

Partick Housing Association



# Allocation Report

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Customer Scrutiny Panel

July 2017

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## Customer Scrutiny Panel Statement

The Customer Scrutiny Panel aims to review the performance of Partick Housing Association (PHA) and make recommendations based on our findings about how these services could be improved. This report covers all of our research, findings and recommendations - finalising our third project on our chosen topic of Rent Setting.

The Panel is made up of seven volunteer tenants and local residents who have been working with PHA to achieve the shared aim of improving services at the Association. With support from PHA and their staff we are enjoying learning about the different services involved in running the association and how this impacts on customers, including ourselves.

### Scrutiny Panel members involved in this report were:

- David Gibson
- Elaine Gordon
- Liz Kyle
- Jean McGrehan
- Alison Sherry
- Eileen Sparkes
- Morayo Scanlan

### Customer scrutiny brings benefits to all involved, including:

- **Customers** - it aims to improve the services tenants and residents receive.
- **PHA/PWL** - it challenges PHA/PWL to tackle areas of underperformance and to aim for continuous improvement in areas of success.
- **Regulator** - it demonstrates compliance with regulatory standards.
- **Partners and stakeholders** - it shows the benefits of partnership working and continuous improvement.

## **Selecting a service for scrutiny**

The Panel decided to look in to the Allocation process after researching rent setting in their last project. It was agreed that having a greater understanding of how and why properties are allocated would help the Panel expand on their knowledge of how PHA operates.

## **The scrutiny process**

The Panel held meetings over a nine month period to discuss all aspects of allocations.

On completion of the project, Panel members agreed the positive and negative aspects they had identified, detailed their findings and agreed recommendations that will potentially be of benefit to PHA and its customers.

The resulting Action Plan is shown at the end of this report. It outlines the Panel's recommendations and how they should be taken forward, identifies a staff member who would have responsibility for the action and a completion date.

Throughout the project, Panel members carried out a range of tasks including:

- Interviewing several members of staff
- Review of PHA's current Allocation Policy
- Interviews with outside organisations at Glasgow City Council.

The information gathered from these exercises is detailed in this report.

## **Allocation Policy and Guide To Applying For A House**

The Panel read over the booklet provided by PHA on applying for housing. In the introduction section it explains that the booklet is a summary only and that a copy of the full allocations policy is available to collect from the PHA office or is downloadable from the website – [www.partickha.org.uk](http://www.partickha.org.uk)

Upon investigation it was discovered that there is no copy of the Allocation Policy available on the website.

Panel members found the explanation of the points system within the leaflet to be confusing. Concerns were raised over why mental health points were so low in comparison to physical health points. When considering this alongside current awareness of mental health issues the Panel felt that it was unfair to award such a low level of points. It was also unclear from the points system how many the average person needs to be rehoused in any size of property. Although the allocation of points was clear, the booklet did not fully explain why these points were set at that level.

Under the section Support Requirements references were made to points being allocated to people moving into Ward areas 12 and 15. There is no explanation about where wards 12 and 15 are but the Panel assumed that this meant the Partick area.

Direct applicants are mentioned in the booklet but it is not clear who is classified as a direct applicant. Anna outlined the three different types of applications to PHA; direct, transfer and section 5 referrals (homeless referrals).

The Panel believed that overall the booklet was confusing and should be revised.

### **Findings**

- It is helpful to have an application guideline that is easy to access for everyone interested in applying for housing.
- Information needs to be provided in an easy to understand format, the PHA guideline can be difficult to follow.

## **Review of Allocation Policies from Local Housing Associations**

The Panel sourced Allocation Policies from other local housing associations by contacting them via phone call, email or downloading the policy from their websites. The policies researched were from:

- Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association
- Maryhill Housing Association
- Queens Cross housing Association
- Charing Cross Housing Association
- Glasgow Housing Association
- Glasgow West Housing Association

Jean was able to get a full copy of the Charing Cross Housing Association Allocation Policy through their website. Everyone agreed that it was very clearly laid out in plain English with headings and tables making it easier to understand. A full explanation of the points system describes the circumstances that an applicant would be in to be awarded the varying level of points. Everyone agreed that the policy was well written.

