

West Lothian Council
Points procedures



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Points procedures

| Points award | Description | Points |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Non-Cumulative | | |
| Homeless | Assessed as statutory homeless | 750 |
| Cumulative | | |
| Property Needs Assessment A | Property does not meet physical requirements | 500 |
| Property Needs Assessment B | Property meets some of need but not all physical requirements | 250 |
| Mental Health Assessment | Property does not meet need and is having an adverse effect on mental health | 250 |
| Below Tolerable Standard | Property assessed as not meeting the statutory standard | 500 |
| Under-occupation | Based on each bedroom unoccupied (only applies to social landlord tenants) | 250 per room |
| Local Strategic Needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Discharge • Leaving supported accommodation to community care • Medical A • Looked after and accommodated children (Children (Scotland) Act 1995) • Leaving Forces (leaving full time regular service and within 9 months of discharge) • Domestic Abuse • Prison Discharge • Leaving Care • Notice to Quit • People at risk of /experiencing serious harassment • Forced sale • Witness protection • Asked to leave/living in insecure accommodation • Forced to Live apart | 750 |
| Overcrowding/Large families | Based on bedroom deficiency (in line with age on who can share a bedroom) | 250 (per room required) |
| Sharing | Based on applicant's household composition | 150 per person |
| Support | To give or receive support | 150 |
| Preferred Area <i>*applicants can select a preferred area and will be awarded points</i> | 1 area can be selected by applicant as their preferred area of choice to reside in | 100 |
| Needs not covered in Allocations Policy | | |
| <i>Situations can occur where the current allocations policy does not allow for swift action. These are extreme cases and will be dealt with on an individual basis.</i> | | 1500 points will be added |



Points Framework procedures

Homeless

An applicant will be placed in the Homeless Group once assessed as statutory homeless and will be accepted from date of homeless presentation and awarded 750 points (these points are not cumulative).

Homeless applicants will be required to select a preferred area (points will not be awarded for this). Each homeless applicant must select a minimum of all areas in 3 wards in West Lothian.

Where a homeless application has not been provided with an offer within 9 months, they will be asked to open up their areas to a minimum of six wards and will be listed for any house type, level and heating type. One offer of permanent accommodation will be made under the homeless priority.

If there are grounds for restriction to areas a restriction request must be submitted to the Assessment Officer within a 14 day timescale. If a property type restriction is required then a Property Needs Assessment form must be submitted through the completion of the online medical preference questions with supporting medical evidence.

If a reasonable offer is made and refused, the homeless priority will be removed and the applicant will be placed into the relevant category depending on their circumstances.

There is a right of appeal if applicants feel they have been unfairly removed from the Homeless Group (**See Homeless Appeals Policy**).

Any applicants going through the appeals process or have requested a restriction for area and/or house type will be suspended awaiting the outcome.

Property Needs Assessment (Physical and Mental Health Assessment)

Applicants who have been successful in being awarded points under the Property Needs Assessment for physical or mental health reasons will be awarded:

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|-------------------|
| PNA | Physical Medical A | 500 points |
| | Physical Medical B | 250 Points |

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------|
| PNA | Mental Health Assessment | 250 points |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------|

Applicants can be awarded points for physical and mental health reasons if they meet both criteria.

Applicants will be placed in the **General Needs Group** (with the exception of WLC tenants who will be placed in the Transfer Group).

Below Tolerable Standard

An applicant may receive points if their present accommodation is in an extremely poor state of repair or it lacks basic services or amenities. If it is felt the property is below the tolerable standard, the applicant needs to contact their local Environmental Health service who will carry out an assessment of the property to determine if it is/has:

- Structural instability
- Unsatisfactory supply of hot or cold water
- Deficient ventilation or natural lighting
- Unsatisfactory access to external doors
- Rising or penetrating damp
- Unsatisfactory cooking facilities
- No fixed bath or shower or wash hand basin at these facilities.

If it is found that the property meets the below tolerable standard criteria, **500 points** will be awarded and applicant will be placed in the General Needs Group (with the exception of WLC tenants who will be placed in the Transfer Group).

Under-occupation

Points will be awarded if the current property has too many bedrooms for the applicants need and exceeds the minimum occupancy standard set by West Lothian Council (see Table 1 in Allocations Policy). If a tenant is under-occupying the property, 250 points will be awarded for each bedroom not in use.

Social housing tenants will be placed in the **General Needs Housing Group** (with the exception of West Lothian Council Tenants who will be placed in the Transfer Group).

An example of when points will be awarded are when someone is occupying a 3 bedroom property and only requires a 1 or 2 bedrooms, we will award two sets of under-occupation points.

The points will only be awarded if you are requesting a property that has fewer bedrooms than your current home. (Under-occupation points will only be awarded to social housing tenants).

Strategic Needs

This category identifies applicants with urgent housing needs with a requirement to meet their needs as quickly and successfully as possible to prevent homelessness. These applicants include:

- Hospital Discharge
- Leaving supported accommodation to community care
- Medical A
- Looked after and accommodated children (Children (Scotland) Act 1995)
- Leaving Forces (leaving full time regular service and within 9 months of discharge)
- Domestic Abuse
- Prison Discharge
- Leaving Care
- Asked to leave
- Notice to Quit
- People at risk of /experiencing serious harassment
- Forced sale
- Witness protection
- Asked to leave/living in insecure accommodation
- Forced to Live apart

Community Care

Applicants who are leaving residential establishments who can live independently with a level of support (this does not include children leaving care). **750 points** will be awarded to those who qualify and will be placed in the **General Needs Group**.

