

Housing Allocations Policy & Points System



Alternative Formats

If you need information from the Moray Council in a different language or format, such as Braille, audio tape or **large print**, please contact:

إذا كنتم في حاجة إلى معلومات من قبل مجلس موراي وتكون بلغة مختلفة أو على شكل مختلف مثل البراي، أسطوانة أوديو أو أن تكون مطبوعة باستعمال حروف غليظة فالرجاء الإتصال ب

Je i pageidaujate tarnybos Moray tarybos teikiama ą informaciją gauti kitokiu formatu, pvz., Brailio raštu, garso įrašų ar stambiu šriftu, kreipkitės:

Jeśli potrzebuj ą Państwo informacji od Rady Okręgu Moray w innym formacie, takim jak alfabet Braille'a, kasety audio lub druk du ą czcionk ą, prosimy o kontakt:

Se necessitar de receber informa oes por parte do Concelho de Moray num formato diferente, como Braille, cassete udio ou letras grandes, contacte:

Ja Jums vajadzīga informācija no Marejas domes (Moray Council) citā valodā vai formātā, piemēram, Braila rakstā, audio lentā vai lielā drukā, sazinieties ar:

اگر آپ کو مورے کونسل سے کسی دیگر زبان یا صورت میں معلومات درکار ہوں مثلاً" بریلے، آڈیو ٹیپ یا بڑے حروف، تو مہربانی فرما کر رابطہ فرمائیں:

Housing & Property
Moray Council
High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

0300 123 4566

housing@moray.gov.uk

Contents

Alternative Formats	1
Moray Council Allocations Policy	4
What is the housing list?	5
Housing Options Team	5
How do I apply for council housing in Moray?	6
Will I need to give you any other information?	6
Your choices	7
Areas you prefer to live in	7
Type of housing	7
Size of housing	8
How are applications for council housing prioritised?	11
What do you mean by unmet housing need?	11
What criteria do you use to award points?	11
Your household is homeless or threatened with homelessness	12
Your home is too big for your needs	12
Your home is too small for your needs	12
You have an assessed functional need for housing	13
You are leaving institutional or supported care	14
You live in poor housing conditions	15
You live in poor housing conditions – caravans	16
You are sharing facilities with another household	16
You live in a flat or maisonette	16
Tied accommodation	17
You are a key worker	17
You need to reside in a specific area	18
You have been assessed as having exceptional circumstances	18
Summary of priorities and points	19

What if I need specialist accommodation?	20
What do you mean by suspension for an offer of housing?	20
When would you suspend an applicant from receiving an offer of housing?	20
Housing related debt	20
A poor tenancy report	21
Deliberate worsening of circumstances	21
Refusal of two reasonable offers of housing	21
When will you bypass applications for housing?	22
What is a local lettings plan?	22
What are sensitive lettings?	22
How long will I stay on the housing list?	23
What should I do if my circumstances change?	23
How do you decide who to give properties to?	23
How long will I have to wait before I am offered housing?	24
What happens if you offer me a property?	24
What type of tenancy will you offer me?	24
What if I refuse an offer of housing?	24
What if I refuse an offer of housing due to the removal of the Housing Benefit Spare Room Subsidy (often called the 'Bedroom Tax')?	25
Do I have any other housing options?	25
Can I apply for a mutual exchange?	26
What happens to all the information that I give?	27
What if I disagree with your decision?	28
How do you monitor the operation of the Allocations Policy?	29
How often do you review your Allocations Policy?	29
What are the consultation arrangements for reviewing of the Allocations Policy?	29
Contacts	30

Moray Council Allocations Policy

Our Allocations Policy sets out the framework that we use to allocate council housing. It helps us to decide who we think is in most need of housing and how to make best use of the stock that we have available. It aims to tackle housing need in Moray. Where possible, we take account of what you would like as a new home and where you would like to live.

