Allocations Policy:

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Stakeholder Consultation	☐ All Staff ☐ Customer Engagement ☐ Union ☐ Employee Voices Group ☐ Head Office Managers ☐ C&S Managers ☐ Department/Other: _____	This policy will be reviewed every 3 years from the date of implementation or earlier if deemed appropriate for any legislation or regulatory changes. If this policy is not reviewed within the above timescale, the latest approved policy will continue to apply.	
Equality Impact Assessment		Yes/No	Add link to assessment

Version Control

Date	Owner	Version	Reason for Change
September 2026	Assistant Director Housing & Customer Experience	V7.0	3 yearly review

Summary of Changes

Section	Change
Overall	Overall change to reflect update Policy Template
1.3.4	New reference to UNCRC
2/3/4	Added in section on Scope, Roles & Responsibilities, Related Policies & Procedures
5	Moved all policy information into S5
Appendix 2	Updated to make reference to UNCRC under the protected characteristic of 'age'

Allocation Policy

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1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 The Allocation Policy

The policy explains how we match applicants to those properties and how we will decide which applicants will be made an offer of housing. We aim to provide affordable and secure rented accommodation to those in housing need, and to assist in the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities in the areas in which we operate.

This Policy will apply to allocation of vacancies within our subsidiary company Ark Services Ltd. Ark Commercial Investment Ltd has its own dedicated Allocation Policy.

1.2 Policy aims

We will do this by taking an approach to allocating homes which:

- Is open and fair manner to people with diverse housing needs;
- Provides open access to our housing list and enable people to exercise choice about where they want to live;
- Gives high priority to addressing homelessness and particular housing needs, through direct lettings and referral arrangements with partner agencies;
- Makes the most effective use of available housing stock, and manages the turnover of lettable properties in an efficient manner;
- Complies with all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to housing applications and allocations.

1.3 Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Ark Housing Association will assess housing applications and let our properties in line with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

1.3.1 Housing Legislation

The main legal requirements relating to housing applications and lettings are set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

In addition, the Scottish Government has published statutory guidance that applies to housing allocations.

To meet our statutory obligations, Ark will:

- Consider statutory requirements, when we amend or review the Allocations Policy;
- Adhere to our procedures for allocating houses, transfers and exchanges;
- Provide open access to our housing list at all times;
- Give "reasonable preference" when letting out houses to:
    - People who are homeless, or who are threatened with homelessness and have unmet housing needs;
    - People living in unsatisfactory housing conditions who have unmet housing needs;
    - People who are tenants of Ark Housing Association any other social landlord who we consider are under-occupying their current home.

Follow statutory guidance in the small number of cases where we may decide to suspend housing offers being made to an applicant.

1.3.2 Scottish Social Housing Charter

In developing our policy, we have also taken account of all relevant statutory guidance and practice-related publications, including the Scottish Government's Social Housing Allocations in Scotland – A Practice Guide February 2019.

As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) regulates us. The SHR's statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants, homeless people and other people who use services provided by social landlords. Our policy also takes account of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The SHR use the outcomes and standards in the Charter to assess the performance of social landlords. The key outcomes that have been considered in the development of this policy are:

Outcome 1 - 'Equalities'

- Ark support the right to adequate housing;
- Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs and rights recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2 - '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'.

Outcome 3 - 'Participation'

Tenants and other customers are offered a range of opportunities that make it easy for them to participate in, and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Outcomes 7, 8 and 9 - 'Housing Options'

- 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 options;
- People at risk of losing their homes get advice and information on preventing homelessness.

Outcome 10 '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.

Outcome 11 'Tenancy Sustainment'

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.

1.3.3 The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives every individual the right to respect for private life; the right to respect for family life; and the right to respect for his or her home. The Act provides protection against discrimination with regard to any of these rights.

The European Convention on Human Rights contains articles setting out the rights that are protected, while the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) hears alleged breaches of the articles. The UK is a signatory to the Convention, and following the UK's departure from the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, the UK Government remains committed to adhering to its current commitments to international Human Rights treaties and Conventions.

Ark recognises that applicants' human rights must be respected at all times. We will ensure this is achieved as part of our processes and working practices.

