



ASSIGNATION POLICY 2017

1.0 OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to set out Ochil View's arrangements for considering applications to assign a tenancy as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and in our Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.

2.0 MAKING AN APPLICATION TO ASSIGN A TENANCY

2.1 Before a tenant can assign the tenancy of their home to someone else they must apply in writing to the Association for permission to do so and get our written consent.

We will permit assignation only when:

- the house has been the tenant's only or principal home during the 12 months immediately before the tenant applies for written permission to assign their tenancy **and**
- the person that the tenant wishes to assign their tenancy to must have lived at the property as their only or principal home for the 12 months before the application to assign is made **and**
- the tenant, joint tenant or person they wish to assign their tenancy to must have notified the landlord that the person they wish to assign the tenancy to is living in the house. The 12-month period does not start unless the landlord has been notified that the person is living in the property as their only or principal home.

3.0 CONFIRMATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES RELATED TO ASSIGNATION INCLUDING NOTIFICATION AND CONSENT TO RESIDE

3.1 Notification

The tenant or any one of the joint tenants, or the person who has moved in must have notified the Association that the person has moved in and that the property is the person's only or principal home. The 12 month qualifying period (as set out above) does not commence until the Association has been notified and has given its consent for the person to reside. Any period before we have been notified or after we have been notified but before we have given consent will not count as part of the 12 month qualifying period.

The Association will accept notification in writing or by email. We will not accept verbal notification. In the case of children in the household reaching the age of 16, who were part of the household when the property was allocated and it is their long term and principal home, no further notification is required.

On notification, the Association will consider whether it is appropriate for that person to reside in the property. We will refuse consent if it is not appropriate that they do so. For example, consent will not be given in the case where a property is overcrowded as a result of their residency. If consent is not given, the person may not remain in the property. Any period following refusal of consent to reside will not count towards any qualifying period for assignation. There may be other reasons why the Association does not consent to residency and the unsuccessful applicant will be notified of the reason at the time.

4.0 ASSESSING AN APPLICATION TO ASSIGN A TENANCY

The assessment of applications for permission to assign a tenancy will take account of both the tenant's and the proposed assignee's circumstances and in all cases, must satisfy the criteria set down in Section 32 and Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. These criteria are set out as **Appendix 1**.

4.1 Ochil View may refuse consent to assign the tenancy on other grounds including:

- ✓ A Notice of Recovery of Possession has been served on the tenant on any of the "conduct grounds" set out in paragraphs 1-7 of Schedule 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (attached as **Appendix 2**).
- ✓ An Order for Recovery of Possession has been made against the tenant.
- ✓ A payment has been received by the tenant, in cash or in kind, in consideration of the assignation request.
- ✓ Ochil View intends to carry out substantial work on the property.
- ✓ There is damage or disrepair to the property caused by the tenant, a member of the household or a visitor to the property.
- ✓ The tenant has outstanding debt owing to Ochil View in terms of their tenancy being either arrears of rent, rechargeable repairs or any other debt related to their occupancy of the property.
- ✓ The Association has been given incomplete or false information about the application.
- ✓ The house is unsuitable for the prospective assignee's needs.
- ✓ The prospective assignee has pursued a course of anti-social behaviour or has been convicted of using a previous tenancy for illegal or immoral purposes or has an Anti-social Behaviour Order.
- ✓ The property was designed or substantially adapted for a person with special needs for example Wheelchair Adapted properties or Elderly Amenity

properties as they are specially designed for persons over pensionable age and the assignee does not require this type of property.

- ✓ There are current outstanding rent arrears or rechargeable repair charges outstanding to the Association
- ✓ where the Association would not give the person the tenant wishes to pass the tenancy to reasonable preference under our Allocations Policy;
- ✓ where, in the Association's opinion and based on the occupancy standards set out in our Allocations Policy, the assignation would result in the home being under-occupied

5.0 RECORDING AND PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

The recording of applications to assign a tenancy is the responsibility of the Housing Services Section. We will respond within 28 days to all requests.

6.0 ENTITLEMENTS, PAYMENTS AND BENEFITS

- 6.1 When the tenant or the proposed assignee is within the definition of a relevant person, the decision to grant or refuse permission shall only be by the Management Committee, following receipt of an appropriate report.

