

Policy – Transitional Housing Management

Policy Statement

BeyondHousing will assist clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to establish and maintain housing through the provision of assessment and planning services, housing advocacy, housing establishment funds and transitional housing.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline BeyondHousing's approach to:

- Initial Assessment and Planning
- Allocation
- Rent
- Rental Management
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Housing Establishment Fund (HEF)

Scope

This policy applies to all clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or renters living in designated transitional housing properties.

Policy Detail

The Transitional Housing Management (THM) program is coordinated with the Homelessness Support Services Program (HSSP) to resolve the housing and support needs of clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The aim of the THM program is to:

- Provide short term housing assistance to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Assist people in housing crisis to establish and/or maintain appropriate, safe, and sustainable housing through the provision of transitional housing, assessment and planning services, housing advocacy and housing establishment funds where required.
- Provide tenancy administration for transitional housing.

BeyondHousing will:

- Comply with its contractual, legal, and regulatory obligations relating to transitional housing.
- Manage all client and renter needs fairly and flexibly.
- Make decisions in an open and transparent manner that can be reviewed or appealed in accordance with BeyondHousing's Compliments and Complaints Policy

- Comply with the [Homelessness Services Assistance Guidelines](#).
- Comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic) through following procedures that consider human rights as outlined in the Charter.

Initial Assessment & Planning

Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) workers are responsible for:

- Screening – determines whether the clients seeking assistance are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Initial Assessment – determines the most immediate homelessness related needs and risks, options for safe housing for the night, basic needs such as food or hygiene, indications of need for specialist support and risks to client's safety or to the safety of others.
- Response – a course of action is developed to access services as required. This includes planning, matching resources to client need and referral to appropriate housing and support. Response may include, however not limited to:
 - Determine eligibility for transitional housing and assist the client to apply.
 - Assistance to secure and or maintain private rental.
 - Determine eligibility for priority access to social housing and assist the client to apply.
 - Financial assistance for housing related needs.
 - Safety planning.
 - Housing advice, information, and referral.
 - Advocacy.
 - Assistance with exit planning.
 - Monitoring while the client is waiting for other services.
 - Emotional support.

Allocation

Allocation of transitional housing is coordinated through Local Area Service Networks (LASN's), allocation meetings. Housing Support Services Programs (HSSP) will ensure that the highest priority referral from each service is sent to BeyondHousing 48 hours prior to an allocation meeting.

BeyondHousing will:

- Inform LASN members and allied services of vacant properties and when the allocation meeting will be held.
- Utilise the state-wide Opening Doors Prioritisation tool, to best match the vacancy to client needs, with other LASN members.

Rent

The following table details how BeyondHousing calculate rent for transitional housing:

Household Type	Rent Rate
General	25% of total household income plus 15% of Family Payments
Young People (15 to 17 years – single)	\$15 per week rent \$25 per week utilities
Young People (18 to 25 years – single) Youth Allowance and Newstart Allowance	\$15 per week rent Utilities paid by Renter

- Total household income is determined by the [Department of Families, Fairness and Housing \(DFFH\) Assessable Income Guidelines](#).
- Total household income includes income from all sources; gross wages/salaries, income from investments, Centrelink payments, child support payments, overseas pensions, and WorkCover/TAC/other compensation payments.
- If renters aged 15-17 years receive a part benefit due to wages from part time work, or if they have dependents, the full rent rate of rent will apply (25% of total household income plus 15% of family payments)
- If a renter receiving Youth or Newstart Allowance turns 18 years old (when residing in transitional housing) rent will continue to be charged at \$15 per week, however the renter is required to transfer utilities into their own name.

Rental Management

The THM program provides secure partially furnished short-medium term housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

While in transitional housing, BeyondHousing will:

- Work with the renter and their support worker/advocate towards a long-term housing outcome.
- Assist the renters to understand their rights and responsibilities when renting a property.
- Work within the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (RTA).
- Provide skilled Property Managers that:
 - Support the tenancy and manage the property.
 - Manage rent payments.
 - Oversee property maintenance and repairs.
 - Furnish the property.
 - Provide a rent reference at the end of the tenancy if the renter wishes to apply for private rental.
 - Explain what is expected under the RTA and how to maintain the property.

