



Accommodation Policy

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Approval

Policy owner	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Business Unit	Specialist Community Services		
Approved by	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Date approved	25/06/2024	Review date	25/06/2026

1 Purpose

- 1.1 SCS manages a range of supported and non-supported accommodation services that have been designed intentionally to be transitional in nature and, utilised as a stepping stone to long term independent housing.
- 1.2 SCS adopts a trauma informed approach and as such places considerable emphasis on the service frameworks and practice approaches utilised in each service, including how accommodation and tenancies are managed. These include the Low Threshold and Change Model, the Supportive Landlord Model and Recovery Oriented Service Delivery.
- 1.3 This policy seeks to ensure that this accommodation is effectively managed in accordance with The Society's (SVDPWA) Mission and Values, compliance frameworks, contractual obligations and in particular, the models of service and, needs of the clients, consumers and tenants who access SCS services.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to the following SCS sites:
 - Mental Health Service
 - Homelessness Services
 - Housing Plus

3 Policy principles

- 3.1 SCS provides a range of accommodation across its services including supported and non-supported accommodation, as well as supported crisis accommodation as outlined below:
 - Homelessness Services – Tom Fisher House: supported crisis accommodation
 - Homelessness Services – Wandjoo Bidi: transitional supported accommodation
 - Housing Plus – non-supported accommodation
 - Mental Health Service – supported accommodation
- 3.2 All accommodation is transitional in nature and is intended as a resource to support clients, consumers and tenants build their capacity toward obtaining secure long-term housing. SCS is committed to contributing to sustainable change and providing an option that will assist clients, consumers and tenants to become tenancy ready and be able to sustain long term accommodation of their own.
- 3.3 SCS recognises that the majority of clients, consumers and tenants accessing their services has had an experience of trauma at some point in their life. For this reason, SCS adopts a trauma informed approach and understands that having a safe and secure base is crucial for those with a history of trauma, so that their essential needs are being met, and they are able to engage with support services and build connections within their natural networks.
- 3.4 There is an expectation in SCS supported accommodation facilities that clients, consumers and tenants are required to actively engage with support staff (either internal or external) to work toward their identified goals and long-term housing

options. The exception being clients accessing Tom Fisher House (Acute Night Shelter) supported crisis accommodation due to the model nature of the service.

Policy Commitments

- 3.5 As a charitable organisation SCS is committed to providing accommodation and chattels that are safe, secure, functional and, of a reasonable standard and quality.
- 3.6 SCS seeks to provide service to those most vulnerable and in need, across the areas of homelessness, housing and mental health and as such, has specific eligibility criteria for accommodation relevant to each service.
- 3.7 Referrals for accommodation will only be considered once all requested and required information has been received.
- 3.8 Across SCS, Service Managers have the discretion to make the final decision regarding applications for accommodation, eligibility, suitability and any assessment of potential risks that are outside expected behaviours relevant to the model of service.
- 3.9 Upon acceptance to the service (supported and non-supported accommodation), offers of accommodation will be determined by current vacancies and match with the service. In situations where no vacancies are available, a wait list option *may* be offered for up to three months (although not each service offers this), upon such time as a new referral must be completed. Clients, consumers and tenants are under no obligation to accept the offer of accommodation should an opportunity arise.
- 3.10 SCS communicates clearly to clients, consumers, tenants and where relevant their family, regarding the nature of service provision, tenure of accommodation and conditions of stay at the time of assessment, upon entry and at sign up.
- 3.11 All clients, consumers and tenants receiving supported or non-supported accommodation through SCS (with the exception of Tom Fisher House) are required to sign either a Tenancy Agreement or License to Occupy (relevant to the service) and are informed of their financial and tenant obligations in respect to this, prior to move in. All clients, consumers and tenants will be supported through this process to ensure that they understand their obligations and the support available to them.
- 3.12 As clients at Tom Fisher House stay for a seven-night period, they are only required to sign a Client Agreement and a Pet Agreement upon entry
- 3.13 In supported mental health accommodation SCS exercises a probationary period during the first three months of residence, to ensure a suitable fit between the individual and the service. This is due to the communal nature of accommodation and the impact on other consumers as well as trying to safeguard that the placement will be successful, as opposed to another 'failed' experience that could impact negatively on the consumer.
- 3.14 Wandjoo Bidi is a transitional service with no stated length of stay, with tenancies being reviewed every three months to assess any required supports clients may need to maintain the tenancy.
- 3.15 SCS will endeavour to work collaboratively with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure the most effective support is offered, to contribute towards positive outcomes for clients, consumers and tenants.
- 3.16 Where required, SCS will strongly advocate for clients, consumers and tenants

with external stakeholders in relation to their support and long-term housing needs.

