Community housing Eligibility guideline

Government of South Australia
SA Housing Authority

Guideline and Procedure details

Name and version number: Community Housing Eligibility guideline v1

Name of applicable policy: Community Housing Eligibility policy

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Overview of changes and development

This is your historical record of how this document was developed. Include information about what's changed and why, who was consulted and when:

- Guideline developed as a result of implementation of the Single Housing Register
- Renamed from Eligibility procedure to clarify the Single Housing Register requirements and superseding of the Community Housing Customer Register
- Moved to SA Housing Authority template
- Added process on registering for housing, previously covered by Registering community housing customers and managing vacancies procedure. Added that community housing providers can register customers for community, public, and Aboriginal housing on the Single Housing Register portal to Connect.
- Removed statement that customer has to go to community housing provider to be registered for community housing only. Housing SA can register a customer for community housing only.
- Added link to new updated Registration of Interest (ROI) form.
- Added new information on difference between public, community, Aboriginal Community housing types.
- Clarified that community housing providers should only take assessable types of income into consideration when determining eligibility for all tenancy types. The Single Housing Register only includes income headings for income types that are assessable.
- Added processes for registrations that are incomplete.
- Added that the Single Housing Register automatically cancels ineligible registrations after 30 days.
- Added that community housing Managers can override certain eligibility criteria eg property ownership, living in South Australia.
- Added that the Single Housing Register automatically assesses the number of bedrooms the customers are eligible for in line with the Occupancy standards on housing.sa.gov.au but this can be overridden.

- Added that customers who are the only household member choose whether they'd accept bedsitter housing on the ROI form.
- Added that customers can be approved for an extra bedroom or specific suburb in line with housing needs assessment process if they confirm they need it in line with the Community housing eligibility policy.
- Added that if the customer has asked for other essential housing requirements on their ROI, only record it in the Single Housing Register if it's reasonable and there's a specific need for it.
- Area maps updated so there's only one set for both public and community housing.
- Added sections on Former Housing SA Tenants and Exclusion because of Antisocial Behaviour – these sections added for more clarity about how Housing SA service exclusion works for public housing and Aboriginal housing registrations.

Community housing Eligibility guideline

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Eligibility guideline

People may be eligible to register their interest in community housing in line with the Community housing eligibility policy and this Community housing eligibility guideline.

This guideline applies to:

- providers registered under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing including volunteer member-tenant managed providers who have a community housing agreement (eg Master Agreement) with the South Australian Housing Trust or the SA Housing Authority
- non-government organisations which have housing leases with the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) which reference this policy, including specialised housing programs
- community housing tenants transferring to a separate social housing provider

In relation to SAHT Transfer programs for example Better Places Strong Communities (BPSC) and Renewing our Streets and Suburbs (ROSAS):

- This guideline applies to all registrants allocated to properties *managed by a provider* under a concurrent lease associated with a Transfer program. This includes:
  - o properties owned by SAHT where management responsibilities have been formally transferred to a provider (eg via transfer deed and concurrent lease)
  - o properties developed and owned by the provider, as a result of development activities under the Transfer Program
- This guideline does not apply to registrants allocated to properties *under SAHT management*, and specifically does not apply to new build properties developed by a community housing provider under the Transfer Program, where ownership is (or is planned to be) transferred to SAHT. SAHT is responsible for all these initial allocations, and providers cannot make housing offers for these properties, unless and until the management of that property (and any in situ tenants) is subsequently transferred to a provider. If SAHT transfers the property and tenancy to a provider for ongoing management, then this guideline would apply to all subsequent allocations by the provider.

This guideline does not apply to internal tenant transfers within individual community housing provider portfolios. Internal transfers are covered by the provider's own policies.

