

Housing Procedure

Housing Procedure

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Approval

Procedure owner: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

Business Unit: Housing Plus

Approved by: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

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1. Purpose

1. St. Vincent de Paul Society WA (SVDPWA)'s Housing Plus believes a safe, secure home is the cornerstone on which individuals and families can build a better quality of life. This provides a foundation for individual, family and community wellbeing and aims to give a personal sense of place and home.
2. HGP acknowledges the growing rate of 'Homelessness' in Australia. Homelessness isn't always visible and it does not discriminate. All people from all ages and backgrounds can become homeless.
3. HGP aims to provide clear and transparent information to staff, support workers, current and prospective tenants/residents and other stakeholders on HGP's tenancy and property management practices including rent setting, allocation, and eligibility criteria and addresses the tenancy responsibilities of our tenants/residents.
4. HGP recognises the importance of providing fair, ethical and transparent treatment of tenants/residents and the provision of quality housing services in a sustainable manner.
5. HGP, using a strengths-based approach, undertakes to inform and uphold the rights and responsibilities of tenants/residents utilising a strengths-based approach
6. As a service provider for vulnerable people, HGP is committed to having strong and robust policies and procedures to support our practice.

2. Scope

1. This is a Specialist Community Services (SCS) policy, applicable to all staff, volunteers and tenants/residents residing within or accessing the following services;
 - Housing Plus (HGP)

3. Procedure

GENERAL PROCEDURE

1. HGP provides a variety of transitional housing options in the greater Perth and Mandurah area for families and young people who face barriers accessing housing, are willing to engage with support and have the capacity to meet tenancy responsibilities.
2. HGP will strongly advocate for tenants/residents with external stakeholders in relation to their support and long-term housing needs as required.
3. HGP staff will provide referrals to additional support services as required to promote the wellbeing of tenants/residents.
4. Decisions around pursuing tenant liability and rent arrears for tenants/residents will be reviewed on a case by case basis considering the longer-term effects of poverty on the tenants/residents and in cases of FDV the evidence provided.
5. All HGP properties are pet-free and fully furnished and any damage caused to the property and its chattels or inventory will be considered as tenant liability.
6. All HGP properties are non-smoking and any damage caused by smoking to the property and its chattels will be considered as tenant liability. If smoking inside a property is detected by HGP staff prior to staff entering the property the meeting/inspection may be rescheduled.
7. HGP will make all efforts to work collaboratively with both internal and external stakeholders to promote the best outcomes for tenants/residents.

TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

8. Tenants/Residents may request at any time to terminate their tenancy and exit the service by providing 2 weeks written notice using the SCS Resident Vacate Notice unless otherwise stated in RTA 1987.

APPEALS

9. Avenues of appeal are available to tenants/residents whom are dissatisfied with any decision by HGP including to exit them from the service or to decline a referral via our HGP Complaint and Appeal process.

RENT SETTING

10. All rents are capped at a maximum of 30% but not less than 25% of assessable income plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
11. HGP conducts rent reviews bi-annually or upon such time as the household incomes/occupancy changes.
12. All household members over the age of 16 must provide income and asset details to HGP as requested.
13. All household members must inform HGP of any changes to income or assets. This includes any change to the number of people living at the property and if there is any change to the assessable income of anyone living at the property.
14. HGP will provide tenants/residents quarterly rent statements or as requested.
15. All charges for any additional services will be clearly outlined to tenants/residents within the Licence to Occupy/Residential Tenancy Agreement prior to move in; including how those charges are calculated as applicable.
16. Rent will not exceed the current Market Rent for any property.
17. Commonwealth Rent Assistance is included in any determination of rent.
18. In carrying out property and tenancy management services HGP may choose to:
 - Adjust rents to reflect the provision of additional services or amenities and location factors, subject to not exceeding the affordability ceiling limits; and/or
 - Modify the Assessable Income List as it sees fit while remaining generally aligned to the policy and practice of the

4. Roles and responsibilities

1. The Manager, Housing Plus is responsible for maintaining the currency of this procedure.
2. Society representatives are required to adhere to this procedure. Failure to comply may be considered a breach of our procedures and may result in disciplinary action.

