

2.3.6 Absence from Property



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 in long term housing to be absent from their property for a total of 3 month, within a 12 months period.

All periods of absence require tenants to lodge a standard 'Absence from Property' form with Women's Housing Company.

Periods of absences beyond a total of 3 months must be approved in writing by WHC and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Rent must be paid whilst the tenant is absent, contact details must be provided in case of emergencies.

Women's Housing Company retains the right to withdraw the rental subsidy in cases where it is assessed that the tenant is not in need of housing with WHC due to excessive periods away from the property.

PROCEDURE

Tenants must notify the WHC office of their intended period of absence, allowing sufficient time for the permission request to be assessed.

An Absence from Property form must be lodged by the tenant and accepted by WHC prior to leaving. This is important to guarantee WHC can notify an authorised person for instance in cases of damage to the property; in leasehold properties if a fixed term lease is not renewed by the real estate agent, or a termination has been received from the real estate; or when WHC conducts income review during the tenant's absence.

Each period of absence will be approved on a case-by-case basis but the general rule is a total of 3 months, within a 12 months period.

Periods beyond the total of 3 months require assessment by the housing worker in regards to the housing need of the tenant. Tenants being absence from their property for long and repeated periods will have to demonstrate they still require housing assistance.

Some circumstances where an extension of time may be granted without withdrawing the rental subsidy:

- Trip overseas being longer than 3 months and extenuating circumstances apply.
- Tenant is required to be in another state for reasons of study / caring for family member

If the housing worker assesses that the tenants excessive periods away from the property demonstrate sufficiently that they are not in need of housing, they are required to discuss with the Senior Housing Manager to withdraw the rental subsidy.

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.