

Hunter Community Housing - Eligibility and Allocations Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy outlines the allocation process for social housing properties managed by Hunter Community Housing.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to applicants eligible for social housing assistance in NSW. A client's eligibility for social housing is determined by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) or a Community Housing Provider (CHP) participating in Housing Pathways.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(3) Hunter Community Housing will allocate clients to social housing property as directed by DCJ or a CHP participating in Housing Pathways.

Section 4 - Principles

Allocations

(4) Housing allocations will be determined in accordance with the relevant DCJ policies.

(5) Generally, new social housing clients will be housed in the following order:

- a. clients approved for Emergency Temporary Accommodation;
- b. clients approved for priority status on the NSW Housing Register;
- c. clients who are aged 80 and over or 55 and over if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- d. clients approved for wait turn housing.

(6) Further information can be found in [Matching and offering a property to a client - Social Housing Eligibility and Allocations Policy Supplement](#) or the [Managing the NSW Housing Register Policy](#).

Bedroom Entitlements

(7) A property will be allocated to a client based on the standard bedroom entitlements as specified in Table 1: Standard number of bedroom entitlements.

Table 1: Standard number of bedroom entitlements

Household Composition	Standard Bedroom Entitlement
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Household Composition	Standard Bedroom Entitlement
Single person	Studio or Bedsitter, one or two bedrooms
Couple	One or two bedrooms
Single person or couple with one other household member	Two or three bedrooms
Single person or couple with two other household members	Two or three bedrooms
Single person or couple with three other household members	Three or four bedrooms
Single person or couple with four other household members	Three or four bedrooms
Single person or couple with five or more other household members	Four bedroom or if available, five or more bedrooms

(8) A property with children will be allocated to a client based on the criteria as specified in Table 2: Criteria for accommodating children.

Table 2: Criteria for accommodating children

Situation	Consideration
Child is over 18 years of age	The child is considered an adult when determining the minimum bedroom entitlement.
Shared bedrooms	Same sex children up to 18 years of age are expected to share a bedroom. Male and female children are expected to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age.
Children can't share a bedroom	An additional bedroom will be allocated where the client demonstrates the need for same sex children or children under 10 years of age to have separate bedrooms.
Shared custody	The child/children are considered part of the household if the client has shared custody of the child/children for 3 days per week or more standard bedroom entitlements apply.
Access visits from children	Child/children must reside in the household for 3 days per week or more.
Future needs of children who may require separate bedrooms in two or three year's time	Consideration will be given when property is allocated however will be dependent on the size and type of housing that is available in the area.

Offers of housing

(9) An applicant will be offered a maximum of two reasonable offers of housing.

(10) If there is evidence of false or misleading information provided by the applicant, the offer of housing may be withdrawn.

(11) A reasonable offer is one that matches:

- a. the number of bedrooms required for the household, as determined in 7;
- b. the approved allocation zone; and
- c. any special needs or medical/disability requirements demonstrated in the application.

(12) An offer is not considered unreasonable if an applicant does not like the:

- a. suburb;

- b. neighbours;
- c. look of the property; or
- d. property because of personal preferences.

(13) An applicant should think carefully about rejecting an offer. If the offer is deemed to be reasonable by DCJ or Hunter Community Housing, the offer will count towards the number of offers the applicant is entitled to receive.

Criteria for accepting, rejecting, and withdrawing housing offers and suspending applications

(14) Table 3: Criteria for accepting, rejecting, and withdrawing housing offers and suspending applications; outlines the process for when an offer has been accepted, rejected, or withdrawn and/or when an application has been suspended.

Table 3: Criteria for accepting, rejecting, and withdrawing housing offers and suspending applications

Outcome	Situation
Offer accepted	The applicant has accepted the offer and must sign a residential tenancy agreement within 14 days.
Offer has been rejected and offer considered to be a reasonable offer	The offer of housing meets the applicant's needs and the applicant: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did not accept an offer that matches their housing needs within 14 days. 2. Failed to respond to contact to confirm eligibility prior to making an offer. 3. Did not provide any new, substantiated information about their needs within the required timeframe.
Offer withdrawn (Not counted as a reasonable offer)	The offer of housing was rejected by the applicant and determined that the applicant's reason for rejection was reasonable as the property did not meet their housing needs. Where the property has been matched (but not offered) to an applicant however the property is now required for an applicant with more urgent needs. The details of the offer were not provided to the applicant as the applicant's needs or circumstances have changed.
Application suspended (Not counted as a reasonable offer)	The applicant has demonstrated that they are temporarily in a situation where they are unable to accept an offer due to circumstances beyond their control.