5. Review

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 SCS Management Team and Executive Manager SCS.

6. Further assistance

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

7. References

References made in this policy are:

1. Department of Communities (Housing Authority) Cash Asset Limits
2. Department of Communities (Housing Authority) Community Housing Entitlement
3. Social Housing Band A Income Eligibility Limits 2020, *Department of Communities Western Australia*.
4. SCS-PP-4093 Family and Domestic Violence Policy
5. Form 1AA, Residential Tenancies Agreement 1987, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
6. HGP-FM-#### Licence to Occupy Schedule 3: Lodging House Rules
7. HGP-FM-#### Licence to Occupy
8. HGP-FR-#### Tenancy Engagement Agreement
9. HGP-FR-#### Tenancy Support Agreement
10. SCS-PP-4004 Compliments and Complaints - Client/Consumer Policy
11. HGP-PR-4091 Complaint and Appeals Procedure

8. Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

1. SCS-PP-4001 Continuous Improvement Policy
2. SVDPWA Critical Incident Policy
3. SCS-PR-4048 Critical Incident Management Policy
4. HGP-PR-4071 Critical Incident Procedure
5. HGP-PR-4088 Entry Property Condition Report Procedure
6. HGP-PP-4070 Department of Communities Notification Policy
7. HGP-PP-4094 Breaches and Termination Policy
8. HGP-PR-4098 Client Contact Procedure
9. Form 1AA, Residential Tenancies Agreement 1987, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
10. Residential Tenancies Act 1987, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
11. HGP-PR-4099 Smoke Alarm and RCD Testing Procedure
12. HGP-PR-4090 Vacate Property Condition Report Procedure
13. HGP-PR-4089 Vacate Procedure
14. HGP-PR-4059 Move out COVID-19 (Non-suspected case)
15. HGP-PR-4060 Move out COVID-19 (Suspected or confirmed case)
16. HGP-PR-4058 Sign Up COVID-19
17. Residential Tenancies (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*

9. Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	01/12/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial version• Separation from policy HGP-PP-4072

10. Definitions

Term	Definition
Assessable Income	Payments that are for, or able to be used for general living costs, whether qualifying as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General income; or• Statutory income which:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are a regular fortnightly income;• Are ongoing and for which recipients do not need to requalify for once eligible; or• Temporarily replace a recipient's primary source of oncome
Assessable Income List	A list of income types that have been deemed assessable by the Department of Communities (Housing Authority) and SVDPWA for the calculation of rent.
Asset	Any property or item of value the household owns or has interest in, including those held outside Australia.
DOC	Department of Communities of Western Australia is a multi-functional public sector agency including Housing Authority and Child Protection and Family Services.
Eligibility Criteria	Conditions a prospective or current tenant/resident must meet to be eligible for accommodation under SVDPWA's Housing Plus Program.
FDV	Family and Domestic Violence
Household Member	Anyone living in SVDPWA's Housing Plus property.
Licence to Occupy	The legally binding contract between SVDPWA and a tenant/resident for accommodation services. The Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA) does not apply to this agreement.
Resident	Or "Lodger". A person granted right of occupancy of residential premises in accommodation managed by SVDPWA's Housing Plus, under a Licence to Occupy agreement. This is under conditions other than those provided by the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA) where they are considered 'lodger' under common law or otherwise. Also referred to as Clients/Consumers in other SVDPWA policy and procedures.
Reasonable Offer of Housing	An offer of accommodation made by SVDPWA to a prospective tenant/resident meeting the criteria outlined in this policy from the available housing stock.
Rental Rate	The total of the % of assessable income plus the Commonwealth Rent Assistance charged by

