

NOMINATIONS AND HOMELESSNESS DUTIES INCLUDING SECTION 5 HOUSING
(SCOTLAND) ACT 2001

PROTOCOL AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this protocol agreement between East Lothian Council and East Lothian Housing Association is to specify the arrangements for the nomination of re-housing applicants AND referrals under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

The terms and conditions of the agreement will be reviewed annually at a review meeting.

2. PRINCIPLES

East Lothian Council and East Lothian Housing Association aim to work together to:

- ◆ Address and assist in reducing homelessness in East Lothian
- ◆ Operate an effective, efficient and equitable nomination process, which minimises void losses, and disputes between the parties to the agreement.
- ◆ Fulfil all relevant Statutory Duties

East Lothian Council and East Lothian Housing Association wish to promote equal access to housing and are committed to meeting legal responsibilities in respect of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to age, race, gender re-assignment, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, disability, pregnancy and maternity, sex and sexual orientation.

All information provided in connection with nominations and Section 5 referrals will be treated as confidential by both organisations.

3. SCOPE OF AGREEMENT

The agreement covers all lettings on a permanent basis to self-contained rented accommodation within East Lothian by East Lothian Housing Association, with the exception of Workshop Homes.

East Lothian Housing Association is committed to assisting East Lothian Council to fulfil its strategic responsibility to provide for those with particular needs within East Lothian. Details of available properties will be provided to appropriate personnel within East Lothian Council who can provide assistance to those with particular needs in identifying and applying for available properties.

4. PUBLICITY

East Lothian Council will provide information on Housing Associations to all homeless, housing and transfer applicants.

This information will include details of the differences between Council and Housing Association tenancies.

East Lothian Housing Association will advertise all available properties at its office, on its website, on the These Homes website and will provide information to appropriate Support Providers including the Council's Housing Options Team. East Lothian Council will provide a link from its website to the These Homes website.

5. LIAISON ARRANGEMENTS

Both organisations will have named officers with contact telephone numbers with day-to-day responsibility for nominations and referrals and will confirm any changes to these arrangements

Any changes to these named contacts shall be notified in writing. In the event of sickness or other periods of absence, there will be a delegated substitute to assume these roles.

6. NOTIFICATION OF ALLOCATION RESULTS

East Lothian Housing Association will notify East Lothian Council of all allocations within two working days of the successful applicant accepting the property.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

Where appropriate, East Lothian Council shall share confidential information including that relating to the conduct of current or previous tenancies of nominated applicants, where this affects their re-housing application.

8. PERCENTAGE OF VACANCIES TO PRIORITY HOMELESS APPLICANTS

East Lothian Housing Association will offer 50% of their vacant properties to homeless applicants that East Lothian Council has a duty to house. Section 5 referrals will normally be contained within this 50% quota, but in exceptional circumstances, with the agreement of both parties, a section 5 referral may be made out-with the agreed quota.

This protocol is void-led and aims to meet the needs and aspirations of prospective tenants.

In calculating the total number of properties for which allocations to priority homeless applicants will be made, the following shall be excluded:

- ◆ VOIDS created through a tenant moving to another landlord where a reciprocal agreement exists
- ◆ VOIDS created by the death of a tenant where there is a statutory successor
- ◆ decants

9. NEW BUILD DEVELOPMENTS

In order to ensure that homeless applicants are allowed the same access to newly built, rehabilitated or acquired property as other applicants, East Lothian Housing Association will contact East Lothian Council 12 weeks before the anticipated completion/acquisition date. The 50% quota will apply and the parties will agree whether the properties are to be advertised or whether nominations and/or section 5 referrals are to be provided. A flexible approach will be adopted which may result in advertising some properties and allocating others via nomination/referral.

10. NOMINATIONS

East Lothian Housing Association will advertise vacant properties under the Choice Based Lettings system, These Homes. A sufficient number of vacancies will state that applicants with a Platinum Priority Pass, awarded by East Lothian Housing Association for homelessness, are eligible to apply. Homeless applicants can apply for all properties but can only use their Platinum Priority Pass for the stated 50% of vacancies.

East Lothian Housing Association will advertise vacant properties on its website, on the These Homes website, as well as local housing offices and libraries etc. The adverts will run for ten days before the closing date.

In the unlikely eventuality that no homeless applicants apply for an advertised property for which a Platinum Priority Homeless Pass is valid, East Lothian Housing Association will contact East Lothian Council by email to request a homeless nomination using the nomination request form.

East Lothian Council will take cognisance of East Lothian Housing Association's These Homes (Allocations) Policy when making the homeless nomination, using the standard nomination. The form will be emailed to East Lothian Housing Association within three working days of the request being received. A nomination will be requested only in the event that no applicant with a Platinum Priority Pass, awarded for homelessness, who also meets the "best use" criteria, applies by the closing date.

