

2.1.6 Offers of Housing



Preamble

Women's Housing Company (WHC) is a community housing association as part of the social housing system in NSW. WHC offers long term housing for single women and medium term housing through support partnerships.

It is the intention of Women's Housing Company to offer good quality, safe and affordable housing to our target group.

We endeavour to meet the housing needs of applicants / tenants but recognise that individual standards and expectations differ greatly between applicants which is often a reflection of prior experiences, socio-economic background and personal needs.

Thus WHC can only commit to the offer of a standard property, knowing that a majority of offers will exceed this description.

POLICY

Three Offers of Housing

Women's Housing Company will make three offers of housing to each applicant.

If none of these is accepted the applicant or tenant is withdrawn from the waitlist, or rehousing waitlist whichever applies. It is deemed that Women's Housing Company cannot meet the housing needs of the applicant / tenant.

The applicant or tenant has the right to reapply but will be treated as a new applicant – previous time on the list will not be counted.

Offers are not made to applicants who have informed WHC that they are locked into a fixed term lease and WHC has been informed when the lease expires.

Housing is provided in Capital properties and Leasehold properties without distinction.

Offers for housing in WHC bedsit properties are not considered long term housing and tenants will be issued with a fixed term lease of three years.

Applicants are informed that if a bedsit offer is accepted, tenants are automatically accepted and placed on the rehousing waitlist.

Only applicants who have ticked the bedsit box as part of the application form, or those who have a later request for bedsit accommodation recorded, will be made an offer of housing for a bedsit.

A studio with a kitchen separate to the main room is not considered a Bedsit.

Rejection of three offers results in the applicant being withdrawn from the waitlist/rehousing list.

Offers are not made to tenants who have informed Women's Housing Company that they are locked into a fixed term lease and WHC has been informed when this lease expires.

PROCEDURE

After the allocations meeting the relevant housing worker will issue an offer of housing letter to the applicant identified with the first priority ranking. This letter is to be generated via the database, offers menu; to ensure offers are recorded electronically.

This offer letter is expected to be sent by the housing worker within two working days following the allocations meeting unless otherwise negotiated with the Senior Housing Manager.

The offer letter will state a deadline by which the applicant needs to have viewed the property by (2 days + 4 days postage). The letter states that the applicant has 48 hours after viewing to decide on accepting or rejecting the offer of housing.

It is preferable for the worker to meet the applicant at the property, but in exceptional cases, the applicant can come to the office and collect the keys to view the unit themselves.

In such cases, all applicants must sign a key borrowing form specifying when keys must be returned by and potential consequences.

Keys are not to stay out of the office overnight. Keys are never to be out of the office over a weekend unless authorised by a senior worker.

If the applicant does not want to view the unit, or does not respond by the given timeframe, the Housing Worker will discuss their reasons explaining that the offer is counted as rejected. All offers are made based on the information provided by the applicant; the offer will still be counted as reasonable.

Once an offer has been accepted or rejected the relevant housing workers sends out a letter confirming the decision and filing a copy on the applicant's file.

If an applicant believes the offer was unreasonable they must supply WHC with a letter stating clearly why the offer was not suitable. The Senior Housing Manager will review the decision.

If the original decision is upheld the applicant will be provided with information on the Housing Appeals Committee process if they wish to appeal the decision further.

The acceptance letter will request the applicant to arrange a time to attend the office to sign a lease within 7 working days of the applicant accepting the offer. Any delays to this timeframe need to be negotiated and approved by housing worker in conjunction with the Senior Housing Manager.

Applicants are advised on the information they need to bring to sign the lease, in particular income verification including all investments/shares and two weeks rent. The offer acceptance is recorded on the database, offer menu, by the housing worker.

Date developed: 2000

Date/s policy was ratified and/or changed by Board: 31/1/05; 28/8/07

Note: Procedures are designed to guide the implementation of a policy and will be updated on a regular basis as part of ongoing best practice service improvement.