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Overview

Purpose	<p>This policy outlines the approach of Salvation Army Housing (SAH) to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocation of vacant properties in its housing programs • successful and sustainable tenancies and communities through the matching of applicants to properties • the level of rent determined for each property and tenant.
Who does this apply to?	All Salvation Army Housing Employees (SAH & SAHV). This policy applies to all housing program properties owned or managed by SAH.
Effective date	13/09/2023

Policy Statement

Policy

Guiding Principals

- SAH aims to ensure a tenant-focused allocation process that:
 - is fair, transparent and equitable
 - relieves households from housing stress
 - takes the needs of prospective tenants into account
 - is in accordance with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations
 - supports the financial viability of SAH's housing programs.
- SAH is committed to promoting successful and sustainable tenancies through the matching applicants to properties. This means that SAH will allocate housing in a way that:
 - gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance.
 - considers the health, safety and support needs of applicants.
 - matches individual housing needs with available properties.
 - supports sustainable and harmonious communities; and
 - works towards always maintaining 100% occupancy across all programs.
- SAH will follow the relevant state and housing programs eligibility requirements when considering access and allocation for prospective tenants.

Approach to Allocation

In allocating housing, SAH will comply with specific program requirements and in doing so will endeavour to:

- Match households to the right house so that an allocation:
 - is the right size for the applicant's household.
 - is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs.
 - assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need.
 - makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by SAH.
 - encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
 - meets any particular expressed needs of the applicant so far as they are known, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers.
- SAH may to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:
 - a high concentration of public and community housing stock in a particular area.
 - a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or building.
 - existing tenancy management issues (or a potential for them to develop).
 - existing neighbourhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
 - a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

Assessment Outcome

- Upon assessment of application and allocation, SAH will be able to make an offer to the successful applicant/s.
- SAH will inform applicants of their right to appeal organisational decisions in the case of dissatisfaction in tenancy allocation.
- SAH understands the need for some tenants to have appropriate support in place in order to manage their tenancies.
- We will establish support agreements with support partners across all states to provide housing for their clients, where an appropriate support plan between the client and the supporting organisation is in place.
- Support agencies will nominate the client/s to be housed by SAH.
- Clients must meet the housing eligibility criteria and any other eligibility criteria will be defined within individual support agreements with each agency.

Property Attributes

SAH provides safe and secure tenancies to all our tenants. When deciding to allocate a property the tenancy manager will look at the following:

- The property suitably meets the needs of the applicant.
- The property has all of any required modifications.
- The property is within the applicant's nominated locational preference or LGA.
- The property has ready access to local amenities, including shops and public transport.
- The property is within the service access area of any required support partners where applicable.
- The property is being allocated to the client with the greatest need but will not be under occupied.
- The property is of a habitable standard required for tenancy.

Determining Allocation

When determining the allocation of a property, SAH will consider the existing agreements in place with respect to the designated uses for the property. Properties will be allocated on the following basis:

Supported Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported Housing properties will be allocated to tenants based on the support provider's nomination rights.• SAH will work proactively with the support provider to allocate properties according to the needs of the tenant (/client).
Social Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAH properties will be allocated to tenants from the relevant jurisdiction's waiting list.• Some properties are allocated to tenants based on nomination rights.
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordable Housing properties will be allocated on need.• Initially, tenants will be assessed for eligibility for the accommodation unit. For eligible applicants, allocations will be according to the selection criteria (which will include an assessment of the unit's affordability for the household).

Decision Making

State Managers have the discretion to approve or revoke approval at any time outside of this policy framework, not including legislative requirements. The reasons for discretion must be documented on the tenant's record.

Housing Allocation

Supported Housing

- Properties will be allocated to support services, whereby they have nomination rights.
- The support services will assess applicants and provide a nomination to SAH, for the clients that they wish to support.
- SAH will accept the nomination of the support service, provided the client meets the following criteria:
 - The support service and SAH believe that the applicant will have a reasonable chance of sustaining a tenancy.
 - The support service and SAH believe that the applicant will participate in the support program offered by the support service.
 - The applicant is currently on the public housing waiting list (or about to lodge an application with the assistance of the support service).
 - The applicant doesn't have an outstanding debt with SAH.
 - SAH believes that the accommodation is suitable for the applicant (and other neighbours).