(15) Further information is available in [Matching and offering a property to a client – Social Housing Eligibility and Allocations Policy Supplement](#).

Registrable persons

(16) Housing assistance is provided to registrable persons in accordance with the [DCJ Social Housing Assistance Policy for Registrable Persons](#).

Modified properties

(17) Modified properties will only be allocated to people with an identified need. These are usually applicants who are elderly, have a disability or care for someone who is elderly or has a disability.

(18) The applicant must provide supporting documentation from a medical professional or allied health care worker which substantiates their need for a property with modifications.

Supported Independent Living (SIL), Permanency Support Program

(19) SIL is an integrated accommodation and support program that aims to prepare and support Young People to

make a smooth transition from the Department of Community and Justice's Permanency Support Program (PSP) to independent living by acquiring independent living skills through the provision of accommodation, case management and structured and individualised life skills programs.

(20) SIL placements are for Young People aged 16 to 17 years of age at entry, assessed as CAT 1 or 4 as based on the Out-of-home care (OOHC) placements Child Assessment Tool (CAT) 1-4 who:

- a. are in statutory Out-of-Home Care (OOHC);
- b. are exiting the PSP to live independently or have left a PSP placement but require further support to successfully transition to independence; or
- c. have been assessed by the Central Access Unit (CAU) as having the capacity to live independently after a period of tailored support.

(21) Referral of a Young Person to the CAU will be made by the Child and Family District Unit (CFDU) where the Young Person meets the eligibility criteria outlined above.

(22) Hunter Community Housing will source and offer a property to a Young Person. The property is sourced based on requirements communicated to Hunter Community Housing by CatholicCare.

(23) Prior to Hunter Community Housing accepting the property from the owner CatholicCare will confirm it is suitable for the young person and their current needs/requirements. If the property is deemed not suitable Hunter Community Housing are to source another property taking into consideration the reasoning behind the initial decline.

(24) If a Young Person rejects an offer which is a reasonable offer by CatholicCare, the Young Person will be required to source an alternative property in their name. The rent for this property would still be funded under the SIL funding.

(25) Hunter Community Housing will provide accommodation that is stable, appropriate, and affordable.

Group Homes

(26) A Group Home allows people who have a disability, mental illness, or a health condition to live together in a supported environment. Each approved resident will have their own bedroom allocated to them.

(27) To be eligible a Resident must have a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan in place with the required funding.

(28) Each Group Home will have a dedicated Support Provider attached to the property. The Support Provider specialises in Supported Independent Living (SIL).

(29) The Support Provider will seek residents for the property/bedroom taking into consideration the current tenancies and the needs and behaviours of these residents. The provider will nominate the resident once it has been confirmed they have the Supported Independent living funding in their NDIS package.

(30) Hunter Community Housing in consultation with the nominated SIL provider may also accept eligible nominations from DCJ.

Section 5 - Appeals and Internal Review

(31) If a social housing tenant disagrees with a decision made in relation to their eligibility for housing, they should firstly discuss their concerns with DCJ or the CHP who made the decision in relation to their application on Housing Pathways.

(32) If a social housing tenant disagrees with a decision Hunter Community Housing has made in relation to an offer of housing we have made, they should firstly speak to Hunter Community Housing.

(33) If a Young Person in relation to SIL disagrees with a decision made by Hunter Community Housing in relation to their eligibility for the SIL program or property allocation, they should firstly discuss their concerns with CatholicCare.

(34) If a Group Home Applicant or Resident has concerns regarding the Support Provider, the Resident is encouraged to raise those concerns with the Support Provider directly in the first instance.

(35) If a tenant or a resident remains dissatisfied with a decision or outcome an appeal can be submitted in accordance with the [Hunter Community Housing – Appeals Policy](#).

Section 6 - Responsibilities

(36) The General Operations Manager – Housing is responsible for implementation of this policy.

(37) Staff are responsible to ensure they have read, understood, and comply with the policy.

(38) The Diocese Governance Department is responsible for managing the review process and publication of their policy.

Section 7 - Document Review

(39) This policy will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegations change or at least every 3 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	27th May 2024
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Unit Head	Lisa Tierney Chief Operating Officer
Enquiries Contact	Hunter Community Housing