

Allocations Policy – Social Housing NSW

1. Purpose

To provide information on how Compass Housing Services Co Ltd (Compass) manages all aspects of the allocations process for social housing and meets our contractual and legal obligations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Compass social housing tenants, applicants, staff and contractors. Allocation of affordable housing is not covered in this policy. Affordable housing allocations can be found in the Affordable Housing Policy.

3. Policy Statement

Compass offers social housing to people who are assessed as eligible for social housing and listed on the NSW Housing register.

Housing Pathways is a partnership between the Department of Communities and Justice, the Aboriginal Housing Office, the Housing Contact Centre and participating Community Housing providers. Housing Pathways provides:

- Coordinated information about housing assistance
- A single application process
- Common eligibility criteria for housing assistance
- A standard assessment process, and
- A single waiting list known as the NSW Housing Register

Further information about Housing Pathways can be found at www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help

In undertaking the management of the allocation of social housing, Compass will:

- Ensure that all eligible people have equal access to housing
- Maintain a fair, needs based allocations process and non-judgemental attitude to all clients
- Provide an open and transparent allocations process
- Meet our funding commitments and the legal and regulatory requirements for all housing programs

- Coordinate access to social housing through Housing Pathways
- Make the most of housing resources

Housing allocations

General housing will be allocated to eligible people from the NSW Housing Register in line with Housing Pathways' policies. The register includes new applicants for social housing and tenants who have been approved for transfer from both the Department of Communities and Justice and participating Community Housing providers. Allocations will generally be made according to priority, date of application and the suitability of the available property.

Non-standard allocations

In some circumstances, Compass may make non-standard allocation to fill vacant properties. A non-standard allocation is when an applicant is selected from the NSW Housing Register that may not have the highest priority.

Non-standard allocations may be made in the following circumstances:

- To meet the needs of someone who is at serious risk or in imminent danger
- For an approved urgent transfer including tenants being relocated for management purposes
- For a person with specific needs
- To meet internal or contracted strategic objectives
- For nominations from support agencies
- Where a property is difficult to allocate

Applicants for non-standard allocation will be supported by evidence and documented.

Housing Registerable Persons

Compass will comply with the Social Housing Assistance Policy for Registerable Persons

Local allocation strategies

Compass may, at times, develop a local allocations strategy for a particular area or estate. This type of strategy will reflect the particular allocation needs of the local community or specific development conditions, for example, seniors living. Such a strategy may be implemented for vacancies when:

- There is a high concentration of community and/or public housing

- There is a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues
- There are existing tenancy management issues or a potential for them to develop
- There are existing identified issues which will be made worse if allocations are not carefully managed
- A property is hard to let

When allocating a property Compass must consider the need to support the peace and quiet enjoyment of existing tenants and communities as well as any particular requirements of a property, for example, if it is disability accessible or is hard to let.

Modified properties

Modified properties will be allocated to people with a disability who demonstrate a need for specific property elements. The person or their household member must have documentation from a medical professional or allied health care worker that supports their need for a property with modifications and the modification must meet the needs of the person or their household.

Entitlements

We will offer and allocate properties that are suitable for the person and their current household members. We will allocate properties to people based on the minimum bedroom entitlements and allocating bedrooms for children shown in the tables below.

Household composition	Minimum bedrooms
Single person	Studio/One bedroom
Couple	One bedroom
Single person or couple with one other household member	Two bedrooms
Single person or couple with two other household members	Two bedrooms
Single person or couple with three other household members	Three bedrooms
Single person or couple with four other household members	Three bedrooms
Single person or couple with five or more other household members	Four bedrooms

Notes: any request for variation to the above must be supported by appropriate medical documentation.

Allocating bedrooms for children

Situation	How we allocate bedrooms
Children 18 years of age or older	Children 18 years of age or older are considered adults when determining the bedroom entitlement
Children of the same sex who are under 18 years of age	Children of the same sex who are under 18 years of age are expected to share a bedroom

Situation	How we allocate bedrooms
Male and female children who are under 18 years of age	Male and female children are expected to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age
Children under the age of 2	We will not allocate an additional bedroom for a child under the age of 2
Children who may need a separate bedroom in 2-3 years' time	We will, where possible, consider the current circumstances and future needs of children when allocating a property. Decisions regarding future needs will be made on a case by case basis according to the size and type of housing that is available in the area.
Children with special needs	We will allocate an additional bedroom where the tenant/applicant can demonstrate a need for same sex children or children under the age of 10 to have separate bedrooms
Shared custody/access visits from children	We will consider the children to be part of the household if they stay for 3 days or more per week. Formal documented evidence is required.