Failure of Nominations

If East Lothian Council fails to provide the requested nomination within three working days, East Lothian Housing Association shall remind the Council of the outstanding request by email. Should East Lothian Council fail to respond within two working days of the reminder, East Lothian Housing Association shall count this as a failed nomination. For monitoring purposes failed nominations will count towards the 50% homeless quota. In the event that no priority homeless applicant applies by the closing date and the nomination has failed, East Lothian Housing Association will allocate the property to the highest placed ordinary applicant. Failed nominations will be reported to East Lothian Council as part of the quarterly performance's statistics provided on the nominations process.

Withdrawal of Property for Nomination

In an emergency such as fire, flood or immediate re-housing required due e.g. to harassment, East Lothian Housing Association reserves the right to withdraw a nomination request or advertised property. In this event, the property will not count towards the 50% allocation to homeless applicants and a suitable property will be substituted when available.

11. REFUSAL OF NOMINATIONS

East Lothian Housing Association may reject East Lothian Council's nomination where:

- ◆ The nominee is not eligible for re-housing under the Association's These Homes (Allocations) policy because their registration is on hold as a result of the nominee providing false or misleading information in respect of his/her registration
- ◆ the nominee has current or previous outstanding rent arrears or rechargeable repair arrears in excess of one month's rent, and no agreed repayment arrangement has been maintained for a minimum of three months. This ground may be waived where the applicant is fleeing harassment as defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and/or domestic violence
- ◆ the nominee caused serious management problems, which resulted in legal action being taken to end a tenancy or, in the case of hostel type accommodation, the applicant was asked to leave because of serious misconduct. In coming to a decision to reject a nomination on this ground, East Lothian Housing Association would look at the circumstances and elapse of time since the tenancy or accommodation ended
- ◆ the circumstances of the nominee have changed since the Council last assessed them, and the property in question is no longer suitable for their needs
- ◆ the Association is concerned that the household contains a person who may not be able to cope with living in the property without additional care or support, which either the household is unwilling to accept, or which cannot be arranged.

Before refusing a nomination East Lothian Housing Association will first contact East Lothian Council to see whether differences can be reconciled, or solutions found. Where agreement cannot be reached, East Lothian Housing Association shall proceed in line with their policy position.

12. SECTION 5 REFERRALS

Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places statutory duties on housing associations and other registered social landlords to provide accommodation to homeless people if requested to do so by the local authority. Any Section 5 referral made by East Lothian Council to East Lothian Housing Association will where possible be contained within the 50% homeless quota, but it is accepted that in exceptional circumstances a section 5 referral may be made out-with the quota

The Association sends a flyer to East Lothian Council each week properties are advertised.. East Lothian Council will respond by email on the same day, or within one working day, if they wish to make a Section 5 referral to a vacant property. If East Lothian Council makes a Section 5 referral the property will be withdrawn from advertisement and will count towards the priority homeless quota except in exceptional circumstances.

The Council will, with the applicant's written consent, provide relevant information concerning the applicant's housing history and any other matters that it would be reasonable for a prospective landlord to take into consideration, particularly any specific requirements and/or support needs. Where the applicant has not granted permission for such information to be provided, East Lothian Housing Association will be informed of the refusal.

The Council will also provide any other information of which East Lothian Housing Association should be aware in an attempt to ensure that the tenancy can be sustained and any potential issues relating to the health and welfare of the applicant or existing residents can be taken into consideration and properly assessed.

It is agreed that both parties can enter into informal discussion concerning an individual household/person prior to the initiation of the formal referral process. Such discussion will not bind the Council to agreeing to any refusal by East Lothian Housing Association to comply with any subsequent formal request for accommodation for the household concerned.

East Lothian Council will make a formal referral by email using the Section 5 Referral Form.

The Association will confirm receipt of the request within one working day.

Prior to formally responding, East Lothian Housing Association will notify the Council of any reason for not wishing to comply that was not apparent from earlier discussions

and/or falls out-with those specified in the guidance to the legislation. It will be for the Council to decide whether or not to proceed with the request to re-house.

The Association will give its formal response within 5 working days of receipt of the referral. Prior to responding, the Association may contact the Homelessness Officer for further information or to provide new information. Such information may result in extending the time for the Association to carry out its part of the procedure.

The Association's response will be one of the following:

- ◆ Confirms that the household/person referred to the Association under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is being allocated the stated property.
- ◆ Confirms that the Association is refusing the request, stating "good reason" not to comply.