Repairs and maintenance

- BeyondHousing will respond to urgent and non-urgent repairs according to the RTA.
- Consumer Affairs distinguishes between [urgent and non-urgent repairs](#). All urgent repairs will be completed within 24 hours of notification.
- During Office Hours - Renters are to contact their Property Manager or the local BeyondHousing office immediately if they require urgent repairs.
- After Hours - If an urgent repair is required after hours in transitional housing, the renter must contact the Housing Call Centre on 13 11 72. This number is for after-hours emergencies only.
- For all other non-urgent repairs, renters are encouraged to contact their Property Manager who will arrange for the repairs or maintenance works to be completed.

Housing Establishment Fund (HEF)

HEF aims to:

- Provide people who are homeless or at risk with direct assistance in accessing private rental housing and securing private tenancies at risk.
- Assist people who are homeless to access appropriate and safe overnight accommodation.
- Promote exit points out of homelessness services and into long-term affordable housing.
- Target resources to those in greatest housing need.

BeyondHousing will ensure HEF is:

- Provided to maximise client choice, ensuring they have full knowledge and control over all decisions that impact on their lives.
- Flexible and focused on the individual needs of clients and delivers appropriate outcomes.
- Clients are treated equitably and with respect regardless of age, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, language, income status or source of referral.
- Delivered in accordance with the [Homelessness Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding](#).
- Assess eligibility for HEF against the income and asset eligibility criteria for access to public housing. Click [here](#) for a copy of the criteria. HEF may be provided on a discretionary basis to assist applicants who do not meet the income eligibility criteria but are in significant housing difficulty.

All requests for HEF will be assessed by an Initial Assessment and Planning Worker.

Human Rights Considerations

In making decisions, BeyondHousing must give proper consideration to the relevant human rights in accordance with the Charter (see section 38(1)).

This consideration should include the potential impact the proposed action we are undertaking may have on the renters and their household member's rights under the Charter.

Rights under the Charter relevant to renters include:

- Section 8 – Right to recognition and equality before the law. Renters should not be discriminated against, for example, by being denied quiet enjoyment of their rented premises because of particular attributes (e.g., age, disability, race, sex).
- Section 13 – Privacy and reputation. A renter’s privacy, family, and home should not be unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with.
- Section 17 – Protection of families and children. This right provides that families are the fundamental group unit of society and are entitled to be protected by society and the State. This will be relevant, for example, when considering ending tenancies.
- Section 19 – Cultural rights. Renters with a particular cultural, religious, racial, or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy their culture, to declare and practise their religion and to their language. Renters who are Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community, to enjoy their identity and culture, to maintain and use their language, to maintain their kinship ties, and to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material, and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

Related:

Policy

- Compliments and Complaints
- Contractors
- Maintenance & Repairs
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Sustaining Tenancies
- Stakeholder Participation
- Rental Management
- Outreach and Home Visits

Documents

- Homelessness Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding May 2014
- Housing Services Processes
- OHS Process Outreach and Home Visits
- Opening Doors Practice Manual (THM properties only)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies – click [here](#)
- VHR Allocation Framework – click [here](#)
- DFFH Vacant Maintenance Guide – RTA Update 29 March 2021

Legislation

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) Vic
- Housing Act (1983) Vic
- Residential Tenancies Act (1997) Vic
- Residential Tenancies Regulations (2021) Vic
- Residential Tenancies Rooming House Standards 2012
- Child Wellbeing & Safety Act (2005) Vic
- Children, Youth & Families Act (2005) Vic
- VCAT Act (1998) Vic
- All Regulations, Standards and Codes of Practice referenced in the above Acts.

Approver: Celia Adams (CEO) Signed: 	Date Reviewed: May 2021
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