



CATHCART & DISTRICT HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cathcart & District Housing Association operates to meet its statutory obligations and the standards as set down within, Performance Standards for social landlords and homelessness functions. CDHA continuously seeks to meet its own aims through the development and implementation of its policies. All CDHA's policies are operated to achieve its strategic objectives.

2. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

CDHA is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons or groups within its area of operation in every aspect of its activities. In operating this policy CDHA will endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity for all at all times and in all circumstances. In line with this commitment to equal opportunities, this policy and any summary or information leaflet can be made available free of charge in a variety of formats including large print, translated into another language or on audio tape.

3. ACCESS TO POLICY INFORMATION

CDHA will ensure that its policies are made fully available to all tenants, applicants, members' persons or groups within its areas. Every effort will be made by CDHA to support access and promote awareness of its policies by developing summaries, guidance and information leaflets as appropriate.

4. TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

CDHA is committed to meeting the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in all of its policies. It will involve tenants in the development of its policies and seek feedback in appropriate circumstances. It will ensure at all times that any material change to services affecting tenants in its policies will be the subject of consultation.

5. POLICY MONITORING

CDHA is committed to ensuring that adequate monitoring of the implementation of its policies is undertaken. This will be achieved through regular review by the Management Committee and customer/tenant feedback surveys

6. RISK MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

CDHA has a detailed Risk Management Policy in place and it will assess the risks to the Association in the implementation of each of its policies as part of its risk management strategy.

7. PROCEDURES

CDHA will develop a detailed set of back up procedures identifying actions, roles and responsibilities in implementing its policies. These procedures will be subject to regular review.

8. TRAINING

CDHA will ensure that staff members are properly trained in terms of their knowledge and understanding of statutory requirements and performance standards pertaining to its policies. It will ensure that appropriate staff members are kept up to date with all procedures pertaining to the implementation of policies. The Management Committee and sub committees will have access to training to ensure that they can maintain a sufficient overview of the policy and procedures.

9. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The policy aims to meet housing need by the provision of good quality rented housing for those in housing need. In determining those needs the Association recognises those households who are experiencing some or all of the following conditions:

- Reasonable Preference

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 states we must give reasonable preference to persons in housing need:

We give points for various needs factors and these are outlined at point 15 in this policy. Applicants who do not fall within the statutory categories below are less likely to be allocated a property.

In determining these needs the Association recognises those households who are experiencing some or all of the following conditions:

- Homelessness
- Occupying overcrowded properties
- Occupying properties which are lacking basic amenities
- Living in unsatisfactory housing conditions (which can include medical as well as some social need)

We aim to be fair in our selection and allocation processes.

We will comply with the 6 over-arching principles laid down in Raising Standards that govern the allocation of rented properties:

Housing need: Housing Associations should prioritise allocations of property to people with high levels of housing need and/or support need where appropriate without discriminating. We will monitor this on an ongoing basis.

Choice and Empowerment: Housing Associations should seek to maximise the opportunities for greater access to housing and the ability of applicants to make informed choices through the provision of good information and advice, reducing complexity wherever possible.

Accountability: Housing Associations should be accountable to the tenants and communities they work with for allocation policies and processes.

Sustainable Communities: Housing Associations should make the best use of available stock and use the allocations process to assist in the

creation and maintenance of communities where people want to live and remain.

Partnership: Housing Associations should work in partnership with other bodies and organisations where possible. They should consider opportunities that may exist for joint work with local authorities or other housing associations working together to identify and alleviate housing need.

Equality and Diversity: The Association will abide by its Equalities and Diversity Policy and take cognisance of the following legislation

- The Equality Act 2010

The Policy will further comply with all statutory requirements Communities Scotland Guidance and other good practice guides that may be published.

- Confidentiality

The Association will comply with the Data Protection Act 1988. The Association shall respect the confidentiality of the applicant and will follow legislation in terms of any information being disclosed to a third party or any requests for access to personal data. All information provided by applicants will be treated in strictest confidence. Where Committee are required to discuss a case, the identity of the applicant will not be revealed.