Following on from this the Panel looked at the current PHA policy. At PHA, medical points are assessed by staff. Some of the housing associations allocation policies referred to paying for a medical assessor to look at applications and make an independent decision on the point allocation. This means that a medical professional can make a more definitive decision.

The Panel discussed the issue of under occupation and the 'bedroom tax'. It was explained that in Partick this was not as much of a concern. PHA had adjusted the under occupation points to a higher value so that those tenants who wanted to downsize were able to move high up the waiting list and be rehoused promptly. After 2 years PHA realised that the 'bedroom tax' was not effecting a large amount of PHA tenants and subsequently reduced the under occupation points back to the previous level.

Each housing association and local authority throughout Scotland can have different and varying levels of points, points awarded and points that people will be rehoused under.

The Panel discussed the responsibility of the Housing Association in terms of assessing and rehousing people who are considered homeless. PHA does not award high enough points to applications of people who are registered as homeless to be rehoused with the Association. This is because PHA allocates 50% of stock to people who are rehoused through Section 5 (homeless) referrals from Glasgow City Council.

There was some discussion regarding 'special circumstances' and 'management transfers'. Questions were posed around what constitutes as special circumstances and who would decide on this. Stewart explained that individual cases would be taken to the Board who then collectively decide on whether there should be a priority to rehouse this case.

## **Findings**

- Housing Association staff do not have the appropriate qualifications to assess medical points.
- Housing Association policies appear to be based on the needs of their local community.
- The variation in points from all social housing providers makes it confusing to understand how likely you are to be rehoused.

## **Interview with Housing Assistant on Housing Options**

The Housing Assistant explained that Housing Options is an interview process for people who would like to change their current living situation. Senior Housing Assistants and Housing Assistants conduct the interviews on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. The Assistants conduct 4 interviews in a day.

Current tenants of PHA who are looking to move out with the area would have their Housing Options interview conducted with their Housing Officer where they would also discuss sustainment of their tenancy.

All of the Housing Services staff received Housing Options training.

It is helpful for the staff to consult with their colleagues on individual cases so that knowledge and experience is shared.

Interviewees must sign a 'consent to share' form before they proceed with the interview. This is so that other organisations that are part of the Housing Options scheme can access the information gathered during the interview. When other housing associations are looking to process Action Plans they can consult the staff member who originally interviewed the applicant.

Anyone applying who has a medical reason for moving would need to provide supporting evidence from a medical practitioner in order to have the points allocated to their application. There are medical categories on the Housing Options form but it is not necessary to see evidence of this at the interview stage.

If an interpreter is needed to translate the interview PHA must arrange and pay any fees which can be around £90. The Panel noted that this was a costly procedure with potentially little reward for PHA as the applicant could then have zero points with the Association.

There are often missed appointments and because these are booked 4 weeks in advance it is often too late when someone doesn't turn up to fill their space.

Spread sheets are sent to Housing Options HQ on a monthly basis with data gathered.

All paper copies of forms are shredded after being scanned and recorded electronically.

The whole process can be very time consuming and labour intensive when the time spent on follow up work is also considered.

It was a PHA Management decision to become involved in the Housing Options Scheme.

Housing Options was created by the Wheatley Group.



## Findings

- There seems to be a high level of missed appointments which is using unnecessary staff time due to the amount of administrative work involved.
- Letters and texts are sent before the appointment is due to remind the customer since they may have booked the appointment 4 weeks in advance.
- A screening process to determine people's needs before making an appointment could help determine how best to help them before having a lengthy housing options interview.

## **Glasgow Common Housing Register (GHR)**

Charly Lynn and Lindsay Forrest visited the Panel from Glasgow City Council to explain how the pilot scheme of the common housing register (CHR) in north west Glasgow will operate. Their department also covers regeneration, homelessness and ensures that Housing Association Grant funding is allocated. Charly and Lindsay outlined some key points:

