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I	INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY
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1. INTRODUCTION

An aim of Lister Housing Co-operative is to provide good quality rented housing for people in need. Lister owns 185 tenement flats in the centre of Edinburgh around Lauriston Place. Most of the flats are for 'general needs' ranging in size from bedsits to six bedrooms. There are 2 wheelchair flats and 13 amenity flats for the ambulant disabled. There are 5 large flats for single people to share. There is no sheltered, supported or shared ownership housing. There is no 'right to buy' at Lister.

Lister is a member of the EdIndex common housing register in Edinburgh using their choice-based lettings system *Key-to-Choice*. Our allocations use this policy decided by Lister. In drafting this policy Lister has taken account of guidance issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and any relevant legislation.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

This allocations policy is designed to meet the following objectives:

- a. To be fair, efficient and accountable in allocating tenancies. To be accessible to all by being part of the EdIndex common housing register in Edinburgh. To meet our legal requirements and the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Standards.
- b. To ensure the housing is as suitable as possible for the applicant's housing needs, including medical and personal/social factors.
- c. To work with the City of Edinburgh Council to assist the homeless and others in need.
- d. To create and maintain a stable and balanced community.
- e. To assist mobility through recognised mobility and exchange schemes.
- f. To make the best use of our limited housing stock.

3. A STABLE AND BALANCED COMMUNITY

Lister aims to contribute to community stability and to develop and maintain a balanced community by:

- a. Addressing a range of needs rather than producing over-concentrations of households with high degrees of vulnerability and/or support needs.
- b. Catering for a wide range of household requirements, and seeking to ensure that the Lister community is diverse, and that we do not have over-concentrations of particular household types and ages.

- c. Aiming to provide a degree of choice and to help meet the aspirations of those applying for housing.
- d. Providing, through the transfer quota arrangement, the opportunity for those tenants with changing needs and circumstances, to continue to be housed by Lister, in more suitable accommodation within the same community. Such transfers will normally create another vacancy.
- e. Aiming to sustain and where possible enhance social, community and family networks.
- f. Assisting in the provision of aids and adaptations to our stock to enable those with special needs / disability to be rehoused, or to continue to live at Lister.

4. *EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES*

Lister has an equal opportunities policy and will not discriminate in the allocation of housing on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, sexual preference, age, religion, appearance, mental or physical disability, HIV infection or HIV related illnesses. Applicants are asked to provide various details in their EdIndex application form so we can check (through monitoring summary statistics) that people are being treated fairly and equally. All our housing lists are open for applications.

Lister will circulate information on this allocations policy to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups in Edinburgh. Lister identifies Gypsy Travellers as a BME group. We have a target that the percentage of new tenants from BME groups at least matches the overall percentage of BME groups in Edinburgh's population. Lister sets a target each year for BME allocations and we aim to achieve this or better it. Due to the small number of vacancies each year, we will monitor the results over a 3 and 5 year period as well as annually.

Lister will provide interpretation services free of charge, though this will need to be arranged by appointment. Lister staff will assist those with difficulty reading, writing or who are visually impaired to complete relevant forms or paperwork. EdIndex can arrange for forms to be translated where possible.

II ACCESS TO HOUSING AT LISTER

5. *WHO CAN APPLY FOR HOUSING*

Applications through the EdIndex form will be considered from any person aged 16 or older and currently living in the UK. A form is on the EdIndex website keytochoice.co.uk
Lister restricts the size of housing for which applicants will be considered - see Section 7.

6. *TYPES OF HOUSING AT LISTER*

Lister uses the EdIndex application form for all allocations apart from Lister tenant-only transfers, mutual exchanges and shared housing for single people (Lister's Multis). All our properties are tenement flats in one small area in and around Lauriston Place (between the Art College and Heriot's School). The main types of housing we have are as follows:

- a. General needs housing - (for bedsit, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 bedroomed self-contained flats).
- b. Amenity housing for the elderly or ambulant disabled - (bedsit, 1, 2 or 3 bedroomed self-contained flats at basement, ground or first floor levels). In addition there are some 'mainstream' flats which have been adapted (usually changing a bathroom into a shower-room) which will be allocated to the elderly or disabled.