1.3.4 The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Children (UNCRC) places legal duties on public authorities to consider the rights of children in Scotland and forms the basis of Scotland's national approach for supporting children, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

It consists of 54 articles detailing rights and obligations which must be upheld, They give effect to, and they cover the child's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

There are four articles in the UNCRC which are known as the 'General Principles'. These assist in interpreting all the other articles and can play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the UNCRC for all children. These help when considering how to give practical effect to taking a children's human rights approach.

The four articles are:

- non-discrimination (Article 2)
- best interests of the child (Article 3)
- right to life, survival, and development (Article 6)
- right to express a view (Article 12)

The one of importance in relation to the Allocations Policy is Article 6, where childrens' rights may impact on considerations such as the size/type of property they may ask to be considered for. Legal advice has been provided and is incorporated in the associated procedure.

1.3.5 Equal opportunities and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Ark will provide equal opportunities and fair treatment for all, ensuring that no individual or group is treated less favourably than anyone else, when they apply to us for housing. We will work closely with external agencies, to provide assurance that we are achieving these aims.

Ark will meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the general equality duty in the Act, to ensure we do not discriminate against, harass or victimise a person because they have one or more of the nine protected characteristics described in the Act.

In developing this Policy, Ark have carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) to assess where the aims of this Policy may have an impact, negative or positive, on

any of the nine Protected Characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Ark will collect information from housing applicants, to allow us to understand who is applying for housing and who is being rehoused. Our systems will cover all nine protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010.

We will respect that some applicants may not wish to provide certain types of personal information. We will treat all monitoring information we collect in confidence, and it will have no bearing on individuals' access to the housing list or any subsequent housing offer. An EIA has been completed for this policy as detailed in Appendix 2.

1.3.6 Data Protection and Confidentiality

Ark will respect the confidential nature of information given by applicants and their representatives, and we will not discuss applications with anyone other than the applicant (Alternatively, a representative supporting the applicant e.g. doctor, social worker, support worker), unless we have obtained the applicant's consent to do so.

Ark is implementing a structured programme for compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, enacted as a consequence of the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and this involves completing a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). In relation to housing applications and lettings, the programme will put in place compliant processes for:

- Privacy Notices;
- Applicant consent to sharing information or seeking information from third parties;
- Preserving the confidentiality of the personal information we hold;
- Applicants' rights to access personal information.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all housing and customer experience staff who are involved in discussing housing options with applicants, assessing housing application forms, and allocating empty properties.

3.0 Roles & Responsibilities

There is a range of standard expectations which underpin all policies. Read more about standard role and responsibilities in addition, the following specific responsibilities apply to this policy.

The Customer Services Advisors are responsible for assessing housing application forms and adding them to the housing lists within the agreed targets.

The Customer Services Officer is responsible for monitoring the performance against targets and reporting on the key performance indicators.

The Housing & Neighbourhood Services Officers are responsible for allocating empty properties in accordance with this policy and any associated procedures.

The Housing & Neighbour Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that teams are trained on allocation and follow the processed outlined in this policy and any associated procedures.

The Assistant Director of Housing & Customer Experience is responsible for ensuring this policy is reviewed as per the cycle requirements.

4.0 Related Policies, Procedures & Documentation

For detailed implementation steps, refer to the Policy content below and HM01a Procedure. The following should also be considered:

- G11 - Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy and associated procedure
- G24 -Data Protection Policy and associated procedures G24a, G24b, G24d
- G25 – Records Management Policy and associated procedure G25a

5.0 Allocating Empty Properties

5.1 Routes to Rehousing

With many types of housing needs present in the communities we serve, Ark offers a range of routes to rehousing for people in need.

We refer to people in both these groups as “applicants”, throughout the Allocations Policy. Priority for rehousing is decided under our points system.

Housing Applicants:
Individuals who complete a housing application form to be added to Ark’s housing list, including people who are homeless and Ark tenants who wish to transfer within our stock.

Referral of homeless households:
We accept referrals made by Local Authorities under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Common Housing Register:
Edindex in The City of Edinburgh;
These Homes for Aberdeenshire/Moray/Aberdeen City.