- Scottish Government and formerly the Scottish Executive promoted common housing registers throughout local authorities.
- It has been challenging to get HA's to agree on a generic application form.
- The pilot scheme will run in the north west of Glasgow because there is a diverse range of Associations in the area.
- The current IT provider has already set up CHRs in other parts of the UK.
- The applicant will fill in one form that will go into an online database.
- The scheme should reduce duplication
- There will be automated re-registration – the system will generate contact with an applicant through a method of their choice on a yearly basis to keep their application up to date. This should save staff time.
- The GHR will launch in February 2017 and this pilot will run for 2 years.
- After the first 6 months there will be an independent evaluation that will find gather opinions from applicants, staff and other users.
- The GHR website shows the areas that each HA covers but this is not shown on the application form. This could mean that Partick Housing Association has an increased number of applications as people who want to live in Partick may not realise that Glasgow West HA and Glasgow HA also cover the area.
- The website can be translated into up to 30 languages through Google translate but the application form has to be filled in in English. This is because the person receiving the form may not be able to understand other languages.
- The CHR should be able to generate data that can be used by PHA in their Annual Return on the Charter report.
- There will be up to 4 user groups for staff using the website with varying levels of access. This means that staff will only see data that is relevant to their job role.
- For data protection there is a 2 step process to sign the declaration on the application form. By completing the name field and typing in the date this will represent an online signature.
- PHA will not have the computer software that will automatically download the applications and enter the details in to the PHA database.

### **Findings**

- There will have to be a considerable amount of PHA staff time dedicated to manually pointing and loading applications.
- Although the participating housing associations have different policies and stock it will still be one application form that is completed.
- The aim is to make it easier for people to apply as they will save time filling out forms.

## PHA Allocation Policy Consultation

The Panel took part in the consultation survey for Partick Housing Association's Allocation Policy. The main body of the consultation feedback form asks the reader to rank the following circumstances in terms of need with number 1 being the highest priority down to number 9 being the lowest. Based on their knowledge so far the Panel decided to comment of the different circumstances.

### **Medical need**

*You have a serious or significant medical condition which means that you need a move to a property that meets your needs.*

The Panel recognised that this would normally mean moving to a low down property due to mobility issues such as arthritis or breathing difficulties.

### **Insecurity of tenure**

*You do not have your own tenancy or have a private tenancy but have been given notice to quit.*

There was no doubt that people in these circumstances were in urgent need of being rehoused, however, in this situation PHA would currently recognise the person as being homeless or about to be made homeless. In these situations the person would normally be advised to approach Glasgow City Council Homeless Casework Services to be given temporary accommodation and a Section 5 Referral.

### **Members of HM Forces**

*You are a member of HM Forces but are due to be discharged so need to find your own accommodation.*

The HM Forces have no legal obligation to find accommodation for ex-service people. After looking through other local Association's policies the Panel acknowledged that none of them gave any priority to members of HM Forces. However, Glasgow Housing Association do give priority when presented with a discharge certificate. The Panel felt that this was unfair and more support should be given to ex-service people.

### **Tied tenant**

*You live in a property that was tied to your job but your circumstances have changed and you now need to find your own accommodation.*

An example of this would be a school Janitor coming to retirement age who currently lives in a house on site. The Panel felt that these situations could be planned for in advance as someone in this position would know that they would no longer have that home once their work has ended.

### **Overcrowding**

*You live in a property which is too small for your household needs so you now need to find a bigger property.*

This normally occurs when a family expands and more children join the home. Although it is important for children to have separate rooms once they reach age 16 and they cannot share if they are different genders once they reach 10, these were not seen as priority situations.

### **Underoccupation**

*You live in a property which is too big for your household needs so you now need to find a smaller property.*

This situation tends to arise when adult children move out of the family home. The Panel acknowledged that the applicant should be awarded points to downsize to then free up larger PHA properties. However, there were questions around whether this should be as high a priority for direct applicants who are not currently in PHA properties.

### **Care and support**

*You have to move into the Partick area so that you can give a high level of support to a dependent person, or so that you can receive a high level of support because you are dependent person.*

It can be difficult to care for an elderly family member or person in need if you live far away from them and this can be equally difficult if you are in need of care but live too far from your family for them to visit on a regular basis. Therefore, the Panel agreed that a level of points should be awarded for people trying to be rehoused in this situation.

### **House condition**

*You live in a property which is in a serious state of disrepair, where have a very small kitchen or only have a shower room.*

The Panel did not see this as being of high priority as the landlord should be keeping the property up to a liveable standard.

### **Sharing accommodation**

*You share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet with other people who are not part of your household.*

Everyone agreed that it was important to award points to people who were sharing amenities so that they could be in a position to be granted their own tenancy.

### **Findings**

- The consultation prompted a lot of discussion between Panel members on what should be considered important issues when looking to be rehoused.
- Most Panel members found it difficult to decide what order to rank the criteria in as depending who spoke, important points were made for several to take top priority.
- The Panel agreed that the top priority should be for medical needs with physical or mental health needs both being given points.

## **Interview with Senior Housing Assistants**

The Senior Housing Assistants explained that, historically at PHA when properties were allocated, it was 19% for homeless referrals with smaller percentages going to agencies such as Women's Aid and Scottish Association for Mental Health.

Applicants with physical medical needs will be given priority for ground floor properties. Although, it isn't always the case that a ground floor home suits people with medical needs. This is because the property may have steps to get into the back court or it could be situated on a hill and difficult to access for those with mobility problems.

The Senior Assistants have to check the figures for their allocations on a regular basis to make sure that the percentages equate to 50% for Section 5 Referrals, 25% to transfers and 25% to direct applicants.

The software that PHA uses matches applicants to properties, the staff member then has to manually look at their application to see which streets the applicant would like to stay in, kitchen type etc. An example was given that recently a tenant had contacted the Association as they were disappointed about not being offered a property that had become available on one of their preferred streets. However, they had said on their application that they did not want a property with a living kitchen. As this had a living kitchen they were not given an offer.

According to the size of property it is then up to the Senior Housing Assistants to make the best use of the housing stock. This would mean that a property that has two bedrooms (3 apartment) but is suitable for four people (two adults and two children) would first be offered to a family who fitted that criteria as opposed to three people (two adults and one child) or two people (one adult and one child).

Each applicant is given two reasonable offers. If the applicant has not accepted the second offer they are invited to have a conversation regarding their application and expectations with the Housing Services Manager. That is why it is so important for applicants to have all of the details in their application form correct, such as which streets they will accept offers on, the type of kitchen and floor level that they are willing to live on.

After every refusal the applicant must fill out a form stating a reason why they have refused the property. If this is due to the street, floor level or kitchen type their form would then be revised.

When making an offer the Senior Housing Assistants will send out a letter to the applicant's registered address asking for a response within 3 working days. Sometimes these viewings will take place with the former tenant still living in the property if it is during their 28 days notice period and they are comfortable with this.

Once the property has been viewed the Association asks that the applicant makes a decision on whether they will take the property by the next morning.

Transfer applicants will need to pay rent on both the properties they are moving out of and the one they are moving in to, if this takes longer than one day. The expense of moving needs to be covered by the applicant and this is discussed at the home visit.

The Association contact the Section 5 Team at Glasgow City Council to ask what a family's composition is so that PHA can then request referrals that will fit the property becoming available.

Anyone who comes to the Association with a Notice to Quit (NTQ) to vacate their property will be referred on to the Homeless Casework Team.

People on the waiting list for three and four bedroom properties tend to wait longer as PHA only has a small amount of these.

Housing Options interviews are normally booked up for around four weeks in advance and sometimes the interviewees do not turn up. PHA is missing out on capturing applicants because of this.

The Common Housing Register (CHR) has a generic approach although all Housing Associations involved in the Glasgow pilot have different allocations policies.

Sensitive lets are when the tenancy has to meet a certain criteria due to issues within the close or with the applicant. An example of this occurred recently when a couple were housed in the property underneath a single male that had been having problems with previous tenants who were also single males. Following an investigation into the tenants in both properties it appeared as though part of the problem may have been because it was always single males in both homes. As there was a common denominator the decision was made to try housing a couple in the property instead, in the hope that this would prevent future anti-social behaviour.

## **Findings**

- PHA does not award enough points to applicants with a valid NTQ to be rehoused which is something that the Panel believed PHA should consider changing.
- As the Panel were confused by the amount of time given for transfer applicants to move they felt it was important for PHA staff to be explicit about how long the tenant is given to move once they have received the keys to their new property.

## Interview with Managers from Glasgow City Council Section 5 Team

The Panel were joined by the Section 5 Team Managers to discuss how people become registered as homeless, what a referral is and how their relationship works with PHA. Listed below are the key points that were made.

- GCC's aim is to resolve homelessness.
- Section 5 referrals are called this as they refer to Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 duties on Local Authority to rehouse.
- Section 6 of the Act explains the responsibility of the landlord.
- During the stock transfer to GHA the Council was registering 12,000 people per year as homeless.
- In 2016 there were 6,000 people registered as homeless in Glasgow.
- There are currently around 100,000 social housing properties in Glasgow.
- It's up to the Homeless Casework team to determine if a person has made themselves intentionally homeless.
- Students cannot be registered as homeless.
- A notice to quit is not always legal and because of this not everyone who presents with a NTQ is registered as homeless.
- There is a reconciliation service for parents and children to help prevent the children from being made homeless.
- In Glasgow during 2016 there were more lets made to non-homeless than homeless people.
- When someone presents as homeless the casework team determines whether that person has a local connection. This would be a job within Glasgow, immediate family or if they had been living there before becoming homeless.
- Glasgow City Council by definition must secure an offer of a Scottish Secure Tenancy (permanent accommodation).
- The Council's policy is that a person will receive one offer only.
- Prospects interviews will help to find out a person's housing need that will then go into their resettlement plan which is like a care plan for rehousing.
- A housing support assessment must be carried out so that the council can arrange to put things in place for service users.
- Of those registered as homeless, 70% of them are single people aged between 24 – 64, a further 70% of this figure are male.
- As PHA has a majority of one bedroom properties this works well for rehousing people.
- GCC's target for rehousing people is 6 months however 47% of people are still homeless after this.
- From the point of producing a Section 5 referral to being given an offer is normally 5 weeks.
- No other Housing Associations in the North West have an Allocation Policy that offers as high as 50% to Section 5 Referrals.
- To register as homeless a person can present as a walk in or call to make an appointment at one of the four area offices in Glasgow.
- A Section 5 Referral shows a person's resettlement plan.
- The Section 5 Team has an excellent relationship with PHA. In effect, all referrals to PHA are sensitive lets because the Section 5 Team look to make

sure the people being referred are suitable for the property and surrounding area.

## **Findings**

- The number of people being registered has dropped significantly. The Panel wondered if there were less homeless people or if the Council had changed their policy on the criteria that people need to meet.
- PHA's stock is well suited for Section 5 referrals as the majority are one bedroom flats.
- The relationship between PHA and the Section 5 Team is well established and operated smoothly for both organisations.
- As the Section 5 team explained that not all NTQs are valid, the Panel questioned whether PHA awarded enough points to applicants who present these. There was concern that if the notice isn't valid, they can't be registered as homeless and they also won't have enough points to be rehoused by PHA.
- Although the Section 5 Team have a 6 month target there is a commendable turnaround time of 5 weeks.



## **Interview With Transfer Applicant**

The Panel interviewed an applicant who transferred from a large two bedroom tenement flat in Chancellor Street to one of the three bedroom townhouses at Broomhill Gate. She lives with her partner and their four children.

The applicant refused PHA's first offer of a property on Dumbarton Road as she thought the location wasn't appropriate. She had concerns about living on a busy road so then updated her application form to remove Dumbarton Road as an option.

The second offer was for a property that suited the family's needs however, it wasn't the right time for them to move. Due to personal issues there was too much going on emotionally and the applicant and her family were not prepared for any upheaval. She then spoke with the Senior Housing Assistant who explained that as she had been giving two reasonable offers and not accepted either of these then her application would be suspended. Although the applicant was not prepared to move at that point in time she was upset by being suspended as she felt that this word meant she had done something wrong and took the suspension personally. Following this the Association explained that all applications are suspended when an applicant is not ready to move.

PHA clarified that when an application is suspended this is normally for a period of three months. After this it can be reinstated when the applicant is ready to move. In this instance, once the application was reinstated she was given the offer of a suitable property. The family were given one day to move but were able to keep the previous property for a further week as they continued to pay the rent on it. PHA did not help with any of the financial cost of moving such as removal vans or rent free days.

### **Findings**

- The Panel agreed that the term suspended could be interpreted as upsetting due to the connotations i.e. suspended from school for bad behaviour. This could be taken personally and cause unnecessary upset to applicants.
- Concerns were raised about the length of time transfer applicants are given to move house. It was then explained that people can take up to one week as long as they are paying rent on both properties.

## Letters and Forms

The Panel looked at:

- the letter sent to direct applicants when their application is registered and pointed
- offer of housing letter
- refusal of offer letter
- Section 5 referrals
- Transfer application form
- Application form
- GHR application form

One of the Panel members read out part of the letter she had been sent by PHA following an application to transfer property. The letter stated,

*“Your application will be suspended if you accrue rent arrears, fail to maintain a previously agreed repayment arrangement, are involved in anti-social behaviour or your home has not been maintained to an acceptable standard.”*

The Panel agreed that the wording of the letter should be in plain language and that it should also state that applications will be suspended after the applicant has refused two reasonable offers.

After reviewing the points and offer letters the Panel noted that there was no mention of there only being two formal offers before an application is suspended. Everyone was in agreement that there should be more awareness raised about suspension.

### Findings

- Panel members suggested they could review PHA letters as a short project in future to make sure that they are easy to understand.
- The points letter does not explain how likely the applicant is to be rehoused.
- There were questions raised about how the current PHA application form will work alongside the GHR online application.

## **Interview With Housing Assistant On The Launch Of The GHR**

One of the PHA Housing Assistants joined the Panel to discuss the launch of the GHR. She explained that since the register went live on 26 April PHA have received 289 applications.

Before the launch of the register there was 280 applications on the PHA waiting list. This number was low due to staff giving applicants advice on how likely they were to be rehoused (due to the PHA Allocation policy) and also through yearly reviews of applications.

This now means that the waiting list has doubled in the last five weeks. As there has been such a phenomenal amount, the Housing Assistant team have been struggling to load the applications. This is because PHA does not have the IT interface that interacts with the PHA software for storing applications. This has resulted in a huge amount of time being taken up by manually pointing application forms and loading them onto the PHA system. It can take around one hour per application form.

There are questions that applicants have been able to bypass that are essential to pointing the application such as 'please list anyone living in your current property and whether or not they are moving with you'. Many people have only listed themselves, even if they live care of family or friends. This then effects the points given as PHA would assume that someone living in a one bedroom property would have sole use of the bedroom. Whereas, if they were sharing that property care of family or friends, the assumption would be that they are sleeping on the couch or sharing the bedroom, therefore they would receive overcrowding points.

The Housing Assistant felt that previously offered Housing Options interviews were too detailed and took a long time however, the Panel felt that it seemed GHR is now the opposite of this.

### **Findings**

- There is a disproportionate and significant amount of staff time taken up on the administrative side of processing applications.
- Having the interface would potentially help to reduce some of the time spent on loading applications onto the PHA database.
- It will not be possible to conduct Housing Options interviews and be part of the GHR – they do not work together.

## **Interview With Section 5 Referral Applicants**

Following a referral from the Section 5 Team, PHA rehoused an elderly couple in a one bedroom ground floor flat.

The applicant explained that they had first applied to PHA along with a number of other housing associations around ten years ago after people in his work advised him to. He recently retired after a career as a school janitor for Glasgow City Council. As the property they were living in was tied to his job, the couple were faced with having to move house.

Under the current PHA allocation policy there is no priority given to people who are living in tied accommodation. This then meant that PHA was not in a position to rehouse the applicants as they would not have enough points allocated to their application form to ever be at the top of the waiting list.

PHA staff advised that the quickest way to be rehoused would be through registering as homeless with Glasgow City Council as they were going to lose their home. This was upsetting for the applicant because he had worked for the Council for so long that he thought he would be entitled to housing. He hadn't previously realised that this would not be the case when he came to retire. When speaking to PHA staff he was assured that the Association has a good relationship with the Section 5 Team and they would ask for the couple's referral once they had been registered. They explained that they would need to wait for an appropriate property to become available that would suit their needs.

Once the applicants approached the Homeless Casework Team and explained that they had been living in tied accommodation for over 20 years and were about to be made homeless, they were registered for a Section 5 referral. It was around four weeks between visiting the Homeless Casework Team and being given an offer from PHA. As this was quicker than they had anticipated, the applicants have not yet been able to move in to their new home. They are still clearing out their previous home and preparing their new one by buying furniture that fits as well as decorating. It is now six weeks since they received the keys and they anticipate that they will be able to move by next week.

The Applicant said that they were treated very well by PHA and the Section 5 Team. When asked he said that he would not change anything about that part of the process.

