



HOUSING SEX OFFENDERS POLICY

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Approved by:	Leadership Team	Date:	14.12.17
Next Review Date:	November 2022	Pages:	4

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 The National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO) forms part of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and outlines how housing forms an integral part of this process.

The NASSO sets out arrangements for housing offenders who are subject to sex offender notification requirements (SONR) with particular focus on assessing and managing the risks posed by such offenders living in a particular community, location and property.

1.2 The Local Authority, Police Scotland and Scottish Prison Service as the Responsible Authorities (RAs) are required to work together to minimise the potential risk each sex offender may pose. The effective management of offenders is enhanced by close working relationships and meaningful information sharing arrangements.

1.3 The Association as a Registered Social Landlord has a ‘duty to co-operate’ and is a signatory to the Information Sharing Protocol for Duty to Co-operate Agencies and Housing Sex Offenders Procedures which operate in Orkney.

1.4 The prime consideration when assessing the manageability of accommodation for offenders is the safety of the community.

1.5 The purpose of this Policy is to outline the Association’s response to providing appropriate housing for sex offenders and how the Association will:

- manage the risk posed by sex offenders and protect the communities where they live;
- work in partnership with other agencies;
- ensure that sex offenders receive support to allow them to sustain a tenancy.

2. Definition

2.1 For the purposes of this policy, a sex offender is someone convicted or cautioned for an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 1997 (as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003).

2.2 Sex offenders may pose a potential risk that requires assessing, but they do not necessarily have any special housing requirements.

- 2.3 It is important to note that not all sex offenders are a threat to children or a risk to the community.

3. Our Duty to Re-house Sex Offenders

- 3.1 Under the Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005 the Association has a 'Duty to Co-operate' with the RAs in the rehousing of sex offenders.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the RAs to minimise the risk posed to communities in which sex offenders are housed by undertaking risk assessments, monitoring and the supervision of sex offenders.
- 3.3 The Association will contribute to the MAPPA where appropriate to manage a sex offender's risk and ensure they are suitably re-housed.

4. Applications for Housing

- 4.1 The Association's designated member of staff as the named Link Officer (LO) is the Head of Housing & Customer Services who will be the first point of contact.
- 4.2 All housing applications from Registered Sex Offenders will be dealt with by the LO, or in their absence the Senior Housing Officer (Tenant Support Team) will deputise.
- 4.3 In dealing with such applications the LO will work with the Sex Offender Liaison Officer (SOLO) within OIC whose role and responsibility it is to contact the Responsible Authorities.
- 4.4 The housing needs of sex offenders will normally be assessed in accordance with the Association's Rented Allocations Policy unless there are special circumstances which are required to be taken into account.

5. Offer of Housing

- 5.1 When considering what housing would be suitable for a sex offender the following will be taken into account:
- anyone with a history of offences against children will not be housed near a school or playground;
 - avoidance of housing more than one sex offender in the same area;
 - proximity to victim;
 - suitability of property eg flats with communal entrances will be avoided;
 - avoidance of housing the sex offender in close proximity to vulnerable persons.
- 5.2 These matters will be viewed in context of the sex offender's risk assessment as determined by the RAs.

6. Tenancy Management

- 6.1 There may be occasions when an existing tenant or a member of the household is either suspected or convicted of committing a sexual offence. If this happens the Association will work closely with the RAs to address the matter and minimise any risk to the community.
- 6.2 The Association is unable to enter into discussions about an individual sex offender with other tenants or residents. However, they will be encouraged to report any suspicious, inappropriate or threatening behaviour to Police Scotland.
- 6.3 The Association recognises the harmful effects a sexual offence can have on both the victim and their family. The Association will, therefore, offer support and, where possible, fulfil any request to move home using our Rented Allocations Policy.
- 6.4 The Association further recognises that an offender's behaviour may change over time and will, therefore, work with the RAs to monitor the behaviour and identify any changes in the risks posed.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1 Information regarding sex offenders will be treated in confidence in line with the Data Protection and the Information Sharing Protocol.
- 7.2 Requests for information from the public and/or media will always be referred to Police Scotland as the lead RA.

8. Training

- 8.1 The Association will ensure that all staff involved in housing and managing sex offenders receive appropriate training and support.

9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 It is likely that the number of sex offenders being housed by the Association will be very low and that to provide details on the housing of sex offenders may breach confidentiality. It is not proposed, therefore, to report to Management Committee on housing at this level of detail.
- 9.2 This policy will be reviewed every 5 years, or sooner as required by best practice or changes in legislation.