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Allocation Policy

Purpose

Advance Housing Limited (Advance Housing) is responsible for managing the allocation of tenancies across a variety of programs including social housing, affordable housing and supported housing. This document outlines Advance Housing’s policy in relation to the prioritisation and allocation of tenancies across all program types.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants who will be housed by Advance Housing.

Policy Statement

Advance Housing is responsible for managing a range of programs in line with contractual and regulatory requirements. This document outlines the policy framework that will be used to match eligible applicants with general social housing properties currently under management. This includes properties leased or owned by Advance Housing for the purposes of social housing.

General Social Housing

Advance Housing will prioritise the allocation of properties within its general social housing portfolio as follows:

1. Management initiated transfer – where Advance Housing is required to relocate a tenant to another property for management purposes.
2. Commitments under formal Housing & Support Partnerships – reflecting our formal contracts with Government and community organisations to house priority needs clients.

3. Priority approved transfer applicants - this will enable all social housing providers to better manage their responsibilities to existing tenants and ensure that available social housing can better meet the needs of new applicants.

4. Priority approved applicants – reflecting the fact that the priority needs of applicants require these applicants to be housed earlier.

5. General wait turn and transfer applicants.

Management Initiated Transfers

Management initiated transfers are undertaken where Advance Housing is required to relocate a tenant to another property for management purposes. These allocations are undertaken outside the Department of Communities - Housing Register. For further information please see the Management Transfer Policy.

Housing & Support Partnerships

Advance Housing has taken an active role in housing vulnerable people who require support to sustain their tenancy. We work in partnerships under a formal agreement between Advance Housing and the relevant Government or non-government organisation providing support services.

The housing and support partnerships cover long term housing and transitional housing arrangements for particular client cohorts such as people with mental health issues, young people and women and children who have experienced family violence.

The majority of these arrangements are for long term social housing, however, some provide transitional housing opportunities. Unlike long term social housing, tenants in transitional housing will be expected to move to more appropriate long term housing options.

Applicants must be eligible for social housing and have been referred in order to be allocated to Advance Housing properties used for support partnerships. All tenants will be required to have a formal support plan in place and must be actively engaged in support unless mutually agreed between the tenant, Advance Housing and the support provider. In the case of transitional housing, a formal exit plan that is mutually agreed between Advance Housing, the tenant and support provider is required to support exit to longer term housing options at the end of the tenancy term.

General Social Housing

1. Priority approved transfer applicants - this will enable all social housing providers to better manage their responsibilities to existing tenants and ensure that available social housing can better meet the needs of new applicants.

2. Priority approved applicants – reflecting the fact that the priority needs of applicants require these applicants to be housed earlier.

3. General wait turn and transfer applicants.

Additional Considerations

When allocating a property or properties, Advance Housing needs to consider the need to support the peace and enjoyment of existing tenants and communities as well as any particular requirements of a property, for example whether it is disability accessible or is hard to let. For this reason not all allocations will be made in accordance with the categories outlined above and staff will need to consider the property configuration and community needs prior to allocation.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing properties are targeted to applicants on low and moderate incomes, some of which are not eligible for social housing. The particular eligibility criteria and entitlements for affordable housing managed by Advance Housing vary according to the funding program.

For those on low or moderate incomes, application management and allocations will be made in accordance with the particular program guidelines.

Advance Housing Tenancy Management Policy

While Advance Housing is subject to the Housing Authority Rental Policy, there are some differences in policy between community housing and public housing providers.

Tenure

Advance Housing has continuous tenure for general social housing. Tenants will be expected to sign a Residential Tenancy Agreement and provided they comply with this agreement they will be able to maintain their tenancy in the longer term.

Bedroom Entitlement

The tables below outline the standard bedroom entitlements for Advance Housing, bedroom entitlements relating to the need to accommodate children and the evidence required to substantiate these entitlements. These apply to all Advance Housing properties including general social housing, affordable housing and transitional supported.