- 3.17 In supported and non-supported accommodation, staff will actively work with clients, consumers and tenants to prepare them for transition to alternative suitable accommodation if and when SCS are no longer able to provide accommodation or, if they identify they are ready to exit the service into long term housing.
- 3.18 Consumers and tenants in Mental Health Services and Housing Plus may request at any time to terminate their tenancy and exit the service. In both supported and non-supported accommodation services, consumers and tenants are required to comply with the termination clause in their Tenancy Agreement or License to Occupy.
- 3.19 Clients, consumers and tenants may be exited from the service if their needs or health status change and the service is unable to meet these needs. This is at the Service Manager's discretion. Should this occur SCS will endeavour to allow sufficient time and support to source alternative accommodation, except in circumstances of significant and imminent risk.
- 3.20 As Wandjoo Bidi is a joint project with the Department of Communities and the Office of Homelessness, the Service Manager/Coordinator is required to liaise with these departments if a tenant is being exited, due to the service being unable to meet the tenants need or, in circumstances of significant and imminent risk.
- 3.21 Any consideration of exiting a client, consumer or tenant from the service will be considered alongside the relevant service model, the strategies and support that have been offered, the impact on other clients, consumer and tenants, the degree to which the client/consumer/tenant is engaged with supports and, will be discussed at Clinical Governance or other SCS Management forums where time allows.
- 3.22 Clients, consumers and tenants may be immediately exited from the service in situations of identified serious and/or imminent risk to themselves or others. In such circumstances the client/consumer/tenant may still lodge an appeal following their exit from the service, provided it is lodged within seven days of exit.
- 3.23 Avenues of appeal are available to clients, consumers and tenants who are dissatisfied with any decision made by SCS to exit them from the service. They may appeal via the appeals process as outlined in their Tenancy Agreement/License to Occupy or, by utilising the service specific process as described in the service's Complaints and Appeals Procedure which is explained to them at the time of entry.
- 3.24 SCS continually reviews their practices and updates service standards in relation to accommodation, ensuring they are in line with best practice across the sectors they provide service in.

4 Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services is responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy.

- 4.1 Society representatives are required to adhere to this policy. Failure to comply may be considered a breach of our policies and may result in disciplinary action.

5 Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the SCS Management Team or the Executive Manager SCS.

6 Further assistance

- 6.1 Society personnel should speak with their Manager regarding any questions about the implementation of this policy.

7 References

References made in this policy are:

- 7.1 SVDPWA Mission and Values
- 7.2 SCS Strategic Plan
- 7.3 Residential Tenancy Agreement –SCS
- 7.4 License to Occupy –SCS
- 7.5 Boarding House Rules – SCS
- 7.6 Appeals Procedure – *Service specific*
- 7.7 Responding to Appeals Procedure - SCS

8 Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

- 8.1 The Mental Health Act 2014, *Mental Health Commission, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.2 National Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013 – *Australian Government Department of Health.*
- 8.3 Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit, *Department of Health, Government of Western Australia.*
- 8.4 Specialist Homelessness Service Standards, *Department of Communities, Government of Western Australia.*
- 8.5 Carer Recognition Act 2010, *Department of Social Services, Australian Government*
- 8.6 The Privacy Act 1998, *Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, Australian Government.*
- 8.7 The Residential Tenancies Act 1987, *Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.8 SCS-PP-4001 Continuous Improvement Policy
- 8.9 SCS-PP-4018 Privacy and Confidentiality Consumer/Client Policy

9 Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	30/06/2017	Initial version
2.0	EM, SCS	28/02/2019	Reviewed
2.1	EM, SCS	01/12/2021	Conversion to new template
3.0	EM, SCS	26/05/2022	Reviewed and updated
4.0	EM, SCS	25/06/2024	Reviewed and updated

10 Definitions

Term	Definition
Acute Night Shelter	Seven night stay in a safe environment where individuals can get support with essential needs, referrals to other services and collaborative care from support staff.
Models of Service	Refers to: Low Threshold and Change, Supportive Landlord, Recovery Oriented, Person Centred and Trauma Informed. These are specific to each service and not used across all SCS services eg: Low Threshold and Change is utilised in Homelessness Services only.
Independent Housing	For the purposes of this policy, independent housing refers to housing that is independent of (external to) SCS services.
Non-Supported Accommodation	For the purpose of this policy, social housing accommodation that requires commitment to engage with external support providers for the duration of tenancy
Supported Accommodation	Accommodation that includes a support component, aimed at assisting residents with daily living skills.
Transitional	Time-limited subsidised housing