

Housing Policy

Housing Policy

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Approval

Policy owner: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

Business Unit: Housing Plus

Approved by: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

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1. Purpose

1. St. Vincent de Paul Society's Housing Plus (HGP) believes a safe, secure home is the cornerstone on which individuals and families can build a better quality of life. This provides a foundation for individual, family and community wellbeing and aims to give a personal sense of place and home.
2. HGP aims to provide clear and transparent information to staff, support workers, current and prospective tenants/residents and other stakeholders on HGP's tenancy and property management practices including rent setting, allocation, eligibility criteria and steps for addressing tenancy responsibilities of tenants
3. HGP recognises the importance of providing fair, ethical and transparent treatment of tenants and the provision of quality housing services in a sustainable manner.

2. Scope

1. This is a Housing Plus (HGP) policy, applicable to all staff, volunteers and tenants residing within or accessing the following services;
 - Housing Plus (HGP)

3. Policy principles

1. HGP is committed to reducing housing stress by giving tenants a stable foundation and secure base to rebuild their lives and participate in their community. This allows them to focus on other aspects of their lives such as health and wellbeing, employment, education and their long-term housing needs.
2. HGS recognises that Homelessness is defined in three categories, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.
 - Primary Homelessness - includes all people without conventional housing, such as people living on the streets, squatting, living in improvised dwellings or using cars for temporary shelter
 - Secondary Homelessness – includes people who move frequently from one form of accommodation to another, this includes people living temporarily with other households, friends or family, and people staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis.
 - Tertiary Homelessness – includes people are living in boarding houses or caravan parks on a medium to long-term basis without the security of a lease or private facilities.
3. HGP is committed to assisting tenants/residents to move out of homelessness quickly and easily by providing move-in ready homes which are fully furnished (including bedding and white goods), shortening property turnaround times and having strong and robust relationships with our external support partners.
4. HGP believes that people are entitled to live in dignity, free from fear and harm in their own home or domestic environment and are committed to the provision of safe, secure and affordable accommodation and support services.
5. HGP recognises the importance of providing respectful, non-judgmental and culturally-sensitive tenancy and property services to tenants.
6. HGP appreciates that tenants experiencing homelessness may have barriers to providing support documentation such as formal identification. Where this occurs exceptions can be made at the discretion of the Service Manager.
7. HGP acknowledges that the majority of tenants have a trauma background and that Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) is one of the leading causes of homelessness in Australia.
8. HGP acknowledges that the tenant must be the central focus of the housing service provision and as such, adopts a person-centred, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to tenancy and property management.
9. HGP is committed to continuous improvement and welcomes tenant and stakeholder service feedback.
10. HGP recognises that addressing homelessness requires a strong and integrated community wide response.
11. HGP appreciates that tenants experiencing housing stress may find it hard to maintain connection to their networks such as school, employment, community and friends and, as such supports tenants in creating opportunities to address their individual tenancy goals.

4. Roles and responsibilities

1. The Manager, Housing Plus is responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy.
2. 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

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 SCS Management Team and Executive Manager SCS.

6. Further assistance

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:

1. There are no references.

8. Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

1. SCS-PP-4004 Complaints, Compliments and Appeals Policy
2. SCS-PP-4001 Continuous Improvement Policy
3. SVDPWA Critical Incident Policy
4. SCS-PR-4048 Critical Incident Management Policy
5. HGP-PR-4071 Critical Incident Procedure
6. HGP-PR-4088 Entry Property Condition Report Procedure
7. HGP-PP-4070 Department of Communities Notification Policy
8. HGP-PP-4094 Breaches and Termination Policy
9. HGP-PR-4098 Client Contact Procedure
10. Form 1AA, Residential Tenancies Agreement 1987, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
11. Residential Tenancies Act 1987, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
12. HGP-PR-4099 Smoke Alarm and RCD Testing Procedure
13. HGP-PR-4090 Vacate Property Condition Report Procedure
14. HGP-PR-4089 Vacate Procedure
15. HGP-PR-4059 Move out COVID 19 (Non-suspected case)
16. HGP-PR-4060 Move out COVID 19 (Suspected or confirmed case)
17. HGP-PR-4058 Sign Up COVID 19
18. Residential Tenancies (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
19. Department of Communities (Housing Authority) Cash Asset Limits
20. Department of Communities (Housing Authority) Community Housing Entitlement
21. Social Housing Band A Income Eligibility Limits 2020, *Department of Communities Western Australia.*
22. SCS-PP-4093 Family and Domestic Violence Policy
23. Form 1AA, Residential Tenancies Agreement 1987, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
24. HGP-FM-#### Licence to Occupy Schedule 3: Lodging House Rules
25. HGP-FM-#### Licence to Occupy
26. HGP-FR-4126 Tenancy Engagement Agreement
27. HGP-FR-4064 Tenancy Support Agreement
28. SCS-PP-4004 Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Policy
29. HGP-PR-4091 Complaints and Appeals Procedure

9. Approval and amendment history

| Version | Approval authority | Date | Amendment summary |
|---------|--------------------|------------|--|
| 1.0 | EM, SCS | 07/10/2020 | Initial version |
| 1.1 | EM, SCS | 01/12/2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversion to new template• Separation of procedure to new template HGP-PR-4136 |
| 2.0 | EM, SCS | 21/04/2022 | Content updated and reviewed |

10. Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------|--|
| FDV | Family and Domestic Violence |
| Trauma Informed | Trauma Informed is a strengths based framework which is founded on five core principals - safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment as well as respect for diversity. |
| Strength based | Strengths based focus on tenants' strengths and not on the deficits. Strengths based practice is holistic and multidisciplinary and works with the tenant to promote their wellbeing. |
| Continuous improvement | The ongoing practice of continually reviewing and improving the service. |