Table 1: Standard bedroom entitlements for Advance Housing

Household Type	Standard Bedroom Entitlement
Single people	Studio or one bedroom
Couples	One bedroom
Couples and sharers (no children)	One or two bedroom
Family, single parent, 1 child	Two bedrooms
Family, single parent, 2 children	Three bedrooms

Family, single parent, 3 children	Three bedrooms
Family, single parent, 4 children and above (bedroom allocation will depend upon gender of children)	Four bedrooms or, if available five or more bedrooms. Applications who have a five bedroom household complement will generally be offered a four bedroom property unless a five bedroom property is vacant when the applicants turn is reached. This is because of the limited availability of five bedroom accommodation.
	Where there is limited or no demand, applicants may be allocated accommodation in excess of their entitlement and general eligibility.

. Table 2: Bedroom entitlements related to accommodating children

Situation	Advance Housing Response
Child is over 18 years of age	The person is considered to be an adult when calculating the minimum bedroom entitlement
Shared bedrooms	Same sex children up to 18 years of age are expected to share a bedroom. Male and female children are expected to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age. Special consideration may be given to an allocation where there is considerable age difference between children of the same gender and an extra bedroom allocated, depending upon housing stock/demand and the willingness of the applicant to wait longer if necessary.
Children can't share a bedroom	Advance Housing will allocate an additional bedroom where the applicant has demonstrated a need for same sex children, or children under 10 years of age, to have separate bedrooms. Examples of situations where an extra bedroom could be appropriate include where there is a large age gap between the children or behavioural factors.
Shared custody	The child/children are considered to be part of the household if the applicant has 50% shared custody. Normal bedroom entitlements apply.

Future needs of children who may need separate bedrooms in the near future	Advance Housing will take this into account when matching the applicant to a property if it can. Advance Housing will make this decision on a case by case basis according to the size and type of housing that is available in the area.
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Table 3: Information required substantiating the need for an extra bedroom

If an applicant has a requirement for an extra bedroom for medical or family reasons, they must substantiate this need.

Situation	Information Required
Extra bedroom due to medical condition or disability	<p>Documentation from the applicant’s health care professional (eg. specialist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist or psychiatrist) that supports the need for an extra bedroom.</p> <p>Evidence of the need for a separate room for a partner if a disability (or routines associated with a disability) require the couple to sleep separately.</p> <p>Evidence of the need for an extra bedroom for a family member, carer or support worker to stay when providing regular short term periods of support, eg. minimum 2 nights per week or equivalent weeks over multiple times for the duration of the tenancy.</p> <p>Evidence that the temporary carer resides in another permanent tenancy.</p>

Type of Housing Offered to Applicants

In general, a new applicant for Advance Housing cannot specify the type of housing that they would prefer unless they have documentation to support a specific need.

When allocating properties, Advance Housing will consider the needs of a household subject to availability. Where applicants have special needs, they must substantiate their need for certain entitlements. An applicant may have special requirements for their accommodation based on medical, social or other factors. If an applicant wishes to be housed with social housing and can substantiate these needs, a provider may approve them for the following specific types of accommodation:

- Ground floor
- Modified property
- Property with wheelchair access
- Property with a certain number of steps

Applicants may specify a preference to be housed in a property targeted to seniors and managed by Advance Housing where they are:

- 55 years of age or over
- Two person adult households where at least one person is 55 years or over.

If an applicant has other needs that require a specific type of accommodation or accommodation in a specific location they must substantiate this need. For example, they may need to be close to medical practitioners, or they may need to be housed in an area because of cultural needs and support, or they may have a child that needs to attend a special school.

Table 1: Information required to substantiate housing needs

The table outlines the information required by Advance Housing to substantiate specific housing needs.