Social Housing

- Applicants will be sourced from the state's housing register through contact with the local allocations team, who will provide a short list of suitable applicants for SAH to approach.
- Offers will be made to short-listed applicants on the following criteria:
 - Applicant meets the eligibility criteria

- Nominated housing is suitable for applicant
- Priority given to applicants in a priority housing category

Affordable Housing

- Properties that are managed as affordable housing will follow the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) guidelines in the relevant state and will be assessed for eligibility according to the rules of the scheme.
- The gross income limits for eligible households to rent NRAS homes are specified in the NRAS Regulations.
(Note that because these levels are subject to indexation, current levels are different to the figures that were initially specified in the Regulations. Information on current, indexed thresholds is available on the website listed in "References". For NRAS purposes, a household is all tenants of the dwelling. Therefore, the income of all residents as members of the household will be included in the gross income.)
- After commencing tenancies, if household income exceeds the applicable household income limit by 25 per cent or more in two consecutive years, occupants will cease to be an eligible tenant.
- Applicants should not have assets or property which could reasonably be expected to solve their housing situation.
- Affordable Housing will be allocated according to the level of need and the appropriateness of the housing to the applicant's needs.

Eligibility Criteria

Affordable Housing

Criteria for Tenant Selection

After satisfying the mandatory criteria, tenants will be selected on the basis of need. Points will be scored based on the following criteria:

- Income levels
- Reasons for housing in the local area
- Current housing situation
- Suitability to available housing
- Financial circumstances
- Previous tenancy history
- Special Needs group

Income Level

Household income will be classified under one of the following levels:

- Very Low
- Low
- Moderate

Reasons for housing in the local area

- Prospective tenants will be classified according to their connection with the local area.
- Connection with the local area can be based on the following criteria:
 - Currently living in the immediate vicinity of the project
 - Currently working in the immediate vicinity of the project
 - Strong social connection with the immediate area
 - Family unit is in the local area
 - No strong connection with local area
 - Additional points are accrued for ability to satisfy more than one criterion

Current Housing Situation

In order to be eligible for housing, prospective tenant's current housing must be unaffordable, inadequate and/or unsuitable. The suitability of current housing will be assessed against criteria including overcrowding, unsuitable location, unsuitable property type and whether the housing is temporary and/or an insecure tenancy.

Suitability of Available Housing

The structure of the household unit compared to the accommodation unit's configuration is a factor in assessing an application. For example, a single person in a four-bedroom house will score lower than a household of more people.

Financial Circumstances

Prospective tenants' access to other financial means (e.g. Existing property or other assets) will play a role in the assessment of prospective tenants.

Previous Tenancy History

Previous Tenancy History will play a role in the selection of prospective tenants.

Special Needs Groups

There will be additional points provided in the application process for applicants who have special needs.

Supported Housing

- SAH understands the need for some tenants to have appropriate support in place in order to manage their tenancies. We will establish support agreements with support partners across all states to provide housing for their clients, where an appropriate support plan between the client and the supporting organisation is in place. Support agencies will nominate the client/s to be housed by SAH. Clients must meet the housing eligibility criteria and any other eligibility criteria will be defined within individual support agreements with each agency.
- The following process will apply to clients in Supported Housing:
 - Properties will be allocated to support services, whereby they have nomination rights
 - The support services will assess applicants and provide a nomination to SAH, for the clients that they wish to support
- SAH will accept the nomination of the support service, provided the client meets the following criteria:
 - The support service and SAH believe that the applicant will have a reasonable chance of sustaining a tenancy
 - The support service and SAH believe that the applicant will participate in the support program offered by the support service
 - The applicant is currently on the public housing waiting list (or about to lodge an application with the assistance of the support service)
 - The applicant doesn't have an outstanding debt with SAH.
 - The SAH believes that the accommodation is suitable for the applicant (and other neighbours).