The policy complies with housing legislation that governs the allocation of social housing. This legislation is contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. This sets out what we must and must not do when allocating our houses. This framework still give us discretion to develop our Allocation policy in line with local priorities in certain areas.

Allocations Policies contain complex and detailed information. Therefore, we have also developed an 'easy to read' question and answer version of our Allocations Policy which you can find on our website. You can get a copy of our Allocations Policy, free of charge from your local access point or from our website at [**www.moray.gov.uk/housing**](http://www.moray.gov.uk/housing).

What is the housing list?

The housing list includes the waiting list, the transfer list and the homeless list. Anyone aged 16 years and over is entitled to go on to the housing list.

- The **waiting list** includes people who do not currently rent from us but who would like a council property in Moray.
- The **transfer list** includes people who are already our tenants but who would like to transfer from their current home to another.
- The **homeless list** includes people who have been assessed as unintentionally homeless (who have become homeless through no fault of their own). On the homeless list, you will not be awarded points. We usually give priority to the applicant who has been on the list the longest.

The ratio of the allocations made from each list is decided by the Council's Communities Committee and is reviewed every year.

What if I am homeless or at risk of homelessness?

If you are homeless or at risk of homelessness you should contact our Housing Options Team as soon as possible for free housing advice.

Housing Options Team

Council Offices
10 High Street, Elgin
IV30 1BX

0300 123 4566

housing@moray.gov.uk

If you become homeless after 5pm or on a weekend, phone our out-of-hours emergency service on **03457 565656**.

How do I apply for council housing in Moray?

We have developed a Common Housing Register (CHR) along with our partners. It is called 'apply4homes'. This means you only need to make one application for social housing in Aberdeenshire and Moray. This one application will go to all or any of the partners. To apply, you will need to register online at www.apply4homes.org.uk. If you do not have access to the internet, you can visit your local library or any of the partners' offices. If you need help to apply online, please phone us on **0300 123 4566**.

The website only collects your information. It does not make any assessment of your housing need. This will be assessed in line with each partner's Allocations Policy (which you can find on the [apply4homes website](#)).

Be aware that not every social landlord in Moray is an apply4homes partner. You may need to apply to other landlords. See [page 24](#) for more information.

Will I need to give you any other information?

There are times when you will need to give us information. These include:

- **Confirming a pregnancy:** If you, or anybody who will be living with you, is pregnant, you must tell us the due date. You should send us a copy of the certificate of pregnancy as soon as possible and a copy of the birth certificate when the baby is born.
- **Occasional overcrowding:** If you need an extra bedroom because you have children who regularly stay with you overnight, we will ask you for proof (eg. a solicitor's letter or court papers).
- **Bedroom size:** If you think any of the rooms you use for sleeping are too small to allow two people to share, you should phone us on **0300 123 4566**. We may need to visit your home to confirm this.
- **Tied accommodation:** If you live in tied accommodation as part of your employment, we will need evidence that your right to live in your home will end when your employment ends. For example, if you are a member of the Armed Forces, we will need a copy of your Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Living Accommodation.

Your choices

We try to take your preferences into account.

Areas you prefer to live in

We have 63 lettings areas in Moray. When you apply for housing you will be asked to select as many areas as you would like to live in. We will try and match you to an area that you want to live in.

You will be considered **equally** for all the lettings areas that you have chosen. For example, if you select all 63 lettings areas, we may offer you a property in any of these areas. It is important to note that if we offer you housing in an area that you selected and you then refuse the offer because of the property's location, we would consider this to be an unreasonable refusal (please refer to **page 23** for more information).

It is important that you only select an area that you actually want to live in. You can change your choices by updating your application. If you only want to live in one area or just a few, you may have to wait longer for a property to become available.

You will also be asked to choose the top three areas that you would prefer to live in. We will only use this information for strategic planning purposes. For example, to aid the development of the Local Housing Strategy and to help us identify where there is most demand for housing.