Situation	Information Required
<p>Location within allocation area – need for a property located within a specific part of an allocation area.</p> <p>For example, for access to cultural supports, a specific medical practitioner, a special school or neighbourhood supports for people with a disability etc.</p>	<p>Documentation substantiating the need for the specific location.</p>
<p>Share custody – need for a larger property to accommodate children. Minimum care 50%</p>	<p>Substantiation of the shared custody arrangement through information such as one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation from the Family Court • Centrelink Income Statement

<p>A studio unit is unsuitable due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical condition or disability • Requires a carer • Family complement including households with more than one person, pregnancy, shared custody or child restoration 	<p>Documentation that demonstrates that this type of property will adversely affect the applicant's health (eg. due to claustrophobia) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Assessment from the applicant's health care professional • Report or letter from a health care worker or a support agency • Only single person households will be offered a studio unit. An applicant with family reasons or carer requirements needs to provide documentation to demonstrate their need for additional bedrooms as outlined above.
<p>A multi-storey unit is unsuitable due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical condition or disability • A child or young person at risk 	<p>Documentation that demonstrates that this type of property will adversely affect the applicant's health (e.g. not able to use stairs) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Assessment from the applicant's health care professional • Report or letter from a health care worker or a support agency

Matching and offering a property to an applicant

Table 1: Advance Housing property types

Property Type	Applicant
<p>General properties Social housing property owned by Advance Housing or head leased</p>	<p>Applicants with needs that can be met by the type, size and location of the particular property.</p>
<p>Advance Housing – Seniors The properties in these Advance Housing complexes are specifically for older people.</p>	<p>Applicants aged 55 years or over or two person household where at least one person is 55 years or over</p>
<p>Modified property Properties modified to cater for applicants with a disability.</p>	<p>Applicants who have demonstrated a need for a modified property</p>
<p>Ground floor property Properties located on the ground floor of a unit complex.</p>	<p>Applicants who have demonstrated a need for a ground floor property.</p>

Level access Properties with level access to an entry way.	Applicants who have demonstrated a need for a property with level access.
Properties with yards Properties with backyards.	Applicants have demonstrated a need for a backyard.
Studio and multi-storey Properties that are studio units or multi-storey.	Applicants whose needs are met by the size of the particular property, except where they have demonstrated that a studio or multi-storey is unsuitable.

Criteria for matching applicant to properties

The criteria used to match applicants to properties are outlined in the table below. Advance Housing will match applicants to housing where an applicant has indicated that they wish to be considered for community housing.

Table 1: Criteria for matching applicants to properties

Property Attribute	Basic Criteria	Additional Criteria that is Considered when Relevant
Location of property	Where the applicant has specified an allocation zone Advance Housing will match the applicant to the applicant's preferred allocation zone.	Advance Housing will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match within an allocation area when the applicant has demonstrated a need for this allocation area.
Type of property	Applicants on the joint waitlist, Advance Housing will match to a house, townhouse or unit according to availability	Advance Housing will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match an applicant to a specific type of property if the applicant has demonstrated a need for this type of property. Match an applicant to properties with specific features (such as ground floor, level access, modifications, maximum numbers of stairs any person can manage) if the applicant has demonstrated a need

		<p>for this type of property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not match an applicant to properties that have specific features if the applicant has demonstrated that these features would make the property unsuitable for them. • Include matches to multi-storey properties, except where the applicant has demonstrated that a multi-storey is unsuitable.
<p>Number of bedrooms</p>	<p>Applicants on the joint waitlist, Advance Housing will match to a bedroom allocation based on the size of the applicant's household</p>	<p>Advance Housing will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match to a bedroom allocation above the minimum entitlement if the applicant has demonstrated a need for a property of this size. For example, Advance Housing will allocate an additional room for a family member or carer to stay in if the applicant has demonstrated a long term need for this. • Where possible, consider the future accommodation needs of children in the household. • Include matches to studio units for a single person household, except where the applicant has demonstrated that a studio is unsuitable.

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Number of Offers Provided

Advance Housing in most cases will provide two offers of alternative accommodation.

Advance Housing tenants who are being relocated for management purposes will receive one offer of alternative accommodation. Advance Housing has decided that the tenant is to only receive one reasonable offer of alternative housing, due to achieve Advance Housing’s broader strategic or operational outcomes, which includes:

- Advance Housing has a compelling financial or operational need to achieve the relocation within a specific timeframe and this timeframe is not reasonably achievable if the tenant is entitled to two reasonable offers of alternative accommodation.
- Seeking to end a situation of anti-social behaviour or disruption in the neighbourhood associated with a particular tenant or tenancy.
- A documented history of the tenant failing to respond to communications from Advance Housing within a reasonable period of time.
- A compelling external reason.