No information about an applicant will be given to any other person unless the applicant has signed a mandate that permits this. A mandate would be required relating to each individual an applicant wishes information to be divulged to.

- Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Association will follow legislation as contained in Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and procedures as laid out in guidance by the Scottish Housing Regulator when granting a tenancy, transfer of tenancy or mutual exchange to Committee Members, Staff Members or close relatives of either.

The statutory provisions state that a Housing Association may grant a tenancy transfer of tenancy or mutual exchange to an employee, former employee, committee member or former committee member providing that the person:

- Fully meets the housing associations published allocations criteria and
 - Has had no involvement in or influence over the process by which the housing association has allocated the tenancy.
 - The granting of the tenancy is approved by the committee or delegated sub committee
- All decisions taken in relation to allocations will be recorded in a separate register kept for this purpose.

When allocating a house the Association will normally offer a Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement except in cases outlined below.

- If an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) has been served on one of our tenants, or a sub-tenant or someone residing with our tenant, the Association may convert the existing tenancy to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). An SSST may also be offered if an applicant or anyone proposing to live with the applicant who has been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the previous 3 years or is the subject of an ASBO.
- If the housing association is already the lessee under a separate agreement and requires to let out a property which is part of that lease then a SSST will be used, as there can be no right to buy or succession offered.
- House Size

Accommodation of a suitable size as per the Allocation Policy will normally be offered.

- Under occupation

Under occupation will be permitted where either of the following criteria applies: -

Where medical reasons dictate an extra bedroom is required. Supporting documentary evidence will be required.

Where a sole tenant or couple occupy a 5-apartment property and wish to move they can be considered for a 2-bedroom property without it affecting their points. This will help free up family accommodation.

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10. ACCESS TO HOUSING

- Anyone aged 16 years or over will be admitted to the housing list following which their application will be fully assessed.
- All applicants enquiring about applying for housing regardless of any individual circumstances will be clearly advised of their right to be admitted to the housing list
- A full assessment of the applicants circumstances will be carried out and the applicant will be advised of the outcome of their assessment within 10 days of submitting their application

11. CHOICE AND EMPOWERMENT

As demand outstrips supply in the social rented sector, it is important for applicants to be able to make informed decisions on their housing options based on information given to them. Information will be enclosed in the housing application form and will be available through Newsletters.

To maximise housing opportunities we will consider mutual exchanges, transfers within our own stock and assist tenants who wish to apply for moves through HOMESWAP, which is now administered through the London office.

We no longer have a nomination agreement with Glasgow City Council but anyone in this area can make application to Glasgow Housing Association for any area throughout Glasgow.

We will be accountable for any suspension from the list.

The Allocation Policy will be available to anyone who wishes a copy.

12. SUSPENSION & REMOVAL FROM THE LIST

- **Suspension from the List**

Applications will be suspended in the following circumstances and applicants will be informed at an early date that a suspension applies, how long it applies for and how it can be lifted. Applicants will also be advised of their right to appeal against either a suspension being imposed or not lifted.

- If an applicant refuses the Association permission to obtain References from current or former landlords
- If an applicant with support needs refuses to have a needs assessment carried out by SWD or refuses support that has been identified or until the needs assessment has identified and agreed support
- If an applicant generally has rent arrears and/or service charge arrears and/or rechargeable repairs arrears totalling more than 1 months rent
- If an applicant has a history of anti-social behaviour
- If an applicant cannot provide proof of their circumstances
- If an applicant gives false information relating to their application
- If an applicant refuses offers of accommodation
- If an applicant applies to exercise their Right to Buy the application will be suspended.

Where an applicant has arrears higher than one months rent but has kept to a payment agreement for a minimum period of the previous 3 months they will be accepted on to the list.

Arrears equal to less than 1/12 of the annual rent will not be taken into account.

In relation to suspended applications due to lack of proof of circumstances. Once an applicant can provide this information the application will be reactivated from the date of the updated information.

