

Allocation Policy Supported Housing

Approved on: 13 November 2007
Housing and Care Services Committee



BIELD HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

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Scottish Charity No SC006878

Bield Housing Association Limited
Allocation Policy - Supported Housing

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1. ABOUT BIELD HOUSING ASSOCIATION

- 1.1 Bield Housing Association Ltd was formed in 1971 as a non-profit organisation. The Association is registered with Communities Scotland under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is incorporated under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts (No. 1692R(S)) and is recognised as a registered Scottish Charity (No SC006878).
- 1.2 Bield's primary objective is to enable older people to live independent and fulfilling lives by being a leading and innovative provider of high quality housing, care and support services. Bield also seeks to develop and manage a broad range of high quality housing for other client groups such as families and vulnerable adults
- 1.3 Bield will work with Local Authorities and, where appropriate, other housing providers and statutory bodies to maximise opportunity and simplify access routes into housing, which will include the promotion of SHOP, Bield's joint Common Housing Register with Hanover (Scotland) and Trust Housing Associations

2. ABOUT BIELD'S HOUSING

Bield's Allocations Policy covers the allocation of housing and, where appropriate, housing support services for all General Needs and Supported Housing properties. **This includes Bield applicants as well as applicants seeking a transfer to another Bield property.**

2.1 General Needs Housing

Bield owns and manages a small number of General Needs properties which in the main are located within or adjacent to existing Supported Housing developments. Some of these properties are purpose built General Needs housing, but most are houses which were previously occupied by residential staff. Where possible, Bield will work with local authorities and voluntary organisations to consider joint initiatives to make use of former staff accommodation to support vulnerable people to live as independently as possible within the local community. Where this is not appropriate, Bield will allocate tenancies to younger applicants, and on occasion, to applicants with families.

2.2 Supported Housing

Within the scope of this Policy, Supported Housing refers to accommodation which has been purpose built and designed to enable older people to live safely and independently, which includes in all cases the provision of a 24 hour community alarm service. Most of the accommodation is located in developments which have communal facilities such as a laundry and lounge, which are managed by scheme based staff.

Within Bield, there are five different Supported Housing models, which in the main differs in the level of "on site" staff support and services. These Supported Housing models are:

- Amenity Housing
- Retirement Housing
- Sheltered Housing
- Very Sheltered Housing
- Housing with Care/Supported Living Housing

Across Bield's Supported Housing developments, there are a number of tenancies which are allocated on a Shared Equity basis. This is an arrangement whereby tenants make a minimum capital sum investment within the property and in return

receive a discount in the rental charge for the property. Further information on this scheme and where Bield's Shared Equity properties are located can be obtained from any of our offices.

A number of individual developments have eligibility criteria and assessment arrangements which are specific to the development due to the specialist nature of the housing, support and in some cases, care provision delivered to tenants within these developments.

Further information relating to Bield's housing models and individual developments is available from any of Bield's offices, Bield's website (www.bield.co.uk) or from the SHOP website (www.scottishhousingoptions.org)

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ALLOCATION POLICY

3.1 Bield's Allocation Policy aims to ensure that:

- there is open and fair access to our housing,
- information and support is available to applicants to enable them to apply for and express choice with regards to the housing developments applied for,
- Bield allocates housing to those in greatest housing and personal need who will benefit from the housing and support services provided,
- Bield works with Local Authority partners with regards to their responsibilities to address the needs of homeless people through Section 5 Protocols and Nomination Agreements,
- For supported housing, information and advice will be provided to applicants on the range of housing support services provided within the developments applied for, and to ensure that an assessment of need is undertaken to ensure that housing support is allocated based on the criteria for the housing developments applied for

4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

4.1 Equality is central to the values and mission statement of Bield. The Statement of Values within the Equal Opportunities Policy states that:-

"Bield believes that people of all ages, including older people, are valuable individuals with equality of rights and responsibilities. Older people should be able to live with dignity and security, have freedom of choice and independence in their daily living, enjoy privacy and be able to realise their potential in diverse ways as respected members of society"

"Bield is committed to contributing to the achievement of a Scotland where everyone can participate fully and fairly without disadvantage arising from their gender, disability, race or any other personal characteristic"

4.2 These values are core to Bield's Allocations Policy, and to the principles adopted in terms of the management of our housing developments. The assessment of applications and the allocations criteria give particular priority to older and disabled people. We aim to take positive action to redress any imbalance of representation of members of the black and minority ethnic communities by providing practical support and information on how to access housing, networking with appropriate agencies and support groups, and by providing translation services which can be

accessed across all Bield offices, Happy to Translate Website (www.equalityscotland.com) and developments.