- c. Wheelchair housing - only 2 flats, both 3 bedroom ground floor.
- d. Shared flats for single people (called Multis by Lister) - 22 places provided in 5 flats for people who *must* want to live in shared housing (as it is not a short cut to getting a self-contained flat). There are 4 flats housing 4 single people and 1 housing 6 people.

NB Lister's Transfer list is for Lister tenants who wish to move to another Lister flat - any of the four types of housing above.

7. HOUSEHOLD SIZE / ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DIFFERENT SIZES OF LISTER FLATS

Lister's policy states that we allocate our property on the following basis:

- Single person - Bedsit or 1 bedroom or room in shared flat
- Couple - 1 Bedroom
- Lone parent or couple with 1 child - 2 Bedrooms
- Lone parent or couple with 2 children of same sex - 2 Bedrooms*
- Lone parent or couple with 2 children of the opposite sex - 3 Bedrooms
- Lone parent or couple with 3 - 4 children - 3 Bedrooms*
- Lone parent or couple with 4 or more children - 4+Bedrooms

Notes: Children of the opposite sex will be considered for separate bedrooms only.

*The size of the smallest bedroom will affect this, i.e. if small with just room for one child.

No account by Lister is taken of pregnancy in assessing overcrowding although an applicant may refuse an offer of rehousing without penalty.

Lister's eligibility criteria for number of bedrooms and number/gender of children is slightly different from the City of Edinburgh Council's policy (which forms the basis for the EdIndex system) so it may be that someone may qualify for certain properties on EdIndex with some other landlords, but will not qualify at Lister, if they do not meet our criteria stated above.

8. MAKING AN APPLICATION (EXCLUDING TRANSFER, EXCHANGES AND SHARED SINGLE PERSON HOUSING)

a. The application form

Applications must be made on the EdIndex application form (available on keytochoice.co.uk) to the EdIndex Central Admin Unit and applicants are informed by the CAU when they have been registered. Applicants are advised to keep note of their reference number as they need it to place bids for vacancies. The Co-operative reserves the right to carry out checks to verify an applicant's previous housing history or medical or other needs relevant to their wish for rehousing.

b. Changes in applicant's circumstances

All applicants are required to keep EdIndex informed fully of changes of address or circumstances. Failure to reply to correspondence within a reasonable period of time will result in the cancellation of an application. If an applicant deliberately worsens their circumstances to gain more priority then this may be not considered by Lister. If an applicant deliberately gives up housing they could otherwise still continue to occupy then this may be reviewed by Lister.

c. Review of housing lists

The housing lists will be reviewed regularly by EdIndex. Applications will be reassessed if there are any changes in circumstances. Applicants who do not reply to the review letter within the stated deadline will have their application cancelled.

d. False or misleading information or withholding of relevant information

In the event of an applicant having knowingly submitted false or misleading information or having with-held information relevant to the assessment of his/her housing need the Co-operative reserves the right to suspend the application, to withdraw any offer of a tenancy, or take action to recover possession of any tenancy that has been granted.

9. APPLYING TO THE SHARED HOUSING LIST (LISTER'S MULTI LIST)

Applicants can apply to Lister's Multi list (for shared housing for single people) at any time, direct to the Lister office. There is a separate information sheet about Multis which is supplied with the Multi application form. Applicants must want to live in shared housing as it is not a short cut to getting a self-contained flat at Lister.

The front and back pages of the Multi application form may be shown to existing multi flat tenants (of a flat where there is/will be a vacancy) to assist in their considering applicants. The inside pages of a Multi application form will remain confidential to the Co-operative.

10. TRANSFERS

Lister tenants may apply for a transfer to another Lister property at any time. Tenants must complete a Lister application form. A separate transfer points scheme is used. A quota system operates and on average up to 30 % of all lets in any one year may go to transfers. As the quota is set at a general maximum of 'up to 30%' rather than a target that 'must' be achieved, it is aimed that over several years, on average 25 % of lets will go to transfers, thus fitting in with the proportions in Lister's current Lettings Plan (available separately).

