



Tenant Access to Support

Policy Category	1. Tenancy	Policy Number	1.26
Author	Cliff Jones – Chief Executive Officer	Board Approval Date	23 May 2019
Position Responsible	Housing Services Manager	Scheduled Review Date	May 2020

Purpose:

This policy confirms and outlines tenants' and applicants' right to access a range of necessary support services. It applies to all tenancies managed by Homes Out West (HOW).

Policy:

HOW shall ensure that tenants have access to appropriate support to assist them to maintain safe, secure and sustainable tenancies that enhance their lives.

Relevant Service Standards:	National Community Housing Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard 3.1 – Tenant Rights Legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW) • Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010 (NSW) • Housing Act 2001 • Community Housing Providers (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012 (NSW) National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) Performance Outcome and Performance Requirement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Outcome 1: Tenant and Housing Services
Related HOW Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Access to Advocacy Policy
Related HOW Forms & Internal Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Plan • Support Agreement • Support Referral Register • Resource Directory

Procedure and Guidelines:

Homes Out West (HOW) will refer tenants and applicants to the appropriate support agencies to provide support to tenants to establish or maintain their tenancy.

A range of support agencies providing a range of services are available to tenants for referral including:

- Drug and alcohol counselling
- Gambling counselling
- Mental health services
- Home care support
- Meals on Wheels
- Financial counselling
- Advocacy support
- Family counselling
- Men's Behaviour Change counselling
- Counselling/support for victims/survivors of domestic and family violence
- General counselling/support
- Specialist homelessness services (for tenants at risk of homelessness due to tenancy issues)
- Youth support
- Loss and grief counselling

Current available support agencies are listed in the HOW Resource Directory which will be maintained and revised at least twice per year to ensure all current services are included and contact information is correct.

The appropriateness/need for support services will be assessed by Client Service Officers (CSO) as part of the following processes:

- During tenancy lease sign-up
- While conducting routine property inspections
- While processing or handling complaints
- While managing breaches including rent arrears

CSO's will also assess whether a referral would be appropriate if concerns are raised with HOW about a tenant and if a tenant/household member seeks support. The CSO will make the referral directly to the support service if this assessment indicates it is appropriate to do so and the tenant authorises it.

Where the services of a support agency are indicated, the CSO will provide information outlining the services available and contact details to the tenant and encourage them to make contact. All referrals will be recorded in a Tenancy Plan if they relate directly to sustaining the tenancy that is otherwise at risk. The Tenancy Plan will also be attached to the tenancy in Greentree.. Referrals will also be recorded on the Support Referral Register for reporting purposes.

When support by a support agency relates to sustaining a tenancy, HOW will seek to enter into a Support Agreement that defines roles and formalises the support to be provided. The tenant will be included in the negotiation and sign-off of the Support Agreement. This will be attached to the tenancy in Greentree. All tenants in transitional housing will be required to sign a Support Agreement with HOW and the relevant specialist homelessness service. The length of any support Agreement will be dependant upon individual circumstances.

Where referrals are frequently made to a particular support agency, consideration will be given to negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the agency to define and formalise the partnership.

Current compliance benchmarks for the organisation include a target that 10% of all new tenancies are supported.

