

## ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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## 1 Purpose and Objective

This policy outlines Housing Plus's approach to ensuring a fair and transparent allocation of social housing properties.

## 2 Scope

- a. This policy applies to all Housing Plus' and its subsidiaries' employees, management and other stakeholders including volunteers
- b. This policy also applies to applicants offered social housing assistance with Housing Plus
- c. This policy describes the organisation's objectives and policies regarding allocations to general social housing, transitional housing, and supported housing programs owned or managed by Housing Plus
- d. Allocations to affordable housing are set out in the *Affordable Housing Policy*.

## 3 References

### 3.1 Legislation

- NSW Housing Act 2001
- NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 No 42

### 3.2 Policies

- NSW Community Housing Access Policy
- Social Housing Assistance Policy for Registrable Persons
- Homes NSW Matching and Offering a Property to a Client Policy
- Homes NSW Antisocial Behaviour Management Policy
- Housing Plus Customer Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Policy
- Housing Plus Eligibility Policy
- Housing Plus Modification of Properties Policy
- Housing Plus Affordable Housing Policy

## 4 Definitions

**Term:** Company

**Definition:** Housing Plus, ABN 83 147 459 461, and all of its related and associated entities

**Term:** Employee

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**Definition:** An individual who is directly engaged and paid by the Company as an Employee

**Term:** Manager

**Definition:** An Employee who has direct reports (includes Executive, Senior Management and Team Leaders). In situations involving volunteers, 'Manager' refers to the Volunteer Supervisor

**Term:** Executive

**Definition:** A member of the Executive team

**Term:** Volunteer or Other Stakeholders

**Definition:** Collectively refers to any individual(s) who is not an Employee but who carries out work (whether paid or unpaid) for the Company, including (but not limited to) work as a volunteer, contractor, secondee, consultant or subcontractor, labour hire company, an apprentice or trainee, and a student gaining work experience.

**Term:** Work Environment

**Definition:** Includes but is not limited to:

- During and outside normal working hours.
- All functions, events and places which are work related (e.g. Including working from home under the flexible work policy, work lunches, conferences, Christmas parties and client functions).
- During the recruitment process, any environment which has sufficient connection to employment; decisions about promotions and other career opportunities, or in the termination of employment.
- In the course of providing goods and services.

**Term:** Applicant

**Definition:** A person seeking social housing assistance. This may be a new tenant or a person seeking transfer of their tenancy.

**Term:** Affordable Housing

**Definition:** Housing available to very low to moderate income households which is priced so that these households are also able to meet other basic living costs such as food, clothing, transport, energy, medical care and education.

**Term:** Social Housing

**Definition:** Properties made available to customers on low to moderate incomes and managed by Community Housing Providers or Homes NSW. Rent subsidies are available to customers to reduce their weekly rent payments.

**Term:** Supported Housing

**Definition:** Properties that are made available to customers who have a support plan in place with a service provider to assist them maintain the tenancy.

**Term:** Tenancy Agreement

**Definition:** The *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* (NSW) ("RTA 2010") defines a residential tenancy agreement as 'an agreement under which a person grants to another person for value a right of occupation of residential premises for the purpose of use as a residence' (section 13(1)).

**Term:** Housing Pathways

**Definition:** The process established by the NSW Government to manage allocation of social housing.

**Term:** NSW Housing Register

**Definition:** The name of the NSW waiting list for social housing, which is part of Housing Pathways.

**Term:** Local Allocation Strategy

**Definition:** A strategy that is developed to consider the current tenant mix and features of a neighbourhood when making allocations.

**Term:** Site and Community Integration Management Plan

**Definition:** A plan that is required under the NSW Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) program.

**Term:** Registrable Person

**Definition:** A person who has committed a registrable offence against young people (under 18 years of age).

## 5 Responsibilities

### 5.1 Executive

- a. Ensure adequate resources are provided to implement and support this policy.
- b. Manage the implementation of and adherence to this policy.
- c. Model appropriate standards of behaviour.

### 5.2 Management

- a. Ensure that all Employees and Other Stakeholders are aware this policy and understand their obligations.

- b. Ensure effective implementation of and adherence to this policy.
- c. Model appropriate standards of behaviour.

## 5.3 Employees, Volunteers and other Stakeholders

- a. Understand and comply with this policy.
- b. Model appropriate standards of behaviour.

## 6 Policy

Housing Plus is committed to promoting sustainable tenancies and communities by matching eligible applicants to available properties that:

- Are appropriate to individual and household needs.
- Offer the opportunity to build social connections and housing independence, reduce social isolation and contribute to the life of the community.
- Make the best use of the properties available to Housing Plus.
- Meet legal and regulatory requirements as well as funding commitments.

### 6.1 Matching and Offering Social Housing

Social housing is allocated to eligible people from the NSW Housing Register in accordance with Housing Pathways' policies. Further information can be found here:

[www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/matching-offering-property-client-policy](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/matching-offering-property-client-policy).

When allocating a vacant property, Housing Plus will first consider current tenants required to transfer to another property to meet management needs. Allocations will then be made according to priority, date of application and the suitability of the property available. This may be a new applicant, or a current tenant approved for a transfer or relocation.

Housing Plus aims to offer the most suitable property to an applicant on the basis that:

- The property and the property location are appropriate for the household's needs.
- The allocation will not cause over or under-occupancy.
- The property type will not have a negative impact on health or disability.
- Properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only offered to those applicants who need them.
- There is alignment with any implemented Local Allocation Strategy or Site and Community Integration Management Plans.

Some properties may have specific requirements about who can live there. For example, some properties may only be able to be allocated to seniors. Housing Plus will document these requirements in Housing Pathways when matching the property to the applicant.