The conditions attaching to a transfer and the details of the transfer points scheme are available separately. The transfer quota system is monitored closely.

11. MOBILITY AND EXCHANGES

At present there is no national mobility scheme organised by the Scottish or UK Government. There are a number of private companies offering a service through their websites which tenants could sign up for individually. There is a web-based exchange scheme in Edinburgh - see www.houseexchange.org.uk for more information.

Exchanges: Lister will consider applications for exchanges between its tenants and those of council or other social housing landlords. Further information and conditions for exchange are available separately. Applicants who have a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) have a right to exchange in law, and landlords can only refuse such an exchange on reasonable grounds.

12. WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Lister reserves the right to invite nominations from other agencies such as Health & Social Care departments or specialist housing providers or advisers in order to make the best use of certain house types, such as amenity or wheelchair housing.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF (AND FORMER MEMBERS / STAFF)

Current and former staff, and current and former Lister Management Committee members, and their relatives may apply for housing, however a tenancy or transfer will only be granted if the allocation complies with this Policy, the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator and has been agreed by the Management Committee. Staff and Committee Members must declare an interest if a close relation applies for housing. Any allocations to someone in these categories shall be recorded in Lister's official register of such matters.

14. *ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE*

Lister staff will provide advice and assistance to applicants, where possible, about their opportunities for rehousing with Lister and through EdIndex. We will also endeavour to give applicants advice about improving their current housing circumstances, so as to help them make informed choices about their options. Applicants should be aware that restricting the area of preferred rehousing and the type and nature of housing sought could impact upon the applicant's chances of obtaining rehousing. Applicants are encouraged to bid regularly for Council housing through the Council's 'Key to Choice' lettings scheme - keytochoice.co.uk

There is no restriction on the number of offers able to be made by Lister to an applicant, however the applicant needs to recognise that our low vacancy rate and the ever-changing EdIndex list means that after a refusal, further offers in the future cannot be guaranteed.

III ASSESSING APPLICATIONS FOR HOUSING

15. *ASSESSING HOUSING NEEDS*

a. Vacancy rates

Lister is very unlikely to develop new property for the foreseeable future. Our housing stock is therefore fixed at 185 properties with very few vacancies each year. On average we have between 2 to 8 self-contained flats available for reletting each year and 3 to 9 places in the shared flats. Therefore we can only help a very small number of people each year.

b. Liaison from the Local Authority (City of Edinburgh Council housing service)

Lister is part of the EdIndex common housing register and we use their Key-to-Choice bidding system to assist us to let our vacant properties. As a result there is no formal nomination system nor does the City of Edinburgh Council use the Section 5 referral method for Key-to-Choice members. However it is expected that a significant number of lets by Lister will be to people in strong housing and medical need including those currently classed by the Council as statutory homeless.

c. Assessing EdIndex applications

Lister participates in the EdIndex Key-to-Choice bidding system thus applicants are given points relating to when they first applied to EdIndex/ the length of time in their current property. They may also have a priority awarded. See more information in Section 16 below.

d. Lister's Lettings Plan

At Lister we aim to create balanced, stable communities. To assist us achieve this aim, we use a Lettings Plan aligned with this allocations policy. We aim that over time the people housed by Lister will be from a range of circumstances, to help build and maintain a balanced community here. A Lettings Plan will be produced by Lister annually by 1 April for the coming 12 months. Please see the separate Lettings Plan document for the current year.

e. Wheelchair, amenity, ground floor and adapted housing.

Lister's stock of housing suitable for the needs of those who are elderly or with disabilities is very small. It is essential that vacant specially designed or adapted flats together with vacant ground floor flats are allocated to those who need them most for a physical medical reason where a move would improve the applicant's medical circumstances. Therefore Lister will let these properties to those whose housing and physical medical need is for a specific type of property even if their overall housing need may not be comparable to the general needs

applicants. In shortlisting applicants with physical medical need, those with the highest medical priority will be considered above those with lower medical need. We also aim to get the best use of our housing stock so would look to allocate a property with special features to someone with medical need who needs those features most / who would get the most benefit from that particular property.

