

Policy Title	SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
Procedure Number	P2021-012
Business Unit	BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
Date of Adoption	24 NOVEMBER 2021
Resolution Number	NA
Review Date	30 SEPTEMBER 2022
Date Repealed	
CM Document #	

References:

Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)
 Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)
 Housing Act 2003 (Qld)
 Housing Regulation 2015 (Qld)
 Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (Qld)
 Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009 (Qld)

Corporate Plan:

Reliable and Affordable Essential Services

A critical component of Tenancy Management is the process of selecting applicants.

Eligibility for Housing

- The Council Housing Program provides rental housing primarily for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and individuals living on Deed of Grant In Trust land.
- Housing is usually provided to applicants in accordance with their level of need on a wait-turn basis.
- Applicants must satisfy *all primary criteria* to be eligible for Council housing.
- Each applicant's full circumstances will be examined to determine the level of housing need.

Primary Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents.
- Applicants must provide evidence of a residency period of not less than 24 months in the Northern Peninsula Area.
- Applicants must be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.



Exception

Where a Non- Indigenous applicant is the registered care giver of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, they may be eligible for housing. This is to ensure that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are not disadvantaged through homelessness.

➤ **Applicants must have Queensland residency**

Applicants who will become tenants and sign the Residential Tenancy Agreement must demonstrate that they live in Queensland. People who will not sign the tenancy agreement do not have to satisfy this criterion. That means people who are not Queensland residents can live in the home as residents or dependents but cannot take responsibility for the tenancy by signing the tenancy agreement.

The Queensland residency requirement may be waived where interstate applicants can demonstrate and provide evidence of a definite need to move to Queensland. For example:

- a person with a disability who has lost crucial family support or is unable to coordinate housing and support services
- a person who must provide support for a family member
- a person who is an employee of a business and relocates to Queensland
- a person whose homeland is Queensland but cultural/family responsibilities required them to live outside of Queensland in the recent period, prior to applying

➤ **Applicants must have an Independent Income**

At least one applicant who will become a tenant and sign the Residential Tenancy Agreement must have an income to ensure the applicant can afford rent and other tenancy costs. An independent income may mean a Centrelink payment or a Community Development Employment Program income.

➤ **Proof of identity**

Applicants must have two original and valid (not expired) proof of identification documents with their application.

Ensure that either document provides:

- the Queensland address that is their place of residence
- the applicant's signature and date of birth
- a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for all applicants providing Centrelink documentation as proof of identification.

Some acceptable proof of identity documents

- Full Birth Certificate or Extract of Birth Certificate or Birth Card as provided by other state Registries
- Drivers Licence with photograph
- Queensland Shooters Licence with photo
- Passport
- 18 Plus Card with photo
- Apprenticeship indenture papers
- Australian Marriage Certificate



NORTHERN PENINSULA AREA REGIONAL COUNCIL
SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
P2021-012

- Australian Taxation Notice of Assessment
- Bank, credit or ATM card containing signature (credit cards must not be photocopied)
- Centrelink correspondence, Pension Card or Health Benefit Card showing the clients name and Customer Reference Number (CRN)
- Divorce papers
- Medicare Card
- Life Insurance Policies
- Occupational registration documents
- Other recognised photographic ID (security identification, Cash Converters Card)
- Recent bank statements, bankbook, Credit Union or Building Society statement showing recent transactions
- Referrals or reports from incorporated organisations, e.g. social welfare bodies, trade unions, employers or schools
- Student Card with photo

Assessing Applications

Applicants must apply for housing assistance using the common application form.

- Applications are stamped with their "date received: - the date the application is lodged with Council.
- All applications are assessed, against a set of eligibility criteria to make sure people are eligible for housing assistance, and that housing is provided to the people who most need it.
- All matters related to applications, tenancy management and other housing-related matters should be free of conflicts of interest and decided in a fair and transparent manner.
- All tenancy and housing-related decisions can be reviewed and appealed, either through Council appeal processes, or through -the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

If they are deemed eligible, applications are categorised into levels of need and go onto a waiting list for housing. When their turn comes, applicants will be allocated a house based on the household size, household composition and the applicant's needs and choices about location and the type of housing they want to live in. Refer to 2.5 Allocation of Housing.

Housing Entitlement

Council will attempt to match client needs with a house which is appropriate to the client's housing needs and bedroom requirements and is well located.

Bedroom entitlements are assessed by considering the basic entitlement in the table below.

Type of housing	Household Type
One-bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single person • Couple
Two-bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 single people sharing • Single/Couple with 1 child • Single/Couple with 2 children of same sex and less than seven years age difference, at the applicant's request.
Three-bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single/Couple with 2 children of same sex and less than seven years age difference • single people sharing • Single/Couple with 2-4 children
Four-bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 single people sharing • Single/Couple with 3 - 6 children
Five bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 single people sharing • Single/Couple with 4 - 8 children
Six bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 single people sharing • Single/Couple with 5 - 10 children
Seven bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 single people sharing • Single/Couple with 6-12 children

Entitlements can be approved outside of the basic guidelines for the following reasons:

- **Pregnancy** - If a pregnancy of three months or more has been confirmed, the bedroom entitlement must cater for a new child of either sex. Evidence of pregnancy in the form of advice from a medical practitioner should be provided unless the applicant is visibly pregnant.
- **Household members over 18 years of age** - Single household members over 18 years of age are entitled to a separate bedroom. Couples aged over 18 years are only entitled to one bedroom.
- **Families with regular access to children** - Families who have access to children on a part-time but regular basis e.g. every second weekend or during school holidays, should have their bedroom entitlements assessed as if the children are permanent residents in the household. Evidence is required:
 - copy of the court order outlining the arrangements, or
 - any other relevant legal documents, or
 - statutory declaration from both the applicant and the main carer verifying regularity of visits and the details of the children (number, ages and sexes).



