

4.4.2 Mental Health Reports & Orders



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.

At times applicants / tenants with Women's Housing Company are more vulnerable than others due to particular needs. In order to provide the best service to all applicants / tenants the Mental Health Report & Order policy will aim to provide direction for WHC staff for particular situations.

POLICY

Women's Housing Company may at times make the assessment that a tenant is not coping well with daily living skills, social interactions or is unable to demonstrate rational understanding of circumstances and situations.

Staff who identify concerns of such nature regarding a particular tenant are required to inform the Senior Housing Manager immediately.

If it is then assessed that the tenant is displaying a substantial level of any of the following, a mental health report needs to be filed.

The tenant displays:

- irrational thoughts
- delusions
- hallucination
- irrational behaviour
- verifiable acts of self harm

At other times WHC is informed that a tenant may be subject to a Mental Health Act Order for given periods of time.

In these cases WHC staff must be alerted to such orders as part of our duty of care.

PROCEDURE

Once a staff member has identified a tenant displaying thoughts and/or behaviours that are irrational, the Senior Housing Manager is informed immediately to discuss an appropriate response.

Based on the information of the worker, the Senior Housing Manager will be required to make an assessment of the severity of the observation and evidence available.

If sufficient grounds are established the Senior Housing Manager will instruct the staff member to file a **Mental Health Report** to the closest public hospital in the vicinity of the relevant tenant's property.

The report will need to provide examples of the above points to substantiate the need for a Mental Health Report.

The health professional taking the report will be asked about the likelihood of the mental health team's response, the timeframe of a response and WHC options to get feedback on the response.

The staff member making the Mental Health Report is required to make an entry under general notes in the database to this effect.

In discussion with the Senior Housing Manager a decision needs to be made whether it is useful or counter-productive to inform the relevant tenant in writing about WHC lodging a Mental Health Report.

In cases when WHC is informed that a tenant has been placed under a **Mental Health Act Order**, the following procedure is to be followed.

1. Women's Housing Company requests a copy of the order to be put on file.
2. The dates of the order need to be checked to ensure that the order is current.
3. The conditions of the order are set out in the order and may vary, this needs to be checked.
4. If the order specifies that the Mental Health Service has the powers to administer drugs and to make use of the police to do so, Women's Housing Company is obliged to cooperate as part of our duty of care.
5. This cooperation will depend on the particular case. If in doubt check with the Senior Housing Manager.
6. If the Mental Health Service informs Women's Housing Company that they will enter the premises of our tenant with the use of force unless they can be provided with keys to the property, Women's Housing Company will provide the keys.
7. Before the keys are provided, Women's Housing Company requests the Mental Health Service to put in writing that they will hand the keys to the police to open and close the door; and that the Mental Health Service will return the keys to Women's Housing Company immediately after the order has been enacted. This may be repeated on numerous occasions.

It needs to be noted that not all Mental Health Services will be providing copies of the Mental Health Reports unless so agreed to by the tenant. In such cases WHC will not provide keys to a property unless some written notification has been received clearly outlining the powers of the relevant service.

Date developed: 31/1/05

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.