

Vacancy Management Policy

DOCUMENT APPROVAL

Approval date: 23 November 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanne Denley', written in a cursive style.

Joanne Denley
Chair, Minda Housing Limited Board
Date Signed:

Vacancy Management Policy

1. POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the practices required to effectively manage enquiries, applications and vacancy allocations for Minda Housing Ltd (MHL) as a Disability Housing Provider.

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

Equity: to ensure that all eligible tenants are considered for accommodation in a fair and transparent manner.

Consistency: to ensure that decision making is undertaken in a reliable manner and that enough information is provided to make sound decisions.

Sustainability: to ensure accommodation offers are part of a long-term and proactive plan that takes into consideration the sustainable operations of the accommodation and Supported Independent Living (SIL) providers

Compatibility: to ensure the physical, emotional, social and support needs of the current residents are taken into consideration when identifying a tenant to offer accommodation.

Safety: to ensure that the support and safety needs of the current and prospective residents

2. POLICY SCOPE

This Policy applies to MHL in the context of operating as a Registered Community Housing Provider and the stakeholders engaged in the vacancy allocation process. This includes the Applicants and the Vacancy Committee. The policy is for all vacancies including tenants transferring from one property to another.

3. POLICY CONTEXT & STATEMENT

MHL are the initial point of contact through the receipt of Registration of Interests for accommodation (ROI) from Applicants. Applicants can contact MHL to discuss housing options or regarding any vacancies advertised by MHL.

Minda Housing Ltd has responsibility for:

- a) Defining a vacancy;
- b) Advertising;
- c) Assessing eligibility of Applicants;
- d) Allocation of Applicants to suitable properties; and
- e) Making an offer of housing.

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a. Defining a vacancy

A vacancy may arise through:

- A Tenant advising they will be vacating;
- MHL issuing a notice to vacate;
- A Tenant passing away;
- Acquisitions and developments;
- Changes in household configuration as defined by MHL; and
- An MHL approved Tenant transfer from one property to another.

b. Advertising

MHL promote and advertise the vacancy as required and ensure that all eligible Applicants have an opportunity to view and apply for a vacancy. Vacancies will be, but not limited to being advertised on the MHL website, Housing Hub, emailing vacancy details to Support Coordinators and SIL providers across the Disability sector.

MHL will ensure the accuracy of the following:

- the Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) type (design category and building type);
- the general location of the property, including proximity to amenities;
- basic and de-identified information about existing tenants, such as gender and age mix;
- a description of the application process such as key dates and application process; and
- details of inspection times or how to arrange a viewing of property.

c. Assessing eligibility of Applicants

Where a property is SDA-enrolled, all steps will be taken to ensure the Applicant is eligible to receive SDA relevant to the design category.

Applicants should have sufficient supports in place to adequately sustain a tenancy and forms part of the risk assessment.

Applicants must be diagnosed with a cognitive disability

Applicants must meet South Australian Community Housing base eligibility criteria

Applicants must also meet any additional specialised housing program requirements.

d. Allocation of tenants to suitable properties

To ensure equity and maximise successful tenancy outcomes, eligible Applicants will be assessed and considered for an offer of housing by the Vacancy Committee.

The Vacancy Committee will make a decision based on:

- Registration of interest documents including proof of income and identification.
- Any potential risks identified through risk assessment.

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Where the property has multiple tenancies, MHL must be satisfied that all parties have been consulted and are in agreement with an allocation of a tenancy i.e. the existing tenants and SIL provider/s.

If a consensus is unable to be reached, the Chair of the MHL Vacancy Committee, will make a final decision on ranking of vacancies to be offered to Applicants.

e. Offer of Housing

The recommendation to offer accommodation to a Customer will rest with the MHL, and the Customer will make the final decision to either accept or decline the offer.

MHL will ensure all Applicants are notified of the outcome of an application for housing, both for successful and unsuccessful applications.

In filling Minda Housing Ltd vacancies, the needs, wishes, choices and situation of participants will be taken into consideration

3.2. Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest may arise in situations where a Board Member, staff member or someone with a personal relationship with a Board Member or staff member applies for an MHL vacancy. In these cases, the conflict of interest must be managed and documented and will not impact the vacancy management process.

Management must be informed, and actions and decisions recorded on the Conflict of Interest register and the Board or staff member involved must not be involved in assessment or allocation process.