- **Removal from the List**

Applicants will be removed from the list in the following circumstances:

- The Applicant requests their application is removed
- The death of the applicant
- If the applicant fails to respond to correspondence which states within it that failure to respond will result in their name being removed from the waiting list
- When we have rehoused the applicant

13. THE HOUSING LISTS

The Association operates a general waiting list broken down into 7 categories

- General Waiting List
- Transfer List
- Section 5 Referrals

- Medical Priority List
- Aspirational List
- Local Lettings initiative/Management Transfers
- Mutual Exchange List

General Waiting List

The General waiting list is open to all applicants who are not tenants of the Association

Transfer List

The Transfer list is open to existing tenants of the Association

Section 5 Referrals

The Section 5 Referral List is the list of statutory homeless applicants. The Association acknowledges its duty as a Registered Social Landlord to comply with a request from Glasgow City Council to accommodate a homeless applicant under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Homeless applicants who apply directly to CDHA will be encouraged to make an appointment with the Homeless Case workers at Glasgow City Council. Once they are accepted as statutory homeless with the council and have provided the required documentary evidence their application will attract homeless points within our allocation policy.

Medical Priority List

The Medical List is open to all applicants who have a medical need. The key principle in determining access to this list is not always the medical condition but whether re housing will significantly assist the medical condition.

We will award points on two levels for medical need “Med A” and “ Med B” Med A cases will be offered ground floor accommodation only and priority will be given to this category for each ground floor flat that becomes available.

Med B cases will be awarded a property at a maximum of first floor level and this category will be given priority whenever a first floor flat is being considered.

A comprehensive list of conditions that will not attract medical priority is attached at Appendix 1. Any applicant with any of the conditions contained within Appendix 1 will not normally be given medical priority and their application will be held within the general list.

Aspirational List

This list will be open to existing tenants who have held a tenancy for more than 10 years and wish to move but do not have enough points to qualify. Very often applicants in this category will free up a family house by moving and in the interests of stock turn around a small quota will be allocated to this category each year.

Referrals

The Association will accept referrals from other organisations where there is a need to move an applicant for support reasons or other significant social reasons e.g. applicants fleeing domestic violence.

Mutual Exchange List

This list is administered separately from the general waiting list and any existing tenant can apply to be placed on the mutual exchange list. The Association will facilitate any mutual exchange that a tenant identifies providing it meets the criteria of the mutual exchange policy.

14. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Medically Adapted Flats

We will ensure that houses with adaptations are clearly identifiable so that where appropriate, applicants who need an adapted property can be offered these properties as they become vacant. If we have no one on our list that needs such a property we will contact other local housing providers to find out whether they have a suitable applicant on their list before we offer it to an applicant who does not specifically require it.

Two members of staff will call to the applicant's home and help them to complete a medical application form if necessary.

Staff will record on the form any difficulties in relation to the property and surrounding locality which affects the applicants' ability to live independently.

Amenity housing, except if specifically adapted or built for a particular age group is for those who require this type of housing due to medical or social needs. However if there is no demand from that client group offers will be made to those applicants on the various waiting lists. Discretion will be used by the Housing Officer in this circumstance and account will be taken of the circumstances of the applicants.

We will be conscious of persons living in tenements with support needs or disabilities and will not overload a particular block with persons with a high level of support need. This means neither the tenant nor the

block will be stigmatised. If an applicant is bypassed for this reason they will receive the next suitable offer.

Confirmation of Circumstances

Applicants must, when requested provide confirmation of their circumstances. Applicants must also advise the Association of any change to their circumstances. Failure to do so will result in the application being suspended until current proof of circumstance is provided. House visits will generally be carried out to verify circumstances.

Number of Offers

If two suitable offers of accommodation have been made and refused the applicant will be interviewed in an attempt to better define the applicant's housing needs. Applicants will be advised that they can ask for their application to be deferred if they do not wish an offer meantime. Suspension may be imposed for a six month period if it appears that an applicant is refusing offers without good reason, however each case will be looked at individually.

Community Care Assessments

In order to promote our commitment to effective care in the community for people with learning difficulties or mental health problems, the Association will require an applicant to agree to a community care assessment being carried out. This will specify the level of support to be provided and will specify who the support providers will be. Applicants who refuse a community care assessment will have their applications suspended as it would not be possible without other professional input to assess their ability to cope with a tenancy and could lead to difficulties for the applicant and surrounding tenants.

