



## 7.1 Eligibility

### Scope

This policy outlines the guidelines for eligibility for SGCH's general and supported housing products. For affordable housing eligibility, please refer to the Affordable Housing policy.

### Purpose

The policy is intended to:

- Ensure equitable access to SGCH housing products.
- Maintain a fair, needs-based assessment process and non-judgemental attitude to all applicants.
- Ensure an individual's rights will not be discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, marital status, criminal history, physical and/or intellectual disability or sexual preference as per the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*.
- Provide an open and transparent application process.
- Ensure that SGCH can work closely with support services to have a more holistic approach when addressing issues related to the applicants.
- Meet the requirements of funding bodies for eligibility for Community Housing and other housing programs.

### Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants may be grouped under the following categories:

- General housing applicants
- Supported Housing applicants

### General housing applicants

Applicants must be eligible and registered under Housing Pathways. The same eligibility criteria apply for all applicants under Housing Pathways.

SGCH General Housing applicants are prioritised according to need using the following points system:

#### *General Housing Register — Eligibility*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Documents required</b>
Transfer — Natural Disaster	1	Tenant must be relocated as their current housing is uninhabitable due to natural disasters such as fire, flood, storm or earthquake.	Eligibility for transfer to be determined by SGCH Manager, Access & Demand

<b>Category</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Documents required</b>
High Priority — At Risk	1	Includes domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse or abuse of older people.	Apprehended Violence Order, police reports, medical assessments from healthcare professionals, STARTTS reports, or documentation from support worker or social worker.
High Priority — Disability/Medical	2	Severe and permanent disability, mental health or medical issues. Factors considered include severity and permanency of condition, mobility issues, level of modification required and frequency of medical visits.	Report from a medical specialist such as a psychologist, physiotherapist or occupational therapist outlining the condition and requirements.
High Priority — Homeless	2	Applicant is homeless, facing imminent homelessness that cannot be resolved through other housing options, living in temporary or emergency accommodation or immediate family divided due to inadequate housing options	Documentation from support worker or social worker, evidence of inability to secure other housing options i.e. rejection of applications for private rental properties.
High Priority — Severe over-occupancy	2	Severe over occupancy due to increase in household size, e.g. family reunited or marriage. Defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unrelated adults sharing a bedroom</li> <li>▪ Adults sharing a bedroom with children</li> <li>▪ Children of different genders over the age of 11 sharing a bedroom</li> <li>▪ More than three children sharing a room</li> </ul>	Evidence of change in circumstances that shows why the additional household members need to move in with the current tenant and how it will cause over occupancy, e.g. marriage certificate, court orders for custody of children, immigration papers.

Category	Priority	Definition	Documents required
Tenancy reinstatement	2	<p>A former tenant voluntarily surrendered their property for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ They were under duress (includes escaping domestic violence or removing themselves or a household member from being at risk)</li> <li>▪ They had to move into a residential care facility</li> <li>▪ They were placed in a custodial facility (e.g. prison)</li> <li>▪ The tenant, a household member or a family member required care</li> <li>▪ Due to exceptional circumstances approved by SGCH/another CHP/HNSW</li> </ul>	Written approval from SGCH/another CHP/HNSW
High Priority Transfer	2	Includes high priority transfers for tenants who are at risk, have a severe disability or medical condition, severe over occupancy or for relocation of tenants for management reasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At risk: Apprehended Violence Order, police reports, medical assessments from healthcare professionals, STARTTS reports, or documentation from support worker or social worker.</li> <li>▪ Medical/disability: Report from a medical specialist such as a psychologist, physiotherapist or occupational therapist outlining the condition and requirements.</li> </ul>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Documents required</b>
High Priority — Elderly	3	Applicants who are over 80 years of age (or 55 for ATSI).  Note: Where there are other household members included on an elderly client's application (other than the elderly person's partner) they will be eligible for high priority provided that the elderly person is totally dependent on the other household members for 24 hour care.	Documents confirming ATSI status if applicable. Where there are other household members included on an elderly client's application (other than the elderly person's partner) they must provide documentation from a medical or allied healthcare professional to support the application.
General transfer	5	Includes compassionate, disability, employment, harassment, medical, uninhabitable, redevelopment, under occupancy or management reasons.	
Eligible — Medical, disability	6	Minor medical issue or disability. Factors considered include severity and permanency of condition, mobility issues, level of modification required and frequency of medical visits.	Report from a medical practitioner outlining the condition and requirements.
Eligible — Over-occupancy	5	When the number of children sharing a room is causing excessive wear and tear, three occupants sharing a room.	Evidence of change in circumstances and how it will cause over occupancy, e.g. birth certificate, marriage certificate, immigration papers, court orders for custody of children.
Eligible — Wait turn	6	Meets housing eligibility without any special circumstances.	Documents required to meet general eligibility. See Eligibility policy.