Type of housing

Normally, you can choose whatever type of property you want (such as a house or a flat), but some kinds of housing are designed for a particular group of people.

For example:

- Specialist housing will be allocated to a household with an identified need for that housing.
- Sheltered housing will be allocated to households who have an assessed health or support need meaning that they need to live in a sheltered housing environment.

These are people who have been assessed and awarded points through our functional assessment process.

- If you have children under five years of age, we will not consider you for flats / maisonette accommodation which has communal access unless you tell us that you would like to be offered this property type.

We will not offer you housing that would make your housing situation worse.

Size of housing

We try to make the best use of the housing available. You will be asked to choose a size of house. We will take into account the actual size of house you need, when we allocate you a property. We work out your house size based on the following rules:

Separate bedrooms are needed for:

- each couple (husband/wife or similar partnerships);
- each person aged 16 years or over;
- children aged five years or over who are of an opposite sex from other children;
- children of the same sex where there is an age difference of five years or more between the elder and the younger child.

No more than two people of any age should occupy one bedroom.

To help make the best use of our housing stock and to address housing need, we offer flexibility in the size of the property that couples will be offered.

Below is an example of the house size we will consider applicants for.

Household size	Bedroom size
Single person	one
Couple	one / two
Single parent or couple with one child or pregnant	two
Single parent or couple with two children of the same sex	
Both children are aged under 16 and there is an age gap of less than five years	two
Both children are aged under 16 but there is an age gap of more than five years	three
One or both of the children are aged 16 or over	three
Single parent or couple with two children of the opposite sex	
Both children are under the age of five	two
One child is aged five or over	three
Single parent or couple with three children of the same sex	
Two children have an age gap of less than five years and both are under 16 years of age	three
There is an age gap of more than five years between all three children	four
All children are over the age of 16	four
Single parent or couple with three children of the opposite sex	
Two children are able to share a room (both the same sex, less than a five year age gap and both under 16 years of age)	three
None of the children are able to share a room due to opposite sexes and age	four
Single parent or couple with four children of the opposite sex	
All children are able to share a bedroom	three
Only two of the children are able to share a bedroom	four
None of the children are able to share a bedroom	five

It is important to note that the rules we use to work out the number of bedrooms you will need are different to those used by the Department of work and Pensions (DWP). For more information please see [page 24](#).

We assess each case on its own merits. There may be circumstances where we may offer you a bigger house.

Here are some examples:

- **Ground floor properties (bungalows and ground floor flats):**
If we assess that you need a one bedroom ground floor property, we will also consider you for two bedroom ground floor properties. We will offer a property to the applicant with the highest level of need.
- **Access to children:**
In most cases children should be adequately housed by their main carer. Therefore, if you need an extra bedroom because of frequent or regular contact with children, we may award one extra bedroom. This is regardless of the number of children covered by any contact agreement (unless exceptional circumstances apply).
- **Health reason for needing an extra bedroom:**
If a member of your household needs to use special medical equipment at home and it would be unreasonable for them to share a room while they use this equipment. We will consider their health needs through our housing functional assessment process.

How are applications for council housing prioritised?

We will assess all applications for housing and will give priority to those in greatest housing need. In line with housing law, we must give 'reasonable preference' to the following:

- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness through no fault of their own and have unmet housing needs;
- Social housing tenants who are under occupying their home; and
- People who are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing needs.

What do you mean by unmet housing need?

We will consider you to have unmet housing needs if you have a housing need which is not capable of being met by your current housing circumstances. For example, an applicant with disabilities whose housing needs can only be met in social housing because it is not possible to make essential adaptations to their current home.

What criteria do you use to award points?

All applications are assessed and points awarded for a range of circumstances. After we have checked your application and made sure that we have all the information we need, we will work out the total points for your application, depending on your circumstances. The number of points that we give your application will decide your place on the housing list. For more information please refer to **page 13**.