5 ACCESS TO THE HOUSING LIST

- 5.1 Bield will maintain an open housing list which means that applications can be made at anytime. There is no limitation on the number of developments which an applicant can specify within an application.
- 5.2 Bield's application and allocations arrangements are managed through SHOP (Scottish Housing Options) which is a common housing register which operates across Scotland enabling applicants to apply for any housing managed by Bield and the other SHOP Partners, Hanover (Scotland) and Trust Housing Associations.
- 5.3 All applicants, including Bield tenants, are required to complete a SHOP application form. This can be through the completion of a manual application form or by applying on line. Advice and assistance from Bield staff, or any Bield Partners within SHOP, is available to anybody who has any difficulty with completion of the form including interpretation and translation services. This document is also available in tape and large print.
- 5.4 To maximise their housing options, applicants will be provided with general advice and information on their housing options including the benefits of also applying directly to the local authority to enable them to be in a position to be considered for nominations or Section 5 referrals, depending on their housing circumstances.
- 5.5 SHOP application forms and information regarding the application and allocation process are made widely available in order to encourage and facilitate applications.

Access points include:

- all Bield offices and schemes
 - council offices which are willing to hold supplies of forms
 - other locations which are willing to hold supplies of forms including – community centres, day care centres, GP surgeries , clubs for older people
 - Bield's Housing Equal Opportunities Manager – including surgeries held in various multi-cultural centres
 - on line via SHOP and Bield's website
 - any access point applicable to a local Common Housing Register
- 5.6 When considering an application, Bield will take no account of:
 - residency qualifications or local connections
 - property ownership
 - the income of the applicant or anyone else who will form part of the applicant's household
 - any rent arrears or other arrears accrued by the applicant for a former home which are no longer outstanding
 - any rent arrears attributable to a house of which the applicant was not the tenant when the liability accrued
 - any rent arrears which is below the value of one month's total rent
 - any outstanding rent arrears for which the applicant has agreed an arrangement with the landlord for paying the outstanding liability and adhered to this agreement for at least 3 months and is continuing to make payments
 - any outstanding debts (such as council tax) of the applicant or anyone else who will form part of the applicant's household which does not relate to the tenancy of a house

5.7 Supported Housing

All applicants for Supported Housing must be 60 years of age or over. In the case of a couple, at least one partner must be aged 60 or over.

Exceptions to this rule will be applied in the following cases:

- the house available is specially designed for a wheelchair user and there are no older applicants with such a need. The age criteria for any such allocations will vary based on the housing model which the property is located in
- where the overall development or an individual property is not accessible for people who have mobility difficulties such as stair access to the property. In this case applications will be considered from people 50 years of age or over.
- where the housing development provides specialist support to a specific client group which also includes a lower age criteria
- where, through negotiation with the local authority, a younger age criteria is applied to a development to address local housing needs. However such a review in the age criteria will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, in consultation with the local authority

Applications received from people who are below 60 years of age (or in the case of a couple where both applicants are below 60 years of age) and who have applied for Supported Housing where no exception to the age criteria apply, will be advised in writing that they do not meet the criteria for the development/s applied for.

5.8 General Needs Housing

Bield owns and manages a small number of General Needs properties which in the main are located within or adjacent to existing Supported Housing developments. Due to the small scale of this housing stock, Bield does not currently maintain a housing list for General Needs housing.

Where a vacancy arises, the Association will seek a “sensitive let” by requesting nominations from the local authority (or an appropriate Registered Social Landlord where the Council no longer maintains a housing list as a result of stock transfer) for suitable nominations based on the criteria for the vacancy. The criteria will take into account the size and design of the property, where it is located, and factors relating to the client group within the adjacent Supported Housing developments.

