



7.4 Start of Tenancy

Scope

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

Guiding Principles

Tenancies will be commenced in a manner that:

- Establishes a positive and sustainable relationship with tenants.
- Ensures tenants are well informed of their rights and responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* and SGCH policies.
- Ensures the administration of each tenancy will be effective and efficient.

Signing the agreement

Information provided at sign up will complement and reinforce information given during the application and allocation process and throughout the tenancy.

At the time of signing the agreement a new tenant is given:

- A copy of the Residential Tenancy Agreement
- Property Condition Report
- New tenant checklist (in English and a community language, if appropriate)
- SGCH Tenant Handbook
- A full set of keys to the property
- Information about all charges
- A copy of the most recent SGCH newsletter
- SGCH membership information
- Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) information
- Information for non-English speaking tenants
- Appeals and Complaints fact sheet and forms

In accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*, tenancy agreements and property condition reports will be provided to each tenant prior to occupancy, and will clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of the tenant and of SGCH as landlord.

The Residential Tenancy Agreement will be explained to the prospective tenant before they take up occupation and an interpreter will be used where required. The tenancy start date is the same as the date rent is first due.

Supported housing

Under some housing programs support is a condition of the tenancy. Where this is the case, SGCH will explain the support requirements to the tenants and their support workers prior to the tenancy commencing.

Shared housing

Where unrelated adults are sharing common facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and laundries, a tenancy will be granted to each person (or couple) by giving them exclusive rights to occupy their bedroom and the right to use common facilities.

Young people

SGCH will grant tenancies to young people under the age of 18 in their own name, without requiring a guarantor or adding any special conditions.

Term of tenure

For most SGCH tenancies, the tenant will be given a lease agreement with a term of 13 weeks. The lease agreement will also contain a clause for continuation of the tenancy at the end of the 13 weeks unless the tenant or landlord ends the agreement as per the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.

For some supported housing programs, tenants will be given a 13 week agreement which will be reviewed after 10 weeks. SGCH will then sign a new lease agreement for three or six months as negotiated between SGCH, the tenant and their support worker. Fixed term leases will continue to be offered until the tenant no longer requires support to sustain their tenancy and is able to move to independent accommodation.

Rent

When SGCH refers to “rent” on the Residential Tenancy Agreement, it will be the market rent for the property. Tenants who receive a rental rebate based on an assessment of their income will have the assessment and the review process explained to them in a separate letter, and they will be given a copy of how their rebate was calculated. See the Rent policy for an explanation of how rebates are determined.

Charges for utilities

SGCH will collect water usage charges from tenants where there is a metered supply. Any services that are not separately metered will not be charged to the tenant if they are connected in the name of SGCH.

Ending a tenancy

Refer to End of Tenancy policy.

Related documents/resources

- Policy - Translating
- Policy - Rent
- [Community Housing Rent Policy](#)
- Policy – End of Tenancy