Allocations Policy – Social Housing NSW

1. Purpose

To provide information on how HOME in PLACE manages all aspects of the allocations process for social housing and meets our contractual and legal obligations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all HOME in PLACE social housing tenants, applicants. staff and contractors. Allocation of affordable housing is not covered in this policy. Affordable housing allocations can be found in the Affordable Housing Policy.

3. Policy Statement

HOME in PLACE offers social housing to people who are assessed as eligible for social housing and listed on the NSW Housing register.

Housing Pathways is a partnership between the Department of Communities and Justice, the Aboriginal Housing Office, the Housing Contact Centre and participating Community Housing providers. Housing Pathways provides:

- Coordinated information about housing assistance
- A single application process
- Common eligibility criteria for housing assistance
- A standard assessment process, and
- A single waiting list known as the NSW Housing Register

Further information about Housing Pathways can be found at www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help

In undertaking the management of the allocation of social housing, HOME in PLACE will:

- Ensure that all eligible people have equal access to housing
- Maintain a fair, needs based allocations process and non-judgemental attitude to all clients
- Provide an open and transparent allocations process
- Meet our funding commitments and the legal and regulatory requirements for all housing programs
- Coordinate access to social housing through Housing Pathways
- Make the most of housing resources

Housing Allocations

General housing will be allocated to eligible people from the NSW Housing Register in line with Housing

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Pathways' policies. The register includes new applicants for social housing and tenants who have been approved for transfer from both the Department of Communities and Justice and participating Community Housing providers. Allocations will generally be made according to priority, date of application and the suitability of the available property.

Non-Standard Allocations

I some circumstances, HOME in PLACE may make non-standard allocation to fill vacant properties. A non-standard allocation is when an applicant is selected from the NSW Housing Register that may not have the highest priority.

Non-standard allocations may be made in the following circumstances:

- To meet the needs of someone who is at serious risk or in imminent danger
- For an approved urgent transfer including tenants being relocated for management purposes
- For a person with specific needs
- To meet internal or contracted strategic objectives
- For nominations from support agencies
- Where a property is difficult to allocate

Applicants for non-standard allocation will be supported by evidence and documented.

Housing Registerable Persons

HOME in PLACE will comply with the Social Housing Assistance Policy for Registerable Persons

Clients under 18 years of age

Generally, an applicant must be at least 18 years of age before HOME in PLACE can consider them for social housing. However, HOME in PLACE will consider applicants between 16 and 18 years of age if:

- They meet all the general eligibility criteria for social housing;
- They have an income;
- Social housing is the best way to meet their accommodation needs;
- HOME in PLACE is satisfied they can meet their tenancy obligations.
- The applicant is accompanied to the viewing and sign up by a legal guardian or appropriate support person (i.e. support agency case worker, Community Services representative etc.)

Local Allocation Strategies

HOME in PLACE may, at times, develop a local allocations strategy for a particular area or estate. This type of strategy will reflect the particular allocation needs of the local community or specific development conditions, for example, seniors living. Such a strategy may be implemented for vacancies when:

- There is a high concentration of community and/or public housing
- There is a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues
- There are existing tenancy management issues or a potential for them to develop

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- There are existing identified issues which will be made worse if allocations are not carefully managed
- A property is hard to let

When allocating a property HOME in PLACE must consider the need to support the peace and quiet enjoyment of existing tenants and communities as well as any particular requirements of a property, for example, if it is disability accessible of is hard to let.

Modified Properties

Modified properties will be allocated to people with a disability who demonstrate a need for specific property elements. The person or their household member must have documentation from a medical professional or allied health care worker that supports their need for a property with modifications and the modification must meet the needs of the person or their household.

Entitlements

We will offer and allocate properties that are suitable for the person and their current household members. We will allocate properties to people based on the minimum bedroom entitlements and allocating bedrooms for children shown in the tables below.

Household composition	Minimum bedrooms
Single person	Studio/One bedroom
Couple	One bedroom
Single person or couple with one other household member	Two bedrooms
Single person or couple with two other household members	Two bedrooms
Single person or couple with three other household members	Three bedrooms
Single person or couple with four other household members	Three bedrooms
Single person or couple with five or more other household members	Four bedrooms

Notes: any request for variation to the above must be supported by appropriate medical documentation.

Allocating Bedrooms for Children

Situation	How we allocate bedrooms
Children 18 years of age or older	Children 18 years of age or older are considered adults when determining the bedroom entitlement
Children of the same sex who are under 18 years of age	Children of the same sex who are under 18 years of age are expected to share a bedroom
Male and female children who are under 18 years of age	Male and female children are expected to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age
Children under the age of 2	We will not allocate an additional bedroom for a child under the age of 2

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Situation	How we allocate bedrooms
Children who may need a separate bedroom in 2-3 years' time	We will, where possible, consider the current circumstances and future needs of children when allocating a property. Decisions regarding future needs will be made on a case by case basis according to the size and type of housing that is available in the area.
Children with special needs	We will allocate an additional bedroom where the tenant/applicant can demonstrate a need for same sex children or children under the age of 10 to have separate bedrooms
Shared custody/access visits from children	We will consider the children to be part of the household if they stay for 3 days or more per week. Formal documented evidence is required.