Offers of housing

Offers of housing are made based on the information in the application, applicants are responsible for ensuring their application is up to date, this ensures any offers of housing will be appropriate. Applicants, including transfer applicants, will usually receive two (2) reasonable offers of housing. Allocations are made based on information provided by the applicant. If there is evidence of false or misleading information provided by the applicant/tenant, Compass may withdraw the offer of housing.

In allocating properties, Compass will consider the information the applicant has provided and the property elements to ensure the property is suitable, we will make sure that:

- the property being offered is appropriate for the person's current household needs
- there won't be under or over occupancy
- the property location matches the applicant's needs
- the property type will not have a negative impact on a person's health or disability

Compass will arrange a property inspection once an offer of housing is made, applicants/tenants will have **two (2) days** to consider the offer following the inspection and will be required to sign a residential tenancy agreement within **five (5) days** of accepting an offer of housing.

An offer is not reasonable if the property:

- has a negative impact on a medical condition or disability of an applicant or household member
- places the applicant or household member in an area that will put them at risk
- makes it difficult for the applicant or their household member to remain together

If an applicant does not accept an offer, they are required to complete the 'offer response' form and provide reasons for declining an offer of housing and any evidence supporting the decision. Based on the information provided, Compass will determine if the reasons for declining the offer of housing are

reasonable. If Compass determines the reasons for declining the offer are not reasonable, the offer will count towards the number of offers the applicant is entitled to receive. If the reasons for declining the offer are deemed reasonable, the offer will be withdrawn and will not count towards the number of offers the applicant is entitled to receive. Applicants will be advised of any decisions made by Compass.

Criteria for accepting, rejecting and withdrawing housing offers and suspending applications

Situation	Evidence
Offer accepted	The person has accepted the property and must sign a residential tenancy agreement within 5 working days
Offer is rejected and is considered to be a reasonable offer	<p>The offer of housing meets the matching requirements and:</p> <p>There are no grounds for suspending the person's NSW Housing register application</p> <p>The person did not provide any new substantiated information to us about their needs within the required timeframe</p> <p>The person has declined the offer for a reason that we consider to be a personal preference because it does not directly impact on the person's housing needs, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wanting a brick property - wanting floorboards, tiles or vinyl instead of carpet - wanting gas rather than electricity - not liking the neighbourhood - not liking the cladding, internal or external layout, design or colour scheme of the property - wanting a bath rather than a shower - wanting a different suburb (where the need for a particular suburb has not been established) - wanting a specific street - wanting to live near shops, family, school, church (where the need for a specific location has not been established) - wanting a different type of property (house, townhouse, villa or unit) - wanting us to match them to a property based on the needs of their pet <p>The person has declined the offer due to not liking, or being unwilling to accept, our requirements or the requirements of the type of the housing program, eg, type or length of lease; terms of the residential tenancy agreement.</p>
Offer withdrawn	<p>The person didn't accept the property and we have determined that this decision is valid because, based on the information provided by the person, the property did not meet their needs. The person may be required to provide evidence that supports their decision such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from medical practitioner or health care provider - Letter from their support provider - Letter from their employer

Situation	Evidence
	<p>Compass offered the property but now needs it for an applicant with more urgent needs;</p> <p>Compass matched the applicant to the property but did not provide the details to the applicant because the applicant's needs or circumstances had changed</p> <p>Compass matched the applicant to the property but did not provide the details to the applicant because they did not meet the eligibility criteria</p> <p>The applicant decided not to accept an offer of a senior communities property, Compass will change its records to show that the applicant should not be offered this type of property again</p>
Application suspended	<p>The person provided information demonstrating that they are temporarily in a situation where they are unable to accept an offer due to circumstances beyond their control. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where the person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is experiencing illness or is in hospital Is overseas or on holidays Cannot terminate a residential tenancy agreement Is in prison

Once a decision is made, the offer and the outcome will be updated on the NSW Housing Register using the Housing Pathways process.

Review of decisions

If a tenant or applicant is dissatisfied with a decision about their Application for Housing Assistance, they should first discuss this with a Housing Access Officer at Compass. If the tenant or applicant is still dissatisfied, they have the right to lodge an appeal for a formal review of the decision. Appeal Request form are available on the Compass website or by contacting a Compass branch.

4. Responsibilities

All Compass workers have an obligation to:

- familiarise themselves with and ensure they have a clear understanding of Compass policies and procedures,
- observe and implement such policies, and associated procedures in delivering services to Compass clients,
- inform Compass clients of the impact of this policy on them and assist them to understand their rights and obligations, as required,
- identify issues that require amendment to this policy document and complete the relevant documentation to propose any amendments, and
- report breaches of Compass policies or procedures.

The relevant Group Executive Manager is ultimately responsible to:

- ensure all stakeholders within their area of responsibility are informed about Compass Policies and Procedures,
- ensure appropriate processes and controls are implemented to enable the correct application of and adherence to relevant policies and procedures, and
- ensure appropriate processes and controls are implemented to enable breaches of approved Compass Policy and Procedures to be reported and managed.

5. Implementation and Review

This policy is listed on Compass Controlled Documents Register and is a controlled document requiring approval of any changes. It may not be amended or shared outside Compass without approval.

The policy is reviewed regularly and published on Compass SharePoint intranet once approved. Employees receive communications and training on new and reviewed policies and procedures.

Compass complies with relevant contractual compliance obligations and jurisdictional laws and regulations when implementing this policy. Confirmation of internal compliance with this policy is undertaken regularly.

It is the responsibility of Compass Group Executive Services (governance@compasshousing.org) to maintain and update the Compass Master Policy Document, Policy Directory and the Policy Review Register, administer the review and approval process and inform and distribute new and amended policies and procedures once approved (refer PROC-011 Policy and Procedure Development Approval).

Compass Workers should refer to [SharePoint Company Documents Policy and Procedure site](#) for the latest version which takes precedent over any uncontrolled version. If this document is printed, downloaded, or saved elsewhere from this site it becomes an uncontrolled version.

For further information contact the Responsible Officer listed under Document Information.

6. Resources and related documents

Related documents

- Compass Eligibility for Social Housing Policy
- Compass Housing Transfer Policy
- Compass Review of Decisions Policy (Appeals)
- Housing Pathways Policies (www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help)

Related legislation/standards

- Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW)
- Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019

7. Definitions

Please refer to Compass Glossary of Definitions for Policies and Procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to its effectiveness:

Term	Definition
Appeals	A Community housing appeal is defined as ‘any expression of dissatisfaction with a decision made by a social housing provider to provide or not provide a service (such as housing, transfer or priority on the housing register) or, a decision relating to a tenant or service user’s dissatisfaction of a decision made by the organisation.’ An application for a decision to be reversed or overturned. Includes but is not limited to: • Allocation decisions; • Level of rent or rent subsidy; • Eligibility for a housing transfer; • Permission to undertake modifications; • Permission to keep pets; • Calculation of water charges;
Applicant	Is a person who has applied for Housing Assistance
Compass	Compass Housing Services Co. Ltd, an Australian Public Company registered in Australia under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cwlth) and as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) .

Term	Definition
Complaints	<p>An expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the services provided by [Organisation], where the complainant is unhappy with the standard or type of service.</p> <p>Types of Complaint include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where Compass have failed to provide or there has been a delay or problem in providing a service; • Where Compass have failed to follow or have been unfair or inconsistent in applying our policies or procedures. • Where Compass have failed to keep Tenants informed, through lack of or insufficient information • Where there has been inappropriate behaviour or attitude from a Compass Employee or contractor.
Complainant	Person with a Complaint ongoing with Compass.
Employee	A person engaged under an employment agreement or award by any company in the Compass Group.
Housing Pathways	The way applications for housing assistance are managed in NSW
Tenant	A person who signs the Residential Tenancy Agreement with Compass
Worker (Compass Group)	<p>a person engaged to carry out activities in any capacity for a company in the Compass Group, including work as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Employee, or • an independent contractor or subcontractor, or • a worker of a contractor or subcontractor, or • a worker of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or • an outworker, or • an apprentice or trainee, or • a student gaining work experience, or a volunteer
Worker (Compass)	<p>has the same meaning as defined in the NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10 Subdivision 2 Part 7 Meaning of 'worker' (1) A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) an employee, or b) a contractor or subcontractor, or c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or e) an outworker, or f) an apprentice or trainee, or g) a student gaining work experience, or h) a volunteer, or i) a person of a prescribed class.