1   Register interest in housing

Customers register their interest in housing by:
- completing a Registration of interest in housing form
- providing proof of income and identity for everyone included in their registration aged 16 and over with an independent income
- including any other necessary information

- returning all documents to the community housing provider or Housing SA

Customers wishing to register their interest in community housing managed by volunteer member-tenant managed providers must complete a [Registration of Interest form](#) and submit it to their primary contact organisation.   If the customer or the volunteer member-tenant managed provider want Housing SA to manage that registration, any Housing SA office or the Housing SA Contact Centre will be able to provide registration assistance. Further information is available at https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing/public-and-community-housing/Volunteer-member-tenant-managed-providers

The provider:
- returns an incomplete form, for example it isn't signed, to the customer along with a letter informing the customer why the form has been returned
- contacts a customer who indicates they're at risk to action accordingly
- processes registrations in the Single Housing Register
- uploads all completed documents to 'Client documents' in the Single Housing Register. SAHT is responsible for digital copies in the SHR and each provider is responsible for any hard copies in compliance with the State Record Act and other applicable requirements.

Registrations are current until either:
- the customer accepts an offer of housing
- they're deferred
- they're cancelled

2   Types of housing and housing providers

Customers are registered for all types of housing and with all the housing providers they're eligible for and interested in.

Customers can choose to register for specific types of housing, for example they only want to register for public housing; or they can register for all types available, that is, public, community and Aboriginal housing, subject to eligibility.

Customers can choose to exclude or nominate specific housing providers, for example they only want to register with a specific community housing provider.

A list of community housing providers and volunteer member tenant managed providers (housing cooperatives) is available online at https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing/public-and-community-housing

Each type of housing has a rehousing list which is a subset of the overall waitlist. It includes registrations for that type of housing, for example the 'GEN Public and Aboriginal housing' rehousing list includes customers registered for public and Aboriginal housing.

2.1   Public and Aboriginal housing

Public and Aboriginal housing is managed by Housing SA. A provider can register a customer for public and/or Aboriginal housing if the customer chooses this.

Aboriginal housing is specifically for people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. Customers are eligible for public and Aboriginal housing in line with the Housing SA Eligibility for housing policy. Registrations of interest in public and Aboriginal housing are placed on the 'GEN Public and Aboriginal housing' rehousing list.

If the customer registers for public and Aboriginal housing (whether they register for community housing as well or not), Housing SA is their primary contact organisation.

If a community housing provider is registering a client that they wish to be considered for a new build property that has been developed under the Transfer program (ROSAS or BPSC), and if the property is to be transferred to SAHT ownership (before possibly being leased back to the CHP under the concurrent lease), then the customer must register for public housing and must meet SAHT eligibility criteria. (The Authority will consider the recommendation by the provider, but is responsible for allocation decisions).

2.2   Community housing

Registered community housing providers are independent non-government organisations that provide and manage community housing under the Community Housing Provider (National Law) (South Australia) Act 2013.

Customers are eligible for community housing in line with the Community Housing eligibility policy.

Registrations of interest in community housing are placed on the 'CHP Community housing' rehousing list.

If a customer only registers for community housing, the community housing provider they register with is their primary contact organisation.

2.3   Housing cooperatives

Housing cooperatives, also known as volunteer member-tenant managed providers, are managed by members who are usually also tenants. Tenants actively participate in running the housing cooperative, including:

- addressing safety and legal matters
- selecting tenants and members
- maintaining and managing the properties and tenancies

Customers are eligible for community housing in line with the community housing eligibility policy.

Registrations of interest in housing cooperatives are placed on the 'COOP Housing co-operative' rehousing list.

If a customer only registers for a housing cooperative, their primary contact organisation is either:

- the housing cooperative they register with
- the housing provider which manages registrations on behalf of the housing cooperative, for example Housing SA or a community housing provider

3   Proving eligibility

Customers must provide proof of eligibility when they register for housing. The provider confirms that the customer is eligible in line with the Community housing Eligibility policy.

Community housing providers should only take assessable types of income into consideration when determining eligibility for all tenancy types. The Single Housing Register only includes income headings for income types that are assessable.

Community housing providers can use the override function in the Single Housing Register to enable customers in Category 1 and 2 to be registered. For example – for customers who are leaving a domestic abuse situation.

If the customer's eligible, send them a Registration of interest eligible letter.

