

# **GOVERNMENT HOUSING**

## **ALLOCATION POLICIES & PRINCIPLES**

(Agreed by Executive Council on 23 February 2006)

### **1. Terms of Reference for the Housing Committee**

To allocate Government's housing stock in accordance with FIG housing allocation policies and principles, which function may be delegated to officer members of the Committee, subject to the circulation of such reports for the information of members as the Chairman considers necessary.

The allocation function excludes Sheltered Accommodation which is allocated by the Team Leader Social Services

Meetings of the Housing Committee will be convened when deemed necessary by the Chairman.

### **2. General Principles**

As a general principle the Falkland Islands Government (FIG) is under no legal obligation to house any person (except where FIG has entered into contractual obligation to house officers recruited from overseas). FIG is, however, responsible for providing housing for Falkland Islanders who are in need, and who, for one reason or another, are unable to find or afford accommodation in the private sector: Theme 9 of the Island Plan is relevant<sup>1</sup>. FIG will, through the Housing Committee, attempt to make best use of the resources available to provide accommodation to Falkland Islands residents who are unable to secure accommodation in the private sector.

### **3. General Principles for the allocation of Government Housing and eligibility for addition to the "List of Applications for Government Housing"**

Definition of "resident". For the purposes of this section 'resident' is defined as a person holding Falkland Islands Status or a Permanent Residence Permit (PRP). However, Executive Council agreed in September 2005 that as applicants for Permanent Residence Permits are required to demonstrate they have long-term accommodation arrangements in place before a PRP is granted, then unless there are extenuating circumstances a PRP holder will not be accepted onto the Government Housing List for a period of four years from the date of the permit.

#### **Priority One**

FIG contract personnel recruited/seconded from overseas, who by the nature of their employment conditions are entitled to, and must be provided with, accommodation for the duration of their contract of service.

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<sup>1</sup> "We will ensure a well-housed, well-served, safe community"

## **Priority Two**

Residents with special needs

*For the avoidance of doubt, 'special needs' refers to an applicant whose housing need is particularly acute due to additional factors which may include, but are not restricted to, disability, ill-health, age, dependant children, or poverty. Residents with special needs may not be required to satisfy all the criteria in Priority Three a) to f) below.*

## **Priority Three**

*(Note: Save for the specific provisions contained in boxes below, and that an applicant must be at least 18 years of age( f) below), in applying the following criteria the Housing Committee may use its discretion depending on the circumstances of any particular application).*

Residents who –

- a) are resident in the Falkland Islands, or who are normally resident but are temporarily absent overseas, for example –
- on education or training
  - for medical reasons
  - serving in HM Armed Forces, or

who are resident overseas but are intending to return to the Islands within the next 12 months.

- b) are not property (home) owners in the Falkland Islands or overseas

*However an individual who, after the breakdown of their relationship signs a separation agreement or other document in which they agree that eventually they will have no legal interest in their former home, and who is not resident in the home, can apply for Government housing even if their name remains on the title to the former home in the meantime.*

- c) have not sold a property (home) within 12 months of date of application

*Except where the sale is due to the permanent breakdown of a relationship, or where a person returns to the Islands having sold a property overseas.*

- d) are not on the Government debtors list
- e) do not have the financial means to buy or build a house or rent privately in the private sector
- f) are at least 18 years of age

4. **Tenancy Agreements**

All persons allocated Government accommodation are required to sign a tenancy agreement which contains details of the rental and obligations of tenant and landlord. The tenancy agreement covers matters such as damage to the property, decorating, permissions required for subletting or taking in paying lodgers, carrying on business at the property, maintaining the grounds of the property, and the keeping of pets.

5. **Limitation of length of tenancy**

Tenancies for residents are normally granted for a maximum term of three years, however this may be varied according to the particular circumstances of any application. Either party to a tenancy agreement may terminate the agreement on giving one month's notice to the other party. Near to the date of expiry of a tenancy agreement a tenant will be required to justify any extension of their tenancy to the Housing Officer. In any case where the Housing Committee considers that the continuation of a tenancy cannot be justified the Housing Officer will write giving the tenant six months' notice of termination of the tenancy, or such notice as may be reasonable in the circumstances of the case.

6. **Entitlement to furnished accommodation**

Government contract staff are entitled to furnished accommodation. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, Government accommodation is only rented to residents on an unfurnished basis at a lower rental than for a furnished property.

7. **Housing Requests made by the Team Leader, Social Services**

Requests for Government accommodation made by the Team Leader Social Services, on behalf of residents with special needs, will, unless there are exceptional circumstances, have no priority over the allocation of accommodation to Government contract staff. The priority to be afforded to these requests for accommodation will be determined by the Housing Committee following presentation of the full facts of any case by the Team Leader Social Services.

8. **Financial Circumstances**

In assessing an applicant's suitability for the allocation of Government housing the financial circumstances of every adult member of the household will be taken into account.

9. **Family Circumstances**

In allocating housing, or considering a request for a transfer to a larger or more expensive property, the Housing Committee will take into account the housing needs of the applicant and all members of their household who are residents (as defined above). The housing needs of non-resident members of the applicant's household will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

10. **Transfers**

A tenant who appears on the Government debtors list will not be considered for transfer to a larger or more expensive property unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**11. Students**

Returning graduates, students and trainees are afforded no special priority for the allocation of Government Housing, and applications from such persons will be considered on their merits along with other applications at the time (however, due account will be taken of the skills and employment opportunities available to such applicants).

**12. House sitting**

- a) The Housing Officer may in her discretion authorise a suitable person or persons to undertake house sitting where a house might otherwise remain vacant, for example, awaiting the arrival of an FIG contract officer.
- b) Where a tenant plans to be absent from their premises for a period exceeding one week, they may arrange with the Housing Officer for someone to house sit for them during their absence.
- c) Persons undertaking house sitting need not be persons on the List of Applications for Government Housing.
- d) House sitting will normally not be permitted for periods in excess of six months.

**13. FIG contract officers transferring to local conditions of employment**

On transfer to local conditions, FIG contract officers may remain in their Government accommodation for a maximum period of two years.

**14. Publication of Rent Arrears List**

The publication of the Rent Arrears List is at the discretion of the Housing Committee.

**15. Lookout Lodge and the YMCA**

The Housing Committee has no involvement in the allocation of rooms at Lookout Lodge or the YMCA.

**16. Government Rent Rebate Scheme**

Details of this scheme may be obtained from the Treasury Department.  
Tel: 27142 E-mail: [treasurygeneral@sec.gov.fk](mailto:treasurygeneral@sec.gov.fk)

**17. List of Applications for Government Housing**

If an applicant for Government housing is known to have been away from the Islands for longer than six months, for reasons other than medical and education/training, they will automatically be removed from the List of Applications for Government Housing, unless notification of such absence, and the reason therefore, has been made to the Housing Officer prior to departure.