

VINCENTCARE COMMUNITY HOUSING

Name: Eligibility for Long Term Rental Housing

Approved by: Policy Authorisation Committee

Date effective: March 2022

Due to be reviewed: March 2025

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This policy outlines VincentCare Community Housing’s (VCCH) approach to eligibility for its long-term rental housing programs.

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
- properties managed by VincentCare Community Housing on behalf of other property owners where the owner retains responsibility for determining rent; 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 VincentCrae becomes aware that this policy no longer complies with the requirement of the organisation.

SECTION 2 – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VincentCare Community Housing establishes eligibility criteria for long-term housing to fulfil its organisational mission of the provision of social housing that is affordable for people experiencing homelessness or disadvantage.

Accordingly, VincentCare Community Housing 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.

1 Victorian Housing Register

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

DFFH has established common eligibility criteria for the VHR that are set out in the Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/social-housing-eligibility>. The VHR eligibility criteria apply to all properties owned or managed by VincentCare Community Housing in Victoria, other than those properties which VincentCare Community Housing and DHHF have agreed are outside the scope of the VHR.

All applicants with a current VHR application are taken by VincentCare Community Housing to have established that they meet the VHR eligibility criteria.

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

2 General requirements for eligibility for long-term housing

To be eligible for long-term housing with VincentCare Community Housing which is under the VHR, an applicant must:

- be able to live independently
- be willing to enter a debt repayment agreement (if previous debt exists) with VincentCare Community Housing and demonstrate how the prospective renter will avoid falling into debt if accepted for long term housing

3 Specific requirements for particular long-term housing programs

Some properties have additional eligibility criteria. Examples might be eligibility based on gender, age or disability.

4 Eligibility for long-term housing programs outside the scope of the VHR

Where VincentCare Community Housing owns or manages housing under programs that are outside the scope of the VHR, then:

- VincentCare Community Housing will comply with any other legal or contractual obligations that apply to housing eligibility in that program; and

- VincentCare Community Housing may within the scope of such legal or contractual obligations:
 - elect to apply the general eligibility criteria as a generally accepted benchmark to establish that the applicant needs affordable housing; or
 - apply some other reasonable eligibility criteria that is consistent with VincentCare Community Housing's objectives and purpose.

VincentCare Community Housing recognises that different population groups are over represented in homelessness, however are underrepresented in accessing homelessness support. Due to experiences of additional service barriers and discrimination (and consistent with VincentCare's diversity strategy) people from LGBTIQ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples will be prioritised for long term housing.

VincentCare Community Housing will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the particular eligibility criteria that apply to that program.

SECTION 3 - PROCEDURES

Any procedures established by VCCH in relation to eligibility for 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 the Eligibility Policy, through MyGov, ad Designated Support Provider or directly to VincentCare Community Housing
Community housing	Housing owned or managed by a community housing organisation
DFFH	The Victorian Department of Families Fairness and Housing
General eligibility criteria	The eligibility criteria established by VincentCare Community Housing under the section of this policy entitled “General requirements for eligibility for long-term housing”
Public housing	Housing owned and managed by DFFH
VHR	The Victorian Housing Register, the statewide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing
VHR eligibility criteria	The VHR’s establish who is eligible for social housing. The VHR Eligibility Criteria relates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• income eligibility;• asset eligibility;• Australian Citizenship or permanent residency; and• Victorian residency.

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	Quality Committee

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Effective Date	Author	Change
1	May 2019	General Manager Housing	This is a new policy for publishing on the public VincentCare 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.