Extension of Offer Timeframes

The table below provides information on when timeframes for Advance Housing offers will be extended.

Table 1: Extension of timeframes for Advance Housing offers

Situation	Evidence
Applicant not able to inspect the offered property within two working days of receiving the offer	Information that substantiates the applicant’s reasons for not being able to inspect the property within the required timeframe.
Applicant not able to sign a tenancy agreement within one week of accepting the offer due to: Serious health reasons or disability or Family crisis or emergency or Have a current rental lease in the private market.	Information that substantiates the applicant’s reasons for not being able to sign the tenancy agreement within the required timeframe, such as: A doctor’s certificate. A letter from a support provider. Evidence of the family crisis or emergency and its impact on the applicant’s ability to sign the tenancy agreement. Current rental lease.

Accepting, Rejecting and Withdrawing Offers and Suspending Applications for Social Housing

The table below sets out the criteria for making decisions about when an offer of Advance Housing is accepted, rejected or withdrawn, and/or when an application is suspended.

Table 1: Criteria for accepting, rejecting and withdrawing Advance Housing offers and suspending applications

Situation	Evidence
Offer accepted	The applicant has accepted a property offered by Advance Housing and has signed a tenancy agreement.
Offer rejected	<p>The offer of housing meets the matching requirements and: The applicant has declined the offer for a reason that Advance Housing considers to be a personal preference because it does not directly impact on the applicant’s housing needs. Common examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanting a property made out of brick. • Wanting gas rather than electricity. • Not liking the neighbourhood. • No liking the cladding, internal or external layout, design or colour scheme of the property. • Wanting a bath rather than a shower. • Wanting a different suburb (where locational need has not been established) • Wanting a specific street. • Wanting to live near shops, family, school (where locational need has not been established). • Wanting a different type of property (house, townhouse or unit) • Wanting to live on a specific floor or a block of units. • Wanting a senior communities property only. • Wanting Advance Housing to match them to a property on the basis of the needs of their pet. • Wanting extra parking for recreational vehicles ie. caravans, boats etc. <p>The offer of housing meets the matching requirements and the applicant has declined the offer due to not liking, or being unwilling to accept, the specific requirements of the housing provider, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type or length of lease offered, or • Payment of bond for a community housing property.
Offer withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance Housing offered the property but now needs it for an applicant with more urgent needs, or • Advance Housing matched the applicant to the property but did not provide the details to the applicant because the applicant’s needs or circumstances had changed, or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance Housing matched the applicant to the property but did not provide the details to the applicant because they did not meet the eligibility criteria, or • The applicant did not accept the property and Advance Housing has decided that the applicant’s decision is valid because, based on information provided by the applicant, the property did not meet their needs. Such information may include a letter and other information provided by the applicant explaining their reasons for declining an offer and supplying relevant supporting documentation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A Medical Assessment form. b) A letter from their doctor or health care provider. c) A letter from their support provider. d) A letter from their employer
Application suspended	<p>Information from the applicant demonstrating that they are temporarily in a situation where they are unable to accept an offer due to circumstances beyond their control. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, situations where the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is experiencing illness or hospitalisation • Is overseas or on holidays • Cannot terminate a Residential Tenancy Agreement • Is in prison

Related Agreements, Policies & Legislation

Management Transfer Policy

Housing Authority Rental Policy

Equal Opportunity Act 1984

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

Employees to ensure they comply with this policy.

Employees to identify and report potential issues to Management.

Employees with related tasks to ensure they have a comprehensive understanding of this Policy, related Legislation and Documents as it relates to their roles.

Team Leaders and Management to oversee compliance, monitoring and review of this Policy.

Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	CEO
Administrator(s) – overall responsibility for compliance, monitoring & review	Housing Services Manager
Next Review Date	December 2023

Policy History

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2/5/2018	1.0	INCEPTION	TAMARA BELFIELD HSM	MAY 2018
MAY 2020	1.0	REVIEW AND UPDATE	TAMARA BELFIELD HSM	May 2020
December 2021	1.0	REVIEW – NO CHANGE	T Belfield and J Lysaught	December 2021