If a customer's not eligible, send them a Registration of interest ineligible letter. The Single Housing Register automatically cancels an ineligible registration 30 days from the date it was assessed in the Single Housing Register.

If a customer is also registered for public and Aboriginal housing, they can also register for low demand housing.

3.1   Living in South Australia

Proof a customer's living in South Australia may include:

- letters or bills addressed to them at a South Australian address

- a driver's licence with a South Australian address
- any other document that satisfactorily demonstrates they're living in South Australia

If the person is not currently living in South Australia they can register their interest in community housing if they're approved for Category 1 and a Community Housing Manager approves it.

3.2   Independent income

Customers must have a minimum amount of income paid directly to them, also known as an independent income. If the person does not have an independent income, they can still register their interest if:

- they are in the process of applying or getting an independent income – for example they are exiting prison and have applied for an income from Centrelink, leaving the family home to study, recently arrived refugee
- they cannot stay where they are living – for example for health or safety reasons, and cannot access any other forms of housing
- they are under the Guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department of Child Protection and they are aged 15 or over but will provide proof of an independent income when they move from care to independent living.

In these circumstances a Community Housing Manager approves the registration and the community housing provider can offer the person a short-term lease agreement for up to three months, subject to them obtaining an independent income.

3.3   Income and Asset limits

Only include assessable types of income when assessing whether a customer meets the income and asset limits. The Single Housing Register only includes income headings for income types that are assessable.

If the customer shares an asset with someone who isn't on the registration, assess it at half its value, except if the customer provides written confirmation the asset's shared differently, for example as specified in a court order. If the customer can provide proof they very recently sold a property, include the value of its sale in their asset limits.

Customers who don't meet the income and asset limits can only register if they're eligible for Category 1 or 2. A Community Housing Manager approves the registration.

3.4   Secondary households

There may be more than one household in a single registration of interest – for example a couple with a dependent child and a financially independent elderly parent.

All household groups in the registration must meet the income and asset limits applicable to their household type – that is, meet the income limits for both a couple with one child, and for

a single person. If one of the household groups does not meet the income limits, all household groups in the registration are ineligible.

3.5   Residential property

Customers who own or partly own residential property can only register for community housing if they confirm they have exceptional circumstances in line with the Community housing Eligibility policy – for example temporary need, relationship breakdown or domestic abuse.

Where they own a property but it is for sale, a short term lease is to be offered – for example three months, with the sale of property listed as a key review criterion for the lease. Further lease extensions may be offered until the property is sold but must not exceed a 12-month period.

3.6   Residential property owner with disabilities

A person does not have to dispose of their interests in a residential property until their family moves out of the property, provided they meet all the below conditions:

- they have a disability
- they jointly own the property
- their family still live in the property
- they have to leave the property as a result of an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessment, or an assessment funded or organised through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), or equivalent professional assessment.

3.7   Additional eligibility criteria

A community housing provider may apply additional eligibility criteria which must be clearly articulated in its own policies and procedures – for example where a person is self-employed and meets the eligibility criteria based on a low taxable income, there might be additional criteria in relation to total business turnover, to make sure housing remains targeted to those most in need.

If a person is to be allocated to a Supported or Supportive Tenancy Type, or a property under the Specialised Housing Program they must also meet specific eligibility criteria associated with the relevant program.

4   Tenants and other occupants

4.1   Current tenants and other occupants

Current Housing SA or community housing tenants aren't eligible to register for public, community or Aboriginal housing except if they're housed on a short-term lease, for example through the Homelessness Supportive Housing Program.

Partners of current Housing SA or community housing tenants aren't eligible to register for public, community or Aboriginal housing while they're living with the tenant, except if either:

- they need to leave because of domestic abuse (for guidance see the Housing SA Domestic Abuse policy)
- they want to leave because the relationship has broken down and they can verify it, for example provide evidence of separate Centrelink incomes

Other Housing SA or community housing occupants, including the tenant's children, can register for public, Aboriginal or community housing at any time provided they're eligible.