We may give you points for the following:

Your household is homeless or threatened with homelessness	
If you are assessed as being homeless or threatened with homelessness and have unmet housing needs.	We will put your application on the homeless list. This list is not part of the points system.

Your home is too big for your needs		points
If you live in social housing , for every bedroom that you don't need		250
If you live in private housing , for every bedroom that you don't need		50

Your home is too small for your needs		points
For every bedroom that you are short		100
If you have children who do not live with you permanently. For example, they only stay with you a few nights a week. You will only be eligible for one additional bedroom regardless of the number of children who stay with you.		50

If you need an additional bedroom because a member of your household is pregnant, your application will be assessed in line with the size of property your household needs. However, overcrowding points will not be awarded until we have received confirmation that the baby has been born.

You have an assessed functional need for housing

You may be awarded these points if we consider that you need another home in order to stabilise a clinical condition or disability or to allow you to live more independently. In order to decide this, a Housing Occupational Therapist will carry out a housing functional assessment. This is not an assessment of a person's condition or disability. It is a more holistic approach, which also takes into account mental health, physical and learning disability issues.

If there is more than one person in a household with a health issue or disability which may mean that their current home is not suitable, only one award of points will be given and this will be based on the applicant with the highest need.

For more information please see our leaflet 'Housing Functional Assessment – a Guide'.

Category	Criteria	points
A	<p>Awarded where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the illness will become life threatening if the person were to remain in their current accommodation; or due to illness and dysfunction it has been clearly established by health professionals that the person is no longer able to safely remain in their current accommodation. 	500
B	<p>Awarded where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the illness is likely to continue to seriously deteriorate if the person remains in their current accommodation; and /or the person is long term and substantially disabled and due to this it has been established by health professionals that they are unable to access and use essential facilities in their current home. 	350
C	Awarded where it has been established by a health professional that a change of property would significantly increase the person's level of safety, ability and independence when completing essential day to day activities.	150
D	Awarded where it has been established by a health professional that a change of property would moderately increase the person's level of safety, ability and independence when completing essential day to day activities.	50
E	<p>No points will be awarded where there are no recognised barriers in place for a person to carry out their day to day activities.</p> <p>No points will be awarded where alternative solutions can be provided (for example, aids and adaptations).</p>	0

You are leaving institutional or supported care

You may be awarded these points if any of the following apply and these can be confirmed by a professional such as a Social Worker, Care Manager, Care Provider, Housing Support Provider, Community Psychiatric Nurse, General Practitioner, Doctor or Consultant, as may be appropriate given the individual circumstances of each case.

points

Where residential care / hospital / specialist supported housing is no longer appropriate.

350

Where you are leaving a care environment. For example, supported accommodation, supported lodgings or foster care.

Where a kinship care placement is no longer appropriate.

If you are a care experienced young person, points will be awarded up to the point that you are permanently housed. Then if you experience housing difficulties and reapply for council housing (up to the age of 26) a referral would be made to the Housing Needs Review Group to consider your application.

Although points may be awarded, unless a valid and up to date support plan is in place which confirms that you will have enough support to help you to sustain your tenancy, you may be bypassed for an offer of housing.

You live in specialist housing that your household no longer needs

Specialist housing is defined as any social housing property in Moray which is either suitable for ambulant disabled households or is wheelchair accessible. Generally this applies to any bungalow with a level entry access.

There can be situations where the person who the property was allocated for no longer lives there and nobody else living there has a need for specialist housing.

points

You may be awarded these points if you are living in specialist housing but there is nobody in your household with a need for this type of housing and you want to move to alternative housing which is not defined as specialist housing.

