HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to residents and prospective residents as to how St Kilda Community Housing (SCH) allocates housing across its properties.

Scope
This policy applies to all properties managed or owned by SCH

Policy Statement
SCH is committed to the allocation of its housing in a fair and transparent manner with regard to the legal and regulatory framework within which we operate.

This policy outlines the principles underpinning the allocations process and the process itself.

The principles underpinning the policy are:
- **Openness** – to provide an open and transparent allocation system in accordance with SCH's legal and regulatory obligations.
- **Equality** –applicants will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious belief, disability or age.
- **Consistency** – all applicants with similar characteristics will be treated in a similar manner to achieve similar outcomes and in accordance with established eligibility criteria.
- Responsiveness – SCH will take account of the needs of individual applicants, including an appeals process.
- **Co-operation** – SCH will work closely with local support agencies to develop protocols that ensure eligible disadvantaged single adults can gain appropriate housing and support.

Eligibility for Housing
SCH participates in the Victorian Housing Register (VHR). The VHR is a common register for all applicants seeking public and community housing in Victoria.

SCH will allocate and offer properties from the register. The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) has established common eligibility criteria for the VHR that are set out in *the Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines* developed by DFFH. The VHR's eligibility criteria apply to all long-term housing owned, managed or controlled by SCH in Victoria.

All applicants with a current VHR application are taken by SCH to meet the VHR eligibility criteria.

Applicants without a current VHR application can provide evidence to SCH that establishes they meet the eligibility criteria. SCH will then assist such applicants to make a VHR application either through referral to an appropriate service or by assisting the applicant to lodge a VHR application.

Additional Requirements for Eligibility for Long Term Housing

In addition to meeting the VHR eligibility criteria, to be eligible for long-term housing with SCH, the following criteria apply:

- Prospective residents must agree to a repayment plan if they have a previous debt with SCH, subject to the discretion of the CEO;
- Only adults over the age of 18 will be housed.
- No children will be housed.

Additional eligibility criteria *may* also include:

- A prior connection to St Kilda/City of Port Phillip.
- A prior successful tenancy with SCH.

Approach to Allocation

Allocations Target - Victorian Housing Register

Under the VHR's allocations framework, SCH is required to meet an annual Priority Allocations Target. This requires SCH to allocate 75% of vacancies in Targeted Social Housing to Priority Access applicants in each financial year. As not all of SCH's properties are Targeted Social Housing, this Target is adjusted so that SCH can make allocations across its portfolio in order to meet the Target.

SCH will implement procedures to monitor its performance against the Priority Allocations Target regularly to ensure that SCH complies with its obligations.

Sourcing Applicants

SCH will at first instance seek suitable applicants from the VHR. Where a suitable applicant being considered for a vacancy does not have a current VHR application but is eligible for social housing under the VHR and suitable for that vacancy, then SCH will ensure that such applicants complete a VHR application at the time of making an offer of housing.

Nomination Rights

Where nomination rights apply, SCH will:
- establish appropriate arrangements in protocol agreements with referral agencies who have responsibility for nominating applicants for vacancies, to ensure timely and appropriate referrals; and
- require that referral agencies nominate applicants who have a current VHR Priority Access application.

Other Legal Requirements

SCH will ensure in making any allocation that it complies with any other legal requirements concerning eligibility for housing or allocation of housing.

Promoting Successful and Sustainable Tenancies

SCH is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against any potential applicant or applicant.

SCH will assess all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine suitability for a particular vacancy (and eligibility if the applicant does not currently have a VHR application). If SCH declines to offer an applicant housing, it will inform the applicant accordingly.

Matching Households to the Right House

SCH will match applicants to properties so that an allocation:

- is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs;
- assists the applicant to access employment or any support services they may need;
- makes the best use of housing stock managed or owned by SCH;
- encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
- meets any particular expressed needs of the applicant so far as they are known, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers.

SCH will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any particular requirements, if this is not contained in a VHR application.

Definitions

Applicant	Means a person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to SCH
DFFH	Means the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Director of Housing	Means the Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria and which is the principal funding body for community housing
Priority Access	Applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The priority Access Categories are: • Emergency Management Housing • Priority Transfers • Homeless with Support • Supported Housing • Temporary Absence • Special Housing Needs • Special Housing Needs aged 55 years and over.
Public Housing	Housing owned and managed by DFFH
Register of Interest	For applicants who do not meet the Priority Access criteria but who may benefit from social housing
Targeted Social Housing	The properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between SCH and the Director of Housing
VHR	The Victorian Housing Register. The state-wide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing

Related Policies

Tenant Transfer Policy

Tenant Recharge Policy

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Legislation and Standards

Housing Act 1983 (Vic)

Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

Legal agreements between SCH and the Director of Housing relating to the VHR

DFFH Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines

Version control

Version No	4.0	Review frequency	3 years
Date	July 2021	Next review	July 2024