16. *THE EdINDEX SCHEME AND KEY-TO-CHOICE*

Vacancies from any of the EdIndex landlords using Key-to-Choice are advertised on-line weekly (except in some holiday periods when it may be fortnightly). Please see the Key-to-Choice website for advice about the bidding system and how to bid.

Properties are stated (by the Landlord) as being offered either for 'Starters' or for 'Movers' or for people in both categories. Once you register with EdIndex you will be advised if you are classed as a Starter or a Mover.

STARTERS are generally people who do not have their own home at present, i.e.,

- Homeless households
- People in hostel, supported or temporary accommodation
- People staying care of friends or family
- New households
- Private rented sector tenants

MOVERS are people who do have a home but who wish to move, i.e.

- Council tenants
- Tenants of Registered Social Landlords i.e. housing associations and co-operatives
- Owner-occupiers
- Households in tied accommodation

Applicants are ranked using a points system based on length of time, as follows:

Starters - date of registration with EdIndex. **Movers** (tenants) - date their current tenancy started. **Movers** (owners) - date they moved into their current address.

In some circumstances, following assessment by EdIndex, households will be awarded a Priority status. The priority categories in the EdIndex scheme are as follows:

- **URGENT GOLD** - Awarded in exceptional medical circumstances such as awaiting a hospital discharge to a suitable property.
- **GOLD** medical priority - awarded after assessment
- **SILVER** priority for households that are:
 - ~ Statutorily homeless; or
 - ~ Overcrowded; or
 - ~ Under-occupying (in a 3+ bed council, housing association or co-operative property and wish a smaller property); or
 - ~ Exceptional housing need (awarded by an Officer Panel) - e.g. in a demolition or regeneration project

Some of the priority awards made by EdIndex have conditions attached such as a maximum length of time, or of a type of property to meet a medical need, or requiring regular bidding and acceptance of a suitable property. Applicants must read and abide by any such conditions to utilise their priority when bidding for properties. Any bid made that breaks any of these conditions may not be considered by Lister.

17. *REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION*

All applicants sign, in their EdIndex application form, giving participating EdIndex partners permission to seek reports to confirm applicants circumstances. Lister shall, where possible, check with current and/or previous landlord(s) of the applicant that their tenancy has been conducted satisfactorily and that the current circumstances of the applicant are as stated on the application form. Issues taken into consideration include rent arrears and anti-social behaviour and any other breaches of tenancy.

Where there are concerns over an applicant's history then more stringent monitoring and the seeking of reports may be made by staff, as Lister's Management Committee are keen to ensure a viable and balanced community, and minimise rent arrears and anti-social behaviour here. Applicants also give permission to confirm medical or other special needs circumstances and reports on these topics may be sought by Lister.

18. *SUSPENSIONS FROM BEING HOUSED AND EXCLUSIONS FROM THE HOUSING LIST*

Lister aims to comply with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in relation to suspending an applicant from being housed and excluding them from the housing lists. Lister aims to not exclude anyone from access to its housing lists (via EdIndex, transfer or exchange lists) who is 16 years or older, and lives in the UK. In certain circumstances applications will be cancelled: at the request of the applicant; failure to reply to correspondence; failure to return a review form; knowingly submitting false or misleading information or with-holding relevant information; death of the applicant. All applicants will be notified of any cancellation at their last known address.

Lister shall take no account of the following in assessing an application:

- a. Length of time that an applicant has been resident in the local area.
- b. The age of applicant, provided they are 16 years or older.
- c. The income of the applicant and his/her family.

Lister shall not require any requirement (before the applicant is eligible for housing) that:

- (i). The application must have been in place for any minimum period of time.
- (ii). That a divorce or judicial separation be obtained.
- (iii). That the applicant no longer lives with or in the same house as some other person.

All suspensions must be on the basis of a written report on the applicant's individual circumstances by Lister staff and countersigned by another Lister staff member before taking effect. If an applicant is suspended by Lister from the housing lists then the applicant will be notified in writing. The applicant will be notified of the reason for suspension; the timescale of suspension; and action the applicant can take to end the suspension. The applicant has a right of appeal against any such suspension. Suspensions will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis. Any suspension will only be in relation to rehousing by Lister and will not affect the applicant's application held on the EdIndex system or other EdIndex partners. EdIndex may suspend an applicant for reasons based on the EdIndex scheme and any such suspensions will be managed by the EdIndex team.