Social Housing

- Applicants will be sourced from the state's housing register through contact with the local allocations team, who will provide a short list of suitable applicants for SAH Service to approach.
- Offers will be made to short-listed applicants on the following criteria:
 - Applicant meets the eligibility criteria
 - Nominated housing is suitable for applicant
 - Priority given to applicants in a priority housing category

Transitional Housing

Allocation of transitional housing is coordinated with support vacancies through Local Area Service Networks (LASNs) and Entry Points and/or specialist support providers, either through homelessness assistance Entry Point services or formal joined-up housing and support pathways initiatives, or via inter-service housing and support protocol agreements setting out roles and responsibilities of housing and Support Workers.

Related Documents and References

Related Policy Documents	Complaints, Feedback and Appeals Policy Arrears Management Policy
Related Procedure Documents	Long Term Housing Allocation and Access Procedure (VIC) Allocations – Victorian Housing Registrar (VHR) Procedure Sign Up Procedure Transitional Housing Allocations and Access Procedure (VIC)
Related Supporting Documents	SAHV CH-RH Interview Matrix Letter of Notification of Successful Application Letter of Notification of Unsuccessful Application
Related Legislation	Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
Related Standard	
Related Accreditation	
Other Relevant Documents /Resources	Victorian Housing Register - Register of Interest application May 2022 VHR Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines March 2020 VHR Special Accommodation Requirements March 2022

Definitions

Definitions are located in the [Glossary of Terms and Definitions \(Salvos Dictionary\)](#).

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing	Affordable housing is a broad term describing housing suitable for the needs of a range of low to moderate income households and priced (whether bought or rented) so these households can meet their other essential living costs.
Homelessness Assistance Entry Point Services	are entry points to the homeless system and connect you with a Transitional Housing Manager (THM)
Housing Registrar	The Housing Registrar monitors the performance of prospective Registered Housing Agencies.
Inter-service Housing and Support Protocol Agreements	sets out roles and responsibilities of housing and support workers
Joined-up Housing Program	Housing Pathways (Joined-up) Initiatives Cross-program/government targeted support and housing initiatives assisting with the prevention of homelessness and early intervention for at-risk people with complex needs.
Local Area Service Networks (LASNs)	Local area service networks are formed from the Housing and Community Building Division-funded homelessness assistance services in a local catchment area. Led by Department of Human Services regions, the local area service networks are responsible for implementing Opening Doors in each local catchment area.
National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)	The NRAS aims to increase the supply of new and affordable rental dwellings by providing an annual financial incentive for up to ten years. This incentive is issued to housing providers to provide affordable rental dwellings at least 20 per cent below market rates.

Term	Definition
National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)	Under NRAS, the Australian Government in conjunction with the states and territories is providing financial incentives to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the supply of affordable rental housing • reduce the rental costs for low to moderate income households • encourage the large-scale investment and innovative delivery of affordable rental housing. NRAS is part of the Australian Government’s long-term commitment to improve housing affordability.
Social Housing	Short- and long-term rental housing for those on low incomes who need housing, especially those who have recently experienced homelessness, family violence or have other special needs.
Specialist Support Providers	Specialist support services include community services, allied health services and other hospital support service, such as the use of psychiatrists, psychologists, physiotherapists, social workers, specialist nurses/nurse counsellors, cancer support or volunteer support groups, individual peer support services, counsellor/bereavement counsellor and pastoral care workers.
Supported Housing	Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) provides specialised housing such as shared supported accommodation or community residential units. Supported Residential Services (SRS) provide accommodation and support for people who need help in everyday life, for instance people who are frail or have a disability. Supported Independent Living (SIL) type of help or supervision with daily tasks to help you live as independently as possible, while building your skills.
Tenancy History	the running history period of a tenant's occupancy with a Community Housing provider
Transitional Housing	Program to provide housing on a short-term basis to people at risk of homelessness seeking long term housing options (generally from three to eighteen months)

Document Control Information

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	13/09/2023	Combination of entities Allocation and Access Policy & Allocations Policy to create one national policy
	01/08/2024	Updated onto new Policy Template