



## **7.2 Allocations**

### **Scope**

The Allocations policy outlines the guidelines for allocation of SGCH's general and supported housing products. For Affordable housing allocations, please refer to Affordable Housing policy.

### **Purpose**

The policy is intended to:

- Ensure equitable access to all eligible people seeking housing.
- Maintain a fair, needs based allocations 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 allocations process.
- Meet funding body and regulatory requirements for allocation of Community Housing, Affordable Housing and other housing programs.
- Provide clients with coordinated access to social housing through Housing Pathways.
- Maximise utilisation of scarce housing resources and where possible, will optimise rental income for viability.

### **General Housing Allocations**

General housing will be allocated in accordance with Housing Pathways (HP) waiting list. This list includes new applicants for social housing and tenants who have been approved for transfer from both Housing NSW and participating social housing providers. Allocations will be made according to priority, date of application and availability of suitable properties. SGCH will prioritise SGCH tenant transfers over transfers from other housing providers in the same category.

### **Allocations for specific housing programs**

The allocation process will vary depending on the program type of the vacant property.

### **Supported Housing**

All allocations are made in accordance with the specific program guidelines and service agreements.

### **Affordable Housing Program**

All allocations are made in accordance with the specific program guidelines and the Affordable Housing policy.

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

The potential tenants will be nominated by the support service and approved by Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC). SGCH will not be involved in the allocation process.

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

All allocations are made in accordance with the specific program guidelines and service agreements.

### **Targeted approaches to allocations**

From time to time, in order to meeting funding or program requirements, SGCH may need to meet externally set targets when allocating certain properties.

### **Properties with Specific Features**

Properties with specific features will only be allocated to applicants that are able to show a demonstrated need, unless these properties are readily available or are vacant for a prolonged period.

### ***Modified properties***

Properties which have been modified to cater for applicants with a disability will only be allocated to applicants with a demonstrated need for these features. The applicant must have documentation from a medical professional or allied health care worker that supports their need for a property with specific features.

### ***Ground floor properties***

Ground floor or properties with level access will be allocated to an applicant/tenant with a demonstrated need for these features. The applicant/tenant must have documentation from a medical professional which supports their requirement for a ground floor or level access property.

Ground floor properties will also be targeted to seniors where appropriate, to support seniors by allowing them to age in their current home.

### ***Local allocation strategy***

In some instances management may determine a local strategy for allocations in a particular area or estate. These strategies may be implemented for vacancies when:

- There is high concentration of community and/or public housing stock.
- There is a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues.
- There are existing tenancy management issues or there is a potential for them to develop.
- There are existing issues which will be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled.
- There is a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

### **Properties with Designated Purpose**

Properties with a designated purpose will only be allocated to applicants that meet the programme or planning criteria. Properties with a designated purpose include:

***Properties subject to State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for seniors or people with a disability) 2004***

The following applicants are eligible for properties which are subject to the above policy:

- Seniors (people who are aged 55 years or more or 45 years or more for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders) or people who have a disability.
- People who live in the same household with seniors or people who have a disability.
- Staff employed to assist in the administration of and provision of services to housing provided under this policy.

**Entitlements**

Properties will be allocated to applicants in accordance with their household size and composition.

The table below outlines the standard bedroom entitlements for different household compositions:

<b>Household composition</b>	<b>Standard bedroom entitlement</b>
Single person	Bedsitter, one or two bedrooms
Couple	One or two bedrooms
Single person or a couple with one other household member	Two or three bedrooms
Single person or a couple with two other household members	Two or three bedrooms
Single person or a couple with three other household members	Three or four bedrooms
Single person or a couple with four other household members	Three or four bedrooms
Single person or a couple with five other household members	Four bedrooms or five bedrooms (if available). Note: Due to the limited availability of five bedroom properties, households with this composition may be offered a four bedroom property if there are no five bedroom properties available.

Note: SGCH does not provide additional bedroom entitlements for specific cultural groups.

The table below outlines how SGCH will allocate bedrooms for children:

<b>Situation</b>	<b>SGCH response</b>
Children 18 years of age or older	Children 18 years of age or older are considered to be adults when determining the bedroom entitlement
Children of the same sex who are under 18 years of age	Children of the same sex who are under 18 years of age are expected to share a bedroom

Male and female children who are under 18 years of age	Male and female children are expected to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age
Children under the age of 2	SGCH will not allocate an additional bedroom for a child under the age of 2.
Children with special needs	SGCH will allocate an additional bedroom where the tenant/applicant can demonstrate a need for same sex children or children under the age of 10 to have separate bedrooms.
Shared custody/access visits from children	SGCH will consider the children to be part of the household if they stay for 3 days or more per week. Formal documented evidence is required.

Note: SGCH will, where possible, consider the future needs for children when allocating a property.

### Offers of housing

Applicants for housing, including transfer applicants will be offered two reasonable offers of accommodation. The decision regarding allocation of general properties is the responsibility of the Allocations Manager in the Access and Demand team and is based on information provided by the applicant/tenant. If there is evidence of false or misleading information provided by the applicant, it is considered reasonable to withdraw the offer of housing.