NORTHERN PENINSULA AREA REGIONAL COUNCIL
SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
P2021-012

- **Live-in carers** - Applicants with a disability or illness are entitled to an extra bedroom to house a live-in carer who stays on a part-time but regular basis.
- **Clients with a disability** - Clients with specific needs are entitled to an extra bedroom/s in addition to their basic entitlements if they have special health, equipment or support needs. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a special room for large equipment, e.g. electric wheelchair, dialysis machines, hoists for medical/disability reasons. This also includes an extra room to store mobility scooters if there is no sufficient space external to the property to store this scooter.
 - a separate bedroom for an adult with a disability, a child with a disability, or for a continuing illness. An extra room can also be used for a spouse or other family member who cannot sleep in the same room due to disturbed nights.
- **Special Circumstances** - Bedroom entitlements may be approved outside the usual policy to ensure the efficient and effective use of Council housing. For example: A single person may be allocating a two bedroom house because there is a limited supply of appropriately sized houses. Consideration should be given to the impact of such an approval on other applicants and their waiting times for housing. Care must be taken not to discriminate against other applicants.

Allocation of Housing

Allocation of housing is made to applicants based on a priority system. Applicants with the highest needs (ie. in the very high or high need categories) are offered assistance ahead of applicants with lower housing needs (ie moderate need or lower need categories), irrespective of how much longer lower need applicants have been waiting for assistance.

Applications within each category have equal priority and are listed in order of application date.

Vacant properties are to be offered to the first household in the highest category on the wait list for the specific type of housing whose needs would be met by the property.

Offers of housing can be made from the following four categories:

1. **Very High Need** - applicants who are experiencing -
 - a. Homelessness
 - b. Child safety issues
 - c. Disability or medical needs
2. **High Need** - applicants living within the community whose current housing situation is overcrowded.
3. **Moderate Need** - applicants currently living outside of the community who are applying to relocate to the community.
4. **Lower Need** - applicants who live in housing in the community that matches their needs ie. Bedroom size and amenities.

Where a vacant property has disability modifications, it is to be offered to the first applicant on the wait list whose needs are best met by the modifications.



**NORTHERN PENINSULA AREA REGIONAL COUNCIL
SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
P2021-012**

When a property is identified as being available for short term leasing due to planned redevelopment of the property it is to be offered to applicant/s that are most likely to be able to move when the property is required. Applicants who have a need for disability modifications are excluded when identifying suitable applicants for short term redevelopment properties.

Where a vacant property has no disability modifications and has not been identified as being available for short term leasing due to planned redevelopment, it is to be offered to applicants in the following order:

1. Council Initiated Transfers
2. Very high needs applicants in order of date of application
3. High need applicants in order of date of application
4. Moderate need applicants in order of date of application
5. Lower need applicants in order of date of application

Offers of Housing

Accepting an offer of housing is a significant decision for an applicant to make. The offer of housing process should best match applicant's needs to the available property.

Applicants are able to decline the offer of a property if they have a valid reason. Some examples of valid reasons to reject a property include:

- A health problem or disability
- No access to specific support or medical services (including rehabilitation services).
- Difficulty reaching place of employment due to location of the housing and/or lack of accessible public transport.
- Lack of access to education facilities offering programs for people with special needs or a disability.
- Not wishing to accept a house in which a relative has died.
- The housing type offered isn't one the applicant requested, or isn't in the place the applicant requested.
- Applicant refuses because of current private rental lease.
- Applicant cannot afford the rent.

If an applicant invalidly rejects an offer of housing, they lose their waiting time within that category and their application is placed at the bottom of the category.

If an applicant rejects two properties with no valid reasons, their application may be cancelled.

If an applicant who has a very high need (Category 1) or high need (Category 2) rejects an offer of housing for invalid reasons, consideration must be given as to whether additional verification of their housing need is required.



**NORTHERN PENINSULA AREA REGIONAL COUNCIL
SOCIAL HOUSING APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
P2021-012**

SignupProcess

When an eligible person has accepted an offer of housing they must sign a formal tenancy agreement. The forms to be used are those recommended under the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*. These forms are available through the Residential Tenancies Authority website, a general tenancy agreement *Form 18a* needs to be completed along with an Entry Condition Report (*Form 1a*). An information booklet – Renting a House or Unit in Queensland (*Form 17a*) should also be provided to the tenant.

The agreement establishes the formal tenancy arrangements between the tenant and the Council as Housing Provider and marks the beginning of the tenant/lessor relationship.

As the Residential Tenancy Agreement is legally binding it is important that tenants have an opportunity to read the agreement and are aware of their rights and responsibilities and the Council's rights and responsibilities before signing.

At the commencement of every tenancy, the condition of the dwelling is set out in the Entry Condition Report which should be completed with the Tenancy Agreement.

Approved:

Susan Law
Chief Executive Officer
Date: