

# **Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association**

## **ALLOCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURE**

The Association is a specialist Housing Association providing accommodation suitable for the use of older, less physically active or disabled persons, 50 years of age or over. Consideration is also given to older single persons or couples under the age of 50, where they require a bungalow due to disability.

This document summarises the Association's policies and procedure governing the selection of residents, including transfers and exchanges.

### **RESIDENT SELECTION PROCEDURES**

**Q How do I apply for accommodation?**

A You can get an application form by calling in person, writing, telephoning or e-mailing our main office at:

**Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association**  
**PO Box 31, The Grove**  
**168 Front Street, Chester le Street**  
**Co Durham DH3 3YH**

**Tel: 08000 432642 (Freephone)**

**Fax: (0191) 388 2838**

**Email: [info@damha.org.uk](mailto:info@damha.org.uk)**

Once filled in, it should be returned to the above address in the prepaid envelope provided. Once we receive your application an acknowledgement will be sent within 10 working days.

**Q Can I still apply if I have another family member (e.g. son/daughter) or carer living with me?**

A If you are applying for 2-bedroom accommodation then your application will be accepted if you have another family member or carer living with you.

In the case of another family member, that person must have been living with you for the previous 12 months. In the case of a carer, the 12-month qualifying period will not apply where he/she is receiving an appropriate carer's allowance and does not own or rent a property in their own right.

A family member/carer who is under the age of 50 will be required to sign an undertaking to vacate the property where the resident is no longer living in the home.

If you are applying for 1-bedroom accommodation then your application will not be considered if a family member or carer intends moving with you, as this would result in the property being overcrowded.

**Q How will my application be assessed?**

A Demand for our accommodation in certain areas is such that it is impossible to house everyone who applies; therefore your application will be assessed using a points system, which is described in the next section.

Your points are assessed from the information you provide on the application form, therefore it is very important that you complete all of the questions and give as much information as possible about your housing circumstances.

Once your application form has been processed you will be advised, in writing, how many points you have been awarded.

Before you are made an offer of accommodation, one of our Area Housing Officers will visit you at home to verify the information you have provided, and the points you have been awarded.

**POINTS SYSTEM**

**HOMELESSNESS**

**(50 points)**

The Association will include the following as homeless where it can be shown that the circumstances have not been intentionally created:

- Where there is no accommodation which the applicant is entitled to occupy
- Where the applicant is at risk of violence at present accommodation
- Where the applicant is living in crisis or emergency accommodation
- Where the applicant fears harassment in their present accommodation
- Where the applicant can show that they will become homeless within 28 days

**EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS**

Where the applicant's home is subject to a demolition order

**(50 points)**

***Lack of Basic Amenities***

No separate bedroom (*i.e. bedsit*)

**( 3 points)**

Shared bedroom (*i.e. shares with a person of the opposite sex other than partner*)

**( 6 points)**

No kitchen sink or drainer

**( 2 points)**

No food storage space

**( 2 points)**

No washbasin

**( 2 points)**

No bath or shower

**( 2 points)**

No inside toilet

**( 6 points)**

No water supply

**( 6 points)**

No hot water supply

**( 6 points)**

No electricity supply ( 6 points)

**Sharing Amenities**

Accommodation shared with another household who are not seeking re-housing with the applicant (e.g. family) ( 4 points)

Amenities shared with another household (e.g. hostel accommodation) ( 6 points)

**Inadequate Features**

Living on first floor with no lift ( 2 points)

Living on second floor with no lift ( 3 points)

Living on third floor or above with no lift ( 4 points)

Living on first floor or above with lift ( 1 point)

Steep stairs/steps within present accommodation ( 1 point)

Steep steps to BOTH entrances of present accommodation ( 2 points)

Each OCCUPIED room without any form of permanent heating (i.e. does not include spare bedroom) ( 1 point)

Property in poor state of repair/maintenance (0-10 points)

**OVERCROWDING**

Points will be awarded where there is no separate bedroom for each of the following:

Each couple ( 2 points)

A parent in a single parent family ( 2 points)

Single adult over 16 years of age ( 2 points)

Each child over 10 years of age sharing with a child of the opposite sex ( 2 points)

**UNDER OCCUPATION**

For each surplus bedroom (one spare bedroom is allowed) ( 1 point)

**EXISTING LOCATION**

Remote from local amenities (e.g. shops, transport) ( 1 point)

Remote from relatives/friends who provide care/support ( 1 point)

Poor surrounding physical or social conditions ( 1 point)

**MEDICAL NEED**

Points can be awarded from one of the following categories

Where applicant(s) cannot use the stairs in the home and only have toilet facilities on an upper level. (25 points)

Where applicant(s) cannot use the stairs in the home and have toilet facilities on both levels (20 points)

Where applicant(s) find it very difficult to manage the stairs in the home and a move to ground floor accommodation would greatly improve the ability to manage independently (15 points)

Where applicant(s) have some difficulty managing the stairs in the home and a move to ground floor accommodation would improve the ability to manage independently (10 points)

Where one or both applicants has minor health problems which make it more difficult to manage the home and/or garden **(5 points)**

Where applicant(s) have a stair lift fitted to enable them to use the stairs **(5 points)**

### **LENGTH OF TIME ON WAITING LIST**

For applicants 50 years of age or over, two points will be awarded for each full year on the waiting list **(2 points per year)**

### **AGE**

15 points will be awarded to applicants aged 50 years and over **(15 points)**

### **COLLIERY SERVICE**

Points will be awarded for the number of years worked in the former Durham Coalfield.	1-10 years	<b>( 2 points)</b>
	11-20 years	<b>( 4 points)</b>
Mineworkers' widows will be assessed on their late husband's colliery service	21-30 years	<b>( 6 points)</b>
	31-40 years	<b>( 8 points)</b>
	41-49 years	<b>(10 points)</b>
	50 + years	<b>(12 points)</b>

### **OTHER SOCIAL NEED**

To ensure that the Association takes account of all individual needs and circumstances, a discretionary award of up to 5 points can be made if the applicant is experiencing severe difficulties in coping with existing housing conditions for reasons other than those listed above **(0-5 points)**

### **MODERNISATION TRANSFERS**

Where a transfer applicant is required by the Association to move to facilitate modernisation of their present home and they wish to move permanently to another area **(30 points)**

### **SALE OF HOMES**

Where the association has made a decision to sell vacant homes in a particular location, outright priority above other applicants will be given to residents wishing to transfer from that scheme to other association property. Where more than one resident requests a transfer to a vacant property, priority should normally be determined by length of occupancy within that particular group of homes.

However, where the vacant home requested has had significant adaptations carried out, making it particularly suitable for a wheelchair user, a wheelchair reliant applicant would be given priority in accord with the Associations overall lettings policy.

## **APPLICANTS WITH THE SAME PRIORITY**

Where more than one applicant is registered with the same number of points, the length of time on the waiting list will be the deciding factor. Where the date of application is the same then preference will be given to the applicant with the longest colliery service.

## **DESIGNATED FAMILY ACCOMMODATION**

Among our stock, the Association has a small number of three bedroom family bungalows (disabled) and three bedroom family houses. All lettings for these particular properties are allocated to the relevant local council who nominate applicants from their own register. All of the local councils in our area now operate a 'Choice Based Lettings' system where empty properties are advertised and applicants are required to 'bid' for the homes that they are interested in. Relevant checks are still carried out on those applicants nominated before an offer of a home is made.

## **DESIGNATED WHEELCHAIR ACCOMMODATION**

Where a property is designated as a wheelchair property or has been significantly adapted to suit a wheelchair user, then disabled persons who use a wheelchair will be given priority above other applicants on the waiting list, where their current accommodation is unsuitable to their needs.

## **OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS**

An application may not be considered where an applicant has realistic alternative options of meeting his/her housing need, e.g. by selling their own home and using the capital to purchase more suitable accommodation in the areas requested.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The selection of residents is at the discretion of the Association. In deciding whether to appoint a resident, the Association will take into account the interests and way of life of the existing residents and may decline to allocate accommodation to any person whose lifestyle could conflict with, or be detrimental to, that of existing residents.

## **DEFERMENT POLICY**

The Association will defer from its Waiting List applicants who are deemed to be "non qualifying persons". Each application will be considered on its merits and 'deferred' where deemed appropriate for a specific length of time, after which the applicant will be invited to apply again for review. The length of the deferment will be relative to the circumstance, being no less than 6 months and no more than 2 years. For serious cases where the applicant continues to pose a threat to the community then a further deferment period will be reapplied following a review.

"Non qualifying persons" will fall into one or more of the following categories:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Deferment</b>
i) Persons who have a record of rent arrears to local authorities or other landlords	<b>6 months</b>
ii) Persons convicted of a drug related offence	<b>12 months</b>
iii) Persons convicted of a criminal offence involving violence, who may be considered a threat to the local community	<b>24 months</b>
iv) Persons convicted of a sex related offence who may be considered a threat to the local community	<b>24 months</b>
v) Persons convicted of a racially motivated offence	<b>18 months</b>
vi) Persons who have been abusive to, attacked or threatened the Association's staff	<b>24 months</b>
vii) Persons who have left an Association property in serious disrepair and repair recharges are outstanding	<b>12 months</b>
viii) Persons who have left an association property leaving arrears of maintenance contribution	<b>6 months</b>

**CONSULTATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

Before taking a decision to defer, it may be necessary to consult with various agencies, where deemed appropriate. Examples of these are Local Authority Departments, Police, Probation Service and other Housing Providers.

**FURTHER QUESTIONS**

**Q      What happens if I am made an offer of accommodation?**

A      The offer of a home is made in writing, and time is given for you and your family to look over the home before making your decision, during which time any problems can be discussed with a member of staff.

**Q      What happens to my application if I refuse an offer of accommodation?**

A      A refusal will not alter the number of points you have been awarded . You will not be penalised for refusing an offer.

**Q      Are the waiting lists reviewed?**

A      Waiting lists are reviewed annually. During each review you will be asked to confirm whether you wish to remain on the waiting list and if your circumstances have changed in any way.

It is very important that you reply, and if you do not, it will be assumed that you no longer wish to be re-housed by the Association.

**Q What happens if my circumstances change?**

A If your circumstances change at any time it is important that you let us know as soon as possible as it could affect your priority on the waiting list.

**Q Who do I contact if I am dissatisfied with the handling of my application?**

A If you do not feel that your application for accommodation has been treated fairly, you should write to the Head of Housing, who will investigate your complaint and reply to you within 10 working days.

If you are still not satisfied with the explanation you should then write to the Chairman of the Association, who will arrange for an Appeals Panel comprising of Executive Committee Members to consider your appeal. This will be arranged within 4 weeks from your request to appeal. You will be able to make written or personal representation. If making personal representation you have the right to bring someone to represent you.

You will be notified of the outcome of your appeal in writing within 5 working days.

Should you still feel that the Association has not dealt with you in a fair way, you may contact the Independent Housing Ombudsman, who will investigate your complaint.

The Ombudsman expects that you first give the Association the opportunity to resolve the complaint and you must contact the Ombudsman no later than a year from the time the Association last looked into the problems. You can ask a friend, relative or adviser to help with the complaint.

If you would like further information about this service please write to:

**The Independent Housing Ombudsman Ltd**  
**81 Aldwych**  
**London WC2B 4HN**

**Telephone: 020 7421 3800 or 0845 7125973** (*local rate calls*)

**Fax: 020 7831 1942**

**Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)**

**[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)**

**Q Can I check the personal information on my application form?**

A You are entitled to inspect the information we have about your application. You may do this anytime during working hours, which are Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 4:30 pm but you should make an appointment first.

**Q Is there anything else I can do to improve my chances of rehousing?**

A We would recommend that you also apply to the local authority and to other housing associations who have suitable accommodation in the areas you wish to move to.

**Q If I am on the council waiting list, will they pass my name on to the Association?**

A When new homes are built by the Association, a percentage, usually 100%, of the new lettings and 50% of subsequent lettings are allocated to the local council who may nominate any qualifying person, from their own waiting lists. Please note that all of the local councils now operate 'Choice Based Lettings' where applicants are required to 'bid' for the properties. (For further details on how Choice Based Lettings works, you should contact your local council.) A nomination from the local council does not necessarily mean the applicant will be made an offer of a home. We will also seek the assistance of the local council when vacancies arise in areas where there is little or no demand.

**Q Can I transfer from one Aged Miners Home to another?**

A We will try to assist residents who wish to move from one of the Association's properties to another in a different area, but it must be stressed that requests for transfers will be considered along with applicants from the waiting lists.

Each request will be considered on its own merits, with housing need being the deciding thing at all times.

**MUTUAL EXCHANGES**

**Q Can I exchange homes with another resident?**

A The Association will consider requests for mutual exchanges between:

- Aged Miners Homes residents
- Residents of Aged Miners Homes and retired persons currently living in local authority or housing association accommodation

Permission to exchange would normally be given in any of the above circumstances, but the Association would need to be satisfied that the other landlord has given consent to the exchange. In order to qualify for an exchange the main requirements are that:

- No resident involved in the exchange is under a court order for possession
- No proceedings for possession are underway
- Overcrowding would not result from the exchange taking place
- None of the participants in the exchange holds a tied tenancy
- The exchange would not result in a property meant for someone with special housing needs (e.g. disabled) being occupied by other than such a person

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY – ACCESS TO HOUSING**

The Association is committed to equal opportunities and declares opposition to all forms of unjust discrimination.

In the provision of housing, we will seek to ensure that no person or group of persons eligible to apply for accommodation will be treated less favourable than any other person or group of persons because of their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious, political beliefs, disability or unrelated criminal convictions.

### **DISABLED ADAPTATIONS**

Many of the people re-housed are disabled or become disabled while living in the home.

Within the constraints of the annual budget, we will work with Social Services Departments to provide the appropriate aids and adaptations to homes to make life easier for residents.

### **FALSE INFORMATION**

Please be aware that false information given on your application for housing may result in your application being disqualified.

If you are re-housed on the basis of false information you may lose your home.

### **FURTHER DETAILS**

Details on any of the information given in this booklet can be obtained by contacting the Housing Management Section at the Association's Office at:

PO Box 31, The Grove  
168 Front Street  
Chester le Street  
Co Durham DH3 3YH

Telephone: 08000 432642 (Freephone)  
Fax: (0191) 388 2838  
Email: [info@damha.org.uk](mailto:info@damha.org.uk)

A Registered Charity No: 222673

Registered with the Housing Corporation No: A3213

Member of the National Association of Almshouses

Member of the National Housing Federation

Member of the Independent Housing Ombudsman

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