250

You live in poor housing conditions	
	points
You may be awarded these points if you live in a property that has been assessed as below an acceptable standard.	250
<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it has an outside or shared toilet (this means that more than one household will be using a toilet); • it has serious damage to the structure; • it has severe rising or penetrating damp (this is when water is getting into the property through the structure and is usually caused by a fault in the roof or walls); or • it does not have a good enough supply of piped water: and • it is going to be knocked down or has a closing order (which makes it illegal for anyone to live in the property until it is improved to meet the standard set out in the order). 	
	points
You may be awarded these points if you live in a property that has been assessed as below an acceptable standard.	150
<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it has a bathroom with toilet which opens directly onto the kitchen or another room (not including a bedroom) • it does not have a bath, shower or washbasin • there is evidence of rising or penetrating damp • it has faulty lighting, poor ventilation or drainage systems • there are no acceptable cooking facilities • the property does not have a closing order or is not going to be knocked down 	
	points
You may be awarded these points if you live in a property that has been assessed as having minor faults including slight dampness or condensation and areas which need repairing.	100

You live in poor housing conditions – caravans

You may be awarded these points if you live in a caravan which has been assessed as:

	points
Needing major repairs and also has poor or no facilities	250
Needing major repairs but has facilities	150
Needing minor repairs and has no facilities	100

You are sharing facilities with another household

	points
You maybe awarded these points if your household shares amenities – kitchen, toilet or bathroom – with another household. These points will only be awarded if you are not the tenant / owner of the property.	100

You live in a flat or maisonette

If you have children under the age of five, you will not be offered flatted / maisonette accomodation with communal access unless you have expressed an interest in being housed in this type of property.

You may be awarded these points if you have children under the age of 16 years and are currently living in flatted / maisonette accommodation where there is a shared access to the building.

	points
Residing in a first floor flat or above ground floor access maisonette	40
Residing in a second floor or over flat or maisonette where the living accommodation is on the second floor or above	75

Tied accommodation		points
<p>You may be awarded these points if you live in accommodation that is part of the conditions of your employment and your right to live there will finish when your employment ends. Points for tied accommodation will be awarded up to three months before the tenancy ends.</p>	350	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must give us valid evidence that your right to live in the accommodation will end. • If you are a serving member of the Armed Forces and your right to remain in service accommodation is due to end, you must give us a copy of your Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Living Accommodation. <p>If a tenant has died, points for tied accommodation may be awarded to the partner or spouse of the tenant. However, in instances of relationship breakdown, points will not be transferred to family members.</p>		

You are a key worker		points
<p>You may be awarded these points if you have a job which brings in skills that are not available locally. We will need your employer to give us confirmation that this skill is not available locally and that they support a request for key worker points. If you are eligible for key worker points, you will normally be offered a short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST). This may be converted to a Scottish secure tenancy.</p>	100	

You need to reside in a specific area	
	points
<p>You may be awarded these points if you (or a member of your household) needs to stay in or move to a lettings area in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give or receive care or support (that would not otherwise be available) • get or maintain specialist education or specialist facilities • get or give childcare to allow you (or the person you want to move closer to) to work • be closer to a place of work • continue living in a lettings area where you have your main home. <p>You will be asked to identify the specific lettings area and up to two other bordering letting areas. Only the letting areas chosen will be eligible for need to reside points.</p>	50

You have been assessed as having exceptional circumstances	
	points
<p>You may be awarded these points in cases which cannot be appropriately considered within the Allocations Policy. You can ask that your circumstances to be considered by the Housing Needs Review Group.</p>	
<p>The Housing Needs Review Group will assess this based on your circumstances.</p>	0 – 500

Summary of priorities and points

Priority category	points
Homelessness	0
Under occupancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing • Private housing 	250 50
Overcrowding	100
Periodic contact	50
Functional housing need	0 – 500
Leaving institutional / supported care	350
Underuse of specialist housing	250
Poor housing conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessed as below tolerable standard and lacking facilities • Assessed as below tolerable standard with facilities • Assessed as lacking facilities but meets the tolerable standard 	250 150 100
Sharing amenities	100
Flatted/maisonette accommodation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have children under 16 years of age and are residing in a first floor flat or above ground floor access maisonette. • If you have children under 16 years of age and are residing in a second floor or over flat or maisonette where the living accommodation is on the second floor. 	40 75
Tied accommodation	350
Key workers	100
Need to reside	50
Exceptional circumstances	0 – 500

What if I need specialist accommodation?

