

VCCH TENANCY & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

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

Section 1 – Introduction

Purpose

This policy and procedure relates to properties that are provided by VincentCare Community Housing (VCCH) on a short to medium term basis. These properties are linked to an expectation that all renters will work on their identified support needs and a plan for long term housing options; in addition to the usual lease arrangements and responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

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 and procedure applies to all renters managed by VCCH under the THM program and VCCH staff involved in property and tenancy management.

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 VCCH becomes aware that this policy no longer complies with the requirements of the organisation.

Section 2 – Policy Statement

Transitional Housing is funded by the Victorian Government as part of its response to people who are experiencing homelessness. VCCH's THM program offers a period of affordable, and stable housing to enable people to eventually find long term housing. It also allows renters the opportunity to engage with a support worker to address any concerns that are affecting their lives. These concerns may have impacted on their ability to sustain secure housing in the past.

VCCH as a registered housing agency manages its THM program with the objective of assisting people experiencing homelessness to find secure housing in the future through assisting renters to recognise and address issues in their lives which inhibit their capacities to secure stable long term accommodation.

THM properties are provided on a short to medium term basis and are linked to support assistance for renters with an expectation that all THM renters will cooperate with support assistance services and work towards identifying support needs and identifying long term housing options inclusive of usual lease arrangements and renter responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA).

Guiding principles/approach

The THM program aims to assist renters by providing safe, secure and affordable transitional housing. All renters complete an assessment through an access point or support agency utilising set criteria, to establish their eligibility for transitional housing and their individual housing needs.

Transitional housing refers to a supportive – yet temporary – type of accommodation that is intended to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure and support to develop life skills, and in some cases enable participation in education and training.

VCCH's Tenancy and Property Management Team provide transitional housing on behalf of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). The THM program essentially manages all transitional property matters such as ensuring that the housing stock is maintained to a community standard. The THM program coordinates the administration of THM tenancies and properties with a view to maximising a successful experience for renters alongside addressing their barriers to securing and maintaining long-term housing.

Transitional housing is generally for a limited time period. The length of stay will depend on individual circumstances. Transitional housing provides people with help after a crisis such as homelessness, a housing breakdown or family violence.

The following will apply with regard to the THM program:

- THM renters will be eligible to apply for rebated market rent
- The National Privacy Principles as set out in the Privacy Act 1988 will apply to all THM renters
- Renters will be required to sign 'authority forms' allowing VCCH to access certain personal information enabling VCCH to fulfil its role as landlord as well as ensuring progress towards the achievement of long-term housing
- Where possible, VCCH will seek to resolve any renter complaints expeditiously and in an informal way by discussing the matter promptly and pro-actively with the renter and their support workers. VCCH will endeavour to resolve complaints within 30 days
- As Landlord, VCCH staff will manage transitional housing properties under the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)
- VCCH is responsible for arranging urgent and non-urgent maintenance repairs for transitional properties
- An urgent 24 hour after hours maintenance service will be available to THM renters as prescribed by the RTA
- All THM renters must have a housing exit plan and actively work with support to address issues that inhibit their ability to get alternative housing, such as paying off rent arrears
- Renters are expected to accept appropriate long-term housing offers in accordance with their exit plan.

Communication

VCCH will provide clear information to renters on this policy. In addition VCCH will ensure that all new transitional housing renters receive a copy of the Transitional Housing welcome pack which elaborates more fully on many of the matters contained in this policy.

Section 3 - Procedures

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

Section 4 – References

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
OoH	Office of Housing
RTA	Residential Tenancies Act
THM	Transitional Housing Management

Related External References

Name	Link
Housing and Support Partnership Agreement	http://www.nwhn.net.au/admin/file/content/2/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
Residential Tenancies Act 1997	http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rta1997207/
Homelessness Assistance Guidelines	https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/201705/Homelessness-Services-Guidelines-and-Conditions-of-Funding-May-2014.pdf

Legislation and standards

This policy implements the obligations of the VincentCare Community Housing under:

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

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	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	April 2022	Manager Tenancy & Property	Revised and updated to reflect RTA changes made effective March 2021. Removal of detailed Procedures. Update of external references.