Mutual exchanges:
Allow two (or more) tenants with Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreements to exchange their homes with each other, as long as Ark, and any other social landlords involved, agree to this.

Nominations:
Where we do not hold a housing list for a particular area, we will make a request to the Local Authority in accordance with the agreement that we have with them. The Local Authority will generally make homeless nominations through this route, but it is not restricted to this category of housing need. Any nominees will be asked to complete an Ark Housing Application Form.

Other referrals:
We accept referrals made by Local Authority Health and Social Care Partnerships.
These special arrangements may include but are not limited to:

- Direct referrals from Social Work Departments or the NHS, to fill vacancies within our designated supported housing stock and registered care homes. We will work

collaboratively with Care and Support Managers to ensure that the allocation and care package are aligned thus maximising tenancy sustainment;

- Management Agreements/Support Protocols, where an arrangement is entered into with the support agency to address the specific needs of an individual;
- Nomination Agreements, where the support agency or Social Work Department refers an individual for mainstream housing and provides the appropriate support (where a third-party care provider is involved a support protocol will require to be entered into);
- Lease Agreements, where the agency leases a property from Ark to deliver a fully supported accommodation service.

Service Leavers/Veterans:
We accept applications from Service Leavers or Veterans based on the criteria below:

Serving personnel can apply one year prior to, and 12 months after, honourable discharge. They must have completed either three years of continuous service, one full tour of duty or discharged on medical grounds.

We require to see a copy of the applicant's discharge papers along with their application for housing and any other evidence that would be required to allow us to assess the level of housing need.

In the event that Ark is approached by an external organisation such as another Registered Social Landlord, Local Authority or the Police we may decide to allocate a property to an individual(s) in extreme housing need e.g. the individual's property is no longer habitable due to a fire; in cases of domestic abuse; delayed discharge applicants.

A decision to offer a Management Transfer or Special let will always be approved by the Head of Housing Services or a member of the Executive Team.

Non-UK Nationals, Asylum Seekers & Refugees:
Whilst we welcome applications from those looking to live, work or study in the UK we will ensure the applicant is not subject to immigration control and have a right to reside and are habitually resident in the UK.

Non-UK Nationals are expected to provide all necessary documentation, including confirmation of refugee status by the Home Office, to show they have a right to reside in the UK before an application for housing is accepted.
We will accept applications from refugees directly or via the statutory homeless route (Section 5) and these customers are given reasonable preference on our housing list as defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

Management Transfer or Special Let:
'Management' reasons allows us to assist in urgent re-housing cases where the allocation policy would not otherwise allow us to act quickly enough. It is only used in exceptional circumstances, such as where there is a serious risk if someone remains in their current home or if we wish to re-house one of our tenants as a matter of urgency. This might be because we must carry out emergency repairs to a property, because someone needs to leave hospital as soon as possible but cannot return to their current home or because they are otherwise in danger if they stay in their current home.

We will always aim to offer a transfer to a property that is as close to the tenant's current home as possible. However, the situation will be urgent, and we may need to offer them a property in a different location, or of a different type, to their current home. This could include working with one of our Local Authority or Housing Association partners to find suitable accommodation.

5.1.2 Providing information and advice

We will undertake to provide a high quality of advice and support to assist all applicants and will seek to secure appropriate advice and information from external agencies where necessary.

A summary of this policy will be made available in a number of other languages, in Easy Read, large print or in audio format, if requested. Where requested we will offer translation and interpreting services.

We will ask an applicant to supply written evidence to support their housing needs requirements, for example, a Local Authority Homeless Assessment letter; a letter from a Doctor.

Where we receive applications from individuals who are vulnerable and, in our view, would require assistance or support in order to sustain a tenancy, we will require a Care/ Risk Assessment or Housing Support Assessment to be undertaken to be assured that sufficient support mechanisms exist to enable the prospective tenant to sustain their tenancy.

We will only seek references at the point of shortlisting for a vacancy. We will take up references for current and/or previous tenancies within the last 3 years. Prior to an offer being made, a home visit will be carried out at the address the applicant is currently living at, as detailed on their application form.