6 **ADMISSION TO THE HOUSING LIST**

- 6.1 Bield operates a points based Allocations Policy. Applications which meet the basic criteria for admission to the housing list for the developments applied for will be assessed in accordance with the points system outlined in section 7 of this Policy. Once assessed and allocated points based on the pointing system, applications will be ranked with those who have the most points being at the top of the housing list.
- 6.2 Where Bield have sufficient information to enable a full assessment of an application, it will be added to the housing list and a written response outlining the outcome of the application issued to the applicant (and their support/carer where specified) within 28 days of receiving the form. ***Please note that within the context of this Policy, “assessment” refers to a housing and support assessment of an applicant’s needs with regards to the type of housing applied for.***
- 6.3 Bield recognises an applicants’ right to choose to apply for any type of housing. However allocations will be made based on the suitability of the property based on the applicant’s needs, size of accommodation and housing support assessment. It should be noted however that to make best use of Bield’s housing stock within a

development which has a mix of 1 person and 2 person properties, applications from couples who are ranked within the top 10 of a housing list may be allocated 2 person, 2 apartment accommodation ahead of single applicants.

- 6.4 Applications (including requests for internal transfers) from Committee or Board Members, Staff and/or their relatives will be subject to the provisions under Section 63, Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Further information regarding this issue can be obtained from the Centralised Allocations Team.
- 6.5 Within the SHOP application form, information is requested on issues relating to rent/mortgage arrears, anti social behaviour and registered sex offenders. Where an applicant has indicated within their application form that they have rent or mortgage arrears, that they have had legal action taken against them for anti social behaviour, or are required to register with the Police with regards to sexual offences, further information will be required from the applicant before the application can be fully admitted to the housing list which could include the provision of a reference from the applicant's current or former landlord.

On occasion there may be a need to seek a reference from a current or former landlord, or support agencies, to assist with the assessment of an application. This could relate to information disclosed within the application regarding their current tenancy, or issues which have arisen during the home visit.

6.6 Suspension from the Housing List

There may be some circumstances when an application will be suspended from the housing list for a restricted period, and as a result will not be made any offers of housing. This action will only be carried out in the following exceptional circumstances:

- The applicant owes Bield, or another landlord, a tenancy related debt such as rent arrears or rechargeable repairs, where the debt is more than one month's rent and a repayment arrangement has not been kept for over 3 months
- The applicant or anyone else who will form part of the applicant's household has a history of anti social behaviour, including violent behaviour, or has been evicted for anti social behaviour offences
- The applicant declares on their application form that they are a sex offender. The application will be suspended until a risk assessment has been carried out by the relevant responsible authority
- The applicant has committed a breach of their tenancy conditions (either as a tenant of Bield or another landlord) and are not willing to demonstrate their ability to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy. This could include issues relating to pets, the condition of their home or the behaviour of other people who form part of their household. (*Please note this will not apply to applicants who have support needs which restricts their ability to fulfil their tenancy conditions but who receive enhanced support to enable them to sustain their tenancy*)
- During home visits and through the provision of supporting information, it is the view of Bield that the applicant has a high level of support needs which Bield cannot meet within the Supported Housing development which they have applied for unless social work services agree to put an appropriate care package in place which will ensure that the applicant/s health, safety and overall welfare will be supported to a level which will enable them to live as independently as possible within the development applied for. The impact that such an allocation

may have on the health and welfare of existing tenants and Bield staff will be considered as part of the assessment process.

- The applicant has deliberately falsified information on their application form
- The applicant has failed to provide all relevant information required to fully assess their application despite being issued with at least 2 written reminders to do so
- The applicant has failed to allow Bield or any of the SHOP partners to undertake a planned home visit on at least 2 occasions, arranged within a 6 month period.
- The applicant has refused 2 formal offers of housing within a 6 month period which meets their choice of development, and their housing and support needs but have been unable to demonstrate a satisfactory reason for the refusals

The purpose of the suspension is to enable time for additional information to be obtained, and/or to monitor the behaviour or conduct of an applicant. Each application will be considered on an individual basis. The decision to suspend an application will be made by the Service Manager: Centralised Allocations Team, who will be responsible for reviewing all suspended applications on a quarterly basis. All applicants who are suspended from the housing list will be advised in writing of the reasons for the suspension and action required.