Applicants living c/o Cathcart & District Housing Association Tenants

Tenants are required to get the Association's permission before taking in lodgers and this could affect the tenant's eligibility for Housing Benefit. Permission will not be granted to take in a lodger if overcrowding would result. These applicants will still be accepted on to the waiting list but not from our tenants address.

Non-traditional family applications

When assessing points, in the case of non-traditional family composition, children will be accepted as part of a household only if the court has awarded custody to the applicant, or if children normally

reside with the applicant on a joint custody basis. Documentary evidence may be required.

References

References will normally be sought for current and former tenancies.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Applicants who have breached their tenancy conditions through anti-social behaviour may have their application suspended. Each case will be considered on its own merits and account will be taken of.

- The extent to which the conduct is a consequence of acts or omissions of other people other than the tenants
- The nature, frequency and duration of the conduct
- The effect the conduct is having on other people
- Steps taken by the tenant to rectify the behaviour
- Whether antisocial behaviour is current or ongoing

Clear evidence should be provided to confirm that anti-social behaviour is problematic before a suspension is imposed.

To avoid suspension an applicant and their family with a confirmed history of anti-social behaviour should generally be able to show that their behaviour has changed for the better since the anti social behaviour took place. It would be expected that the applicant and or the applicant's household have been receiving support from the Social Work Department and or other relevant agencies as appropriate for a length of period that has enabled them to change their behaviour and be capable of living next to others without committing antisocial acts. All persons involved in the support and any other relevant persons should be interviewed or asked for reports so that as accurate an assessment as possible can be made about whether to suspend their application.

Where an applicant or a person who it is proposed would reside with the applicant is the subject of an ASBO or has been evicted in the last three years for anti social behaviour and a decision has been made not to suspend them from the waiting list due to an improvement in their behaviour if a tenancy is offered it should initially be a Short Scottish Secure tenancy. If no acts of an anti social nature are committed by that household within 12 months the tenancy will convert to a full SST.

Applicants who have their application suspended have the right to a full explanation as to the reasons for suspension and when a suspension will be lifted. They also have the right to appeal to the Housing Management Sub committee.

Rent Arrears

Applicants with rent arrears will be considered on an individual basis.

All applicants should generally owe no more than one months rent or owe the equivalent sum for rechargeable repairs or service charges. If any category of arrear is higher than the equivalent of one months rent the applicant should have made and kept to an agreed repayment plan for a period of three months and the arrangement is being kept to. This applies to both current tenancies and former tenancies within the previous 5 years

As private landlords are not subject to regulation in terms of good practice references should generally not be sought from them. However where it is established that a private tenant is definitely in arrears or owes rechargeable repairs their application will generally be suspended until the above criteria has been met.

All applicants will be invited to an interview when we receive a reference stating there are arrears higher than one month or that an arrangement has not been in place for a 3-month period. Any circumstances, which may have prevented them from keeping to an arrangement, will be taken account of. If there are no extenuating circumstances the applicant will be advised that they will be suspended.

Arrears due to overpayments of housing benefit, which are the error of a council, will not be taken account of.

All suspended applicants should be informed that their suspension will be lifted when the appropriate criteria is met. They also have the right to appeal to the Housing Management Sub Committee.

Arrears will not be taken account of if a homeless nomination is made as a Section 5 Referral.

Transfer Applications

Applicants from existing tenants will be accepted on to the transfer list. No transfer will be considered within 2 years of the tenancy start date unless there is housing need, which has arisen owing to a change of circumstances since the start of the tenancy.

Transfer applicants should generally have a clear rent account at the time an offer is made and should generally owe no outstanding rechargeable repairs.

Transfer applicants should generally have no recent history of anti social behaviour.

If a relationship breakdown occurs in a family housed by us, we will advise both parties to seek legal advice on the entitlement to the tenancy in cases where the parties cannot agree. The person not awarded the tenancy can apply to us separately.

In cases of domestic abuse where the abused partner wishes to remain in the tenancy with any children we will refer the other party to the homeless section of the Council. Rent arrears will not be a factor when considering an application relating to one of our tenants who is the victim of domestic abuse.