5.1.3 Applications from staff or board members

We do not exclude any employee, former employee, board member, former board member or close relatives of employees, former employees, committee members, or former committee members from applying for a tenancy, transfer of tenancy or mutual exchange.

These individuals must apply through the normal application process, will be subject to the same assessment procedure, and will be allocated housing based on their housing need as assessed through this allocation policy. The individual concerned or any close relative will not be involved in, or have any influence over, the decisions we make about who will be offered a property.

In accordance with the provisions contained within the Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy (G11), the Board of Management must approve the allocation in advance, and the tenancy will be recorded in the appropriate register.

5.2 Applying for our housing

Anyone aged 16 years or over is entitled to make a housing application. Ark has properties in 13 Local Authorities throughout Scotland.

We are part of 'Edindex - Key to Choice' in Edinburgh and These Homes in North East of Scotland, whilst we hold our own housing list for the other areas in which we own properties.

5.2.1 Properties in Edinburgh

We are one of the partners of Edinburgh's 'Key to Choice', choice-based allocation system.

Along with other partner landlords, we advertise any properties we have available in Edinburgh through 'Key to Choice' and applicants can note they are interested in a property by placing a 'bid'.

An applicant only needs to complete one application form to be able to place bids through 'Key to Choice'. This would allow an applicant to bid for an Ark property but also for properties advertised by our partners.

Applicants should also apply to 'Key to Choice' if they are already an Ark tenant and would like to move or 'transfer' to a property in Edinburgh. We will say whether any property we advertise is available for starters or movers.

Further information on Key to Choice can be found on its website at: https://keytochoice.co.uk/.

Our staff will also be able to answer any questions about how to make an application or place a bid.

5.2.2 Properties in other areas

If an applicant is looking for a home in one of the other areas we have properties, or for a move from one Ark property to a more suitable Ark property, they should apply to join our housing list.

In order to make best use of our stock, we reserve the right to consider the needs of existing tenants before the needs of new applicants, as in moving a tenant a further vacancy will arise.

We will make available the application form and an associated information guide at our offices and online. The guide for applicants will summarise the policy and explain how to complete an application. It will also give details of the type of properties we manage and their locations.

Our application process gathers information on personal and housing circumstances as well as preferences for housing area. All applications will be processed and recorded on our Housing List.

Details on how to apply to us for housing are on our website or a member of staff can be contacted. If required, applicants can also be provided with translation services or other support to assist them in completing their application.

5.2.3 Eligibility of Property Size

We aim to make best use of our housing stock and the size of property an applicant is eligible for will depend on the number and make up of people on the housing application as detailed in Table 1 below.

Couples will share a double bedroom. Other adults in the household should have their own bedroom.

Children should have their own bedroom, unless they are the same sex and both under 14 years, or mixed sex and both under 7 years.

If an applicant is expecting a child, they will be placed on the housing list for the size of house they currently require, this will be amended after the birth.

Ark will not make offers of housing, which will result in an applicants' household becoming overcrowded.

TABLE 1: PROPERTY SIZE by HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Property Size	Bed Space	Household Size
Studio	Single	1 person
1 Bedroom (1 person)	Single	1 person
1 Bedroom (2 person)	Double	1 person or couple
2 Bedroom (3 person)	1 Double + 1 Single	1 person or couple with 1 child/access to children
2 Bedroom (4 person)	2 Double	1 person or couple with 1 or 2 children/access to children
3 Bedroom (4 person)	1 Double + 2 Single	Single person/Couple with 2 Children
3 Bedroom (5 person)	2 Double + 1 Single	Single person/couple with 2 or 3 children
3 Bedroom (6 person)	3 Double	Single person/couple with 2, 3, or 4 children provided not more than 2 children of the same sex share a room
4 Bedroom (8 person)	4 Double	Single person/couple with 4, 5 or 6 children provided not more than 2 children of the same sex share a room