Applicants can appeal against the decision which will be treated in accordance with the allocations appeals process (see section 11 below).

6.7 Mutual Exchanges

Bield will consider requests from tenants who wish to exchange with another Bield tenant or a tenant from another registered social landlord, and will offer assistance where possible to enable the exchange to take place.

For all external parties to a mutual exchange, a tenancy reference will be required before a decision on the exchange will be made. Bield reserves the right to refuse such a request if it considers the exchange to be unreasonable or if the tenancy reference highlights areas of concern. This will include any issues relating to application suspensions as outlined in section 6.6.

Bield will also refuse a mutual exchange where the exchange does not make best use of the housing stock (ie the exchange will create overcrowding, or will not make best use of the stock by creating under occupancy of the property), the external party to the mutual exchange does not meet the age or other criteria for the development applied for, or the external party to the mutual exchange is unable to demonstrate that they will benefit from the level of housing support services provided, then the mutual exchange will be refused.

6.8 Internal Transfers

All Bield tenants are required to complete a SHOP application form and will be assessed in the same way as direct applications. However it is recognised that a number of Bield properties may necessitate the need for some tenants to seek a transfer to another Bield property or development for medical reasons. This includes tenants who have mobility problems which are exacerbated by the design of their current accommodation or the development they live in, and tenants who require a large property due to the use of a wheelchair access or other walking aids or adaptations.

Tenants will be assessed and allocated points based on their housing and personal factors. However where they demonstrate a medical need for a transfer, an

additional 100 points will be allocated to their application. Such applications will be placed at the top of the housing list for the development applied for and will become a priority for rehousing, depending on a suitable property becoming available. Where more than one tenant has applied for a transfer within the development and have equal points to other transfer applicants, the date of application will be considered, with the tenant who applied first becoming a priority for rehousing.

Tenants who are seeking a transfer for non medical reasons will be assessed and placed on the housing list for the development/s applied following the same procedure applied for applicants.

6.9 Cancellation of Applications

Applications may only be cancelled and removed from the housing list in the following circumstances:

- The applicant has requested their application to be cancelled
- On the death of the applicant
- The applicants has failed to respond to a periodic review of applications on the housing list
- The application has been suspended for a significant period of time due to concerns about the applicant’s support and/or care needs and the applicant has been unable to secure additional support which will enable them to sustain any future tenancy. In these circumstances, any decision to remove the applicant from the housing list must be taken by the Assistant Director: Supported Housing

Applicants can appeal against the decision which will be treated in accordance with the Allocations Appeals Process (see section 11 below).

7 **BIELD’S POINTS SYSTEM**

Bield operates a points based allocations system. This system is designed to ensure that priority is given to those applicants identified as being in most housing need. Points are split into Housing Factors and Personal Factors, and are awarded points based on the circumstances of the household which is seeking to be allocated a tenancy with Bield.

HOUSING FACTORS

Over-crowding/sharing

(applicants can be awarded point for each of the criteria outlined below)

Points Award

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) applicant does not have exclusive use of living room | 2 |
| (b) applicant does not have exclusive use of bedroom | 4 |
| (c) applicant does not have exclusive use of kitchen | 2 |
| (d) applicant does not have exclusive use of bathroom | 2 |
| (e) applicant lives in a non-domestic setting | 2 |

Basic amenities

(applicants can be awarded point for each of the criteria outlined below)

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) house lacks fixed bath or shower | 3 |
| (b) house lacks inside toilet | 3 |
| (c) house lacks satisfactory kitchen facilities | 3 |

Serious disrepair

(applicants can be awarded point for each of the criteria outlined below)

- (a) house suffers serious dampness or condensation 3
- (b) house suffers other serious repair problems 3

