

VINCENTCARE COMMUNITY HOUSING

Name: Rent Monitoring and Arrears (public facing policy)

Authorised by: Policy Authorisation Committee

Date effective: March 2022

Due to be reviewed: March 2025

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

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.

This Policy ensures the interests of VincentCare Community Housing are protected, and renters are assisted to avoid falling into arrears.

SCOPE

The Policy covers VincentCare Community Housing that provides access to Transitional Housing (THM) and Long-Term Housing.

This policy applies to all staff providing those services.

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 – POLICY

1 Principles:

VCCH will apply a consistent and proactive process in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for both renters and the organisation:

1. Expectation of a rent paying culture is established at sign-up.
2. TPWs recognise that rent arrears can be a sign of broader tenancy issues.
3. Rent arrears are identified and addressed early to give the renter the best chance to sustain their rental agreement.
4. TPWs will endeavour to refer renters to appropriate support agencies in order to assist in addressing arrears.
5. Eviction for rent arrears through VCAT will only occur when all avenues to address the arrears have been explored.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

TPWs will:

1. Monitor rents at least weekly
2. Employ different strategies with a renter/s to address rent arrears
3. Ensure that renter's human rights are considered in line with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Expectation is that renters will:

1. Comply with their rental agreements in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA) in relation to rent payment
2. Communicate with their VCCH during times of financial hardship.
3. Enter into a Rent Arrears Agreement where required.
4. Be open to working with support agencies to address difficulties around rent payment

SECTION 3 – PROCEDURE

Any procedures established by VCCH in relation to rent monitoring and arrears will be in compliance with this policy.

SECTION 4 – REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Financial difficulty	A decrease in household income, significant rise in living expenses, unexpected expenses such as high utility bills or car repairs, and similar circumstances that reduce the renter's ability to make their rental payments by the due date. These circumstances may affect renters differently, due to diversity in money management skills.
VCAT	Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal
TPW	Tenancy Property Worker
RTA	Residential Tenancies Act

SECTION 5 – GOVERNANCE

RELATED EXTERNAL REFERENCES

Name	Link
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 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

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
V1	2008	St Vincent de Paul Community Housing	Rewritten to meet related external references
V2	June 2016	Accommodation Services Manager	Revised and updated to incorporate all forms of housing within VincentCare
V3	October 2018	Manager Tenancy and Property	Diversity inclusion statement added. Job role titles updated to reflect housing portfolio structure.
V4	March 2022	Manager Tenancy & Property	Revised and updated to reflect RTA changes made effective March 2021. Removal of detailed procedures. Update of external references.