

VINCENTCARE COMMUNITY HOUSING

Name: Allocation of Long-Term Housing (public facing policy)

Authorised by: Policy Authorisation Committee

Date effective: March 2022

Due to be reviewed: March 2025

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This policy establishes VincentCare Community Housing's (VCCH) approach to:

- The prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its long-term rental housing portfolio; and
- Successful and sustainable tenancies and communities through appropriate matching of applicants to properties.

VincentCare Victoria 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 long-term rental properties owned or managed by VincentCare Community Housing.

This policy does not apply to the following VincentCare Community Housing programs:

- Transitional housing properties managed by VincentCare Community Housing; and
- temporary or crisis accommodation.

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

REVIEW CYCLE

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

SECTION 2 – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1 In its approach to allocation, VCCH will:

- only allocate long-term housing to eligible applicants;
- communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for long-term housing with VincentCare Community Housing; and
- comply with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for long-term housing.

2 VincentCare Community Housing will allocate long-term housing to eligible applicants in a manner which:

- is fair, transparent and equitable;
- relieves households from housing stress;
- is in accordance with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations; and
- supports the financial viability of VincentCare Community Housing's long-term housing programs.

3 VincentCare Community Housing is committed to promoting a successful and sustainable tenancy when matching applicants to its properties. This means that VincentCare Community Housing will allocate housing in a way that:

- gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance;
- considers the health, safety and support needs of applicants;
- matches individual housing needs with available properties; and
- supports sustainable and harmonious communities.

4 Allocations Target - Victorian Housing Register (VHR)

Under the VHR's allocations framework, VincentCare Community Housing is required to meet an annual Priority Allocations Target. This requires VincentCare Community Housing to allocate a percentage of vacancies in Targeted Social Housing to Priority Access applicants in each financial year.

5 Sourcing applicants

VincentCare Community Housing will in the 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 VincentCare Community Housing will ensure that such applicants complete a VHR application at the time of making an offer of housing.

6 Nomination access

Where nomination access is in place, VincentCare Community Housing 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.

7 Other legal requirements

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

8 Promoting successful and sustainable tenancies

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

VincentCare Community Housing will assess all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine eligibility and suitability for a particular vacancy. If VincentCare Community Housing declines to offer an applicant housing, it will inform the applicant accordingly.

9 Matching households to the right home

In allocating housing, VincentCare Community Housing will also have regard to the VHR operational guideline, Clients with Special Accommodation Requirements.

VincentCare Community Housing will match applicants to properties so that an allocation:

- is the right size for the applicant's household;
- is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs;
- assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need;
- makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by VincentCare Community Housing;
- 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.

VincentCare Community Housing aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those applicants who need them, including:

- properties that are suitable for older people
- properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability;
- properties on the ground floor,
- properties with level access; or
- properties with a yard/garden.

VincentCare Community Housing will ask applicants without a VHR application to provide evidence to substantiate any particular requirements.

10 Supporting sustainable and harmonious communities

VincentCare Community Housing may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of public and community housing stock in a particular area;
- a high concentration of renters with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or building;
- existing tenancy management issues (or a potential for them to develop);
- existing neighbourhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

SECTION 3 – PROCEDURES

Any procedures established by VCCH in relation to allocation of long-term housing will be in compliance with this policy.

SECTION 4 – REFERENCES

DEFINITIONS

Applicant	means a person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to VincentCare Community Housing
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
Nomination access	means arrangements between VincentCare Community Housing and third party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties
Priority Access	Applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need.
Public housing	Housing owned and managed by DHHS
Targeted Social Housing	The properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between VincentCare Community Housing and the Director of Housing.
Transitional Housing	means the Victorian Government program to provide housing on a short-term basis to people at risk of homelessness
VHR	The Victorian Housing Register, the state-wide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

- This policy implements the obligations of VincentCare Community Housing under:
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by Department of Health and Human Services DHHS
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

SECTION 5 – GOVERNANCE

RESPONSIBILITY

Process Owner	EGM Client Services
Content Holder/s	State Manager Housing
Recommending body	Quality Committee
Endorsed by	Policy Authorisation Committee

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Effective Date	Author	Change
1	May 2019	General Manager Housing	This is a new policy for publication on VincentCare's website This policy is a compliance requirement for registered agency participation in the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)
2	March 2022	Manager Tenancy and Property	Revised and updated to reflect RTA changes made effective March 2021. Removal of detailed Procedures. Update of external references.