

# 04.02 HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SERVICE APPLICATION AND ALLOCATION PROCESS POLICY

## SCOPE

RQ Property Portfolio

## POLICY

RQ will ensure that all its properties are allocated in a fair and equitable manner. RQ is a registered housing provider under the required legislation and regulations. All long-term accommodation (LTCH, EEH and CMSU) will be managed as per the requirements of the One Social Housing System, contact relevant State and/or Federal Government agency/ies' guidelines and policy. CAP accommodation will be allocated ensuring that those applicants with the highest need matching the property type will be accommodated.

## PURPOSE

To provide adequate guidelines for the organisation to manage the application and allocation process to RQ accommodation while ensuring that the applicant's housing needs are accommodated and matched to the property. This policy covers client and RQ initiated transfers.

## DEFINITION/S

RQ	Roseberry Qld
General Manager	Also refers to Acting General Manager
Workforce	Refers to all individuals providing service on behalf of RQ, such as Staff, Volunteers, Independent Clinicians, Consortium.
Staff	Refers to paid staff, graduates and student placements.
DCHDE	Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
LTCH	Long Term Community Housing
CMSU	Community Managed Studio Units
EEH	Employment and Education Housing
QHIP	Queensland Homelessness Information Platform
RTA	Residential Tenancies Authority
RPM	Rental Property Management Software
HSC	Housing Service Centre

## PROCEDURES

### 04.02.01 Requests for Housing Assistance for LTCH, EEH and CMSU Housing Programs

1. RQ is a funded, registered community housing provider as per the Queensland Housing Act 2003, and, therefore receives applicant referrals from the relevant State or Federal Government agency/ies Housing Register to fill LTCH, EEH and CMSU vacancies.
2. People wishing to list for LTCH, EEH and CMSU accommodation who are not registered with the relevant State or Federal Government agency/ies for Social Housing will be immediately directed to the local or the relevant State or Federal Government agency/ies to check eligibility and complete and provide required documentation.
3. RQ Housing Officers will complete the RQ Housing and Homelessness Enquiry Form with interested applicants. This provides RQ with more detailed information regarding their circumstances, which can be referred to if they are in need of crisis accommodation with RQ

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4. RQ Housing Officers will assist applicants with completion of the Form 7 – Application for Housing Assistance when requested to do so. In these instances, applicants are encouraged to make an appointment with the Housing staff first.
5. RQ Housing Officers are always mindful and aware that in some instances, applicants may not have adequate literacy and numeracy skills to complete paperwork, therefore, offers of assistance will always be made in a respectful and courteous manner. Wherever necessary RQ Housing staff will provide applicants information on other housing alternatives and options available to them.

### **04.02.02 Allocating to LTCH, EEH and CMSU Accommodation**

1. RQ allocates LTCH, EEH and CMSU accommodation as per the DCHDE Allocations Policy and Allocation Procedures for funded Social Housing Providers (effective September 11, 2020), as follows:
  - a) Within one working day of RQ becoming aware of a vacancy in its portfolio, Housing staff will contact relevant State and/or Federal Government agency/ies of the vacancy using the “Notification of Vacancy Form – Community Housing”.
  - b) The relevant State and/or Federal Government agency/ies will review the Housing Register for applicants who meet the requirements for a good property match and provide a minimum of three short listed applicants (wherever able) to RQ using the DCHDE Applicant Referral Report – Community Housing Form.
  - c) Where RQ becomes responsible for a unit block through new acquisition or construction, the DCHDE will provide a Bulk Referral List. RQ will work with, assist where necessary and provide relevant details to the DCHDE to progress the allocation process in a timely and efficient manner.
  - d) Where Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy does not have any suitable referrals for a vacancy, and RQ is aware of a suitable applicant, RQ will nominate that Applicant to DCHDE ensuring:
    - That approval is provided by DCHDE
    - The applicant is eligible for housing assistance and matches property and program criteria
    - The application is listed with DCHDE, and
    - All required processes and paperwork is completed.

### **04.02.03 Matching Applicants to Property**

The RQ Housing Officer will assess referrals and application to determine the highest need and best match to the available property to ensure best use of the property and provide applicants the best fit for a successful tenancy. The following steps are followed by RQ Housing Officers when matching applicants to vacant properties:

#### **Step 1:**

1. The RQ Housing Officers will conduct interviews with all applicants referred from the DCHDE. The Housing Officer responsible for the vacant property will contact the applicant, or if necessary, the third party identified on the DCHDE referral, to make an appointment for an interview.
2. It is preferred that interviews are conducted face to face however where necessary (mobility or accessibility issues) telephone interviews or home visits can be organised.

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In those instances, staff must comply with RQ 03.17 Home and Community Meetings Policy.