3.3. Confidentiality

All information regarding Applicants collected during the assessment process, is confidential and is not discussed externally except with the specific consent of the Applicant (Applicants will generally have signed specific consents)

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. The MHL Board has overall responsibility and accountability for:

- Ensuring this policy is developed, implemented and monitored.
- Monitoring vacancy management by seeking, analysing and questioning relevant information.
- Ensuring MHL acts in accordance with relevant legislation, regulation, standards and initiatives relevant to vacancy management.

4.2. The CEO will:

- Ensure Delegations of Authority in respect to MHL decisions are exercised having regard to the principles of sound governance.

4.3. MHL Executive and Managers will:

- Ensure all MHL staff receive adequate direction and support in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to vacancy management.

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- Ensure assignment of workforce roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to individuals within MHL for:
 - compliance with relevant legislation, policies, procedures and directives
 - client safety and quality in the delivery of vacancy management

4.4. MHL staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all Applicants are managed within the requirements of this Policy and associated legislation.
- Working with the Applicants to initiate and sustain successful tenancy outcomes.
- Work in collaboration with SIL Providers and Support Coordinators and in line with the requirements of the Disability Act and the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2020.

4.5. Vacancy Management Committee is responsible for:

- Monitoring the vacancy management process and approving the allocation of tenancies within the scope of this policy.

4.6. SIL Provider

- The NDIS Support Provider, supports the Applicant to apply for a suitable vacancy and provide support through the process to secure a vacancy of choice for their client.
- The SIL provider works in collaboration with Housing Providers and Support Coordinators and in line with the requirements of the Disability Act and the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2020.

5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Includes, but is not limited to:

- Community Housing Providers (National Law) (SA) Act 2013
- Disability Act (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Act 2013 (NDIS Act)
- Residential Tenancies Act SA
- Residential Tenancies Regulations 2010
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Specialist Disability Accommodation) Rules 2020

NDIS Practice standards and quality indicators 2020

6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1. Internal Resources:

- Risk Assessment Form

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- Memorandum of Understanding between Minda Inc and Minda Housing Ltd
- Vacancy Committee TOR
- Residential Tenancy Agreement
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Registration of Interest for Housing

6.2. External Resources:

- Master Community Housing Agreement
- Government of South Australia Community Housing Core Operating Policy
- National Housing Regulator web page <http://www.nrsch.gov.au/>
- Specialist Disability Accommodation Operational Guidelines
- SA Housing Authority Eligibility Policy

7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI), RECORDS, AUDIT

KPIs for this policy are:

7.1. Relevant metrics required by the National Housing Regulator:

- MHL must turnaround all vacancies within the following timeframes to comply with the requirements set by the National Standards for Community Housing.

Status	Benchmark days (calculated from the date the tenant vacates to the date the next tenancy commences)
Vacant Tenantable	14
Vacant Untenantable	28
Vacant Other	N/A

- MHL report on their performance against these benchmarks annually to the Office of Housing Regulator.
- Vacancy turnaround is a Performance Outcome requirement of an accredited Community Housing Provider (Tier 1, 2 or 3).
- MHL must maintain an Occupancy rate 97% or above. This is a reportable Performance Outcome for the annual compliance submission for the National Regulatory Standards for Community Housing.

7.2. Relevant metrics required under the Master Agreement with South Australian Housing Authority:

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- All vacancies contained in the Master Agreement are allocated using the SA Housing Authority (SAHA) Eligibility Policy.
- All vacancies contained in the Master Agreement are allocated using the Community Housing Customer Register. MHL must report this KPI in the Quarterly Data Return to SAHA.

8. DEFINITIONS

For this policy, the following definitions apply:

Word	Definition
Applicant	For this policy, a person applying to be housed by Minda Housing Ltd
Vacancy Committee	The committee is comprised of two MHL Board members, MHL Executive Director, MHL Housing Manager
Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)	Housing provided by a NDIS registered provider to customers who require specialist housing solutions to assist with the delivery of their supports. SDA refers to the dwelling itself and not the support. Providers must be registered with the NDS to provide SDA.
Stakeholders	For this policy is (but not limited to) the Applicant, Support Coordinator, any existing tenants, SIL provider and families/advocate.
Supported Independent Living (SIL)	Support to tenants including assistance with or supervision of the tasks of daily life.
Support Coordinator	Support coordinator can assist an Applicant with SDA in their plan. Support coordination could include assistance to locate, apply for, access, transition and maintain arrangements including the development of written agreements when moving into a dwelling.