



Eligibility – Social Housing

1. Purpose

This policy is intended to clarify the eligibility criteria for Housing Trust's general social housing portfolio and admission of an applicant to the NSW Housing Register.

2. Guiding Principles

- Housing Trust will assess all applications for eligibility in a fair, consistent, transparent, non-judgemental, and timely manner.
- Housing Trust will ensure that an individual's rights are not discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, marital status, criminal history, physical and/or intellectual disability or sexual preference as per the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Housing Trust will work closely and collaboratively with support services to assess eligibility and may, where appropriate, undertake outreach visits to support applicants in accessing our service

3. Policy Statement

As a Housing Pathways provider, Housing Trust will adopt and apply the *Eligibility for Social Housing Policy* established by the NSW Government. This policy is available from the Housing Pathways website: www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au. The policy includes reference as to how priority housing assistance is determined.

4. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for social housing, generally applicants must:

- Be a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia, and
- Be resident in NSW, and
- Establish their Identity, and
- Have a household income within the eligibility limits for social housing, and
- Not own assets or property which could be reasonably expected to resolve their housing needs and
- Be able to sustain a successful tenancy, and
- If applicable, make repayments of any former debts to a social housing providers, and
- In general, be at least 18 years of age.

5. Special Housing Programs

Housing Trust may establish special or supported housing programs for target client groups in social housing. Where this is the case:

- Clients must be eligible for social housing, and
- Any additional eligibility requirements for the particular program will be clearly documented

6. Eligibility of Former Tenants

A former tenant is someone who previously lived in a property managed by Housing Trust or another community housing provider or Housing NSW (NSW). Former tenants may apply to be on the NSW Housing Register.

In assessing eligibility, former tenants can expect Housing Trust to:

- Make enquiries with their former housing provider as to the nature of any previous tenancy
- Explain any conditions that need to be met to enable the applicant to be eligible for housing, including the documentation required to be submitted & possible repayment of debts
- Assist applicants with advice about alternative housing options, including temporary or crisis accommodation if required
- Advise applicants of their rights to appeal

Additional guidelines apply in respect of former social housing tenant debts:

For debts less than \$500	Housing Trust will require an applicant to demonstrate they have acknowledged the debt and have taken steps to start paying back the debt prior to being approved for the Housing NSW Register
For debts greater than \$500	Housing Trust will require an applicant to demonstrate they have acknowledged the debt and have taken steps to start paying back the debt prior to being approved for the Housing NSW Register. The application, if approved, will be suspended in the Housing NSW Register for 6 months or until the debt is repaid in full. Housing Trust will review the application after 6 months.

7. Tenancy Reinstatement

As a Housing Pathways provider, Housing Trust will adopt and apply the definition and process of Tenancy Reinstatement as outlined in the Transfer policy statement of the NSW Government. This policy is available from the Housing Pathways website: www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au.

Under the policy, tenancy reinstatement can apply to former tenants who vacated their property because:

- They were under duress, or
- They had to move into a residential care facility (including a psychiatric hospital, rehabilitation centre, hostel, nursing home) either voluntarily or under a court order, or
- They were placed into a custodial facility

To be eligible for tenancy reinstatement, former tenants must prove that:

- They meet the eligibility criteria for social housing, and
- They meet the criteria for priority transfer, and
- They vacated under duress, vacated to a residential care or correctional facility, or vacated because of care needs, and
- They made an application to their housing provider within six months of vacating the former property, or

- In the case of custodial sentences not longer than three years, they can also apply within six months of their release from custody.

Former tenants will need to provide a range of documented evidence to substantiate an application for tenancy reinstatement. The housing transfer policy statement referred to above includes detailed information on the nature of information that may be required in these circumstances.