If the Association refuses the referral stating "good reason" not to comply, the Association will specify its reasons for non-compliance. The Council will consider the Association's response and reply within 5 working days. East Lothian Council may respond by:

- ◆ Discussing the Association's response and reviewing its request
- ◆ Withdrawing the request
- ◆ Instigating the commencement of a period of ten working days within which the parties must either reach agreement or submit to arbitration.

If the Association makes an allocation to a Section 5 referral, the allocation will be treated the same as an allocation to a homeless applicant and East Lothian Council will be notified if the property is subsequently refused.

13. REJECTION OF SECTION 5 REFERRALS

East Lothian Housing Association will reject East Lothian Council's section 5 referral where:

- ◆ the person concerned has current or previous outstanding rent arrears or rechargeable repair arrears in excess of one month's rent, and no agreed repayment arrangement has been maintained for a minimum of three months. This ground may be waived where the applicant is fleeing harassment as defined by the Housing(Scotland) Act 2001 and/or domestic violence
- ◆ the person concerned caused serious management problems, which resulted in legal action being taken or, in the case of hostel type accommodation, the applicant was asked to leave because of serious misconduct. In coming to a decision to reject a referral on this ground, East Lothian Housing Association would look at the circumstances and elapse of time since the tenancy or accommodation ended.
- ◆ the circumstances of the person have changed since the Council last assessed them, and the property in question is no longer suitable for their needs.

- ◆ the Association is concerned that the household contains a person who may not be able to cope with living in the property without additional care or support, which either the household is unwilling to accept, or which cannot be arranged.

In these cases, the Association will first contact East Lothian Council to see whether differences can be reconciled, or solutions found. Where agreement cannot be reached, the arbitration process outlined in section 15 will be implemented.

14. REFUSAL OF AN OFFER BY A HOMELESS APPLICANT

East Lothian Housing Association may offer available properties to homeless applicants who have either applied direct through These Homes, been nominated by East Lothian Council or been referred by East Lothian Council under section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Under East Lothian Council policy, homeless applicants are entitled to one reasonable offer of accommodation. If a homeless applicant is offered a property by the Housing Association and refuses the offer, East Lothian Housing Association will advise the applicant to contact the Council and notify East Lothian Council of the refusal and the reasons by email or telephone on the day of the applicant's refusal.

In these circumstances, East Lothian Council's Homelessness Team will need to investigate and decide whether the re-housing duty towards the applicant has been discharged. The Housing Association shall hold the property for the applicant until the Council has completed such investigations. East Lothian Council will normally notify The Housing Association of the outcome within 2 working days.

15. DISPUTES AND ARBITRATION

Both parties will, in the first instance, attempt to resolve any dispute arising from the operation of this agreement by informal discussion in order to avoid the need for arbitration. At the informal discussion stage, both parties will take cognisance of the Arbitration (Scotland) Act 2010 and associated Guidance on good reason for non-compliance with a request to re-house and to sections 11 and 13 of this agreement.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it will be referred to a Disputes Panel made up of representatives of East Lothian Council and East Lothian Housing Association. The Disputes Panel will be chaired by someone, independent or otherwise, agreed by both parties.

Throughout the course of any Formal Dispute the void property subject to the Dispute will remain unallocated until the outcome of the Dispute is known.

The Disputes Panel will meet and reach its decision within 7 working days of a Dispute being referred to it. The Panel will also decide how any financial losses incurred by either side are to be split.

The decision of the Disputes Panel will be final and binding on both parties.

All Formal Disputes will be recorded in Housing Association Disputes Form copies of which will be provided to both parties.

In the event of the Disputes Panel being unable to reach agreement on the outcome of a Dispute, both parties will, as a last resort, consider using the arbitration process outlined by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

16. MONITORING NOMINATIONS AND REFERRALS

The Association will, notify the Housing Options Team of the outcome of referrals and nominations within two working days.

East Lothian Housing Association will also provide East Lothian Council with information on its stock numbers by type, area and apartment size and turnover by providing the relevant pages of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) submitted annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

On a quarterly basis the Association will forward to the Council a summary of:

- ◆ total number of overall lets by the Association, by source category (i.e. both direct and nominated homeless and all other applicants).
- ◆ total number of Section 5 referrals and their outcome.

On a quarterly basis the Council will supply the Association with total figures for both the period in question and, cumulatively for the year so far summarising:

- ◆ the total number of homeless acceptances for permanent accommodation, broken down by area.
- ◆ an analysis of referrals made to each RSL within the council area and their outcome.

This data will enable all parties to monitor against the 50% target agreed within the protocol.

A formal annual review meeting will be held to discuss performance, how any shortfalls in the quota of nominations should be addressed, and any proposed alterations to the agreement.