### Eligibility of former tenants

A former tenant is someone who previously lived in a property that was owned or managed by SGCH, other community housing providers (CHP) or Housing NSW (HNSW) and has since vacated the property. Former tenants of SGCH, other CHPs or HNSW may apply to be on the Housing Pathways Register. To be approved,

former tenants must meet the current eligibility criteria for Housing Pathways and re-establish their position on the Housing Pathways register.

Former tenants applying for housing assistance can expect SGCH to:

- Explain any conditions that need to be met to enable the applicant to be eligible for housing
- Explain any of the documentation required to confirm eligibility
- Explain the types of assistance available
- Explain why they are ineligible for an offer from SGCH until agreed conditions are met
- Advise them of their right to appeal.

A review of the applicant's tenancy history with SGCH/other CHP/HNSW and any private landlords will be used to determine any conditions that need to be met by the applicant before an offer of housing assistance will be made.

If an ex-tenant owes money to Housing NSW or a community housing provider, he/she will be required to complete a repayment agreement and undertake to make payments to that provider prior to being housed. He/she will also be required to provide evidence that he/she has paid rent consistently to a landlord since leaving the organisation.

Applications from ex-tenants who have had their tenancy terminated on the grounds of having caused serious damage on purpose or by behaving recklessly, having caused injury to the landlord, someone acting on the landlord's behalf or someone in adjoining premises will be considered on a case by case basis. If approved, ex-tenants may be offered a fixed term lease. SGCH will use the fixed term to determine a tenant's ability to successfully maintain a tenancy. If after the completion of the fixed term period, SGCH considers that the tenant can successfully maintain a tenancy, the tenant will be offered a continuous lease arrangement.

### Tenancy Reinstatement

Former tenants that are approved for tenancy reinstatement will have their application prioritised when they re-apply for housing.

To be eligible for tenancy reinstatement the former tenant must be able to prove the following:

- They meet the eligibility criteria
- They vacated their property due to any of the following reasons:
  - they were under duress
  - they had to move into a residential care facility
  - they were placed in a custodial facility (e.g. prison) or themselves, a household member or a family member required care
- They made an application to their former housing provider for tenancy reinstatement within six months of vacating their property (except for custodial sentences of three years or less where the former tenant can apply within six months of their release from custody).

When assessing applications for tenancy reinstatement, SGCH will consider the following where applicable:

- If the tenant vacated the property without giving notice, was it reasonable to vacate the property without notice? Did the circumstances force the tenant to vacate without giving notice?
- Did the tenant previously contact their housing provider about their situation
- Did the tenant consider options other than vacating?
- Did the housing provider ask the tenant to relinquish their tenancy because they were going to a residential care or custodial facility?
- Could the decision to vacate have been delayed?
- Was it reasonable to vacate under the circumstances?

Former tenants will need to provide documented evidence to substantiate their need to vacate the dwelling. The type of evidence required will vary depending on the reason for vacating the premises. For example, if the tenant vacated because of being at risk they would need to supply documents as noted in the High Priority – At Risk category for eligibility in the above table.

### **Supported Housing**

Support services, as partners, will nominate potential tenants who are linked with support. The potential tenants must be eligible for housing with HNSW, and live on the Housing Pathways housing register, although some exclusion's apply. Eligibility criteria are outlined in the relevant agreements/policies/guidelines for each program.

### ***Boarding House Tenants Relocation Program***

This program involves Ageing, Disability & Home Care (ADHC), Community Housing Division, support services and SGCH. The potential tenants will be nominated by the support service and approved by ADHC. SGCH will not be involved in the selection and assessment process.

### ***Single Living Unit Program***

Refer to program guidelines and service agreements for eligibility.

### **Related documents/resources**

- Policy - Affordable Housing