## 6.2 Offers of Housing

Housing Plus makes an offer of housing once a suitable applicant has been identified. Applicants are provided with two reasonable offers of housing.

Housing Plus will call the applicant to confirm their eligibility to receive the offer. If an applicant does not respond to the phone contact, Housing Plus will attempt to contact them through SMS or email. An applicant has two business days to respond to contact attempts. If the applicant does not respond to contact, Housing Plus will count the offer as reasonable. If the applicant has a valid reason for not responding to requests for contact, they can submit the reason to Housing Plus within 28 days for the offer to be withdrawn.

Once an applicant has responded to contact, they have two business days to view and provide an outcome for the offer. If the applicant does not view the property within two days, it may be considered a rejection of a reasonable offer. If the offer is accepted, the applicant is expected to sign a Residential Tenancy Agreement within five business days.

If the applicant declines the offer and the property meets their housing needs, it will be considered a reasonable offer. If the property did not meet their housing needs, it will not be considered a reasonable offer. The applicant will be sent a letter explaining that they have 28 days to provide evidence as to why the property was not a reasonable offer for consideration of a withdrawal. Once the evidence is received, Housing Plus will review the evidence provided and decide if the offer was reasonable.

When making an offer of social housing, applicants can expect Housing Plus to:

- Confirm the applicant's current situation to make sure that the offer meets the applicant's needs.
- Inform the applicant about information and documentation they need to provide before any offers are made, particularly where an applicant needs a particular type of dwelling or location.
- Promote stable communities and sustainable tenancies.
- Explain the offer policy, the options available and what will happen when an offer is accepted, rejected or withdrawn along with the timeframes for responding to offers of housing.
- Give the applicant 24 hours to consider an offer.
- Match property features that are in short supply, such as modified properties and level access, to applicants who need those features to establish a sustainable tenancy.
- Consider requests for modifications to properties as required and in accordance with our *Modification of Properties Policy*.
- Disclose any known material facts when offering a property as required by the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.
- Withdraw an offer if it is not reasonable.

## 6.2.1 Entitlements

Housing Plus offers and allocates properties suitable for the applicant and their current household members. Tables 1 and 2 show the number of bedrooms Housing Plus allocates to tenants based on the size and composition of their household.

**Table 1: Standard bedroom entitlements**

| Household type   | Standard bedroom entitlement  |
|--|---|
| Single Person  | Studio, one or two bedrooms   |
| Couples  | One or two bedrooms   |
| Single people or couples with one other household member including a carer | Two or three bedrooms   |
| Single people or couples with two other household members                  | Two or three bedrooms   |
| Single people or couples with three other household members                | Three or four bedrooms  |
| Single people or couples with four other household members                 | Three or four bedrooms  |
| Single people or couples with five or more other household members         | Four bedrooms or, if available, five or more bedrooms. Applicants who have a five-bedroom household complement will generally be offered a four-bedroom property unless a five-bedroom property is vacant. This is because of the limited availability of five-bedroom accommodation. |

**Table 2 - Allocating bedrooms for children**

| Situation                     | Entitlement  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Children over 18 years of age | The person is considered an adult when determining the minimum bedroom entitlement.  |
| Shared bedrooms               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same sex children up to 18 years of age are expected to share a bedroom</li> <li>• Male and female children are expected to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age.</li> </ul> |

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|--|---|
| Children who can't share a bedroom   | Housing Plus will allocate an additional bedroom where the applicant has demonstrated a need for same sex children, or children under 10 years of age, to have separate bedrooms.<br><br>Examples of situations where an extra bedroom could be appropriate include where there is a large age gap between the children or behavioural factors. |
| Shared custody   | The child/children are considered to be part of the household if the client has shared custody of children for 3 days per week or more. Normal bedroom entitlements apply.  |
| Access visits from children  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children are not considered to be part of the household if they visit for less than 3 days per week.</li> <li>• The applicant must demonstrate a need for an extra bedroom to accommodate access visits.</li> </ul>  |
| Future needs of children who may need separate bedrooms in 2- or 3-years' time | 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.  |

## 6.2.2 Aboriginality

Eligible social housing applicants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are entitled to one additional bedroom above the minimum household requirements.

To be eligible for the extra bedroom, at least one member of the household must be an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander, and this person must provide confirmation of their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. Types of evidence that can be provided are listed in the Aboriginal Housing Office Eligibility for Services Policy, found here: <https://www.aho.nsw.gov.au/policy/eligibility-for-services>.

## 6.2.3 Special Needs

An applicant may have special requirements for their accommodation based on medical, social or other factors. If an applicant requires a specific type of accommodation, accommodation in a specific location, or an extra bedroom for medical or family reasons, they must substantiate this need.

## 6.2.4 Shared Accommodation

Housing Plus will not enter into shared accommodation arrangements for general social housing tenancies. Housing Plus may enter shared accommodation arrangements where there is a joint arrangement between Housing Plus and a support service, or where there is evidence of an established carer relationship for unrelated persons.



## 6.2.5 Housing Registerable Persons

Housing Plus will comply with the *Social Housing Assistance Policy for Registerable Persons* when a person is listed as a Registerable Person. The policy can be found here: <http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/social-housing-assistance-policy-registerable-persons>.

## 7 Appeals and Reviews of Decisions

Decisions made under this policy can be reviewed or appealed. For more information, refer to the *Customer Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy*.

## 8 Document Control

### 8.1 Document History

| Action        | Responsible Person   | Date          |
|---------------|--|---------------|
| Created draft | Lena Jenson<br>Chris Maybin<br>Tracy Hurst<br>Chelsea Preen<br>Therese Short | April 2024    |
| Reviewed by   | Liz Stamatelos   | December 2024 |
| Approved by   | Justin Cantelo   | February 2025 |