7.0 NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

Ochil View will notify the tenant in writing of its decision within 28 days of receiving their application. Where consent to has been refused we will advise the applicant of the reason/s for refusing consent. If Ochil View has not made a decision within 28 days of receiving the written application Ochil View will be deemed to have consented to the same under and in terms of Schedule 5, Part 2, Para 12 of the Housing Scotland 2001 Act. Where the applicant is dissatisfied with the Association's decision, the applicant may seek further information and explanation of our decision and may exercise their right to appeal as set out in the Complaints procedure.

- 7.1 Where a person may become homeless as a result of the Association's refusal to grant an assignation of tenancy, the Association may allow the person to remain in the property on a Short Scottish Secure tenancy until suitable alternative accommodation is available.

8.0 SUCCESSION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT WITH HOUSING COSTS

The Association works in partnership with the appropriate authorities to minimise fraud and overpayment in payment of financial support with housing costs. We are required to notify the appropriate authorities of a significant change in the circumstances of any tenant that may affect their entitlement to financial support with housing costs. We will notify the local authority and where applicable the Department of Work and Pensions of any changes in household of which we are notified of assignations that take place.

9.0 ASSIGNATION, RENT ARREARS, RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS AND THE CONDITION OF THE PROPERTY

9.1 Only assignees who were joint tenants prior to the death of the tenant shall have responsibility for rent arrears and rechargeable repair accounts that are outstanding at the date of assignment

10.0 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

10.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every five years.

Graeme Wilson
Housing Services Manager

27 April 2017

Policy Review Process and Consultation

Reviewed by Management Team on 12 April 2017

Recommended by the Customer Services Committee on 20 April 2017

Reviewed by Involved Residents Group 5 April 2017

APPROVED BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON

SECTION 32 OF THE HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2001 AS AMENDED BY SECTION 12(2) OF THE HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014

- (1) It is a term of every Scottish secure tenancy that the tenant may assign, sub-let or otherwise give up to another person possession of the house or any part of it or take in a lodger—
 - (a) only with the consent in writing of the landlord, and
 - (b) in the case of an assignation, only where the house has been the assignee's only or principal home throughout the period of 12 months ending with the date of the application for the landlord's consent to the assignation under paragraph 9 of schedule 5.
- (2) A landlord whose consent is required under subsection (1) may refuse such consent only if it has reasonable grounds for doing so.
- (3) There are, in particular, reasonable grounds for refusing such consent if—
 - (a) a notice under section 14(2) has been served on the tenant specifying a ground set out in any of paragraphs 1 to 7 of schedule 2,
 - (b) an order for recovery of possession of the house has been made against the tenant under section 16(2),
 - (c) it appears to the landlord that a payment other than—
 - (i) a rent which is in its opinion a reasonable rent, or
 - (ii) a deposit which in its opinion is reasonable, returnable at the termination of the assignation, sub-letting or other transaction and given as security for the sub-tenant's obligations for accounts for supplies of gas, electricity, telephone or other domestic supplies and for damage to the house or contents, has been or is to be received by the tenant in consideration of the assignation, sub-letting or other transaction,
 - (d) the transaction for which consent is sought would lead to overcrowding of the house in such circumstances as to render the occupier guilty of an offence under section 139 of the 1987 Act, or
 - (e) the landlord proposes to carry out work on the house or on the building of which it forms part so that the proposed work will affect the accommodation likely to be used by the sub-tenant or other person who would reside in the house as a result of the transaction.
- (4) Where the landlord is a registered social landlord which is a co-operative housing association, any consent under subsection (1) is subject to the condition that the assignee, sub-tenant or other person is a member of the association when the assignation or sub-lease takes effect or, as the case may be, when possession is given to the other person.
- (5) The Scottish Ministers may by order modify subsection (3).

