Community housing Allocations policy

Policy details

Name and version number: Community housing Allocations policy version 1

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Date of review: 1 February 2021   Next review date: February 2023

Compulsory considerations

- This policy has been reviewed in its entirety for relevance and is up to date.

- All feedback, issues and questions has been considered and addressed.

- The policy has been considered to make sure it doesn't have a disproportionate effect on any one social group - eg Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander people.

- Corporate and organisational risks have been considered and assessed.

Overview of the policy's development

This is your historical record of how this policy was developed. Include information about what's changed and why, who was consulted and when:
- This policy replaces the Tenant allocations and tenure policy, name changed to Community Housing Allocations policy
- Updated to support implementation of the Single Housing Register in March 2021
- SAHT policy template used
- Scope extended to tenancies under SAHT Housing Transfer programs (BPSC and ROSAS) (Noting that SAHT directly allocates to SAHT-owned new builds in the SAHT Transfer program).
- Scope extended to include all specialised housing lease programs where the leases refer to this policy
- Referenced Single Housing Register Access Deed and Data Sharing Agreement
- Includes definitions of Categories
- Added detail on what the primary contact organisation is
- Added information on how customers update their primary contact organisation

This policy sets out how community housing providers (providers):

- prioritise customers into categories
- make offers of housing to registrants
- allocate properties to registrants

This policy applies to:

- providers registered under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) including volunteer member-tenant managed providers who have a community housing agreement (eg Master Agreement) with the South Australian Housing Trust or the SA Housing Authority
- non-government organisations which have housing leases with the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) which reference this policy, including specialised housing programs
- community housing tenants transferring to a separate social housing provider

In relation to SAHT Transfer programs for example Better Places Strong Communities (BPSC) and Renewing our Streets and Suburbs (ROSAS):

- This policy applies to all allocations to properties *managed by a provider* under a concurrent lease associated with a Transfer program. This includes:
    - properties owned by SAHT where management responsibilities have been formally transferred to a provider (eg via transfer deed and concurrent lease)
    - properties developed and owned by the provider, as a result of development activities under the Transfer Program
- This policy does not apply to properties *under SAHT management*, and specifically does not apply to new build properties developed by a provider under the Transfer Program, where ownership is (or is planned to be) transferred to SAHT. SAHT is responsible for all these allocations, and providers cannot make housing offers for these properties, unless and until the management of that property (and any in situ tenants) is subsequently transferred to a provider. If SAHT then transfers the property and tenancy to a provider for ongoing management, this policy would then apply to all subsequent allocations by the provider.

This policy does not apply to internal tenant transfers within individual community housing provider portfolios. Internal transfers are covered by the provider's own policies.

Registrations of interest

People who are eligible in line with the Community Housing Eligibility policy can register their interest in community housing.

People who are eligible in line with the Housing SA Eligibility for Housing Policy may register their interest in public or Aboriginal housing.

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The organisation the customer registers with is the primary contact organisation (PCO) responsible for managing the customer's registration of interest in housing. If a customer registers for both public and community housing, Housing SA will automatically be the PCO unless the customer chooses the provider to be the PCO.

Registrations are placed on a Single Housing Register. The person who registers their interest is called the registrant.

Providers must use the Single Housing Register to select eligible tenants who are suitable for vacant properties.

In order to access the Single Housing Register, providers registered under the NRSCH must have entered both the below agreements with the SA Housing Authority:

- the Single Housing Register Access Deed
- the Data Sharing Agreement under the Public Sector (Data Sharing) Act 2016.

Providers use the Single Housing Register to register people for programs managed by providers – including the Master Agreement, SAHT Housing Transfers program properties (BPSC and ROSAS) and leased properties under the specialised housing programs.

A registrant may choose to register with specific providers and will only be offered properties by those providers.

Categories

Registrations for community housing are prioritised and placed in a category based on the registrant's need for housing and the urgency of their situation. These categories are the same for public and community housing and are listed here and in the Housing SA Housing registration and allocation policy.[1] Community housing does not have category 4 or Low demand housing.

Community housing providers consider all the below when assessing a registrant's need for housing:

- their accommodation history

- the housing options available to them

- their individual need

- the circumstances of anyone else included on their registration of interest

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[1] Where changes are made by the Authority to public housing policy, changes will also be made to community housing policy, subject to consultation.

