

Managing Transitional Housing

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1. Background

In accord with the general provisions of the THM program, Women's Housing Ltd (WHL) manages properties on behalf of the Office of Housing and provides transitional housing services for women who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or who are particularly disadvantaged in relation to housing.

The broad purpose of the program is to assist women in crisis to make the transition to longer term, secure and sustainable housing. This program provides short to medium term accommodation (usually between 6 months to 18 months) together with information and referral services and individual support where required. It acts as a stepping stone to more permanent housing in public, community or the private market.

WHL THM Housing is provided in accordance with the DHHS Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding, the Victorian Homelessness Support Program, the Residential Tenancies Act and the Housing Act 1983.

The THM program works within the DHHS Opening Doors system which aims to improve services to homeless people through a simplified structure of access points, centralised resource registers and service allocation, and improved client engagement practices.

Working in conjunction with external agencies, the WHL THM program allows women the opportunity of safe and affordable accommodation while long term housing options are pursued with the ongoing assistance of a support worker.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail the policies and processes relating to WHL Transitional Housing Program. The Transitional Housing Program is subject to guidelines as established by the Department of Health and Human Services.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all potential and current tenants residing within the WHL Transitional Housing Program.

4. Statement of Commitment

A well-maintained system is a key component of quality service delivery.

WHL is committed to:

- High performance and continuous improvement in this area
- Maintaining accurate and comprehensive databases relating to tenancies
- Maintaining appropriate privacy protections for tenants
- Providing access to personal information for tenants
- Maintaining information and financial integrity

5. Purpose of Transitional Housing

The broad aim of Transitional Housing is to provide housing assistance to individuals and families to establish and/or maintain appropriate, secure and sustainable housing through the provision of transitional housing.

Transitional Housing is short term housing, provided to single women and women headed households. Women remain tenants of housing whilst they are:

- Abiding by the Residential Tenancies Act and terms of lease
- Seeking long term housing options and
- Working with Support workers to maintain housing and to seek permanent longer-term housing

6. Allocation of Housing

Individuals cannot self-refer into a THM vacancy. Individuals will present at local Access Points and are then registered on a Prioritisation List. Individuals are then put forward to WHL vacancies through local Access Points and nominated partners. All transitional housing vacancies are posted on the DHHS Resource Register and WHL has signed partnerships with initiatives that support women. Several properties are assigned to these initiatives.

7. Furnishings

WHL transitional properties are fitted out with a kit of furniture. These should remain in the property at the end of the tenancy. In addition, WHL supplies a welcome pack of kitchen goods.

8. Period of Tenure

Transitional housing is viewed as short to medium term housing. It is not permanent housing and all tenants are expected to be working with a Housing Support Worker on their long-term housing goals. All housing is subject to the Residential Tenancies Act.

9. Housing Exit Plans

Housing exit plans are an integral part of a tenant's successful transition to long term housing. The tenant's support worker will be expected to provide WHL with a completed WHL THM Tenancy Review Form and Exit Plan within one month of the initial sign up.

The housing exit plan describes the tenant's long-term housing goals and the various steps that will be taken to achieve them.

This plan forms the essential basis of ongoing tenancy reviews.

10. Tenancy Reviews

WHL will meet with the tenant and Housing Support Worker at regular intervals. The purpose of these meetings is to review the Housing Exit Plan and to ensure that all viable options are being considered for long term housing.

11. End of Tenancy

Tenants are required to advise WHL immediately that they become aware of a move to their longer-term housing. Tenants should leave the property in a clean condition, free of personal belongings. It is expected that all furniture supplied to tenants will remain in the property.

12. Related Documents

- Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Customer Charter
- Tenant's Rights and Participation Policy
- Tenant Dispute Policy
- Rental Management and Debt Collection Policy
- Tenancy Review Policy
- Rent Setting and Review Policy
- Allocations Policy

13. Relevant Legislation

- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)