

Tenant Eligibility & Allocations

Related Policy: Centacare Housing Services Policy

Purpose & Objectives

Centacare Housing Services (CHS) has established a clear set of procedures and guidelines for receiving and assessing tenant applications, processing eligibility assessment and subsequent allocation of housing.

This procedure has been established to ensure CHS meets the legislative and contractual requirements for tenant eligibility and allocation. It is the objective of CHS to:

- Allocate available properties efficiently to maximise the use of resources
- Allocate properties to eligible applicants equitably and transparently on the basis of need
- Meet funding bodies' requirements and guidelines.

Procedure

Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Properties

CHS will be guided by DHHS Allocations Policy in determining eligibility for general social housing properties. To be eligible under the Allocations Policy an applicant must comply with the requirements of the DHHS Applications and Eligibility guidelines:

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/allocations-manual>

National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) Program

Eligibility for properties funded under other programs (i.e. NRAS) will be determined by the relevant funding program's guidelines. <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/national-rental-affordability-scheme>

CHS will integrate applicants with specific support needs into the CHS direct application process wherever possible. CHS is careful to maximise community access and information about housing options at all appropriate entry points.

Applications

Applicants for all housing will apply at CHS offices using the CHS Rental Application document. CHS will offer assistance to applicants, if required, to complete or amend their application. All applicants will be logged on the CHINTARO wait list. CHS will interview applicants in person or by telephone, if required.

CHS will ensure that potential tenants are informed about the organisation and the services it offers. Regular reviews will be undertaken on the way the community receives and interprets information about the organisation and whether the target groups are being reached.

CHS will:

- Ensure information about the organisation is readily available to people in housing need.
- Provide information in various languages when required
- Build links with other relevant services for referrals and nominations
- Inform applicants of other options to meet any immediate or specific housing needs.

General allocations

When a general social housing property becomes available, CHS will seek to allocate the property to the highest ranked applicant on the wait list. CHS will make allocation decisions based on information about the applicant's needs and preferences and information about the property and the neighbourhood. In matching applicants to properties, CHS will:

- Ensure fairness and consistency in decision making
- Ensure the most effective use of the housing portfolio by maximising the use of bedrooms, living areas and any special facilities or modifications for each property
- Ensure the property is suitable for the tenant considering both the needs and preferences of the highest priority applicants when making decisions regarding specific property allocation
- Ensure that the location of the property suits the applicant as much as possible, including providing access to any special support services they may need, and does not create difficulties for the tenant that cannot be overcome
- Ensure that the type of properties and facilities enable the applicant to maximise his/her mobility and independence and alleviates and/or stabilises medical conditions or disabilities wherever possible and increases the wellbeing of the applicant relative to their existing housing conditions
- Create sustainable and balanced communities in the allocation of vacant properties by taking into account the maintenance of an appropriate social mix and the needs of neighbouring tenants and residents
- Facilitate successful tenancies by balancing the needs and interests of the tenant, the community and the organisation in order to minimise future tenancy problems and maximise tenant satisfaction

Nominations

For properties where support partners or other agencies have nomination rights, CHS will seek to allocate vacancies to applicants nominated by the relevant agency. In making allocation decisions, CHS will ensure that the:

- applicant is eligible
- allocation is consistent with the agreed ranking criteria
- applicant agrees with the offer.

Transfers

Current CHS tenants wanting to transfer into other properties may only apply to do so if they have had a period of 6 months with no arrears (including rent, utility fees or any other applicable charges).

CHS will minimise the requirement for enforced transfers through a fair but comprehensive pre-selection process. This process assists to avoid disruption of the CHS tenant having to transfer to another property, with the exception of unavoidable events such as natural disaster, tenant death or by order of the Department of Housing.

CHS achieves sustainable tenancies through timely and effective management of any disruptive tenant behaviour. Applicable CHS Tenants are required to complete the DHHS 'Neighbourly Behaviour Statement'.

Staff Members accessing CHS Properties

Staff members of Centacare and Centacare Housing Services are not eligible to apply for or rent properties managed by CHS.

Vacancies

CHS accepts paper based rentals applications from prospective tenants that are held on file pending vacancies in properties. When a property becomes vacant, tenancy workers will select potential candidates from the list based on a number of criteria including but not limited to:

- Position on the waiting list
- Number of potential tenants
- Property type and location
- NRAS Eligibility
- DHHS defined target group (e.g. general disability)