Category 1

Category 1 is for registrants with urgent housing needs and long-term barriers to accessing or maintaining private housing options.

Registrants are approved for Category 1 if a community housing provider assesses that they meet all the below conditions:

- they're homeless and at risk

- their accommodation history and the housing options available to them indicate private housing is unsuitable in the long-term

Category 2

Category 2 is for registrants who aren't in urgent housing need but have long-term barriers to accessing or maintaining private housing options.

Registrants are approved for Category 2 if a community housing provider assesses their accommodation history and housing options to indicate private housing is unsuitable in the long-term.

Registrants are eligible for Category 2 without an assessment if they can verify they, their partner, or a child in their or their partner's legal custody or guardianship either:

- receive the Disability Support Pension from Centrelink, including if they received it immediately before moving on to an Aged Pension, or they currently don't receive it because of WorkCover payments

- receive the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Pension from the Department of Veterans' Affairs

- are a refugee living in Australia for less than 2 years, verified by either the Department of Home Affairs documentation, visa codes 200, 201, 202, 203, 204 or 866, or a letter from the Australian Refugee Association

Category 3

Category 3 is for registrants who don't have urgent housing needs or long-term barriers to other housing options.

Registrants are registered for Category 3 if they're eligible for community housing but haven't been approved for Category 1 or 2.

Ordering of registrations of interest

Registrations of interest for community housing providers are placed on the register based on:

- the category
- the date they were approved for Category 1 or 2
- the date they registered their interest

- an approved benefit date, for example a customer who was removed from someone else's registration may be given a benefit to reflect the time already spent on the register.

Volunteer member tenant managed providers (co-operatives) rank registrations by registration date (or benefit date if any) only.

Registrations of interest are reviewed annually, as per the procedures outlined in the [Community Housing Managing the housing register guideline](#).

Category 1 reviews
Category 1 registrations are reviewed 12 months from the date the registrant was approved for Category 1. The purpose of the review is to make sure the registrant is still eligible for Category 1.

The Single Housing Register will automatically send a letter to registrants 30 days before the Category 1 expiry date, asking them to contact their PCO to make a review appointment if they still have urgent housing needs.

If the registrant doesn't respond, the PCO moves their registration from Category 1 to Category 3 and defers it for 12 months.

Registrants can ask to be re-assessed for Category 1 at any time if they have urgent housing needs.

Category 2, 3 or 4 review
The Single Housing Register automatically contacts registrants in Category 2, 3, 4 or low demand every 12 months to make sure they still have a need for housing and their information's correct and up to date. Note: Category 4 and Low Demand housing only relates to Housing SA.

If registrants don't respond, their registration is deferred for 12 months.

Moving registrations between categories

The PCO may move a registration between categories in any of the below situations:

- the registrant's circumstances change
- as a result of reviewing the registration of interest
- the registrant doesn't respond to contact from the PCO, for example to review their registration of interest

Updating registrations of interest
Registrants must tell the PCO if there are changes in their household or circumstances that could affect their eligibility or a CHP's ability to contact them. This includes, but isn't limited to, when:

- their contact details change

- they change their name
- the members of their household change

Registrants may let the PCO know if they want to change their registration including, but not limited to, when:

- they want to change the areas they registered for
- they want to cancel their registration

Registrants can update their PCO at any time by contacting either:

- the provider they want to be their PCO, and completing a [Change of Circumstances form](#)
- their current PCO if they want Housing SA to be their primary contact organisation. The provider can simply change the PCO to Housing SA.

Housing SA always agrees to being a registrant's PCO.

A community housing provider can refuse to be a registrant's PCO, for example if they don't have housing in the areas the registrant wants to live in, or the registrant isn't suitable for the housing programs they offer.

If a person is removed from someone else's registration, for example due to a relationship breakdown, they can make their own independent registration of interest.

Active, deferred and cancelled registrations of interest

A registration of interest is active until either:

- the registrant accepts an offer of housing
- the registration of interest is deferred or cancelled

A registration of interest can be deferred by either:

- the registrant, for example they ask to defer it because they're temporarily unable to accept housing
- the PCO, for example if the registrant can't be contacted

A registration of interest is cancelled either:

- if it's been deferred for 12 months
- at the registrant's request
- if the registrant is registered for public, Aboriginal or community housing and has not lived in South Australia for at least 1 year
- if the registrant is excluded from Housing SA services in line with the [Housing SA Antisocial behaviour policy](#)

Shortlisting

Utilising the filters available within the Single Housing Register, community housing providers make a short list of all registrants suitable for the property being offered.