19. *SUSPENSIONS DUE TO RENT ARREARS*

Lister may suspend an applicant who has rent arrears or other debt relating to a tenancy, but we will not suspend someone:

- a. Where previous rent arrears have been cleared.
- b. Where rent outstanding is equal to or less than one-twelfth of the annual rent.
- c. Where there is an agreement to pay rent arrears and the applicant has stuck to their agreement for three months and is continuing to keep to it.
- d. Where the debt was not the responsibility of the applicant (i.e. they were not the tenant).

Lister will suspend applicants where: there is a current Notice seeking possession or other legal action related to debt recovery which has been served on the applicant; or where the applicant has been evicted in the last 5 years for rent arrears or debts (and none of the above conditions (a) - (d) apply).

20. *SUSPENSIONS DUE TO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR / TENANCY BREACHES*

Lister would like to prevent any problems arising through anti-social behaviour (as defined in the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)) or serious breaches of tenancy conditions. Lister will suspend applicants where we have obtained a report that states that:

- a. The applicant has been evicted for anti-social behaviour within the last 3 years or the applicant is a former Lister tenant who has been evicted by us or a member of a former Lister tenant's household and his/her actions or behaviour contributed to the decision to evict.
- b. The applicant has had an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) or interim ASBO granted against them in the last 3 years.
- c. Where the applicant has been guilty of violence, aggression or harassment against a tenant, neighbour, member of staff, Committee member or contractor used by Lister.
- d. Where the applicant has caused significant and serious nuisance directly related to the standard of their tenancy: e.g. garden, common areas, control over pets, rubbish, vandalism, drug dealing.
- e. Where reports from the Police or other statutory body confirms that anti-social behaviour has taken place and is directly related to the applicant's tenancy, including anti-social behaviour by any members of the applicant's household or visitors.

Where an applicant has been evicted in the last 3 years for anti-social behaviour or a member of his/her household has an ASBO/Interim ASBO made against them, Lister may offer a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) after a period of review of their suspension, provided: there is evidence of a sustained improvement in behaviour; or there is a commitment to change and a funded support package has been put in place. A SSST will be converted to a SST after a period of 12 months if Lister has not raised proceedings for possession. See Lister's policy on Short SSTs for more information.

21. OTHER REASONS FOR BEING SUSPENDED

- a. *Support Needs.* If an applicant has an unmet support need, an assessment of needs will be made by contacting support agencies, with the applicant's permission. In the situation where an applicant does not recognise that they have support needs or refused the offer of support then Lister can suspend their application. Each case will be considered on its merits and any suspension will only be for the period of time in which it takes to secure a support package.
- b. *Sex Offenders.* If verified information arises, either from the applicant or elsewhere, that the applicant is a sex offender then a risk assessment shall be carried out by the appropriate authority and the Council's Liaison officer notified. In general Lister considers that it is inappropriate usually to rehouse sex offenders in its stock due to the existing high number of families with children housed here; the compact geographic location of our stock which means families are close by; the communal back greens which are used frequently by children and accessible to all tenants; and the very close proximity of our housing to two schools.
- c. *False Information.* If an applicant supplies false information then Lister may suspend their application pending investigation and confirmation of the true circumstances.
- d. *No permission to take up reports.* If an applicant does not grant EdIndex/Lister the right to take up reports, then the application may be suspended by Lister.
- e. *Criminal convictions.* We do not ask applicants about previous convictions but if information is brought to our attention then Lister reserves the right to verify such information and assess the appropriateness of any future allocation. This will only be done if the nature of the offence is likely to lead to problems with a tenancy.
- f. *Risk Assessment.* Lister may suspend an applicant on the basis of a risk assessment carried out by Lister staff and checked by a senior staff member. The assessment can include an assessment of the applicant's ability to sustain a tenancy; the financial risk to Lister; the risks to other tenants / neighbours / staff / Committee members / contractors if the applicant has more intensive needs and/or challenging behaviours.