17. SIGNATURES

Signed on behalf of East Lothian Housing Association

Signature.....Name.....

...

Title..... Date.....

Witnessed by

Signature.....Name.....

.....

Address.....Date.....

Signed on behalf of East Lothian Council

Signature.....Name.....

.....

Title..... Date.....

Witnessed by

Signature.....Name.....

.....

Address.....Date.....

Tenant Participation Annual Report

Report by Claire McMillan, Housing Manager – for information

1.0 Introduction

The responsibility for monitoring Tenant Participation throughout the year is delegated to the Audit & Assurance Committee; however, involving tenants in the Association's work is both a legal and regulatory requirement, as well as a corporate responsibility. This Annual Report highlights the work the Association has carried out in relation to Tenant Participation during the year 2021/22.

2.0 Tenant Participation Strategy

Progress on the Tenant Participation Action Plans (parts of the Tenant Participation Strategy that are reviewed three yearly and annually) was overseen by the TIG Panel. Action Plans for 2022/23 have been agreed, including the intention for the TIG-Scrutiny Group to carry out another scrutiny project.

3.0 Tenant Involvement Group (TIG)

The TIG completed their sixth project, after choosing to consider 'Leased Properties' as their topic. The TIG met with the Director of Housing during this exercise to discuss the different aspects they wished to scrutinise. A presentation was provided with all supporting information required for the exercise; and the outcome was that no recommendations were made for change.

The TIG Panel's work over the year also involved:

- Continuing to adapt to meeting digitally through 'Teams' and taking the decision to offer this option longer term, to make the meetings as accessible as possible to tenants
- Reviewing the quarterly Complaints Analysis Report
- Assisting staff in reviewing the frequency of the Stair Cleaning Satisfaction Survey, along with the wording of this and whether to link this survey to the Key Tenant Scheme discounts
- Reviewing a number of satisfaction surveys and consultation exercises, including the rent increase consultation

Membership of the TIG Panel stood at five at the end of the year, with one additional member interested in becoming involved again once meetings return to face to face.

4.0 Information & Consultation

The Association produced a range of information for tenants during the year including:

- 11 e-news
- 7 newsflashes
- 4 printed newsletters

Over the year, the average open rate for e-Talk newsletters and newsflash editions was 55%, and 31% of recipients click through to read at least one full article on elha.com' news page.

The annual Rent Increase Consultation was carried out in January 2022 using the specially designed elha.com micro-site for the second year running. Printed information was sent to the minority of tenants who have not opted to be paper-free. Engagement levels were very positive with 25.9% tenants responding to the consultation.

Satisfaction surveys were also carried out over the year for the following service areas, the results of which were reported to the Audit & Assurance Committee:

- Reactive Maintenance Service
- New Development Survey at Wildflower Crescent, Ormiston
- Garden Care Service
- Stair Cleaning Service

5.0 Social Media

Work to improve the Association's social media presence continued and dedicated campaigns on different topics, including using hashtags to highlight issues are being used.

Work also continued to consolidate key hashtags on the Facebook page using #elhahelp, #elhaenergy, and #thesehomes to highlight different aspects of the Association's work and advice.

ELHA's Facebook page had a following of 1,401 people at the of March 2022.

6.0 Working with Tenants / Tenant Groups

Opportunities to work with tenant groups has sadly remained significantly limited during the past year. Informal opportunities also often arise through estate management work, which was still reduced in 20/21 in comparison with previous years.

During the course of the year, the Association has:

- Worked with residents at Hardgate Court, Haddington on issues regarding the Stair Cleaning Service and improving the condition of a stairwell
- Carried out estate inspections with residents in Stenton and Ormiston, resulting in improvements to the car parking area at Hillview Court, Ormiston, where the Estate Improvements budget has been used to paint lines in the car park
- Worked with tenants at North High Street, Musselburgh, on car parking issues (following consultation with all tenants concerned, a chain has been introduced to restrict access to their car park after ongoing issues with non-residents taking up the limited available spaces)
- Introduced new Stair Cleaning and Communal Garden Maintenance Services at a stair in Delta View, Musselburgh, following discussions and formal consultation with all tenants

7.0 Working with Partners

The East Lothian Tenant Participation Liaison Group has not met since December 2019 however it is hoped these will resume during 2022. The aim of this Group is to work with partners to maximise opportunities for joint working, pooling resources and sharing areas of good practice.

Contact has been made with Homes for Life Housing Partnership over the year regarding potential joint working opportunities on shared developments, including at Kennedy Court, Haddington.

The Association has regularly taken part in information sharing with landlords throughout Scotland through the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's Housing Management Forum and through the Tenant Participation Advisory Service's requests for sharing good practice.