Overcrowding/Large Families

Points will be awarded if the current property does not have enough bedrooms to meet an applicants' housing need and fails to meet the occupancy standard (See Table 1 in Allocations Policy). **250 points** will be awarded for each bedroom required.

All applicants (with the exception of those who have been accepted as statutory homeless and with the exception of WLC tenants who will be placed in the Transfer Group) will be placed in the **General Needs Group**

Sharing

Points will be awarded if there are more than one person sharing facilities with anyone other than those included in their application for housing.

Facilities are:

- Livingroom
- Kitchen
- Toilet
- Bathroom

150 points will be awarded for each person who has to share the facilities mentioned and will be placed in the **General Needs Group**.

To give or receive support

Points will be awarded where an applicant gives/ receives support to/from a family member/friend. In order to award these points, written evidence detailing the type of support that is given/received is required by both person(s) giving/receiving support. Please note points will not be awarded for professional support or for childcare unless in circumstances described below.

150 points will be awarded to those who qualify and will be placed in the **General Needs Group**.

Support points will be given when:

An applicant has high support needs and must reside in a particular area to ensure continuity of support. This would include where a family member/friend identified as main carer provides support. (Evidence may be required from Health, Social Work, Housing, and Education and/or in some instances proof of receipt of carers' allowance)

Where an applicant is at risk of financial hardship due to the excessive cost of childcare if they were to move from their current area which resulted in

- a) the loss of childcare provided by a relative, and/or
- b) their inability to retain their current employment due to travel difficulties

e.g. very early or late start/ finish times when public transport is unavailable.

Preferred Area

Applicants can select one area where they would prefer to reside. **100 points** will be awarded for this community only.

Homeless applicants will be required to select a preferred area however points will not be awarded for this.

Needs not covered in the Allocations Policy

Situations can occur where the current allocations policy does not allow for swift action. Additional points will be added to those who qualify to allow an offer of housing to be made. The following are reasons that we will consider applicants under this category are:

- Where Police Scotland confirm there is a risk to someone's life if they remain in the property
- Witness Protection
- Extreme anti-social behaviour and the only resolution is to move one party
- Extreme harassment which has been confirmed by the Safer Neighbourhood Team and/or Police Scotland.

This list is not exhaustive and extreme cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Strategic Needs points explained

Domestic Abuse: points will be awarded to an applicant who is experiencing or are at risk of domestic abuse from their partner, or ex-partner and can include physical abuse, sexual abuse and mental and emotional abuse. Points can be awarded to enable the victim to avoid approaching the council statutory homeless service where that is their choice.

Hospital Discharge: Points will be awarded when an applicant cannot return to their existing home on hospital discharge. Discharge referral form or appropriate paperwork to be completed by the relevant hospital practitioner e.g. consultant, social worker, OT and should be on a planned basis. See hospital discharge protocols

Prison Discharge: Points will be awarded for an applicant who will be released from prison and have no home to which they can return. Points will be awarded 12 weeks before their liberation date and should be in line with the council's approach to housing advice, information and support for people leaving prison, known as the SHORE standards. See Prison Discharge protocol

Harassment: Points will be awarded for an applicant at risk or experiencing serious abuse and harassment. This may include, racial harassment, religious harassment, homophobic harassment, transphobic harassment, sexual harassment or harassment of autistic people or people with a learning disability or mental health. A range of evidence will be required from the police, the council's safer neighbourhood team, and other services such as social policy, education, health and other agencies. See Harassment Policy

Leaving Forces: Points will be awarded for an applicant leaving the armed forces and are required to leave service accommodation. Copy of discharge papers required.

Young People Leaving Care :“Looked after children” aged 16 or over who are preparing to take on a permanent tenancy and/or who may be moving on from supported accommodation. The aim is to avoid young care leavers from approaching the council's statutory homeless service.

Witness Protection – evidence required from relevant professional body.

The council will consider awarding points to applicants who have **insecure housing circumstances** but who have not applied through the statutory homeless route or who would be considered statutory homeless. This priority can help avoid applicants needing to approach the council's homeless service and can be applied in the following circumstances:

Notice to Quit: Points can be awarded where a valid Notice to Quit has been served for a private rented tenancy. Copy of notice to quit required.

Forced Sale: Points may be awarded where a repossession notice has been served on an owner-occupier home. Proof of sale date, lawyers letter stating the sale is forced.

Asked to Leave: An applicant asked to leave accommodation by relatives or friends whereby this has been their last permanent address. In conjunction with the Homeless Legislation, this will be regarded as having lived there for six months or more. Confirmation of housing history should be provided via the housing application or PHPs and also evidence of being asked to leave will be required.

Families being forced to live apart: Points will be awarded where there are dependent children included in the household composition and where the applicant/s has previously lived together as a family unit, i.e. owned a property, rented a property where one or both have been owner/s tenant/s. In the event of one being the owner/ tenant, the other must supply evidence to show they lived at the address jointly.

750 points will be awarded to applicants who qualify for any of these points and will be placed in the **General Needs group**.

If after two months no offer of permanent accommodation has been made. Your case will be reviewed and where required referred to the homeless team for assessment. Where a formal threatened with homeless decision, in line with homeless legislation has been reached and after two months no offer of permanent accommodation has been made then your homeless officer will carry out a review of **your case. If assessed as homeless at this stage your application will be placed in the homeless category.**