We provide a range of housing which has been specially designed, built or adapted to meet the needs of certain groups, particularly elderly people and people with specialist needs. When you are applying for housing you will be asked to select the type of housing that you would accept. We will consider what type of accommodation will suit you. If you would like advice on the options available, please contact us (see [page 29](#)).

What do you mean by suspension for an offer of housing?

A suspension means that an applicant can be assessed for and accepted on to the Housing List but will not be eligible for an offer of housing until:

- a specified period has passed;
- there is evidence that their conduct has changed; or
- there has been a change in circumstances.

In line with housing law, homeless applicants cannot be suspended from receiving offers of housing.

When would you suspend an applicant from receiving an offer of housing?

We will not automatically suspend applicants from receiving an offer of housing. We work hard with applicants to make sure that suspensions are kept to a minimum and will assess each case on its own merits. We will take into account personal circumstances and the level of housing need before we suspend applicants from an offer of housing. Circumstances include the following:

Housing related debt

If you are behind with your current rent, owe rent from a previous tenancy or have other housing debts, you must make an arrangement to clear the amount you owe. We may suspend your housing application from receiving any offer of accommodation unless:

- the housing debt is no more than 1/12th of the total amount of yearly rent you owe on your tenancy or previous tenancy; or
- you have made a payment arrangement with your current or previous landlord and you have kept to this for at least three months. You will need to prove that you have kept to the repayment agreement. If you still owe some of the debt, we will expect you to continue to make repayments.

A poor tenancy report

We carry out tenancy checks on all applicants. We may suspend your housing application from receiving an offer of accommodation if:

- you have not kept to the terms of your current or former tenancy in a satisfactory way;
- there is proof that you or a member of your household is responsible for antisocial behaviour; or
- you or a member of your household has been evicted.

If you are a transfer tenant, we will inspect your home before we make you an offer of housing.

Deliberate worsening of circumstances

If we think that you have deliberately done, or failed to do something, to make your housing situation worse in an attempt to get higher up the housing list, we will carry out an investigation.

As part of our investigation we will take into account all contributing factors. We will find out if you were aware of your actions and will decide if your actions were reasonable.

Where we have evidence that you have unfairly gained an advantage, you will be suspended from receiving an offer of housing for six months. After the six month period, the suspension will be lifted and your housing application will be reassessed.

Refusal of two reasonable offers of housing

If an applicant refuses two reasonable offers of housing, they may be suspended from receiving an offer of housing for six months.

When will you bypass applications for housing?

In most circumstances we will offer the property to you if you have the highest number of points and have a need for that particular size and type of property. However there may be some situations where you are bypassed for an offer of housing.

For example:

- if you have support need and do not have an up-to-date support plan;
- if you are not ready to sustain a tenancy; or
- if a property is not suitable for you.

What is a local lettings plan?

There are times when we will deviate from our Allocations Policy. For example, when we allocate new build council housing, we will use a local lettings plan.

This allows us to develop policies and letting arrangements that:

- respond to local housing need and demand;
- help to suitably match applicants to properties; and
- help us to achieve a balanced housing mix within a particular area.

The main aim of a local lettings plan is to build a strong and sustainable community. You can find more information on local lettings plans on our website at www.moray.gov.uk/housing.

What are sensitive lettings?

We may use sensitive lettings in exceptional circumstances – where we will deviate from our Allocations Policy. When considering a sensitive let, instead of allocating a property to the person at the top of the list (the person in the most housing need) we will consider the suitability of the applicant for the property. This will be based on information we have about applicants, the property, its location and neighbours. We will make sure that the needs of the applicant and the suitability of the property match.