Heating

(applicants can be awarded point for each of the criteria outlined below)

- (a) house lacks satisfactory heating to living room 2
- (b) house lacks satisfactory heating to principal bedroom 2
- (c) house lacks satisfactory heating to kitchen 2
- (d) house lacks satisfactory heating to bathroom 2

External Stairs

(applicants will only be allocated points for a or b, not both)

- (a) house has external stairs which make going out difficult 2
- (b) house has external stairs which make going out possible only with assistance 4

Internal Stairs

(applicants will only be allocated points for a or b, not both)

- (a) house has internal stairs which make access to bathroom or bedroom difficult 2
- (b) house has internal stairs which make access to bathroom or bedroom possible only with assistance 4

Garden

(applicants will only be allocated points for a, b or c, not for all)

- (a) house has garden which applicant finds difficult to manage 1
- (b) house has garden which applicant finds very difficult to manage 3
- (c) house has garden which applicant finds impossible to manage 5

Transfers

- The applicant is a tenant of Bield and is applying for a transfer to another Bield property due to medical factors 100

PERSONAL FACTORS

Harassment/Security

(applicants will only be allocated points for one of the criteria below, not for all)

Points Award

- (a) applicant suffers mild harassment/security problems less than once a week 2
- (b) applicant suffers mild harassment/security problems at least once a week 4
- (c) applicant suffers severe harassment/security problems less than once a week 6

- | | |
|--|----|
| (d) applicant suffers severe harassment/security problems at least once a week | 8 |
| (e) applicant suffers severe harassment/security problems most days | 10 |

Social contacts

(applicants will only be allocated points for one of the criteria below, not for all)

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) applicant has social contact with others most but not all days | 2 |
| (b) applicant has social contact with others at least once a week | 4 |
| (c) applicant has social contact with others less than once a week | 6 |
| (d) applicant has no social contact with others | 8 |

Housing Support Needs

(for each of the four housing support factors outlined below, applicants will be allocated points based on the criteria which best reflects their circumstances)

1. Housework

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) applicant needs a little help with housework | 1 |
| (b) applicant needs quite a lot of help with housework | 3 |
| (c) applicant needs a great deal of help with housework | 5 |

2. Meal preparation

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) applicant needs a little help with meal preparation | 1 |
| (b) applicant needs quite a lot of help with meal preparation | 3 |
| (c) applicant needs a great deal of help with meal preparation | 5 |

3. Bathroom

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) applicant needs a little help with bathing | 1 |
| (b) applicant needs quite a lot of help with bathing | 3 |
| (c) applicant needs a great deal of help with bathing | 5 |

4. Shopping

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) applicant needs a little help with shopping | 1 |
| (b) applicant needs quite a lot of help with shopping | 3 |
| (c) applicant needs a great deal of help with shopping | 5 |

Walking aids

(applicants will only be allocated points for one of the criteria below, not for all)

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) applicant needs to use a walking stick | 2 |
| (b) applicant needs to use a walking frame/elbow crutches | 4 |
| (c) applicant needs to use a wheelchair when going out | 6 |
| (d) applicant needs to use a wheelchair at all times | 8 |

Assistance

(applicants will only be allocated points for one of the criteria below, not for all)

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) applicant needs assistance due to tendency to fall or other illness or | 2 |
|--|---|

condition less than once a week	
(b) applicant needs assistance due to tendency to fall or other illness at last once a week	4
(c) applicant needs assistance due to tendency to fall or other illness most days	6

8 NOMINATIONS AND HOMELESSNESS

Bield will actively work with all local authorities where the Association has Supported Housing and General Needs stock to develop measures to maximise choice and access to Bield housing. This will include formal Nomination Agreements, Section 5 Referrals and the exploration of joint allocation arrangements such as Common Housing Registers.

8.1 Nominations Agreements

In most cases local authorities will be invited to nominate applicants to Bield from their own housing list for a minimum of 50% of all void properties which are considered to be “net lets” (ie net of transfers and special referral arrangements). Formal arrangements relating to the level of nominees and timescales will be set out within a nomination agreement between Bield and the local authority will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

For some housing stock, local authorities may have up to 100% nomination arrangements for all void properties within this stock which are considered to be “net lets”. In the main these relate to General Needs housing and Supported Housing for special groups such as rough sleepers or very frail older people. These arrangements are set out within the formal nomination agreement between Bield and the local authority, or through allocations criteria specific to the development.