4.2   Former Housing SA tenants

If a former Housing SA tenant had a lease agreement ended by Housing SA for reasons other than antisocial behaviour, the Single Housing Register displays a 'Service Exclusion' key detail on their customer record.

They can register but won't be offered housing by Housing SA except in line with the Housing SA Allocations guideline.

4.3   Exclusion because of antisocial behaviour

Housing SA tenants and other occupants may be excluded from registering their interest in housing in line with the Housing SA Antisocial behaviour policy.

If a former Housing SA tenant or other occupant contributed to serious or moderate antisocial behaviour, the Single Housing Register:

- displays a 'Service Exclusion' key detail on their customer record
- automatically answers 'Yes' to the 'Antisocial behaviour' application question, when they're registered
- automatically assesses the customer as ineligible for public or Aboriginal housing, when they're registered

A Housing SA Operations Manager can approve accepting their registration for public or Aboriginal housing, if it's approved by a SA Housing Authority Director. A Community Housing Manager can't approve the registration.

5   Customers in other situations

5.1   Customers in prison

Customers who are in prison can register if they meet the below conditions:

- the prison confirms in writing the customer's identity and that they're incarcerated
- they're otherwise eligible for housing

They don't need to provide proof of income or identity until they're released.

Get confirmation of the prisoner's release date from the prison to enable the prisoner to be assessed for a higher category up to 3 months before their release.

Prisoners on remand can only be assessed for a higher category when they're released. The customer or their support worker is responsible for telling the community housing provider about any changes to their circumstances, for example a change in their release date.

5.2 Natural disasters

Undertake a Housing Needs Assessment for victims of natural disasters – for example fire, flood. Further details are in the CH Housing Needs Assessment guideline.

6 Property types, size and areas

Customers are registered for all property types. The number of bedrooms they're eligible for is automatically determined by the Single Housing Register in line with the Occupancy standards, however this can be overridden in the shortlisting process.

If the customer's registering their interest in public and Aboriginal housing, register them for a bedsit if they're the only person on the registration and they indicate they would accept an offer of a bedsit. Bedsits are small public housing units with a combined lounge and bedroom.

Customers select at least one area from the country and metropolitan area maps.

Customers can be approved for an extra bedroom or housing in a specific suburb in line with the Community Housing – housing needs assessment guideline if they confirm they need it, for example they need an extra bedroom so that children can stay with them, or because of medical or mobility requirements, or because they have a disability and require room in their home for the provision of 24/7 support.

If a customer states they have other essential housing requirements on their Registration of interest form, record it in the Single Housing Register if:
- it's reasonable
- there's a specific need for it
- the supply or demand for housing stock permits it

Make sure the customer is aware that:
- limiting the house size, area or housing preferences they register for can limit the offers of housing they're made

- housing providers may not be able to accommodate their request if suitable housing isn't available

7   Assessing a customer's housing need

Identify a customer's:
- current housing situation, how long they can stay there, and why it is not suitable
- where they have lived over the last three years, and why they left
- why they have not been able to find, access or maintain other housing options
- housing options and services that may be available and appropriate for them to meet their immediate needs – for example refer them to Housing SA for bond and rent assistance (where applicable).

If a person is considered to be in urgent housing need, complete a Housing Needs Assessment interview to assess the household's level of housing need. Registrants and support organisations can submit a Housing Needs Assessment form and request an interview. For details refer to the Community Housing – Housing Needs Assessment guideline.

There are three parts to the Housing Needs Assessment interview:
1. an individual needs assessment to confirm which category to place the person in
2. identify and assess their accommodation history
3. identify the housing options available to them that will address their immediate and long-term housing and support needs.

People eligible for Category 1 or 2 as a result of a Housing Needs Assessment can register their interest in community housing even if they do not meet the income and asset limits. Upload documents related to registrations, including Housing Needs Assessment Forms, to 'Client documents' in the Single Housing Register.

A Housing Needs Assessment is not necessary if the registrant is either:
- a public, Aboriginal or community housing tenant being relocated for approved development activities or asset management purposes – for example a transfer initiated by Housing SA or a community housing provider.
- automatically eligible for Category 2.