- (6) It is a term of every Scottish secure tenancy that, where the landlord has given consent to an assignment, sub-letting or other transaction under subsection (1), the tenant —
 - (a) must notify the landlord of any proposed increase in the rent which was payable by the sub-tenant at the commencement of the assignment, sub-letting or other transaction, and
 - (b) must not increase the rent if the landlord objects to the increase.
- (7) An assignment, sub-letting or other transaction to which this section applies is not—
 - (a) a protected tenancy or a statutory tenancy within the meaning of the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984 (c. 58), or
 - (b) an assured tenancy, and Part VII (rent assessment) of that Act does not apply to such an assignment, sub-letting or other transaction.
- (8) In this section and schedule 5, “sub-tenant” means a person entitled to possession of a house or any part of a house under an assignment, sub-letting or other transaction to which this section applies, and includes a lodger.
- (9) The provisions of Part 2 of schedule 5, so far as relating to this section, have effect as terms of every Scottish secure tenancy.

In accordance with Section 12(2) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 we may also refuse permission for an Assignment:

- where the landlord (being a local authority or a registered social landlord) would not give the person the tenant wishes to pass the tenancy to reasonable preference under their Allocations policy;
- where, in the landlord’s opinion, the assignment would result in the home being under-occupied.

GROUNDS ON WHICH COURT MAY ORDER RECOVERY OF POSSESSION

- (1) Rent lawfully due from the tenant has not been paid, or any other obligation of the tenancy has been broken.
- (2) The tenant (or any one of joint tenants), a person residing or lodging in the house with, or sub-tenant of, the tenant, or a person visiting the house has been convicted of-
 - (a) using the house or allowing it to be used for immoral or illegal purposes, or
 - (b) an offence punishable by imprisonment committed in, or in the locality of, the house.
- (3) (1) The condition of the house or of any of the common parts has deteriorated owing to acts of waste by, or the neglect or default of, the tenant (or any one of joint tenants) or any person residing or lodging with, or any sub-tenant of, the tenant; and in the case of acts of waste by, or the neglect or default of, a person residing or lodging with, or sub-tenant of, a tenant, the tenant has not, before the making of the order in question, taken such steps as the tenant ought reasonably to have taken for the removal of that person.

(2) In sub-paragraph (1), "the common parts" means any part of a building containing the house and any other premises which the tenant is entitled under the terms of the tenancy to use in common with the occupiers of other houses.
- (4) The condition of any furniture provided for use under the tenancy, or for use in any of the common parts (within the meaning given in paragraph 3(2)), has deteriorated owing to ill-treatment by the tenant (or any one of joint tenants) or any person residing or lodging with, or any sub-tenant of, the tenant; and in the case of ill-treatment by a person residing or lodging with, or sub-tenant of, a tenant, the tenant has not, before the making of the order in question, taken such steps as the tenant ought reasonably to have taken for the removal of that person.
- (5) The tenant and-
 - (a) the tenant's spouse or Civil Partner¹, or
 - (b) any person with whom the tenant has, for a period of at least 6 months immediately prior to the commencement of the period referred to below, been living in the house as husband and wife or in a relationship which has the characteristics of the relationship between Civil Partners², have been absent from the house without reasonable cause for a continuous period exceeding 6 months or have ceased to occupy the house as their principal home.

¹ As amended by Schedule 28 Part 4 , Section 65 of the Civil Partnerships Act 2008

² As amended by Schedule 28 Part 4 Section 65 of the Civil Partnerships Act 2008

- (6) The tenant is the person, or one of the persons, to whom the tenancy was granted and the landlord was induced to grant the tenancy by a false statement made knowingly or recklessly by the tenant.
- (7) (1) The tenant (or any one of joint tenants), a person residing or lodging in the house with, or any sub-tenant of, the tenant, or a person visiting the house has-
- (a) acted in an anti-social manner in relation to a person residing in, visiting or otherwise engaged in lawful activity in the locality, or
 - (b) pursued a course of conduct amounting to harassment of such a person, or a course of conduct which is otherwise anti-social conduct in relation to such a person, and is not reasonable in all the circumstances that the landlord should be required to make other accommodation available to the tenant.
- (2) In sub-paragraph (1)-
- "anti-social", in relation to an action or course of conduct, means causing or likely to cause alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance,
 - "conduct" includes speech, and a course of conduct must involve conduct on at least two occasions,
 - "harassment" is to be construed in accordance with section 8 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (c.40).