To maximise housing opportunities for applicants, Bield may enter into nomination arrangements with other Registered Social Landlords where the local authority has disposed of their residual housing stock through stock transfer. Any arrangements will be set out in a formal agreement and will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by both parties.

8.2 Homelessness

In recognition of the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Bield will work with local authorities to consider housing options to assist in their duties to permanently rehouse homeless people. This includes the establishment, monitoring and review of Section 5 Referral Protocols with each of the local authorities where Bield have General Needs and Supported Housing stock.

Where a direct application is received from a homeless person, Bield will assess their application in accordance with this Policy but will also provide general advice and assistance on their housing options, including the role of the local authority to assist homeless people with the provision of temporary accommodation.

8.3 Referrals from Local Authorities for Developments with Enhanced Housing Support Services

To ensure that Bield are allocating housing and support services to those applicants with the greatest level of housing need, Bield have the right to refuse nominees or homeless referrals do not meet the age or other criteria for the development applied for, or the nominees or referrals are unable to demonstrate that they would benefit

from the level of housing support services provided to tenants within the development where the void property has arisen.

8.4 Common Housing Registers

Bield operates its own Common Housing Register with its SHOP partners (see section 5 above) which widens housing opportunities for applicants seeking housing across Scotland, particularly older people. Bield will actively work with local authorities and other housing providers to develop SHOP to increase the options for applicants to access a wider choice of housing opportunities.

Bield will also work with individual local authorities and housing providers who are developing joint working arrangements to maximise access routes for applicants within a local area. The principle aim will be to minimise duplication for applicants and to consider how localised arrangements can complement the application process already established through SHOP.

9. **ALLOCATIONS**

9.1 Home Visits

Before making an offer of housing, Bield staff or one of the SHOP partners will visit applicants within their home. Where a home visit has been carried out within 6 months of the offer of housing, staff will initially make telephone contact with the applicant or their representative to establish if there has been any change in their circumstances. If required a further visit will be undertaken.

Where an applicant is living within insecure accommodation such as a temporary accommodation or hospital setting, staff will arrange to meet with the applicant within this temporary accommodation. On occasions, Bield may deem it necessary to enable the progression of an application to undertake assessment visits jointly with external agencies to ensure that a full and considered assessment is undertaken. This could involve joint visits with local authority social work staff or agencies with specialist knowledge of the care and/or support needs of the applicant.

Where it is not possible to undertake a home assessment visit due to the location of the applicant or due to personal circumstances, verification of the applicant's circumstances will be sought from other agencies, which might include a request for a home visit to be undertaken by a locally based housing provider.

The purpose of the home assessment visit is to review the applicant's circumstances, based on the information provided within the application form, to determine if there is any change in circumstances which might impact on the type of housing which an applicant should be allocated. During home visits, staff will discuss issues relating to the development and the housing models they have applied for; assess any additional support needs which have been identified; offer advice on welfare benefits and outline issues relating to the provision of housing support services where this is provided within any of the developments which the applicant has applied for.

9.2 Home Visits - Internal Transfers

When a Bield tenant is being considered for an offer of a transfer, a visit to their current tenancy will be carried out to inspect their home to ensure that no malicious damage or wilful neglect has occurred within the property. Where the property is found to be damaged by the tenant or the standard of decoration is unacceptable, the tenant will be advised that their housing application will be suspended until the tenant has completed all identified works to an acceptable standard. The decision to

hold onto the void property during this process will be made by the Service Manager: Centralised Allocations Team. Once the work has been undertaken to the satisfaction of the Association, their application will be reinstated to the housing list and the tenant will be eligible for a transfer.