In allocating properties, SGCH will consider the information the applicant has provided with their application and the property elements to ensure that the match is appropriate. Through this process, SGCH will ensure that:

- The property being offered is of an appropriate size and bedroom number to ensure there is no under or over-occupancy.
- The property location matches the applicant's needs.
- The property type and facilities enable the applicant to maximise his/her mobility and independence and alleviates and/or stabilises medical conditions or disabilities wherever possible and increases the wellbeing of the applicant relative to their current housing conditions.
- The neighbourhood is considered not to adversely affect the new tenant's wellbeing; and the new tenant will not adversely affect neighbours.
- Any reasons not to allocate a property to a particular individual will be documented and thoroughly reviewed before a final decision is made.

It is not a reasonable offer if the property:

- Adversely affects an applicant/tenant's medical condition or disability or makes it harder for them to stabilise or improve their condition.
- Places the applicant/tenant in an area that will put them at risk.
- Makes it difficult for the applicant's/tenant's household to remain together.

The applicant can expect SGCH to:

- Undertake a pre selection check, using the provided checklist to ensure that the offer meets the applicant's needs.

- Look at previous offer history to determine whether the offer about to be made is a reasonable one and suitable to the applicant's housing needs.
- Determine if the applicant has any other needs pertaining to support, whether a known case plan is in place and determine if offer is appropriate.
- Promote stable communities and sustainable tenancies.
- Offer the property to the client once a suitable match has been identified.
- Explain the offer policy, the options available and the implications of accepting an offer of housing.
- Make up to two offers of reasonable accommodation.
- Make sure that the type and location of the accommodation which is offered meets the applicant's needs.
- Inform the applicant about information and documentation they need to provide before any offers are made, especially if the applicant specifies a particular type of dwelling or location.
- Give the applicant 48 hours to consider an offer.
- Encourage the applicant to accept the first reasonable offer and explain what happens if the offer is rejected.
- Recognise that the selected applicant/tenant has a right to decline the offer of housing without incurring penalty.
- Consider requests for modifications to properties as required, in accordance with the Modification of Properties Policy.
- Disclose certain known material facts in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* when offering a property.
- Withdraw an offer if it is not reasonable.
- Make future offers which are a better match for the applicant's location and dwelling needs.

The table below sets out the criteria for assisting staff in making decisions about when an offer of housing is accepted, rejected or withdrawn, and/or when an application needs to be suspended. Once this decision is made, the offer and its outcome will be required to be updated on the Housing Pathways Register using Housing Pathways process.

Table: Criteria for accepting, rejecting and withdrawing housing offers and suspending applications

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Offer accepted	The client has accepted a property offered by SGCH and is required to sign a tenancy agreement within 7 days.
Offer rejected and considered to be a reasonable offer	The offer of housing meets the matching requirements and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are no grounds for suspending the client's NSW housing register application.</li> <li>▪ The client did not provide any new, substantiated information to SGCH about their needs within the required timeframe.</li> <li>▪ The offer of housing meets the matching requirements but the client has declined the offer for a reason that SGCH considers to be a personal preference because it does not directly impact on the client's housing needs. Common</li> </ul>

	<p>examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wanting a property made out of brick.</li> <li>○ Wanting gas rather than electricity.</li> <li>○ Not liking the neighbourhood.</li> <li>○ Not liking the cladding, internal or external layout, design, or colour scheme of the property.</li> <li>○ Wanting a bath rather than a shower.</li> <li>○ Wanting a different suburb (where the need for a particular suburb has not been established).</li> <li>○ Wanting a specific street.</li> <li>○ Wanting to live near shops, family, school, church (where the need for a specific location has not been established).</li> <li>○ Wanting a different type of property (house, townhouse, villa or unit).</li> <li>○ Wanting to live on a specific floor of a block of units.</li> <li>○ Wanting a senior's community's property only.</li> <li>○ Wanting SGCH to match them to a property on the basis of the needs of their pet</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The offer of housing meets the matching requirements and the client has declined the offer due to not liking, or being unwilling to accept, the specific requirements of SGCH, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The type or length of lease offered</li> <li>○ Payment of rent in advance or bond at sign up</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Offer withdrawn	<p>The client did not accept the property and SGCH has decided that the client's decision is valid because, based on information provided by the client; the property did not meet their needs. Such information may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A letter and other information provided by the client explaining their reasons for declining an offer and supplying relevant supporting documentation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A Medical Supplement Form</li> <li>○ A letter from their doctor or health care provider.</li> <li>○ A letter from their support provider.</li> <li>○ A letter from their employer.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ SGCH offered the property but now needs it for a client with more urgent needs, or</li> <li>▪ SGCH matched the client to the property but did not provide the details to the client because the client's needs or circumstances had changed, or</li> <li>▪ SGCH matched the client to the property but did not provide the details to the client because they did not meet the eligibility criteria, or</li> <li>▪ The client decided not to accept an offer of a bedsitter, high rise or senior's community's property. SGCH will change Pathways records to show that the client should not be offered this type of property again.</li> <li>▪ The client declined the offer due to the materials facts about</li> </ul>

	the property that were disclosed by SGCH in accordance with the <i>Residential Tenancies Act 2010</i> .
Application suspended	<p>Information from the client demonstrating that they are temporarily in a situation where they are unable to accept an offer due to circumstances beyond their control. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, situations where the client:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is experiencing illness or hospitalisation.</li> <li>▪ Is overseas or on holidays.</li> <li>▪ Cannot terminate a residential tenancy agreement.</li> <li>▪ Is in prison.</li> </ul>

### Timeframes

The whole offer process should be completed within 14 days for general properties and within 28 days for supported properties.