5.3 Variations to the Standard Rules on House Types and Sizes

Ark will make a number of reasonable exceptions to the house size rules described above, so that we can be responsive to applicants' individual needs. They may include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- Living Arrangements for applicants for children - applicants who have custody of their children will be offered accommodation to meet the entire family's needs;
- If an applicant has overnight or weekend access to children who do not live with them, we will consider them for one extra bedroom, regardless of the number, sex, and ages of the children;
- For an overnight carer;
- For the storage of medical equipment;
- For Medical conditions requiring an additional bedroom

5.4 Prioritising applications

Ark's policy is to make offers of housing to those in greatest need, while also maximising the prospects of creating sustainable tenancies. This involves a number of factors being considered as follows:

- The number of points applicants have received;
- The suitability of the house on offer for potential new tenants, and who will make best use of the house;
- The area and any other choices expressed by applicants;
- Any factors that indicate to us that granting a tenancy to a particular applicant may make that tenancy more difficult to sustain or have a negative impact on the needs of the community.

When a property is to be offered through Ark's Housing list, the property will normally be offered to the applicant with the highest number of points when the List was generated, if the required size and type of accommodation is correct. The shortlisting process may also take into other circumstances that are relevant, for example:

- The information we hold about the applicant's circumstances and needs;
- Which applicants will fully use all of the bedspaces in the property on offer;
- Which applicants may need a particular floor level, for example by prioritising housing at lower levels for those with mobility needs;

- Community needs, for example we would not re-house an applicant in the same Neighbourhood where they previously committed antisocial behaviour or crimes such as drug dealing.

On occasion, consideration of these wider factors will mean that Ark will bypass the applicant with most points, and select another applicant to receive the first offer.

If the applicant on the top of the list does not wish to accept the offer, a new shortlist List will be generated. This will take into account any changes to individual applications, and any new applications, which have been processed. This will ensure that applicants with the highest priority will always be at the top of Matching Lists.

If two or more applicants have an equal number of points, we will make the offer to the applicant who has been in housing need longest (based on the date on which Ark first offered points for housing need).

5.5 Factors which cannot be considered

There are certain factors, which the law states Ark cannot consider when assessing an application. These are:

- The applicant(s) age, except from being at least 16;
- Whether the applicant already lives in one of the areas where we have properties;
- The applicant, or their families, income.
- Any housing debt the applicant has now repaid;
- Any non-housing debt such as Council Tax arrears;
- Any housing debt, which is not owed by the applicant, such as, rent arrears owed by a partner.
- Any rent arrears where the amount is no more than one month's rent, or where the applicant has an arrangement in place to pay the arrears, and the applicant has been keeping to the arrangement for at least three months and are continuing to do so.

5.6 How applicants are prioritised in Edinburgh

Applicants in Edinburgh will apply through 'Key to Choice'.

Anyone who is 16 years or older can apply for housing in Edinburgh.

People registered with EdIndex build up waiting time. This is measured in days. An applicant is classed as a Starter (S) or Mover (M) or both (SM).

Starters are homes for people who are:

- Homeless;
- Staying with a friend or relative;
- Staying in a hostel;
- Staying in supported accommodation;
- Renting a house or flat from a private landlord.

Waiting time for Starters is worked out from the date the application form is registered. This means a **Starter** registered for one year has 365 waiting days. They will get a further day for every day they are registered.

Movers are homes for people who are:

- A Council tenant;
- A Housing Association or Housing Co-operative tenant;
- A joint tenant with the Council, Housing Association or Housing Co-operative;
- A tenant of tied accommodation that is provided by an employer;
- An owner occupier of a home (a mortgage may be in place).

Waiting time for Movers is worked out from the date the applicant moved into their current home. For example, if an applicant has been in their current home for 10 years, they will have 3,650 waiting days. They will build up a further day for every day they stay in their current home.

