



**Policy Name:** Property Inspections

**Approved by:** Chief Executive Officer

**Date effective:** May 2019

**Due to be reviewed:** May 2022

## Section 1 – Introduction

### PURPOSE

This policy and procedure commits VincentCare Community Housing (VCCH) to ensuring that it fulfils its duties as a landlord in relation to property inspections and upholds the rights of its tenants under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA).

VCCH operates a diverse range of accommodation and support services for people experiencing disadvantage, and is committed to applying an appropriate duty of care to all people in contact with VincentCare services. This includes protecting people's personal and cultural safety regardless of ability, cultural background, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all tenants managed by VCCH.

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'tenant' is inclusive of the term 'resident'.

### REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed every three years. It will be modified or replaced whenever VCCH becomes aware that this policy no longer complies with the requirements of the organisation.

## Section 2 – Policy Statement

VCCH is committed to conducting regular and routine property inspections in order to maintain all properties at an acceptable community standard. Property inspections shall be conducted in line with the Residential Tenancies Act.

### Guiding principles/approach

Division 8 of the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) outlines the rights and duties of the tenant and the landlord with regard to 'Rights of entry'. These legislative provisions underpin this policy.

The following approach will apply with regard to VCCH property inspections:

- VCCH shall perform regular and routine property inspections in order to maintain properties at an acceptable community standard.
- Property inspections shall be conducted in line with the Residential Tenancies Act.



- Staff shall provide the tenant with one week's written notice of routine inspection by regular post.
- Staff will also notify tenants by their preferred communication method.
- If the scheduled inspection time does not suit the tenant, staff will reschedule the time and date to an agreed time during the following week.
- If the tenant is not at home at the scheduled inspection time VCCH is authorised to access the property using the master key under the RTA.
- VCCH shall perform property inspections on tenanted properties six monthly, with the first inspection three months after the lease commences.
- Additional property inspections may be conducted under the following circumstances:
  - There is evidence that the property has been abandoned;
  - VCCH receives notification of property damage;
  - There are suspected safety issues at the property or neighbour complaints; or,
  - DHHS or the property owner request a property inspection for the purposes of valuation or upgrade works.

VCCH as the landlord will observe and fulfill its obligations under Section 85 of the Residential Tenancies Act including the provision whereby inspections will be conducted between 8 am and 6 pm.

## Communication

VCCH will provide clear information to tenants on this policy, and will inform tenants when the policy is being applied.

## Section 3 – Procedures

The following procedures will apply to VCCH property inspections:

### 3.1 Identify properties due for inspection and notify tenants

- Routine inspections will be arranged for properties on or within one month after the inspection due date.
- The Notice will provide a time window of 60 to 90 minutes to conduct the inspection, for example between 10am and 11am. Ninety minutes may be required if the property is further away.
- Three business days after posting the letter staff shall contact the tenant by phone to confirm receipt of Notice and discuss routine inspection provisions of the RTA, if required.

### 3.2 Conducting the inspection

When conducting property inspections, staff shall:

- Check the general property condition;
- Check fire exits are clear and functioning;
- Check smoke alarm functionality;
- Assess required garden maintenance;
- Assess other required maintenance; and
- Record maintenance requirements on the Responsive Maintenance form and any other matters.
- If staff identify issues requiring action by the tenants to return the property to an acceptable standard, staff shall explain these to the tenant during the inspection.

### 3.3 Update records and log maintenance requests

- Staff shall record inspection notes in the tenancy and property system and update the routine inspection due date to six months after the inspection is completed.
- If tenant action is required to return the property to an acceptable community standard staff shall use the Tenant Action Requirement letter template to detail actions required with references to the tenant rights and responsibilities under the RTA.
- The TPM shall generate a Follow-Up Inspection Notice using the tenancy and property system with an inspection date two weeks after the initial inspection. The TPM shall:
  - Send originals to the tenant by regular post;
  - Email copies to the support worker (if applicable); and,
  - Attach copies to the tenant's property record.
- If the tenant has not fulfilled their responsibilities at the time of the follow-up inspection staff shall follow a separate Breach of Duty procedure.

## Section 4 – References

### Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
RTA	Residential Tenancies Act
THM	Transitional Housing Management

### Related External References

Name	Link
Housing and Support Partnership Agreement	<a href="http://www.nwhn.net.au/admin/file/content/2/c7/Housing%20and%20Support%20Partnership%20Agreement%20Nov%2011.pdf">http://www.nwhn.net.au/admin/file/content/2/c7/Housing%20and%20Support%20Partnership%20Agreement%20Nov%2011.pdf</a>
Housing Registrar Performance Standards	<a href="http://www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/publications/performance-standards-and-evidence-guidelines/current-performance-standards.pdf">http://www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/publications/performance-standards-and-evidence-guidelines/current-performance-standards.pdf</a>
National Community Housing Standards	<a href="http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/CHStandardsManual.pdf">http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/CHStandardsManual.pdf</a>
Residential Tenancies Act 1997	<a href="http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rta1997207/">http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rta1997207/</a>

## Related policies

Policy name	Description
VCCH Maintenance and Repairs Policy	<a href="https://vincentcare.org.au">https://vincentcare.org.au</a>
VCCH Complaints and Appeals Policy	<a href="https://vincentcare.org.au">https://vincentcare.org.au</a>
VCCH Evictions Policy	<a href="https://vincentcare.org.au">https://vincentcare.org.au</a>

## Legislation and standards

This policy implements the obligations of VincentCare Community Housing under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

## Section 5 – Governance

### Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the VincentCare Community Housing website

<https://vincentcare.org.au>

## Responsibility

<b>Process Owner</b>	General Manager Housing
<b>Content Holder/s</b>	Housing Program Managers
<b>Recommending body</b>	Quality Committee
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Chief Executive Officer

## Change history

Version	Effective Date
1	March 2014
2	May 2019