

2.2.9.1 Rent Subsidy Fraud



Preamble

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

As a social housing provider WHC is funded by the Office of Community Housing to provide rent subsidies to eligible tenants.

Eligibility guidelines are stated by OCH and the Housing NSW.

It is the responsibility of Women's Housing Company to ensure that no rent subsidy fraud is occurring.

POLICY

Women's Housing Company occasionally discovers that tenants have property or assets they have not declared and/or are in receipt of more income than stated.

In some cases this means these tenants are not actually in need of social housing.

If a tenant is suspected of **Rent Subsidy Fraud**, Women's Housing Company will investigate the situation to the best of our abilities and within legal guideline while continuing to treat the tenant with respect and dignity.

As part of this investigation, WHC may cancel the rent subsidy of the tenant until the situation is clarified. In such cases tenant are charged with market rent.

If the tenant acknowledges or is found to have committed rent subsidy fraud, Women's Housing Company reserves the right to terminate their tenancy.

PROCEDURE

Women's Housing Company may suspect rent subsidy fraud because they have received verifiable information from a third party which gives ground to such suspicion, or a worker has come across contradicting information as part of a regular rent review for instance.

Rental Subsidy Fraud is constituted if a tenant **fails to provide all information**, or provides **false information** with respect to the following:

- Declaration of total gross income received.
- Declaration of all persons living at the property.
- Declaration of all investments and assets including interest earned and property owned.

If Women's Housing Company suspects that a tenant is engaging in rent subsidy fraud a housing worker may request particular information to substantiate or to disprove this suspicion.

If the tenant refuses to provide the information as requested, Women's Housing Company will remove their rental subsidy and start charging market rent.

If the tenant does not cooperate as part of this process and the tenant moves into rent arrears, the rent arrears process will set in.

If the tenant cooperates and rental fraud is substantiated, the tenant will be asked to attend an interview with the housing worker and the Senior Housing Manager of Women's Housing Company or delegate to discuss the fraudulent claim.

If the tenant can demonstrate that they have acted without fraudulent intentions, Women's Housing Company will continue to provide a rent subsidy to the tenant, if still eligible for one, or the rent subsidy will be reinstated.

Any rent arrears incurred due to a backdating of a higher rent need to be negotiated in terms of the repayment amount.

If the tenant cooperates and it is substantiated that the tenant owns property in which they would be able to live, an exit timeframe for the tenant will be negotiated to allow them to make arrangements to move into their property.

In cases where the tenant does not cooperate freely and rent subsidy fraud is substantiated, Women's Housing Company may inform the relevant authorities that is Housing NSW, Centrelink and Police.

The CTTT process for obtaining vacant possession will be initiated if the tenancy agreement has been breached, e.g. if one or more additional occupants are substantiated to be living at the property.

Date developed: 31/12/05

Date/s policy was ratified and/or changed by Board: 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.