In some cases, following assessment, households will be awarded a priority status. Priority status can be awarded to either starter or movers as set out below. Possible priority status is as follows:

- Gold Priority - is awarded when the current property does not meet and cannot be adapted, the housing needs of the applicant or a member of their household. This is only awarded after an assessment;
- Gold priority (urgent) - is usually only awarded in exceptional circumstances, for example to enable a hospital discharge. This priority is also awarded to prevent long-term hospital, care home admissions and forms part of a wider support, and care package;
- Silver Priority - This level of priority can be awarded for different reasons:
    - Statutory homeless under the terms of Part 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;

- Overcrowded households. This will be awarded to households that require:
  a) Two more bedrooms to adequately house their family;
  b) At least one extra bedroom as they are currently housed in one bedroom accommodation and have one or more children under the age of 16;
- Under occupation. Households occupying 3 or more bedroom houses who no longer require that size of home and are willing to move to smaller accommodation, should contact their local neighbourhood office to discuss this in detail. This only applies to tenants of the Council, Housing Associations and Housing Cooperatives;
- Where rehousing is required due to demolition or regeneration works in an area. This can be awarded to starter or mover households.
- Exceptional housing need. This can be awarded to either starter or mover households but will only be awarded following an assessment by an Officer Panel. This may also include people living in Below Tolerable Standard housing (usually lacking basic amenities such as hot water supply or no kitchen) and people living in unacceptable circumstances.

Ranking Priority:

The order of priority is as follows with highest at the top

- Gold, Urgent
- Gold
- Silver
- Waiting Time/ Length of time in last tenancy

In all cases priority cases will be ranked by date of award of priority and then by date of application for starters and length of time at current address for movers.

Where a person/household would be eligible for more than one category of priority the highest level only will apply. Unless otherwise stipulated priority will apply to available property citywide.

5.7 These Homes

Following the closing date, Ark will request a short-list of the first 10 applicants. The short-list is emailed to Ark, and the Housing Assistant contacts the first four applicants by phone/ email asking if they are still interested in being short-listed. They will be asked to complete

an Ark application form. On receipt the applications are processed and assessed in line with this policy and procedure.

5.8 How applicants are prioritised in Ark's Housing List

An applicant will be awarded points based on their housing needs and current circumstances as detailed on the Application Form.

Table 2 below shows the categories of housing need and points awarded under each category.

TABLE 2 – CATEGORIES OF NEED

Category description	Other information	Points
You are in **a temporary placement where you may be bed blocking** and need a home to suit your health or mobility needs. You may need to be admitted to **hospital or a care home on a long-term basis** as your home is no longer suitable and forms part of a wider support and care package.	Applicants who are currently in hospital and no longer have a home to go to or cannot go back to the home they lived in before as it no longer meets their needs	40
	Applicants who have been placed in an emergency residential care setting, but the setting is not appropriate for their needs	
	Applicants who are supported in a residential setting as children but because of their age need to move into adult services	
You need to move for **serious health or mobility reasons**	Applicants whose current home no longer meets their mobility needs, it cannot be adapted and they are housebound. This priority is generally only given to people who have been assessed as requiring a ground floor home	35
You need to move because of **domestic abuse**	You or a member of your household are a victim of domestic abuse and you are unable to continue living in your current accommodation	35

Category description	Other information		Points
You are **statutorily homeless**	You have a statutorily homeless decision from a Local Authority, and it states that you have been assessed as being unintentionally homeless		30
You need to move because of **abuse or harassment**	Any applicant that has advised that they victim of verbal or physical and at its most acute, life threatening. Types of abuse and harassment that will be considered are • racial harassment; • religious or sectarian harassment; • homophobic harassment; • transphobic harassment; • harassment of autistic people and people with learning or physical disability; and • sexual harassment.		30
You are living in a home that has too **many bedrooms**	You live in the social rented sector, and you have more bedrooms than you need according to this policy	Two or more bedrooms too many	25
		One bedroom too many	20
You are living in a home that has too **few bedrooms**	You live in the social rented sector, and you have more bedrooms than you need according to this policy	Two or more bedrooms too few	25
		One bedroom too few	20
You need to move for health or mobility reasons	You or a member of your household have severe health or mobility difficulties and your current home is unsuitable and makes daily activities difficult, however adaptations could be made to make it more suitable.		20

