

# Accommodation Policy

## Accommodation Policy

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### Approval

Policy owner: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

Business Unit: Specialist Community Services

Approved by: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

Date approved: 26/05/2022

Review date: 26/05/2024

### 1. Purpose

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1. This policy is to ensure that accommodation across Specialist Community Services (SCS) is managed effectively, in accordance with the SCS Strategic Plan, The Society's (SVPWA) Mission and Values, compliance frameworks, contractual obligations and, to meet the needs of the clients, consumers and tenants who access the service.
2. It is intended to communicate that accommodation as defined in this policy, is transitional in nature and not intended to be a home for life or, an alternative for long term independent housing.
3. This policy makes clear the expectation that for supported accommodation clients, consumers and tenants are required to actively engage with support staff (either internal or external) to work toward their identified goals and long-term housing options. The exception being clients accommodated in SCS Crisis Accommodation due to the model and framework of service

### 2. Scope

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1. This policy applies to the following SCS sites:
  - Mental Health Service
  - Homelessness Services - Tom Fisher House
  - Housing Plus

### 3. Policy principles

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1. SCS provides a range of accommodation across its services including supported and non-supported accommodation, as well as supported crisis accommodation as outlined below:
  - Homelessness Services – Tom Fisher House – supported crisis accommodation
  - Housing Plus – non-supported accommodation
  - Mental Health Service – supported accommodation
2. All accommodation is transitional in nature and is intended as a resource to support clients, consumers and tenants build their capacity toward obtaining secure long-term housing. SCS is committed to contributing to sustainable change and therefore in some services, accommodation includes support and/or the provision of a recovery-oriented programme delivered by SCS.

#### Policy Commitments

3. As a charitable organisation SCS is committed to providing accommodation and chattels that are safe, secure, functional and, of a reasonable standard and quality.
4. SCS seeks to provide service to those most vulnerable and in need, across the areas of homelessness, housing and mental health and, as such has specific eligibility criteria for accommodation relevant to each service.
5. Referrals for accommodation will only be considered once all requested and required information has been received.
6. Across SCS, Service Managers have discretion to make the final decision regarding applications for accommodation, eligibility, suitability and any assessment of potential risks.
7. Upon acceptance to the service (supported and non-supported accommodation), offers of accommodation will be determined by current vacancies and fit with the service. In situations where no vacancies are available, a wait list option may be offered for up to three months (relevant to each service), upon such time as a new referral must be completed. Clients, consumers and tenants are under no obligation to accept the offer of accommodation should an opportunity arise.
8. SCS communicates clearly to clients, consumers, tenants and where relevant, their family, the nature of service provision, tenure of accommodation and conditions of stay at the time of assessment, upon entry and at sign up.
9. All clients, consumers and tenants receiving supported or non-supported accommodation through SCS are required to sign a Tenancy Agreement or License to Occupy (relevant to the service) and are informed of their financial and tenant obligations in respect to this.
10. In supported and non-supported accommodation SCS exercise a probationary period during the first three months of residence, to ensure a suitable fit between the individual and the service.
11. SCS will endeavour to work collaboratively with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure the most effective support is offered, to contribute towards positive outcomes for clients, consumers and tenants.
12. Where required, SCS will strongly advocate for clients, consumers and tenants with external stakeholders in relation to their support and long term housing needs.
13. In supported and non-supported accommodation, staff will actively work with clients, consumers and tenants to prepare them for transition to alternative suitable accommodation, if SCS are no longer able to provide accommodation or, if they are ready to exit the service into long term housing.
14. Clients, consumers and tenants may request at any time to terminate their tenancy and exit the service. For supported and non supported accommodation services, Consumers and tenants are required to comply with the termination clause in their Tenancy Agreement or License to Occupy.
15. Clients, consumers and tenants may be exited from the service if their needs or health status change and the service is unable to meet these needs. Should this occur, SCS will endeavour to allow sufficient time and support to source alternative accommodation, except in circumstances of significant and imminent risk.
16. Avenues of appeal are available to clients, consumers and tenants who are dissatisfied with any decision made by



#### 4. Roles and responsibilities

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1. The Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services is responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy.
2. Society representatives are required to adhere to this policy. Failure to comply may be considered a breach of our policies and may result in disciplinary action.

#### 5. Review

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1. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the SCS Management Team or the Executive Manager SCS.

#### 6. Further assistance

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1. Society personnel should speak with their Manager regarding any questions about the implementation of this policy.

#### 7. References

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References made in this policy are:

1. SVD PWA Mission and Values
2. SCS Strategic Plan
3. Residential Tenancy Agreement – SVD PWA SCS
4. License to Occupy – SVD PWA SCS

## 8. Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

1. The Mental Health Act 2014, *Mental Health Commission, Government of Western Australia*
2. National Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013 – *Australian Government Department of Health.*
3. Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit, *Department of Health, Government of Western Australia.*
4. Homelessness Service Standards, *Department of Communities, Government of Western Australia.*
5. Carer Recognition Act 2010, *Department of Social Services, Australian Government*
6. The Privacy Act 1998, *Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, Australian Government.*
7. The Residential Tenancies Act 1987, *Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia*
8. SCS-PP-4001 Continuous Improvement Policy
9. SCS-PP-4018 Privacy and Confidentiality Consumer/Client Policy
10. SVDPWA-PP-1015 Incident and Hazard Management Policy
11. SVDPWA-PP-1018 Incident and Reporting Policy and Procedure

## 9. Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	30/06/2017	Initial version
2.0	EM, SCS	28/02/2019	Reviewed
2.1	EM, SCS	01/12/2021	Conversion to new template
3.0	EM, SCS	26/05/2022	Content reviewed and updated

## 10. Definitions

Term	Definition
Non-Supported Accommodation	For the purpose of this policy, social housing accommodation that requires commitment to engage with external support providers for the duration of tenancy
Supported Accommodation	accommodation that includes a support component, aimed at assisting residents with daily living skills.
Supported Crisis Accommodation	seven night stay in a safe environment where individuals can get support with essential needs, referrals to other services and collaborative care from support staff.
Transitional	Time-limited subsidised housing combined with a program of specialised support

