

Tenant Eligibility & Allocations Procedure

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 according to the Allocations Framework of the Victorian Housing Register
- 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.

In November 2018 Centacare Housing Services opted in to the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Victorian Housing Register Allocations Framework. The Housing Register is the central point and a common Register for all social and affordable housing applicants to lodge their application.

Procedure

Applications

Applicants for all Centacare properties are required to complete the application which is submitted directly to the Housing Register. The application can be made via:

- the MyGov website at <https://my.gov.au>
- a paper-based application form located at <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/apply-social-housing> which can be completed and posted to
 - o Victorian Housing Register - Department Health and Human Services – HCC
Reply Paid 933
Moe VIC 3825
 - o at CHS offices with assistance to applicants, if required, to complete or amend their application.

1. Register of Interest:

For people to register their interest in being considered for social housing. All Victorians who meet the eligibility criteria for Social Housing are able to add their name to the Register.

2. Priority Access:

For those most in need. The 6 groups include:

- Emergency Management Housing – for people whose housing is no longer safe or habitable due to an emergency such as a bushfire or flood
- Priority Transfers – safety issues such as family violence
- Homeless with Support – for homeless or family violence
- Supported Housing – where disability modifications are required
- Special Housing Needs – inappropriate, insecure or unsafe housing
- Special Housing Needs 55 years and over – inappropriate, insecure or unsafe housing & 55+

Centacare Housing Services

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.

Vacancies and Allocations

The Allocations Framework requires that all applicants for Centacare Housing properties are processed from the Housing Register. Additionally, a calculated percentage of the total applications must be from the Priority Access category.

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.

Succession of Tenancy

Succession of a tenancy is when CHS agrees to transfer a client's rights to living in a CHS property to another member of the household. CHS has a succession of tenancy plan to ensure that eligible household members will not be made homeless or forced to suffer undue hardship because the client dies or leaves the property.

Eligible household members are:

- spouse of defacto partner (including same sex partners)
- an adult child or other household member that wishes to remain living in their home
- legal guardian of children of the household

In general, when applying for succession of tenancy, the applicant must:

- have lived at the property for a reasonable period of time or established a pattern of occupancy
- not be responsible for tenancy breaches leading to action to terminate the previous tenancy, and
- meet income eligibility requirements for CHS housing

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.

Document History

13.03.19 Amended to include reference to VHR and Allocations Framework; and new application process for social housing, and Succession of tenancy. Approved by CHS Board 18/3/19.