

Sustainable Tenancies for Tenants with Complex Needs Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff to respond effectively to tenants with complex needs. It is anticipated such a response will create more sustainable and positive outcomes for tenants as they are able to successfully manage their tenancy.

Policy

Housing Trust aims to create homes and places where people want to live and to ensure that tenancies are sustainable.

Housing Trust understands the importance of living in a secure environment and how this enables people to flourish through education, employment and good health. We also understand the cost of tenancy breakdown; the personal, health, social and financial cost.

Housing Trust's overall aim is to prevent tenancies from failing and this policy sets out our continued commitment and plans to deliver sustainable and successful tenancies that enable people to succeed, enjoy a better quality of life, and live in stable, strong and thriving communities.

Housing Trust understands the complexity of needs tenants may experience. To ensure tenants are effectively supported to sustain their tenancies, it is critical that Community Housing Workers are able to recognise how complex needs influence a persons' behaviour and how to respond appropriately to the range of needs impacting the well-being and potential autonomy of a tenant.

Appropriate Property Allocations

Housing Trust believes sustainable tenancies are created by allocating the right property to the right tenants. Housing Trust ensures that all new tenants are allocated properties that maximise the opportunity to create a sustainable tenancy.

It is recognised that prevention strategies are more effective than reacting to issues once they develop. Therefore, Housing Trust will undertake a risk assessment for all priority housing applicants at the point of allocation to build a detailed profile of the risks an applicant might have in creating a sustainable tenancy. This assessment will help to determine appropriate referrals that could be made prior to the lease sign up to assist the new tenant to prepare to move into their new accommodation and to maximise opportunities for a sustainable tenancy.

The outcome of the risk assessment will be recorded in a Tenancy Response Plan to be handed over to the tenancy team undertaking the lease sign up and managing the tenancy ongoing.

Lease Sign Up

Housing Trust will provide information in an easy to read format to assist new tenants understand their responsibilities as a tenant and their requirement to meet tenancy obligations.

For tenants with a Tenancy Response Plan, the Community Housing Worker undertaking the lease sign up will review the Plan developed during the allocation stage and make any appropriate changes in consultation with the new tenant.

Tenancy Management

In accordance with our tenancy agreements and associated procedures, Housing Trust will undertake a combination of tenancy management strategies to ensure tenants can be supported to sustain their tenancies.

Home Visits

Home Visits are conducted bi-annually by Housing Trust. Home Visits provide Housing Trust with the opportunity to really get to know our tenants and to identify potential tenancy issues early and provide appropriate support and assistance.

Housing Trust will respect a tenant's right to privacy and quiet enjoyment of their home – at least seven (7) days written notice of a Home Visit will be provided. The tenant is required to be present at the Home Visit. The tenant is entitled to have a support person with them during the visit if they wish.

When an issue is identified as placing a tenancy at risk, Housing Trust will undertake a number of steps depending on the issues identified. These steps may include:

- Referral to appropriate support service/s
- Referral to Housing Trust's Tenancy Support Facilitator
- Implementation of a Tenancy Response Plan (where a plan has not previously existed)
- Changes to the Tenancy Response Plan (where a plan already exists)

Supporting Tenancy Sustainability

Housing Trust understands that some tenants will need support for varying amounts of time to enable them to establish and/or sustain a tenancy. Housing Trust has a range of partnerships with local support services that enable a collaborative plan to be established to assist them with this goal.

Tenants may present with a range of needs throughout their tenancy. Housing Trust will assess the needs of tenants and develop a response based on a tenants individual needs.

The Vulnerability Assessment Tool will be used to determine the severity and likelihood of a tenancy being at risk. The information can be used to indicate the tenants' vulnerability for sustaining their tenancy.

Based on the Vulnerability Assessment Tool's outcomes Housing Trust will collaborate with the tenant and partner organisations to develop or modify a Tenancy Response Plan to address the identified risks/needs. The Tenancy Response Plan will outline the required response/s to manage the identified risk/s and articulate the required interventions if the risk escalates.

The response plan will be implemented in consultation with all stakeholders and regularly monitored according to the changing needs of the tenant.

Definitions

Complex needs:

A framework for understanding multiple, interlocking needs that span health and social issues. People with complex needs may have to negotiate a number of different issues in their life, for example learning disability, mental health problems, substance abuse. They may also be living in deprived circumstances and lack access to suitable housing or meaningful daily activity.¹

The following needs are considered as having a compounding effect:

- mental illness, substance misuse, hoarding, discrimination based on ethnicity, sexuality, domestic and family violence, history of homelessness, poverty and history of involvement with the criminal justice system.

Sustainable Tenancies:

A sustainable tenancy is one that can be maintained successfully by the tenant throughout the life of the tenancy. For this to happen, certain conditions need to be in place:

- the property needs to be appropriate for their needs
- the tenant needs to possess the skills required to maintain their tenancy and
- they need to meet their tenant responsibilities.

Reference or Related Documents

Internal

Policy:

1. Eligibility Social Housing Policy
2. Allocations Policy
3. Privacy Policy

Flow Chart:

1. Allocations Flow Chart Process

Procedure:

1. Housing Trust Sustainable Tenancies for Tenants with Complex Needs Procedure
2. Home Visit including Risk Assessment Procedure

External

1. Residential Tenancies Act 2010
2. Centre for Training in Social Housing, (April 2017), CHCCS004 Assess co-existing needs Participant Notes.
3. Rankin, J. & Regan, S., 2004. Meeting Complex Needs: The future of social housing care, London: emphasis.publishing.co.uk
4. Community Housing Industry Association NSW (CHIA NSW), Creating Sustainable Tenancies for Tenants with Complex Needs. A Toolkit to support Community Housing Providers strengthen practice in NSW and QLD

Policy Version Control

Version	Details of Improvements	Release Date	Approval/Release Details
V 1.0	New Policy introduced due to best practice and based on recommendation from CHIA NSW	26.09.2019	Approved for release by Amanda Winks Chief Housing Officer