IV THE LETTINGS PROCESS

22. ALLOCATION OF SELF CONTAINED TENANCIES

- a. *The source of applications to consider and shortlist*

When a potential vacancy occurs staff will decide whether:

- (i) to advertise the property on EdIndex's Key-to-Choice website; or
- (ii) to let in-house using the Lister transfer list; or
- (iii) to make an allocation based on Exceptional Circumstances.

In selecting which route to choose, staff will give consideration to: the current proportion of lets in relation to this year's Lettings Plan (which will include the Transfer quota scheme); the size, type and location of the vacancy; and any other relevant factors, e.g. reason for the vacancy arising.

Where a vacant property is suitable for someone who is elderly or disabled or with medical needs (typically wheelchair / amenity / ground floor flats / flats already specially adapted) then Lister will only consider (from any source) applicants who have a medical need that will be alleviated by the proposed move to the vacancy. For example usually applicants being considered for a ground floor flat require to have a physical medical need for such a property.

Applicants without such a need, no matter what their points or priority level, will not be considered. Applicants with physical medical need, those with the highest medical need suitable for the particular vacancy will be considered above those with other medical need.

b. Lets made under the category of 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 gives social landlords the ability to make an allocation on Exceptional Circumstances, based on local priorities. As Lister is a very small social landlord, we deem all of our housing to be able to be eligible for an Exceptional Circumstances allocation (some landlords with large stock may have a special Local lettings plan for particular parts of their large stock).

It is not possible to predict all the exceptional circumstances that may arise but these could include circumstances such as: - Lister making a management transfer or special let outside the normal allocations policy; to make an exceptional allocation to someone who does not qualify to succeed to a tenancy; or to assist in an official Resettlement Programme.

c. The disregarding of a Priority category

It is the policy of Lister to disregard any priority that the applicant is eligible for, if the proposed move (to the property for which they are being considered), does not improve or condition for which the applicant was awarded the priority. For example if an applicant is in a first floor flat and has priority under medical need to move to a ground floor property, then if he/she is being considered at Lister for a first floor flat then that medical priority shall not be counted.

This disregarding of priority will not lead to their EdIndex application being altered, however all such disregarding must be recorded in writing when shortlisting for any vacancy at Lister. Such disregards will be confirmed by another Lister staff member, through the signing of the shortlisting paperwork.

d. Achieving a stable and balanced community

In some cases, allocations may not be made to someone bidding with the highest priority or points. This could arise in several specific circumstances, which are outlined below:

- (i) Where the previous tenant of the vacant flat was evicted for reasons including anti-social behaviour and there may be a risk that the applicant due to be housed could cause similar problems.
- (ii) Where there are too many vulnerable people in the locality or stair and allocating the vacancy to the applicant would increase the number of vulnerable people, or would make it more likely that the applicant's tenancy could not be sustained successfully.

This process is not to 'screen out' particular types of applicant, but is to avoid concentrating those with high dependency needs where their vulnerability will be increased. Any bypassing such as this will be written down and confirmed by the signature of another Lister staff member.

e. The next steps

The staff will arrange home visits and/or interviews as necessary in accordance with the Co-operative's allocations procedure.

The applicant bidding for the vacancy and demonstrating the greatest need for rehousing under the terms of this policy, provided they meet the household specification for the

vacancy, will be offered the tenancy of the vacant flat, subject to the membership requirement (see below).

Where two (or more) applicants have the highest and equal bids then the deciding factor shall be the length of time the applicant is known to have been in the highest housing need. This is not related to the length of time an application has been held on a housing list.

An applicant being offered a tenancy will be invited to view the property and will have up to 4 days from the day of first being notified of the offer (by telephone or letter) to view and to decide whether to accept the offer. An applicant is expected to start their tenancy within 5 working days of the offer being accepted and the membership procedure having been completed, unless an alternative entry date is agreed by Lister.