The short list targets the most appropriate registrant for the property according to criteria set by the community housing providers, taking into account the portfolio profiles required under the Master Agreement. Further details in the Community housing Allocations guideline.

Making an offer of housing

Before making an offer of housing, the provider confirms all the below conditions:

- the registrant's still eligible for housing and the category their registration of interest is in
- the registrant's still eligible for the relevant program attached to the house if applicable, for example supportive housing
- the property the registrant may be offered is appropriate for their household and circumstances
- an intervention order won't be breached if the registrant moves into the property they may be offered
- the allocation will support the targeted allocation outcomes in the provider's portfolio profile
- the provider has the authority to make an offer of housing for the property (eg providers cannot make offers of housing for properties developed by them under Transfer programs which are transferred back to SAHT ownership, unless SAHT has formally transferred management of that specific property to the provider eg via a concurrent lease).

Areas, house types and sizes

Registrants register for housing within an area rather than a specific suburb or town. Refer Metropolitan Area Map and Country Map.

Registrants are registered for all property types for example townhouses, houses, flats or apartments. The number of bedrooms they're eligible for is automatically determined by the Single Housing Register in line with the Occupancy standards, however this can be overridden in the shortlisting process.

A provider may make an offer of housing that doesn't match the registrant's household size if the supply or demand for housing stock permits it (for example in country areas), or if they have a specific, verified need for a particular house size, for example they need an extra room for children/relatives staying on a regular basis or for medical equipment.

Allocating a property

Once a registrant accepts an offer of housing, they're assigned a tenancy type of General, Supported or Affordable, as described in the CH Allocations guideline. Then they are assigned to a particular housing program within their tenancy type.

The provider allocates the registrant to the property and talks to the registrant about:

- the conditions of their lease agreement
- how rent is calculated and charged
- any support needs they may have
- any other program requirements relating to the offer

The provider offers registrants a lease agreement in line with the tenure arrangements.

Rent is calculated in line with the community housing rent policy and associated procedures, depending on tenancy type.

Tenure arrangements

Providers are to refer to the specialised housing program policy and relevant guidelines when dealing with specialised housing program allocations.

For all other tenancies, registrants are allocated one of the following lease arrangements:

Probationary lease
All new tenancies to which this policy applies will commence with a probationary lease of up to 12 months unless a specific term is required as a condition of program funding.

Upon lease renewal, providers may elect to set a further probationary lease, for example where tenancy issues have arisen during the probationary period.

Tenants must be advised in writing of their probationary lease arrangements (for example in the Conditions of Tenancy or Lease Agreement).

Short term leases
The supported and supportive housing programs offer short term leases in line with their various program guidelines.

Fixed term lease
A fixed term tenancy will be offered to each tenant who has successfully completed their probationary period. Fixed term leases may be set for no longer than ten years.

Ongoing lease
Tenants of volunteer member-tenant managed providers are not required to have fixed term leases and may have an ongoing lease. Members of volunteer member-tenant managed

providers which merge into another community housing provider may keep their existing lease arrangements where this has been agreed in merger negotiations.

Related laws, policies and other documents

Controlling documents
This policy is based on:

- *Community Housing Providers (National Law) (South Australia) Act 2013*
- National Regulatory System Community Housing (NRSCH) Regulatory Framework
- Master Community Housing Agreements
- Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA)
- Single Housing Register Access Deed
- Data Sharing Agreement under the Public Sector (Data Sharing) Act 2016

Supporting procedures/guidelines
- Community housing Allocation guideline

Related policies and other documents
- Community Housing Eligibility policy
- Community Housing Eligibility guideline
- Transitional housing program policy
- Integrated Housing Exits Program policy
- Integrated Housing Exits Program guideline (PDF, 314.3 KB)
- Integrated Housing Exits Youth Justice Program policy
- Homelessness Supportive Housing Program policy
- Homelessness Supportive Housing Program guidelines (339.3 KB PDF)
- Aged Homelessness Assistance Program policy
- Mental Health Supported Social Housing Program policy

Date this policy applies from
1 March 2021

Version number
1

The online version of the policy is the approved and current version. There is no guarantee that any printed copies are current.