

VCCH TENANCY & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Policy Name:	Neighbours
Approved by:	Policy Authorisation Committee
Date effective:	July 2022
Due to be reviewed:	July 2025

Section 1 – Introduction

PURPOSE

This Policy outlines the position of VincentCare Community Housing (VCCH) with regard to renter and neighbour relationships and provides associated guidelines for instances where there may be disputes or disagreements between renters and neighbours.

The policy promotes effective communication and co-operation between renters and their neighbours as well as a philosophy of discussion and cooperation for solving issues or concerns that may arise from time to time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all VCCH renters and employees of VincentCare involved in managing and resolving neighbour relationships and complaints.

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 or is subject to changes to associated legislation and regulations.

Section 2 – Policy Statement

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VCCH is committed to:

- Promoting a safe and secure environment for all residents
- Responding promptly to allegations of anti-social behaviour to ensure the safety of all residents
- Working in line with the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Transparent decision making
- Confidentiality – All renter/neighbour disputes will be treated as confidential in accordance with VCCH's privacy and information security policy.

Policy principles include:

VCCH will inform new renters of the importance of establishing and maintaining open, positive and respectful relationships with their neighbours.

VCCH will advise new renters that the following are considered unacceptable behaviour:

- excessive and/ or repeated noise
- intimidation, abuse or harassment
- aggressive and threatening language or behaviour
- vandalism
- nuisance caused by vehicles, such as where they are parked or the way repairs are being carried out
- nuisance caused by pets

VCCH staff will investigate when reports of incidents are received and will gather evidence from witnesses as required.

Where a renter's behaviour places other renters, staff or contractors in danger, VCCH will take action under the RTA. In considering action, VCCH will prioritise the safety of others.

Renters are given the opportunity to respond to allegations against them and their account of an incident will be given consideration.

Resolving disputes and responding to challenging behaviours is a collaborative process between the renter (and their supports, where applicable), VCCH and the other parties involved.

Complaint referral – Where VCCH staff are unable to resolve neighbour complaints to the satisfaction of either or both parties, they may be referred to appropriate external organisations which deal with neighbour disputes e.g. DFFH, Dispute Settlement Centre, Victorian Legal Aid, VCAT etc. The Housing Registrar may investigate complaints from renters, if not resolved satisfactorily by VCCH within 30 days.

VCCH are not able to deal with renter/neighbour complaints dealing with criminal matters. Such matters should be referred to Victoria Police.

VCCH will provide clear information and direction to all parties involved in neighbour disputes and complaints.

Section 3 – Procedures

Any procedures established by VCCH in relation to Neighbours will ensure compliance with this policy.

Section 4 – References

RELATED EXTERNAL REFERENCES

Name	Link
Housing and Support Partnership Agreement	http://www.nwhn.net.au/admin/file/content2/c7/Housing%20and%20Support%20Partnership%20Agreement%20Nov%2011.pdf
Housing Registrar Performance Standards	http://www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/publications/performance-standards-and-evidence-guidelines/current-performance-standards.pdf

Homelessness Assistance Program Guidelines	https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/201705/Homelessness-Services-Guidelines-and-Conditions-of-Funding-May-2014.pdf
Housing Registrar Complaint Management Guidelines	http://www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/publications/regulatory-framework-series/2016-regulatory-framework-complaints.pdf

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

This policy implements the obligations of VCCH under:

- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by Department of Health and Human Services DHHS
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006

Transparency and Accessibility

THIS POLICY WILL BE AVAILABLE ON VINCENTCARE'S WEBSITE <HTTPS://VINCENTCARE.ORG.AU>

Section 5 - Governance

Responsibility

Process Owner	State Manager Housing
Content Holder/s	Housing Program Managers
Recommending body	Quality Committee
Endorsed by	Policy Authorisation Committee

Change history

Version	Effective Date	Author	Change
1	May 2019	GM Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	June 2022	Manager Tenancy and Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised and updated to reflect RTA changes made effective March 2021. • Removal of detailed procedures. • Update of external references.