Category description	Other information	Points
You do not have secure accommodation	You are living in accommodation that you have been asked to leave e.g. • Served a Notice to Leave in the Private Rented Sector • Tied accommodation and you are going to retire/be made redundant/leave the Forces • An owner – occupier with a repossession notice • Prison leaver • Non-UK Nationals, Asylum Seekers & Refugees	10
Your home does not meet the **Tolerable Standard**	Your home is below the Tolerable Standard as set out in Appendix 1	5
You need to move because of **anti-social behaviour**	You or a member of your household have been subject to serious anti-social behaviour	5
You want to move to give or receive support or for employment reasons	You want to move closer to someone to whom you give regular support or you want to move closer to someone to whom you give regular support and it allows an individual to continue living independently and prevent the need for a move into residential or specialist accommodation.	5

When a property becomes available, we generate a short list, with the applicant in greatest need at the top. This will usually be the applicant who is offered the property. There may be a valid reason for bypassing the applicant at the top of the list. If this happens, Ark will keep a record of the reason why an applicant has been by-passed.

5.9 Sensitive allocations

Sensitive allocations may be used in exceptional circumstances to ensure that individual allocations do not result in an unsustainable tenancy or create wider issues within the local community. Considerations may include, to what extent has the conduct affected the applicant's life and the life of others, whether there has there been legal involvement, whether there has been a significant improvement.

Ark will ensure that all decisions regarding sensitive lets are accountable, transparent and monitored. We will monitor the use of sensitive allocations in order to ensure that there is no pattern of bypassing particular people or groups.

5.10 Local Lettings Initiatives

We reserve the right in certain circumstances to develop Local Lettings Initiatives within specific geographical areas, based on clear evidence of why it is required.

Local tenants will be involved in the development of local letting initiatives.

Any Initiative will have clear outcomes and will be time limited. Details of the scheme will be published.

Ark will regularly monitor and report on any Local Lettings Initiatives in order to assess their effectiveness.

5.11 Low demand properties

We reserve the right to depart from this Allocations Policy for certain 'low demand' letting areas and, within these areas, to advertise and allocate these properties on a choice basis, provided we ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.

Low demand stock is characterised by high levels of empty houses, small or non-existent housing lists, high refusal rates, and low levels of tenancy sustainment.

Before deciding to adopt a different approach to allocating houses, we will consider the issues that need to be addressed and will demonstrate that there is no demand for the stock from the applicants on their housing lists.

5.12 Community Safety - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

The National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) forms part of the Multi-Agency Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) which was introduced as a result of Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005. The Association will manage any allocations to sex offenders covered by the MAPPA arrangements at a senior level and in consultation with relevant agencies such as the Police, Scottish Prison Service and Social Work Services. All aspects of this policy may not be applied in making such offer and any offer of housing will be dealt with in line with MAPPA Protocols which covers the Local Authority area in which there is a vacancy. The Assistant Director of Housing & Customer Experience is the Association's Link Officer who will work closely with the SOLO (Sexual Offender Liaison Officer) Officer appointed by the relevant Local Authority to discuss and agree the housing of any registered sex offenders. Where the Association is aware that an applicant faces allegations or there is a declaration from the applicant that they are a sex offender we will liaise directly with the SOLO Team and Police Scotland. This approach will be to ensure a risk assessment be carried out prior to any decision to allocate a property to the applicant.

5.13 Reasons for not making an offer

There may occasions when we might not to make an offer of housing to an applicant who might otherwise have been offered a property.

5.13.1 Bypassing applicants

Ark may decide not to make an offer to the applicant at the top of a short list. If we do, it would be for one of the following reasons:

- The property would not meet the applicant's needs;
- The applicant has failed to respond to our communications relating to an offer without good reason;
- The applicant has previously refused an offer of the property or a similar property in the same location;

We will keep a record of when an applicant has been bypassed and will review our practice on a regular basis.