How long will I stay on the housing list?

Unless you accept an offer of accommodation from one of the partners, your application will be active for 12 months from when you first apply or make any changes to your application on www.apply4homes.org.uk.

If there have been no changes made to your application for 12 months, the partnership will contact you to ask if you still want to stay on the list. If you do not respond the partnership will assume that you no longer want to be considered for housing and will cancel your application.

What should I do if my circumstances change?

If any of your circumstances change, you should go online and update your application. If you need help to do this, phone us on **0300 123 4566**.

How do you decide who to give properties to?

For each empty home, we produce a short list of people who are looking for that size and type of home in that particular area. This list will include people on the homeless, waiting and transfer lists. For the transfer and waiting list we usually offer the house to the person on the shortlist with the most points. For the homeless list, we will usually offer the house to the person who has been on the list the longest. However, we may not do this in every case. This is because:

- we need to let homes to people from all of the lists to make best use of our housing stock;
- we consider quotas set for each of the lists to allocate properties fairly to people most in housing need;
- we try to take account of anyone who has a particular need to live in that area, perhaps because they work there, or live there already;
- we will consider any exceptional circumstances when we decide your position on each list;
- we try to take account of any person who has a clinical condition or disability and needs a certain type of accommodation (for example, if the house has special features, such as a wheelchair access, or does not have stairs); and
- we also look at the preferences you have shown on your application. For example, if you say you only want a home with gas heating, we will not consider you for a home with electric heating.

How long will I have to wait before I am offered housing?

There is no average waiting time. How long you wait for an offer of housing will depend on:

- the number of points we give your application (unless you are on our homeless list, where it will depend on when you applied);
- how popular the area is that you have applied for;
- the size and type of the property you need; and
- how often vacant properties come up.

What happens if you offer me a property?

We will write and tell you. If you have given us your email address we will email you. Our letter will give you details of the home that we are offering you, who to contact to arrange to view the property and how long you have to make up your mind. If you accept the offer, your new tenancy will normally start as soon as the property is ready for you to move into. We will charge you rent from the date the tenancy starts.

What type of tenancy will you offer me?

In most cases we will offer you a Scottish secure tenancy (SST). However in some cases, we will offer you a short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST). SST and SSST agreements set out the responsibilities of tenants and the behaviour expected from members of their household as well as visitors both within and around the locality of their home. A SSST is a short term or probationary tenancy that can be given to tenants in certain circumstances. You will find more information on our website at www.moray.gov.uk/housing.

What if I refuse an offer of housing?

You have the right to refuse any offer of housing. However, if you refuse two reasonable offers of housing within a period of one year, we will not make any other offers of housing to you for six months from the date of your last offer. If you are going to refuse an offer of housing, you should discuss your reasons with the area housing officer who deals with the area the property is in before you make a final decision. This is because it may be some time before we can make another offer to you.

What if I refuse an offer of housing due to the removal of the Housing Benefit Spare Room Subsidy (often called the ‘Bedroom Tax’)?

The way that we work out the size of property that you need is different from the criteria used by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). We may offer you a house which the DWP would view as being bigger than you need. This means that if you are entitled to Housing Benefit, the DWP may consider that you have a ‘spare bedroom’ and you may get less Housing Benefit than the amount of rent due.

If you refuse an offer for this reason, then we would consider this to be a reasonable refusal. We will not take the refusal into account when considering the number of refusals that may have been made. In the future your application for housing will only be considered for a smaller size property.

Do I have any other housing options?

Remember that not all social landlords in Moray and Aberdeenshire are part of the apply4homes scheme. You will need to apply to them separately. Some landlords with housing in Moray are part of HomeHunt North East Scotland (NES). These landlords operate a Choice Based Lettings scheme to let their houses and flats for rent. This is a different way of letting properties from traditional waiting lists. Applicants register by filling in a short online form and the landlords advertise all their vacancies as they arise. Once registered, you can apply for any property that you are interested in. A short list of bidding applicants will be used to determine the successful applicant, based on giving priority to the household that best matches the property type and also considering housing need.