Tenants can apply for a mutual exchange with tenants of our Association, other Associations and Councils. (See mutual exchange policy).

Aspirational List

Aspirational applications will only be considered on the basis that applicants can apply for maximum 1 bedroom more than family requirements dictate through this policy. Housing benefit implications will be explained in all circumstances.

Discretion

Generally allocations will be made to the applicant with the highest points total from a particular list. Where more than one application has the same points total the application with the earliest date will usually be allocated a vacant property. However discretion will be used by the Housing Officer to allow individual circumstances to be taken account of. This aims to ensure that individual circumstances are treated sensitively. An example of this is where two applicants have the same points total but one has been awarded their points for needing to be housed in that area because of support needs and the other applicant wants that particular area but has no need for it. The Housing Officer may use discretion to allocate to the person who has support needs even if their application is dated later than others with the same points. In the interest of accountability where discretion has been used the reason for this will be recorded.

15. THE POINTS SYSTEM

We award points for various factors. These are set out later in this section.

Family Support

Applicants who require to move to Cathcart to give or receive support to a friend or relative living in the area, or who require to move within the area for this reason should provide the Association with official documentary evidence of the support requirements. Discretion by the Housing Officer will be used in relation to the location of applicants and support providers and to the reasons for the move. Generally if an applicant lives in a different Council Ward to the person requiring/giving support this will be considered appropriate particularly if there are poor transport links. However individual circumstances will be taken into account.

Support needs will take account of physical or mental health problems or age of the person requiring support. Extreme circumstances out with these criteria will also be considered on an individual basis.

Harassment/Domestic Abuse

Harassment can take many forms, including racial harassment, sexual harassment, harassment against people with mental health problems, learning or physical disabilities or people with HIV and gay or lesbian people. People can also be harassed in their home through domestic abuse. Harassment always has a seriously detrimental effect on quality of life and at its most acute can be life-threatening. Applicants claiming harassment should be referred to their local council's homeless section/ support agency to have their circumstances assessed.

Waiting List

The Association's waiting list is broken down into categories of house size and type. Applicants are only considered for the house type and floor level they have requested. The waiting list is reviewed on an ongoing basis on the anniversary of each application when a cleansing process takes place. Every applicant is lettered and those who wish to be removed from the waiting list are and returned letters result in the application being placed in a suspended file. If the applicant subsequently contacts us discretion is used regarding the re-introduction of their application.

Priority on List

Applications for each of the categories are placed in order of points totals. The applicant with the highest points in a category will generally be offered a suitable vacant property however discretion will be used as detailed above.

Homelessness

All homeless and potentially homeless applicants will be advised to make an appointment with their local council to have their circumstances assessed. Applicants assessed as statutorily homeless can be referred as a Section 5 referral to either ourselves or another RSL. This will include applicants who are victims of harassment or domestic abuse. Section 5 referrals to us will attract section 5 points for the period the applicant remains a section 5 referral. Once an applicant refuses 2 offers from Glasgow City Council through the section 5 route, the priority homeless points awarded through this policy will be reduced by CDHA to 10 points

Section 5 Case work Assessed	60 points
After 2 section 5 refusals	10 points

Lack of Amenities/ House condition

Rising or penetrating damp (report required from Environmental health)	15 points
No inside WC	15 point
No piped supply of hot or cold water	15 points
No bath or shower	15 points
No separate kitchen facilities	15 points
Structurally unstable	15 point

Sharing Amenities

Applicants sharing amenities: -

1-3 people sharing with parents/another household	2 points
4-6 people sharing with parents/another household	4 points

Applicants living at a care of address will have 1 extra point added to these points.

Joint applicants from separate addresses will have their points assessed separately and points will be awarded based on the applicant whose circumstances attract the highest points. There will be no points awarded to the other applicant if they could move in with the partner without attracting needs points.