9.3 Offers of Tenancies

When a vacancy occurs within a development, it will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority, normally based on the allocation of points, who has indicated a wish to be considered for that development, subject to the following:

- A home assessment visit has been carried out in the preceding 6 months
- The property which is vacant is suitable for the applicant/s in terms of accommodation size and the offer of accommodation will make best use of the stock.
- The house is suitable for the applicant in terms of location and facilities. Suitability is assessed according to an applicant's abilities. For example, applicants who cannot manage stairs will not be offered housing which can only be accessed by stair.
- An applicant's choices will be respected. We will not offer housing of a type which an applicant has clearly indicated a wish to avoid, subject to advice having been given by the Association of the restrictions on allocation options such choices may create.
- The applicant has the funds available to make the capital contribution required if the house is being disposed of under a shared equity arrangement.

9.4 Where possible Bield will ensure that offers of housing made match the applicant's preferences and housing needs, and as such it should be unlikely that an applicant will be made an offer of housing which is unsuitable. Accordingly the number of offers will be limited to avoid multiple offers being made to applicants who do not wish a move at that time. Where an applicant has refused 2 offers within a 6 month period, their application will be suspended pending further discussions with the applicant on their housing needs and timescales for a move. On occasion an application may be cancelled from the housing list where, through discussions, it is determined that the applicant is not actively seeking an immediate move into Bield housing.

9.5 When a formal offer is made to an applicant, an appointment will be agreed with the applicant for them to view the vacant property. The applicant will be offered up to 10 working days from the date of offer to the tenancy start date.

10 **REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS**

Applications will be reviewed at least once a year. Applicants may be contacted in writing, by telephone or in person. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the information held within SHOP is kept up to date and that the applicant is kept apprised of the status of the application.

The Association will also review all applications following notification by an applicant about changes in their circumstances, and the Association encourages applicants to contact them at any time regarding changes in their circumstances. This can be done in writing, by telephone, email or in person.

Applicants who fail to respond to periodic reviews of applications will be removed from the housing list. This action will only be taken when an applicant has failed to respond to two letters from Bield, or when correspondence has been returned to Bield marked “gone away” and staff have been unable to contact the applicant by other means.

11 APPEALS

Any person who enquires about or applies to Bield for housing is entitled to appeal against any decision taken regarding their own application. Appeals should be made in the first instance to the Service Manager: Centralised Allocations Team who will consider the appeal and respond in writing, normally within 14 days. **Where the appeal relates to the cancellation of an application due to high support needs, the appeal will be considered by the Assistant Director: Supported Housing who will consider the appeal and respond in writing, normally within 14 days.**

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the response from the first stage appeal, a further appeal can be made to the Assistant Director: Supported Housing who will consider the appeal and respond in writing normally within 21 days. **Where the appeal relates to the cancellation of an application due to high support needs, the appeal will be considered by the Director: Housing Services who will consider the appeal and respond in writing, normally within 21 days.**

If an applicant thinks Bield has not complied with the terms of the Allocations Policy or they are dissatisfied with the way their application was handled they may use our complaints procedure. Copies of the Association’s Complaints Policy are available on our web site or from any Bield office. If an applicant is still dissatisfied after going through Bield’s complaints procedure they may complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

12 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

All applications and information relevant to them will be processed in accordance with Bield’s Data Protection and Confidentiality policies.

Applicants will be able to access all information held about them and any other relevant information in accordance with Bield’s Data Protection and Confidentiality policies. Further information on this issue can be obtained from the Service Manager: Centralised Allocations Team.

13 MONITORING

Key performance areas relating to allocation and void management, including arrangements with local authorities, will be monitored and reviewed by senior staff on an on going basis to ensure that the service delivered maximises choice for applicants and tenants, makes best use of our housing stock and support services, and minimises the time taken to allocate properties.

Regular reports on performance, including Key Performance Indicators and benchmarking information with comparable housing providers, with regards to allocation and void activity will be submitted to Bield’s Housing and Care Services Committee.

Bield will also consult and involve tenants through the Partnership Forum on changes to policy and procedure relating to allocation and void issues. In addition information on performance will be published in Bield’s annually.

14

REVIEW OF POLICY

The Allocation Policy will be reviewed on a five yearly basis.