

2.3.5 Extended Stay of Visitors



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.

WHC guarantees the following of all landlord responsibilities as stated in the NSW Residential Tenancy Act 1987.

WHC recognises that applicants and tenants needs differ greatly based on past experiences, independent living skills, cultural and language backgrounds, age, health which are all factors contributing to differing expectations. As a social housing provider we are committed to provide best quality services at all times. It is recognised that needs and expectations may not always be possible to meet by WHC.

WHC understands that maintaining key relationships with family and friends is vital for the well being of tenants.

POLICY

Women's Housing Company permits tenants to have visitors stay in their properties for up to three weeks, every six months.

In all cases, if the period of time is for up to 3 weeks then verbal permission may be granted over the phone.

If tenants request visitors to stay longer than 3 weeks, Women's Housing Company requires a written application form to be lodged for extended stays of visitors; these will be assessed on a case by case basis.

WHC retains the right to cancel a rental subsidy if the period of visitor/s staying at the property is considered excessive; or if an investigation into breach of tenancy agreement is negotiated regarding additional occupants.

PROCEDURE

WHC encourages tenants to notify us when they expect visitors to stay at their places for a given period. This is to avoid any confusion and fears other tenants may have when they notice other people frequenting a tenant's unit.

If a tenant requests permission for one or more visitors to stay for a period of more than 3 weeks, every 6 months, tenants are required to contact the office and request Permission for Visitors Form prior to their visitor/s arriving.

When WHC receives requests for visitors the housing worker will assess the application.

Issues that will be taken into account:

- Type of property/bedroom size
- Relationship to tenant/gender (exemption from Anti-Discrimination Act section 3.3)
- Period of time requested
- Reason for visitor/s stay

Time frames past the usual three weeks may be extended but permission must have been received in writing from WHC; extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration.

If the housing worker assesses the length of stay of the visitor/s as excessive the housing worker may cancel the rental subsidy requiring the tenant to pay market rent until their visitor leaves. This is based on tenants receiving rental subsidies based on household income.

If permission is not obtained and Women's Housing Company is informed of additional occupants living at the property, the housing worker will initiate an investigation into breach of tenancy regarding additional occupants.

This may involve:

- Inspection of the property
- Request for evidence regarding the permanent residential address of persons claimed to be living at the WHC property e.g. Centrelink income statement
- Request of documents relevant to the WHC tenancy e.g. phone bill, electricity bill
- Meeting at WHC office

During this investigation the rental subsidy may be cancelled.

Permission will not be given for an additional occupant to stay for more than three months. If after three months the tenant continues to house the additional occupant, WHC will take the matter to the CTTT for breach of tenancy. At the CTTT it is aimed to resolve the matter by obtaining an order for the additional occupant to leave by a negotiated time, if this is not possible vacant possession may be sought.

A mutual exchange should be suggested though cannot be guaranteed as WHC has no control over the decision making processes of other housing associations.

Date developed: 1/1/06

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.