Offers of Housing

Offers of housing are made based on the information in the application, applicants are responsible for ensuring their application is up to date, this ensures any offers of housing will be appropriate. Applicants, including transfer applicants, will usually receive two (2) reasonable offers of housing. Allocations are made based on information provided by the applicant. If there is evidence of false or misleading information provided by the applicant/tenant, HOME in PLACE may withdraw the offer of housing.

In allocating properties and determining the suitability of a property, HOME in PLACE will consider the information provided by the applicant and the property elements. At the time of offer HOME in PLACE will consider if:

- The property being offered is appropriate for the person's current household needs
- There won't be under or over occupancy
- The property location matches the applicant's needs
- The property type will not have a negative impact on a person's health or disability

HOME in PLACE will arrange a property inspection once an offer of housing is made, applicants/tenants will have **two (2) days** to consider the offer following the inspection and will be required to sign a residential tenancy agreement within **five (5) days** of accepting an offer of housing.

An offer is not reasonable if the property:

- Has a negative impact on a medical condition or disability of an applicant or household member
- Places the applicant or household member in an area that will put them at risk
- Makes it difficult for the applicant or their household member to remain together

If an applicant does not accept an offer, they are required to complete the 'offer response' form and provide reasons for declining an offer of housing and any evidence supporting the decision. Based on the information provided, HOME in PLACE will determine if the reasons for declining the offer of housing are reasonable. If HOME in PLACE determines the reasons for declining the offer are not reasonable, the offer will count towards the number of offers the applicant is entitled to receive. If the reasons for declining the offer are deemed reasonable, the offer will be withdrawn and will not count towards the number of offers the applicant is entitled to receive. Applicants will be advised of any decisions made by HOME in PLACE.

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Criteria for Accepting, Rejecting and Withdrawing Housing Offers and Suspending Applications

Situation	Evidence
Offer accepted	The person has accepted the property and must sign a residential tenancy agreement within 5 working days
Offer is rejected and is considered to be a reasonable offer	The offer of housing meets the matching requirements and: There are no grounds for suspending the person's NSW Housing register application The person did not provide any new substantiated information to us about their needs within the required timeframe The person has declined the offer for a reason that we consider to be a personal preference because it does not directly impact on the person's housing needs, for example - wanting a brick property -wanting floorboards, tiles or vinyl instead of carpet -wanting gas rather than electricity -not liking the neighbourhood -not liking the cladding, internal or external layout, design or colour scheme of the property -wanting a bath rather than a shower -wanting a different suburb (where the need for a particular suburb has not been established) -wanting a specific street -wanting to live near shops, family, school, church (where the need for a specific location has not been established) -wanting a different type of property (house, townhouse, villa or unit) -wanting us to match them to a property based on the needs of their pet The person has declined the offer due to not liking, or being unwilling to accept, our requirements or the requirements of the type of the housing program, e.g., type or length of lease; terms of the residential tenancy agreement.
Offer withdrawn	The person didn't accept the property and we have determined that this decision is valid because, based on the information provided by the person, the property did not meet their needs. The person may be required to provide evidence that supports their decision such as -Letter from medical practitioner or health care provider -Letter from their support provider -Letter from their employer HOME in PLACE offered the property but now needs it for an applicant with more urgent needs; HOME in PLACE matched the applicant to the property but did not provide the details to the applicant because the applicant's needs or circumstances had changed HOME in PLACE matched the applicant to the property but did not provide the details to the applicant because they did not meet the eligibility criteria

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Situation	Evidence
	The applicant decided not to accept an offer of a senior communities property, HOME in PLACE will change its records to show that the applicant should not be offered this type of property again
Application suspended	The person provided information demonstrating that they are temporarily in a situation where they are unable to accept an offer due to circumstances beyond their control. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where the person Is experiencing illness or is in hospital Is overseas or on holidays Cannot terminate a residential tenancy agreement Is in prison

Once a decision is made, the offer and the outcome will be updated on the NSW Housing Register using the Housing Pathways process.

Review of Decisions

If a tenant or applicant is dissatisfied with a decision about their Application for Housing Assistance, they should first discuss this with a Housing Access Officer at HOME in PLACE. If the tenant or applicant is still dissatisfied, they have the right to lodge an appeal for a formal review of the decision. The Appeal Request Form is available on the HOME in PLACE website or by contacting a HOME in PLACE branch.

4. Definitions and Acronyms Glossary

For clarification of any definitions or acronyms contained within this document, please click on the Glossary for information.

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