

Customer Service Charter



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1. Purpose

This Charter demonstrates Women's Housing Ltd's (WHL) commitment to providing the highest possible quality services for its clients and stakeholders.

2. Vision

All women in our communities will have safe, secure, affordable housing choices

3. Mission

To be a leading provider of specialist housing services for women who are disadvantaged in the rental and housing market.

WHL is committed to:

- The rights of all women and children to live free from family violence and the threat of homelessness that accompanies this
- Increasing the supply and access to affordable quality housing for women
- Providing professional and responsive tenancy management
- Producing lasting and sustainable solutions for our clients
- Building inclusive communities in which all renters can feel valued and involved

4. Service principles

WHL is committed to the following principles:

- Safe and secure housing is a right afforded to all women
- Service provision will be culturally safe
- Self-determination, respect and dignity underpin all service delivery activities
- A feminist philosophical framework that acknowledges the need for gender specific housing
- Collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders on issues of strategic importance to homeless women
- Transparent accountability in effective and efficient operations
- Commitment to continuous quality improvement
- Clients, renters and stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity

5. Our service standards

5.1 Meeting & responding to client needs

- WHL staff work in the office, at home or on site at different property locations. Renters who wish to meet with their Tenancy Officer can arrange an appropriate time and location by calling or emailing in advance.
- Staff will provide a professional response to clients and renters that is trauma informed, takes account of the impact of family violence and is based on feminist principles.
- Staff will respond to phone calls and emails as soon as reasonably possible and aim to acknowledge missed calls or emails within 24 hours
- Staff can access free interpreter services
- Staff will use inclusive language, including correct pronouns and preferred names
- Staff will give as much notice as possible when rearranging or cancelling appointments
- Staff will maintain a high level of confidentiality and privacy
- Staff will work in conjunction with identified supports when consent is provided

5.2 Tenancy management

WHL commit to the following:

- Allocating housing fairly and objectively
- Minimizing vacancy periods where possible
- Providing comprehensive sign-up information to inform renters of their rights and responsibilities
- Allocating a Tenancy Officer as a point of contact for renters
- Building communities through positive allocations and ongoing engagement
- Inspecting your home regularly and providing advice and feedback on the state of the property
- Responding to renter modification requests in a fair and transparent manner
- Communicating transparently and openly about action that may impact a tenancy, such as issuing Breach Notices
- Committing to continuous improvement through seeking and responding to feedback and complaints from renters

5.3 Maintenance and repairs

WHL will respond to maintenance requests in a timely manner. Repairs will be prioritized according to the urgency and type of maintenance as defined in the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA). WHL commit to the following timelines:

- Urgent repairs – 100% will be attended and resolved within 24 hours of notification
- Non-urgent repairs – 90% will be attended within 14 days

WHL commit to the following:

- Requiring contractors to show identification prior to entering renters' homes.
- Conducting Property Condition Surveys every three years to assess the condition and maintenance requirements of each property
- Providing a specific phone line for renters to call and report maintenance

- Keeping renters informed of the status of maintenance requests and assisting them to understand their rights and obligations regarding repairs

5.4 Ending tenancies

WHL is committed to sustaining tenancies wherever possible through positive renter support and early intervention. However, there are circumstances where ending a tenancy is the fairest outcome to protect the rights and safety of others.

- WHL acknowledges the personal and/or financial vulnerability of many of our clients, noting that this can sometimes result in tenancies being placed at risk. WHL will attempt to work alongside renter supports to identify and resolve issues at an early stage.
- WHL will always apply the provisions of the RTA fairly and accurately and will uphold the legal rights of renters.
- WHL is committed to applying the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act fairly and accurately and consider the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities in decisions impacting THM tenancies.

5.5 Rent setting & review

WHL will:

- Clearly advise renters about how their rent is being calculated and review
- Assist and support renters experiencing financial hardship
- Provide accurate and up-to-date rental statements
- Provide timely and early intervention to assist renters to maintain rental payments and repayment agreements
- Undertake any VCAT action in a transparent manner and taking into account the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

5.6 Consultation and renter engagement

WHL will provide opportunities for renters to engage with WHL on relevant issues, including consulting on policies. WHL may provide opportunities for communication and consultation in the following formats:

- Regular renter surveys to collect and analyse data to improve service delivery
- Individual consultation with renters about policies
- Advisory groups whereby renters can attend and contribute to conversations about WHL's service
- House meetings and rooming houses
- Newsletters
- Website

5.7 Complaints & appeals

A fundamental feature of WHL's approach to complaints is that firstly complainants know their rights, and secondly, they feel enabled to raise matters of complaint with WHL staff.

WHL will:

- Provide information to clients and renters about their rights and how to make complaints

- Ensure a fair, speedy and effective resolution of complaints and appeals
- Acknowledge the rights of renters and other members of the public to lodge a complaint or appeal with or about WHL, free from any threat of adverse consequences
- Positively assist complainants
- Record complaints about WHL's service, staff or policies in the Complaints Register
- Protect privacy and confidentiality where it is possible and reasonable to do so

6. Related documents

For more information about specific policies, please see the following documents at www.womenshousing.com.au

- WHL Renters Rights and Participation Policy
- WHL Ending Tenancies Policy
- WHL Interpreters Policy
- WHL Complaints and Appeals Policy
- WHL Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- WHL THM Policy
- WHL Arrears Policy
- WHL Rent Policy
- WHL Inspection Policy
- WHL Transfer Policy
- WHL Relocations Policy
- WHL Renter Dispute Policy
- WHL Diversity and Inclusion Policy