Joint applications will have their sharing amenity points calculated separately and those of the applicant with the lesser pointed application form will have their sharing amenity points added to the application with the highest points

Overcrowding

For the purpose of this Allocation Policy a house is overcrowded where the number of persons sleeping is such as to contravene the standards specified in Sections 136 (Room Standard) and 137 (Space Standard(Part V11 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987

Overcrowding is calculated using the following criteria as a requirement-

- One double bedroom for Couple/Single Adult
- One bedroom for each single adult
- One bedroom for two children under 10 years of age
- One bedroom for two children of the same sex between 10 and 16

Overcrowding points will be calculated on the basis of

- The number of rooms in present accommodation
- The number of rooms required

For each additional bedroom required	10 points
Where a household member over 10 years is sharing With the opposite sex	5 points

Under occupation

These points are only awarded to an applicant who is a householder

Under occupation points will not be awarded if the property is only under occupied by one bedroom. Points will be awarded for each room surplus to this.

5 points per room

Medical Condition

Medical points may be applied for where an applicant's long term medical condition is being made worse by their accommodation's design, condition or location. All applicants who feel that rehousing could significantly alleviate a long-term medical condition can apply to the Association to be considered for medical points assessment.

Priority on the list will be given to those with the highest points total, however a certain amount of discretion may be applied in locating applicants close to support etc. Any discretionary element will be noted down for accountability purposes.

An independent medical advisor will award points as follows:

Category A – where the accommodation is causing extreme impairment to the applicant’s medical condition
Considered for Ground floor accommodation only 20 points

Category B – where the accommodation is causing serious impairment to the applicant’s medical condition
Considered for ground and 1st floor only 10 points

Family Support

Points will be awarded to applicants who can provide documentary evidence which shows that they need to give or receive support in the Cathcart postcode of G44 G42
10 points

Insecure Tenancies

Points will be awarded to those with insecure tenancies. This category covers the following:

- Homeless (unless referred as a Section 5 referral)
- Living in tied accommodation and the employment will end within 6 months.
- Short Assured tenant who has been issued with a Notice to Quit need to be assessed by Council.

10 points

Management Transfer

This category will cover urgent cases whereby for reasons either to the tenant or their immediate neighbours it is beneficial to move one of our tenants within our stock.

40 points

Tenants Incentive Scheme

All the single aspect flats which have combined living/kitchen accommodation and which are only suitable for single persons will be let on the basis that if the tenant wishes to move after a period of 2 years there will be an option to do so. There will be in addition to the 2 year transfer rule every effort made to offer a more spacious 1 bedroom flat providing that:

- The rent account has been clear during all of that time
- There is no record of anti social behaviour or neighbour disputes (for which the tenant is responsible)
- The tenancy has been conducted in a satisfactory way in general

This will be made known to new tenants when moving into flats of this size.

16. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Audit Trail

As we are accountable to our tenants and the communities we work with we will keep an audit trail of all lets to demonstrate how and why a let was allocated to a particular household.

Decision Taking

The day to day operation of the allocations process will be undertaken by staff and not by governing body members whose involvement will be in setting, reviewing and agreeing the policy, considering appeals and special cases, considering Schedule 7 cases and monitoring outcomes of the policy.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The Association will monitor the policy on an ongoing basis to ensure it is meeting its stated aims and objectives.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if new guidance or legislation deems this necessary. In addition some changes may be required at any point depending on the outcomes of the ongoing monitoring reports.

Reporting

Staff within the Housing Management Section will prepare monthly performance reports on Allocation activity and report these to the Management Committee on a monthly basis

These reports will also include performance against targets

17. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Complaints

The Association recognises that a situation may occur where an applicant is unhappy with a decision in relation to their application. The housing management staff will in the first instance try and deal with any complaint.

If the complaint cannot be resolved in the above way an applicant will be referred to our complaints policy and guidance given on how to go about lodging a complaint through this process.

Appeals

An applicant can lodge an appeal for the following reasons:

- They feel their application has not been properly assessed
- They feel their application has been unjustly suspended
- They feel their application has been unjustly removed from list
- They feel an imposed suspension should be lifted and this has not been done.

All appeals should be addressed to the Housing Officer in the first instance. If a satisfactory outcome is not obtained then the appeal should be addressed to the Director. The director may refer the matter to the Housing Management Sub Committee. An applicant may be requested to attend the committee meeting where the appeal will be discussed.