5.13.2 Suspension of applicants

Ark will use non-statutory suspensions. The circumstances, which may result in an application being suspended, are detailed in Table 3 below:

TABLE 3: SUSPENSION REASON/LENGTH

Suspension reason	Length of suspension
You owe us, or another landlord, a tenancy related debt such as rent or rechargeable repairs, and this debt is more than one month's rent	Until the repayment agreement has been maintained for three months
You or any members of your household are guilty of anti-social behaviour	12 months
You or someone you live with or have lived with has been convicted of certain offences and those offences are associated with a residential property or the surrounding area	12 months
Any violence or aggression towards staff	12 months
You have deliberately worsened your housing circumstances	12 months
Suspension reason	Length of suspension
You or any members of your household have broken or not kept to the conditions of your tenancy agreement, for example you have damaged your home, or have not maintained your garden or the shared areas properly	Until the breach is rectified
You, as either a tenant or joint tenant, have abandoned a previous tenancy which has been repossessed by a social landlord	12 months
You have given us false information on your application form	12 months
You have refused two offers of housing	6 months

We will consider your circumstances before deciding how long to suspend your application for.

We will aim to reduce the need for, and the length of, suspensions. If we suspend an application, we will tell the applicant what they need to do before we will review or remove the suspension.

If an applicant is unhappy with our decision to suspend their application, they should follow the appeals procedure set out in the policy.

5.14 Holding and reviewing information

Ark will collect and hold personal information regarding applicants and their prospective households in accordance with our Privacy Notice. We will keep any information given to us confidential. We will not discuss an application with anyone other than the applicant (or their representative) unless you give us written instructions to do so.

We are registered in the Data Protection Register. We will let an applicant see any information we hold about them in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. The applicant must ask us in writing and a charge may apply.

Each year, Ark will write to everyone on Arks Housing List asking them to confirm that:

- They wish to remain on the list;
  and
- The information we hold about their circumstances and needs is still up to date.

The review is managed on a rolling monthly basis, with letters being sent out to applicants within one year of the initial assessment or any subsequent re-assessment.

If we do not receive a response to our review letter after 28 days, we will send a second in addition, final letter to the applicant. If we do not receive any response within 14 days of the second letter, we will remove the application from the housing list.

Ark will also remove an applicant from the list, if:

- The applicant asks to be removed (this should usually be done in writing);
- The applicant has died;
- The applicant has accepted an offer of a tenancy made by Ark or another landlord.

Housing applicants are responsible for notifying Ark if their household circumstances or needs change, either as part of the annual review or at any time in between annual reviews. This could include changes of address, changes to the household such as new babies being born or relationship breakdown.

An applicant who has been removed from the housing list by Ark can apply to be re-assessed and re-admitted to the housing list within six months from the date of removal. The date of application in such cases will be the date the applicant was re-admitted.

5.15 Appeals and complaints

We recognise that there may be occasions when someone is not happy with the service we have provided or with the outcome of our assessment of their application. If an applicant is unhappy about the way their application has been assessed, they can ask a senior member of staff to review the assessment.

If anyone wishes to complain about how we have applied our Allocations Policy, they will be asked to submit their complaint in writing.

We will provide the required assistance, or services from external sources, to anyone who has trouble in making a written complaint, including translation services for those whose first language is not English.

If you have gone through the complaints procedure and you are still not happy, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman may take up the matter for you. Write to:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS
(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is:
FREEPOST SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online contact **www.spso.org.uk/contact-us**
Website: **www.spso.org.uk**

6.0 Training & Monitoring Requirements

6.1 Training

Staff who undertake housing options discussions and allocation of empty properties will have training appropriate to their needs and to the needs of the organisation as identified on their individual learning plans. Ark will ensure that relevant employees have an awareness of this policy and receive adequate training to enable them to effectively fulfil their roles and ensure

6.2 Monitoring

All allocations will be signed off by a senior manager, thus ensuring they comply with this policy and any associated procedures.

The category of allocations will be monitored on a monthly basis and recorded on the KPI tracker.

Appendix 1 – Tolerable Standard

The Tolerable Standard is defined in section 86 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (Tolerable Standard) (Extension of Criteria) Order 2019.

A house meets the tolerable standard if it:

- is structurally stable;
- is substantially free from rising or penetrating damp;
- has satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating;
- has satisfactory thermal insulation;
- has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house;
- has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house;
- has a water closet or waterless closet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house;
- has a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitably located within the house;
- has an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water;
- in the case of a house having a supply of electricity, complies with the relevant requirements in relation to the electrical installation for the purposes of that supply;
- has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house; and
- has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings.