

Building foundations for Allocating healthy homes

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Wheatley Group

- Scotland's leading housing, care and property-management group
- The UK's biggest developer of homes for social rent
- Subsidiaries include six housing associations, two care organisations and two commercial companies
- Jointly own City Building (Glasgow) with Glasgow City Council
- Work across 17 local authority areas
- Award-winning services and homes
- All partners committed to making homes and lives better



The Wheatley family



Choice-based letting (CBL) – it's how we let our homes at Wheatley



Designed to place choice at the heart of the letting system:

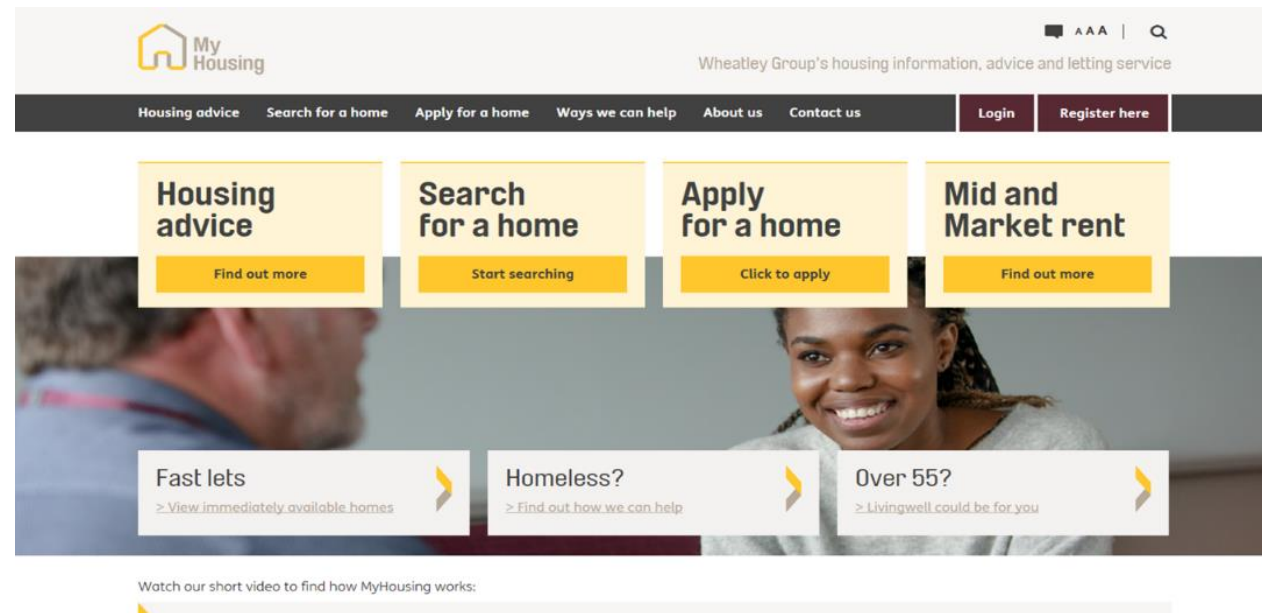
- Vacant property is advertised (Tuesday and Friday)
 - Applicant makes a note of interest (bid) to register interest
 - Applicant with the highest priority is allocated the home
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- CBL puts the onus on the applicant to seek out suitable properties that meet their needs and encourages pro-active engagement
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- Vulnerable households are supported in the process – the system matching service (assisted bidding).

Benefits of choice-based letting

- Greater customer choice
- More transparency
- Increased engagement and interaction between housing providers and customers
- Better management of customers' expectations, tackling low demand
- Improve acceptance rates
- More sustainable neighbourhoods and communities.

The beginning of our journey

- Housing Scotland Act (2014) – changes in legislation
- Review all Group allocation policies - Development of a Group Framework and Policy that supports:
 - Housing Scotland Act (2014)
 - Wheatley Group Subsidiary - local variations, demand and challenges
- Reviewed frontline processes and guidance
- MyHousing IT platform to support Group Framework and Subsidiary Policies



Vision

- Let our homes to people most in need of affordable housing – giving people control over where they live and building sustainable communities
- Become a leading provider of tailored housing advice – supporting people to find solutions
- Customers build and own a personal housing plan – using technology for content and placement

Our key principles

- Simple, flexible framework
- Consistency of approach
- Starts with individual advice
- Focus on housing options
- Customers in control
- Staff thinking differently
- Easy access to advisory services

Our tenancy sustainment is high, therefore number of homes we let is limited:

- We let 4,611 properties across our Group last year
- 29.4% of Lets to homeless across our Group despite over 40% of properties being advertised
- 25% of our turnover is in our multi-storey accommodation
- Managing customer expectations

Allocation picture

- 29,505 people on housing list
- 7,029 are tenants wanting a transfer
- 675 live homeless applications
- Band E (Health and Housing Need) 4104 with 1760 tenants and 19 homeless households
- More than half of applications (15,233) are in Band F with no housing need



Group E - Health and Housing need housing list



Group E	Total	Waiting	Transfer	Homeless
Health and Housing Need (normally mobility)	2394	1351	1024	19
Health and Housing Need Dispersed (normally autism or PTSD)	661	305	356	N/A
Livingwell (older people)	734	468	266	N/A
Livingwell 55+ (requiring help)	98	49	49	N/A
Provide or Receive support	217	152	65	N/A
Total	4104	2325	1760	19

What's different in our policy

- ✓ Better and tailored messaging for all bands
- ✓ Defined process for Local Letting Plans
- ✓ Changes to armed forces criteria
- ✓ Promotion of mutual exchanges and downsizing – particularly for older people
- ✓ Outcomes published
- ✓ Bands now in a hierarchy
- ✓ Higher priority for Community Care and access to supported housing solutions
- ✓ New rules for owner occupiers



GHA



Dunedin
Canmore



Loretto
Housing



Cube



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HOMES.]

Applicant bands

Band A

- **Clearance / Demolition** – assessment (using the assessment section)
- **Management Transfer** - assessment (using the assessment section)
- **Exceptional Housing Need** - assessment (using the assessment section)
- **Return to Community** – assessment (Housing Officer and HOOP)
- **Local Move** - assessment (using the assessment section)

Band B

- **Homeless** – assessment (S5 referral from LA)
- **Housing First** – assessment HAT team (S5 referral from LA)
- **Young Care Leaver** – assessment HAT team (as per protocol)

Band C

- **Separating Partner** – automated (for WG tenants)
- **Affordability** – housing officer led - manual
- **Leaving the armed forces** – automated (with documents)
- **Tied accommodation** – automated (with documents)
- **Community Care Leavers** – automated (with documents)

Band D

- **Over crowding** – automated (update question suite)
- **Under occupation** – automated (update question suite)
- **Below tolerable standard** – automated (with documents)

Band E

- **Health and housing need** – manual assessment
- **Health and housing need dispersed** - manual assessment
- **Livingwell** - manual assessment
- **Livingwell 55+** - manual assessment
- **Provide or receive support** - manual assessment

Band F

- **No housing need** – automated (update question suite)

Band E: Health and housing need pilot



Allocations Community of Excellence (COE) sub group carried out a review of the current medical assessment process and customer outcomes. Key findings were:

- Process was subjective and open to interpretation
- Not consistently applied across Wheatley Group
- Staff lacked confidence in the assessment process
- Unnecessary awards – didn't always consider adaptations to support customer to remain in their own home
- Unacceptable waiting times for applicants to be rehoused
- No formal review process in place
- Practice did not make best use of our housing stock.

What we wanted to achieve

- Provide clear focus for both customer and housing officer in assessing suitability of current home and impact of health condition
- Triggers to ensure all options/adaptions are considered
- Reduce aspirational moves and highlight high rise living as a good option
- Housing Officers have the right information - increase confidence
- Reduce waiting times and unnecessary awards
- Be able to review health and housing need awards with clear guidance around when an award can be removed
- Access to OT services – when necessary.

New Form – key changes

Changed the focus from:

“awarding a priority for a move” to “determining why customer home is unsuitable and identifying if adaptations may make their current home suitable for their needs”.



Old Application

Medical Priority

You have told us you need a new home because you or someone who lives with you has a medical condition. Please complete this application form to support your request. You should provide as much information as you can. This will help us to make a decision as quickly as possible. **Completing this form does not guarantee that you will get Medical Priority.**

New Application

Health and housing need assessment

- ▶ You have told us your current home is unsuitable for you or someone who lives with you. Please complete this application form in full, telling us why your home is unsuitable to help us assess your housing need. If you are a new applicant this form should be completed along with a housing registration form.
- ▶ Please note multi-storey properties with lift access may be considered as suitable for anyone who needs to be re-housed for mobility reasons.

New Form - key changes (continued)

Medical priority

Terminology: “Medical Condition” and “Priority” is used throughout form

How does medical condition affect day to day living?

How long have you had the condition?

Have any adaptations been carried out to current home?

Removed leading questions e.g. near shops, hilly or flat, hospitalisation etc.

Integral provided poor responses which did not aid the Housing Officer in their decisions

Health and housing need assessment

Changed terminology to ‘Health Condition, Illness or Disability’ and ‘Assessment’

Tell us why your current home is not suitable?

Determine if health condition, illness or disability can be treated/corrected or terminal etc.

Evidence of current medication will be required
When was their condition diagnosed?

Have you contacted Social work OT? And when?

HO also asked if adaptations were offered & discussion recorded in the office use section

Questions asked e.g. where the bathroom and bedroom is located etc.

Improved quality of information to allow decision to be made

Our new and improved Group process



- New online Health and Housing need form for all applicants
- No external assessment by independent agency - Housing Officer is empowered to be the decision maker;
- If decision is challenged, Occupational Therapist support;
- Review of existing customers with a medical award carried out;
- All health and housing need awards are now reviewed regularly
- All applications and outcomes recorded online

Impact

- ✓ Improved customer journey
- ✓ Information and messaging gives customers realistic advice
- ✓ Better housing solutions for customers
- ✓ Confident staff - streamlined processes used across Group
- ✓ Best use of housing stock
- ✓ Increased tenancy sustainment.