8   Confirming a customer's situation

Determine what information is needed to confirm the customer's situation. Check the customer's case notes, to determine what assistance has previously been provided. You can ask the customer for their consent for you to talk to their supports directly (these may be

listed on the [Community Housing Needs Assessment form)](#). You can ask the customer to provide documents confirming their situation. This can include getting information from:

- government and non-government organisations
- police or other emergency services
- health or medical professionals
- the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

You can ask the customer to provide more information at any time if you're in doubt or need more confirmation.

9   Category criteria

Customers who are eligible for community housing are placed in Category 1, 2 or 3. Details on how to assess for these categories, for example definitions and descriptions of "homeless and at risk", are found in the [Community Housing – Housing Needs Assessment Guideline](#).

10 Tenancy types

Community housing providers manage their properties in accordance with the relevant contractual agreement attached to each property, including:

- Master Agreement
- SAHT properties transfers
    - Better Places Stronger Communities (BPSC)
    - Renewing our Streets and Suburbs (ROSAS)

Within these contractual agreements, the community housing provider must maintain the required number of tenancy types stated:

- General
- Supported
- Affordable

The rents charged for each tenancy type are outlined in the [Community housing rent policy and procedures.](#) There are specific housing programs within each tenancy type. They are listed in the [CH Allocation guideline](#).

Additional eligibility criteria may apply to a person at the point of being allocated a property, especially to a [Supported or Supportive Tenancy Type](#) or a leased property under the [Specialised Housing Program](#).

11 Ongoing eligibility

Community housing providers may stipulate ongoing eligibility requirements as a means to ensure housing is kept available for those most in need, while also documenting processes

to mitigate workforce disincentives. This should be done in tandem with a proactive policy to support tenants moving through the housing pathway into alternative accommodation including home ownership and private rental where appropriate. Any ongoing eligibility requirements must be specified in the person's tenancy agreement.

Where ongoing eligibility requirements exist, a review of ongoing eligibility should occur at least three months prior to the expiry of a tenant's lease. This is to ensure sufficient time is available to discuss and seek alternative housing options with the tenant. If a tenant becomes ineligible due to property ownership, subleasing a property without permission, they are to be charged Market Rent until they become re-eligible for community housing, or their tenancy is terminated.

No tenant is to be made homeless due to becoming ineligible once housed except when all reasonable endeavours to find and offer suitable alternative housing have been exhausted.

Housing options to be considered are but not limited to:

11.1 Private rental

Private rental offers tenants more choice in locations and amenities than social housing.

11.2 Home ownership

There are a number of ways to buy a home. Community housing tenants may also be eligible for additional financial assistance via:
- HomeStart
- Grants and Concessions

11.3 Buying a community housing property

A tenant may wish to buy the house they are currently living in, if it is for sale. Alternatively, a tenant may wish to buy an Affordable Home.

12 Related information

12.1 Controlling documents

This procedure is based on:
- Community Housing Providers (National Law) (South Australia) Act 2013
- National Regulatory System Community Housing – Regulatory Framework
- Residential Tenancies Act 1993 (SA)
- Community housing eligibility policy v4

12.2 Supporting documents

- Community housing property sale to tenant procedure
- Specialised housing program

- [Supportive and supported housing program](#)
- Community Housing Providers - www.sa.gov.au
- Volunteer member-tenant managed providers - www.sa.gov.au
- Register for public and community housing - www.sa.gov.au
- Income and asset eligibility limits - www.sa.gov.au
- Assessable income types for Housing SA and community housing - www.sa.gov.au
- Proof of income, identity and rent - www.sa.gov.au
- Verifying special circumstances - www.sa.gov.au
- Eligibility and housing needs assessment - www.sa.gov.au
- Managing registrations - www.sa.gov.au
- [Registration of interest for community housing volunteer member-tenant management housing form](#)
- [Community housing needs report form](#)

12.3   Date these procedures apply from

1 March 2021

12.4   Version number

1

12.5   Disclaimer

These procedures can be changed, withdrawn or replaced at any time