



7.14 Occupancy

Scope

This policy applies to all St George Community Housing (SGCH) tenancies.

Definitions

Severe over occupancy

Severe over occupancy is when the household size and composition changes and results in the household having fewer bedrooms than they are entitled to and the over occupancy is considered to be severe. Refer to Allocations (Entitlements) policy.

Examples severe over occupancy include:

- Four or more children sharing a bedroom.
- Three or more unrelated adults sharing a bedroom

Over occupancy

Over occupancy is when the household size and composition changes and results in the household having fewer bedrooms than they are entitled to, but the over occupancy is not considered to be severe. Refer to Allocations (Entitlements) policy.

Examples of over occupancy include:

- Three children sharing a bedroom.
- An adult or couple sharing a bedroom with a child over two years of age.
- Two unrelated adults sharing a bedroom.
- Children of different genders sharing a bedroom when one of the children is 10 years of age.

Under occupancy

Under occupancy is when the property has two or more bedrooms more than the household is entitled to. Refer to Allocations (Entitlements) policy.

Additional occupant

An additional occupant is a person who was not a member of the household at the beginning of the tenancy and who has since obtained written approval from SGCH to become a member of the household and their income is assessed for rent purposes.

Visitor

A visitor is a person who temporarily stays with a SGCH tenant for up to 28 consecutive days or less than 4 days per week. If a tenant wants their visitor to stay longer than 28 days they must request permission from SGCH for the person to become an additional occupant. On a case by case basis, a Manager may approve a visitor to stay at a property for more than 28 days. If a person



stays longer than 28 days consecutive days or 4 days or more per week they will be considered to be an unauthorised occupant.

Unauthorised occupant

An unauthorised occupant is a person who has lived in a SGCH property for more than 28 days or 4 days or more per week and who has not been approved by SGCH as an additional occupant.

Requests for Additional Occupants

Tenants are allocated properties according to their household size and are charged rent based on their household income. Therefore, tenants must request permission from SGCH before allowing additional people to live at their property.

When requesting approval for additional occupants, the tenant and additional occupant/s need to be aware that:

- SGCH will not approve a request for an additional occupant if it will result in severe over occupancy.
- Housing additional occupants is not usually accepted as sufficient reason to be transferred to a larger dwelling.
- If additional occupants are approved, the rent will be reassessed and the additional occupant's income will be included in the new rent assessment.

Assessing requests for additional occupants

When assessing requests for additional occupants, SGCH will consider:

- Relevant policies, guidelines, legislation or leases that relate to the property.
- Whether additional occupant/s will result in the property being over occupied.
- Whether the dwelling is suitable accommodation for the additional occupants.
- Whether the approval of additional occupants will create noise, nuisance or other social issues.

If the tenant has rent arrears or tenant debts SGCH may require the tenant to enter into a repayment agreement before the application can be assessed.

If the proposed additional occupant/s owes money to SGCH from a previous tenancy, they must make arrangements to pay off this debt before the application can be approved.

If the proposed additional occupant/s has an existing tenancy with HNSW or another community housing provider, this tenancy must be finalised before the application to join another household can be assessed. Documented evidence must be provided to SGCH to show that the other tenancy has been finalised.

SGCH standards in responding to requests for additional occupants

A letter advising the tenant of the outcome of their request will be sent within 28 working days, unless further documentation has been requested. The letter will also advise the tenant of their right of appeal if they disagree with the decision.



What happens if a request is approved?

If SGCH approves a tenant's request to have additional occupants, SGCH will reassess the rent based on the income of all household members.

An additional occupant can apply for succession if the tenant leaves the property, provided that the additional occupant meets the eligibility requirements for succession.

An additional occupant may remain on the Housing Pathways Register for a property of their own whilst living with another tenant. If the additional occupant is on the Housing Pathways Register for housing and they no longer require a property of their own, their approval will be sought to remove their name from the Housing Pathways Register.

What happens if a request is declined?

If SGCH declines a tenant's request to have additional occupants and the additional occupant/s is already living with the tenant SGCH will formally request, that the proposed additional occupant vacate the property.

Unauthorised occupants

If SGCH receives reports of unauthorised occupants living at a SGCH property, this will be investigated. If unauthorised occupants are found to be living in a SGCH property, SGCH will give the tenant 14 days to either submit a request for the person/s to become an additional occupant or for the person/s to vacate the property.

SGCH can not legally intervene if a tenant wants another occupant removed from their dwelling. Tenants who need assistance with removing occupants from their dwellings should contact the Police.

Related documents/resources

- Policy - Allocations (Entitlements)
- Policy – Succession