You must register with ‘HomeHunt’ in order to bid for a property. For more information please see the Homehunt website at www.homehunt.info.

You can find out more about other housing options, such as the private rented sector and low cost home ownership in our ‘Guide to housing options in Moray’ which you can view at your local access point, library or online at www.moray.gov.uk/housing.

Can I apply for a mutual exchange?

You can apply for a mutual exchange if you are:

- our tenant;
- a tenant with another local authority; or
- a tenant with a housing association.

A mutual exchange is where you exchange your home with:

- another of our tenants;
- a council tenant from another local authority; or
- a tenant from a housing association.

House Exchange is a website that brings people together who are looking to swap their home. To register you will need to visit the House Exchange website at www.apply4homes.houseexchange.org.uk.

If you do not have internet access at home you can visit your local library or access point. If you need help to apply, phone us on **0300 123 4566**.

The landlords of each property must give permission before a mutual exchange can take place. We will not withhold our permission unreasonably.

What happens to all the information that I give?

We may ask for information about your health, household, housing needs and previous addresses. We will use the information you give us to assess and meet you and your households' housing needs.

We may also ask you for information about you, including your sex, ethnicity, disability and religion. This information will be used for statistical or planning purposes. We need this information to make sure that we protect your rights and make sure we keep to any relevant laws.

In some cases we can share your personal information with other agencies, such as the health service, if you agree. We may share personal information with our partners. However we will not give this information to any other organisation unless you give us your permission in writing or we have to provide it by law.

We may take court action against you and take back any tenancy we may have granted if you have provided false or misleading information.

What if I disagree with your decision?

If you are not satisfied with our decision, you can request a review. You should submit your request in writing, including the reason for your request to:

Senior Housing Needs Officer
Moray Council
PO Box 6760
Elgin
IV30 1BX

A senior manager not previously involved with the original decision will complete the review and will aim to respond to you within 28 days of your request.

If you are still not satisfied, you can request that the Housing Needs Review Group consider your case. You should make your request to:

Housing Needs Manager
Moray Council
PO Box 6760
Elgin
IV30 1BX

The Housing Needs Review Group which sits monthly will decide if the decision made on your application will remain or be overturned. The Housing Needs Review Group will write and tell you of their decision within seven days.

How do you monitor the operation of the Allocations Policy?

We regularly monitor the time it takes to relet our vacant properties and the amount of rent lost as a result of a property being vacant.

We also monitor:

Annually

- the ethnic origin of applicants on the housing list and new tenants
- the number of people who consider themselves to have a disability

Quarterly

- the percentage of allocations by group (homeless list / waiting list / transfer list)
- the percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year.

How often do you review your Allocations Policy?

If monitoring of the Allocations Policy identifies areas for improvement, the policy may be amended or a review carried out. If the law changes, the policy will be changed to make sure that we comply with the law.

What are the consultation arrangements for reviewing of the Allocations Policy?

If the changes being made to the Allocations Policy are substantive, we will consult with tenants, applicants and other key stakeholders before making any changes. Consultation will be ongoing during the review process and not just once the policy has been finalised.

We will prepare and publish a report following the consultation on the Allocations Policy.

Contacts

Housing and Property
PO Box 6760
Elgin
IV30 1BX

0300 123 4566
housing@moray.gov.uk

We are continually trying to improve the services that we offer and welcome any comments or suggestions. Please send them to:

Housing & Property (Housing Policy)
Moray Council
PO Box 6760
Elgin
IV30 1BX

housingpolicy@moray.gov.uk

We review our leaflets regularly to make sure you have the most up-to-date information. However, the content of this leaflet is only correct at the time it is published.

For more information or advice contact us on **0300 123 4566**
or visit our website at **www.moray.gov.uk/housing**