

COMMUNITY HOUSING POLICY

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1. Purpose

To provide a clear understanding of the requirements for managing the community housing units, including applications, rentals, and maintenance.

2. Background

Council owns 27 single bedroom units at Kennedy Crescent, Waimate. They are for single tenants or couples only. All applicants are required to complete an application form, and their needs to be assessed prior to being considered for a unit.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Tenancy Agreement is a written agreement between Council and the tenant and it is subject to the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

4. Policy

4.1. Eligibility Criteria

- Applicant must be New Zealand citizen or permanent resident;
- Applicant must be receiving long-term social welfare benefits, including but not limited to:
 - New Zealand superannuation
 - Veteran's pension
 - Disability allowance
- Applicants on limited income may be considered with the application judged on individual basis, for accommodation to be offered on a temporary basis only. Such applicants are subject to the limited income rate as per Councils fees and charges. If a more eligible applicant (according to the criteria) needs to be placed in a unit which is already occupied by a limited income tenant, then the limited income tenant will be given 90 days notice to vacate. This clause would be included in the limited income persons Tenancy Agreement.
- Applicants must have a housing need. If an applicant's current accommodation is unsuitable for various reasons, the applicant should include all relevant details in the application form.
- If an applicant owns property and decides to accept a Council unit, then the property must be sold or placed on the market for sale within 1 month of accepting the unit, and Council is to be advised accordingly. The applicant may not collect rent from a property once they have become a tenant of a Council unit.

- An application must include a medical practitioner's letter recommending the applicant for a Council unit, confirming that the applicant is capable of caring for themselves
- Applicants are asked to agree to Council undertaking a credit check to assess whether they are suitable for further consideration for a unit.
- An application must also include a letter of reference from the applicant's current landlord, or if the applicant owns their own home, a character reference.

4.2. Processing Applications

Applications must be made on a Council Community Housing application form which must be completed in full, including signing of the Privacy Act Declaration and Consent to Credit Check. The Council may take appropriate measures- including financial means assessment, or income and asset testing- to ensure that units are allocated to the most eligible applicants.

Once the application is received, it will be assessed. The assessment shall take account of the applicant's age and level of assets. The assessment is based on the application, general practitioner's letter, and any other relevant circumstances. The assessment, in the form of a score, is then placed next to the applicant's name on the Council waiting list if a unit is not immediately available.

Should an applicant decline two opportunities to occupy a unit which suits the applicant's requirements, that application may be removed from the waiting list.

All assessment reports are reviewed by Community Housing Manager; successful applications must obtain the approval of the said manager.

4.3. Tenancy Requirements

A bond of maximum 3 weeks, and rent in advance of minimum 2 weeks, will be required to commence a new tenancy. The bond will be forwarded to the Tenancy Services, as per legislative requirements.

Rents shall be reviewed annually through Council's fees and charges.

5. Publication Details

All inquiries or suggestions regarding this document should be referred to:	Community and Strategy Group Manager
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