There is no restriction on the number of offers able to be made by Lister to an applicant, however the applicant needs to recognise that our low vacancy rate and the ever changing EdIndex list means that, after a refusal, further offers in the future cannot be guaranteed.

f. Home owners

Home owners may apply to us and be assessed in the same way as other applicants. Lister will give active consideration to the following information:

- Any heritable property (land and or buildings) owned by the applicant;
- Any heritable property owned by anyone who it is proposed will live with the applicant;
- Any heritable property owned previously by the applicant and/or members of their current or future household.

Lister will not take into account property that falls into the following categories:

- If it is vacant and the owner cannot secure entry to it e.g. due to its dangerous condition or that there are squatters in it.;
- If occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone currently living in the property;
- If occupying the property will lead to abuse from someone who previously resided with the applicant;
- Where occupying the property would endanger the health of the occupants and there are no reasonable steps that could be taken to prevent the danger.

Lister may decide not to make an allocation to a home-owner where Lister believes that they have other options for a housing solution from their own resources. Home owners are recommended to get advice and assistance from EdIndex advisers about housing options and also look online at *Housing options* at www.keytochoice.co.uk

23. ALLOCATION OF TENANCIES IN SHARED SINGLE PERSON FLATS (MULTIS)

When a vacancy in a shared flat occurs, the remaining flat members will consider applicants from Lister's shared housing list in consultation with staff. The flat members will usually meet shortlisted applicant(s) and then make a nomination to the staff for the vacancy. The same interview procedure by staff as for other lettings is then followed, as well as the membership procedure (see below).

24. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CO-OPERATIVE

As Lister is a fully mutual housing co-operative all applicants about to be offered a tenancy must apply to become members of the Co-operative, and if accepted, pay the cost of £1. They must fill in a membership application form and attend a brief informal membership interview with members from the Allocations and Membership Sub Committee (in some cases the Membership decision may be made by the Sub Committee based on written submissions and no interview). They must be approved for membership by this Sub

Committee Interview Panel and take up membership before they sign a tenancy agreement. All people in the household wishing to be on the tenancy agreement must complete successfully this membership process.

If an applicant fails to attend an agreed membership interview or fails to be approved for membership or declines to take up the offer of membership then the allocations process stops and the offer is withdrawn. There is an appeal process within the membership procedure if the applicant wishes to appeal any membership decision such as being refused membership.

V	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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25. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The Co-operative has a complaints and appeals policy which gives clear guidelines on how we deal with any complaints. An applicant may appeal against any decision concerning their application for housing. If the applicant is still not satisfied the matter can be considered by the Management Committee. The Co-operative participates in the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman scheme. Please ask if you wish more information about it. Those who have exhausted the appeals procedure can refer their complaint to the Ombudsman.

The EdIndex system also has a complaints procedure which may be used where appropriate. EdIndex also has service delivery targets which it aims to achieve.

26. ACCESS TO INFORMATION & CONFIDENTIALITY

The staff will respect the confidentiality of personal information about applicants or tenants obtained through applications, interviews or other contact with them. The Co-operative has a policy on access to personal and computer files which also covers the requirements of the Data Protection Acts and the GDPR.

However if Lister staff consider that a person's safety or well-being is at risk, or where we are obliged to give information by law, or as part of a legal process (when the alternative may be to face a charge of contempt of court), then information may be passed to a relevant person/organisation. This will only be done after careful consideration.

27. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy shall be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Management Committee to ensure it is meeting Lister's objectives. Tenants shall be consulted in advance on any proposed major changes to this policy. Annual statistical reports shall be made to the Management Committee. Selected results from the monitoring shall be made available in Lister's Annual Report and upon request to Lister.

FURTHER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN OUR LEAFLETS ON THE FOLLOWING:

- No. 1: Application for Housing (Housing List).
- No. 2: Shared Housing for Single People (Multi List)
- No. 3: Mutual Exchanges and Mobility Schemes
- No. 4: Transfers and Exchanges within Lister
- No. 5: Membership
- No. 7: No longer available - see Keytochoice.co.uk for a list of other Housing Associations & Co-ops in Edinburgh
- No. 8: Access to Personal Files
- No. 9: Allocation of Multi flats to partners of tenants
- No.10: Data Protection Act

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