### **Findings**

- It is important to inform applicants of how likely it is that they will be rehoused under their current living situation.
- The communication between PHA and the Section 5 Team is clearly very effective as PHA were able to notify the team of the applicant's situation.
- Although initially upset after finding out that PHA would not be able to rehouse the applicant in his current living situation, the couple were pleased with the final outcome.

<b>Action Plan Recommendations</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Responsible Staff Member</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>
PHA should make their Allocation Policy available on the PHA website.	It is important that this information is easy to access for everyone so that people applying for housing can read in more detail PHA's process in the interest of transparency.	Housing Services	December 2017
An independent medical assessor would be best trained to decide on how many points are allocated for different medical needs. The Panel agree that this should no longer be decided by PHA staff.	As staff are not qualified to assess medical conditions it is unfair on the applicant that they decide how many points they should be awarded as there is a chance that people could assess these incorrectly.	Operations Director	January 2018
The Panel thinks that equal points should be awarded for overcrowding and under-occupation to current PHA tenants to help with movement within PHA stock.	There was concern from the Panel that current tenants under-occupying their home would not have enough points awarded to then receive an offer for downsizing. The idea between the points level being the same for transfer tenants is because it would give PHA's own tenants more priority to free up housing then those applying from other housing.	Operations Director and Housing Services	When Policy is next reviewed
Section 5 referrals should be rehoused 'up to' 50%. This will give PHA movement on the number of Section 5 referrals that are rehoused each year.	When comparing the percentage of Section 5 referrals rehoused in other local housing association's policies, PHA had the highest percentage. The Panel felt that it was important to therefore have room for movement on this figure.	Operations Director and Housing Services	When Policy is next reviewed

<p>Housing Options interviews in the current format should end. There is far too much staff time taken up on interviews with what appears to be a high number of people who would not actually have any priority to be housed with PHA.</p>	<p>The Panel were in agreement that giving applicants tailored advice was important and great customer service. However, the current Housing Options format takes up too much staff time and prevents people from applying before their appointment. This means that PHA is missing out on applications.</p>	<p>Housing Services</p>	<p>December 2017</p>
<p>The Panel believes that points should be awarded to applicants who have been living in tied accommodation but have to move home as their work contract has ended. Examples of this could be school janitors and ex-members of HM Forces.</p>	<p>When PHA is next reviewing their Allocation Policy, these changes should be considered.</p>	<p>Operations Director and Housing Services</p>	<p>When Policy is next reviewed</p>
<p>PHA should inform people through the website and newsletter about how allocating housing works by using an easy to understand format using plain English.</p>	<p>Following the interviews with staff and tenants it became apparent that there any many misconceptions about getting rehoused in Partick. The Panel believes that explaining the allocation process in an easy to follow way on the website and in a newsletter will help to change these misconceptions.</p>	<p>Housing Services</p>	<p>December 2017</p>
<p>There should be a local letting agreement. The Panel believes that current tenants of PHA, who have a live transfer application, should be given priority for being rehoused in new developments over direct waiting list and Section 5 referral applicants.</p>	<p>After gaining an understanding about how available properties are allocated (50% Section 5 referrals, 25% transfers and 25% direct applicants) The Panel felt that when new developments come off site it would be in PHA's best interests to allocate these to transfers. This would in turn then free up more properties within PHA stock that could be allocated to direct and Section 5 applicants. In total it would mean more</p>	<p>Operations Director and Housing Services</p>	<p>When Policy is next reviewed</p>

	properties available to let. It would also be excellent customer service by rewarding current tenants with new build properties.		
The Panel would like to see PHA's policy formatted in a way that is easy to understand. The Panel were most keen on the layout of the Charing Cross Housing Association Allocation Policy.	To make policies easy to access and understand it is important that the layout is clear and concise. By following a similar format to Charing Cross the Panel believes that PHA's policy will be more accessible.	Operations Director	When Policy is next reviewed
Current 'Applying for A House' leaflet should be revised. This information needs to be written in a way that is easier to read. It would be helpful if the area that wards 12 and 15 cover could be shown on a map.	The Panel agreed that having a leaflet available in reception for prospective applicants was important. Some small changes to this leaflet would help to make it clearer.	Housing Services	January 2018