3. The RQ Housing Officer will interview the applicants, using the prescribed RQ Housing Interview and Assessment Form.
4. The purpose of the interview is to:
  - a) Update applicant information and circumstances,
  - b) Ensure that the property characteristics match the applicants needs and requirements,
  - c) Explain specific or pertinent tenancy conditions related to the property,
  - d) Provide opportunity for the applicant to ask questions and seek clarification on any issues or concerns,
  - e) Gather adequate information to make an effective assessment of applicants needs and prioritise the application.

### **Step 2: Allocation Panel**

1. Once all interviews have been completed, the Housing Officer will collate the information ensuring the form is complete, organise a meeting with the Allocation Panel to discuss and prioritise allocations.
2. This meeting shall occur within two working days of the interviews being completed. The Allocation Panel will comprise of at least the two RQ Housing Officers and either the Manager of Housing and Homelessness Services or the RQ General Manager. All panel members involved in the decision-making process will comply with RQ 01.15 Conflict of Interest Policy requirements and are required to sign off on the allocation decision once made.

### **Step 3: Determining Housing Priority**

1. The Allocation Panel will assess the information collected in the interview process and determine from the information provided a priority list of applicants. RQ uses the following criteria to prioritise the applicants housing needs:
  - Homeless / sleeping rough
  - Unaffordable rent (over 30% of household income)
  - NTL issued or temporary accommodation only
  - Medical / Health condition
  - Disability / Mobility issue
  - Premises is not right size due to a child / children being returned to care
  - Overcrowding causing serious health /safety concerns
  - Risk of violence and continual harassment
  - Safety of household members is at risk
  - Lack of access to relevant services
  - Court orders or legal processes preventing relocation
  - Provides improved accessibility and mobility
  - Close to required services
  - Provides capacity for children to return to care
  - Household composition matches property – size, type and location of dwelling
  - Removes or significantly reduces risk of violence and continual harassment
  - Capacity to pay Bond and Rent when tenancy commences
  - Able to move into property within required timeframe

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- No pets impeding property match
  - Where necessary, addressing neighbourhood fatigue
2. RQ does not use a point ranking system to prioritise applicants however the above criteria is used to ascertain the level of need. All criteria carry equal rating, with exception of "Homeless / sleeping rough". People who are homeless or sleeping rough and if the applicant household matches property type, they will be ranked the highest priority.
  3. If the household is not homeless / sleeping rough, all other relevant criteria will be selected. All other criteria are rated equally and the applicant household with the most criteria impacting upon their housing situation will be selected as the most in need.
  4. In situations where there has been considerable and ongoing neighbourhood disturbances, RQ Housing and Homelessness Services will discuss the issue and seek assistance from the local HSC to locate a suitable applicant from Common Wait List to assist in reducing complaints but also to assist in providing neighbours quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their properties. This process is only undertaken after consultation and with approval of the RQ Manager of Housing and Homelessness Services or the RQ General Manager.
  5. Where client's priority is deemed to be the same, RQ will refer to the tie breaker criteria which advise that the applicant who has been listed with the DCHDE for the longest amount of time will be offered the property first.
  6. RQ understands and acknowledges that an applicant's housing distress/circumstances may not be able to be captured adequately within the criteria which may place them at a disadvantage. In those instances, where the criteria do not reflect the high need, the interview panel will ensure that clear reasoning and recommendations will be made, and discussed with the RQ General Manager prior to offers of housing being made.

### 04.02.04 Record Keeping

RQ maintains records of the following documentation:

- Request for Housing Assistance forms
- Notification of Vacancy Form – Community Housing
- Housing and interview assessment form for over 25 years of age
- Intake and Assessment- QHIP –Queensland Homelessness information Platform. For 25years and under
- Housing and Interview Assessment Form – LTCH
- RQ Client Consent Form
- Any other records relevant to the application and allocation process for the tenants.

### 04.02.05 Procedures for RQ and Client Initiated Transfers

1. A **client-initiated transfer** takes place when the tenant needs to move because:
  - a) they are homeless or at risk of homelessness (e.g. fleeing domestic violence)
  - b) they are at risk of violence from members of the local community or neighbourhood
  - c) they need to move to access essential services, employment, to meet cultural obligations, gain access to children or for family/informal support
  - d) the design or size of the current housing does not meet the household's need.
2. A **provider-initiated transfer (RQ)** takes place when the tenant needs to move because:

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- a) the property requires significant maintenance or upgrades
  - b) the property is to be demolished or redeveloped
  - c) the property is being resumed by the owner and is no longer available to the provider
  - d) under-occupancy – that is, the property has more bedrooms than the tenants need
  - e) there are persistent neighbourhood disputes or harassment
  - f) there is a health and safety issue or fire or natural disaster
  - g) the transfer moves the household from a high-demand to low-demand area
  - h) the initial allocation of transitional housing is deemed inappropriate, or
  - i) there are other exceptional circumstances, as approved by the Manager or General Manager of RQ Housing Services.
3. Tenants must fill in the Application for Transfer Form and submit it to RQ. RQ will complete the Transfers Checklist. This information is available on the DCHDE website.
4. RQ will:
- a) assess the tenant's priority for transfer,
  - b) attempt to transfer the tenant within RQ portfolio
  - c) if a transfer cannot take place within RQ's own portfolio, attempt to transfer the tenant to another community housing provider in the area/region matching the tenant's needs
  - d) if a transfer cannot take place within the community housing sector, lodge the Application for Transfer Form (with the tenant's consent) and Transfers Checklist with the local Housing Service Centre,
5. For client-initiated transfers, RQ will assess the tenant's eligibility under the criteria described below:
1. Queensland residency
  2. Assets test (property ownership and liquid assets)
  3. Independent income
  4. Household income limits
  5. Appropriateness of current housing:
    - fleeing domestic violence
    - irreversible family breakdown
    - access to essential facilities, support services, employment, to meet parole conditions, enable care of children, to meet cultural obligations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
    - design/size of the housing does not meet the household's needs
    - formation of a new household, where a tenant with a disability needs to move to establish a new household under advice provided by Disability Services, Project 300, Young People Exiting Residential Aged Care Facilities Initiative, Adult Lifestyle Support Packages, or General Accommodation Support Program.

### **04.02.06 Verifying the Tenant's Circumstances**

1. RQ will seek to verify the tenant's circumstances by sighting appropriate evidence, such as a current Domestic Violence Protection Order or letter from a doctor.
2. If it is not possible to obtain evidence of the tenant's circumstances (for example, where domestic violence has occurred) RQ will apply discretion in processing the tenant's application.

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### 04.02.07      **Prioritising Tenants for Transfer**

Provider-initiated transfers may take place as soon as an appropriate vacancy arises and after considering the relative priority of client-initiated transfer applications on the following basis:

Very High Need for a transfer:

- a. homeless or at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence or violence/abuse from another family or community member or neighbour, and/or
- b. four reasons from the transfer appropriateness criteria above.

High Need for a transfer:

- a. homeless or at risk of homelessness due to irreversible family breakdown or being split between family and friends, or
- b. three reasons from the transfer appropriateness criteria above, or
- c. need to access essential facilities, support services, to meet parole conditions, enable care of children, cultural grounds relating to a death in the tenant's dwelling or an issue with the design of the housing.

Moderate Need for a transfer:

- a. need to access employment, cultural reasons excluding a death in the tenant's dwelling, family and informal support), physical amenity (housing size/overcrowding) or formation of new household.

The RQ Manager of Housing and Homelessness Services will use discretion in applying the transfer process based on this assessment process and using local knowledge and understanding of the tenants needs.

### 04.02.08      **Tenants who do not want to Remain in Community Housing**

If a community housing tenant does not want to remain in community housing, RQ will:

1. Inform the tenant that transfer applications accepted by the Housing Service Centre are placed on the housing register in order of need and it is likely that the tenant will have to wait longer for assistance than if they move within the community housing sector
2. Assist the tenant to lodge the Application for Transfer Form\_at the Housing Service Centre
3. Provide any relevant information on the tenant's current housing to the Housing Service Centre, with the tenant's permission and as per the RQ Client Consent Form.

### 04.02.09      **Rejection of Offer**

If a transferring tenant rejects an offer of alternative housing, RCS will assess whether the reason is considered valid or invalid under the department's guidelines. Tenants who reject offers of housing assistance for invalid reasons may have their transfer priority reassessed.

### 04.02.10      **Offering other Assistance to Tenants**

For provider-initiated transfers, RQ may offer financial assistance to help tenants to move, unless prohibited by the terms of their assistance agreement with the department.

RQ may make arrangements directly with suppliers for removals, storage, cleaning and rubbish removal.

### 04.02.11      **Record-keeping**

RQ maintains records of:

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- any assessment of the tenant’s eligibility
- attempts to transfer the tenant within portfolio and to other providers.

When a transfer application needs to be processed by the Housing Service Centre, RQ and Housing Service Centre should share information so that tenants do not have to supply the same information more than once. RQ will request tenants’ consent to share information with the department, and this will be recorded on the RQ Client Consent Form.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

RQ Housing and Homelessness Manager and Officers  
DCHDE Housing Officer (Referrals)

## EVALUATION METHOD

Review of RQ policies as per [01.10 Policy and Procedure Development and Review Policy](#), [02.23 Quality Evaluation & Improvement Policy](#)  
Allocation Internal Report.  
Matching applicants to need.

## LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

[Housing Act 2003](#)  
[Housing Regulation 2015](#)

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

[01.15 Conflict of Interest Policy](#)  
[02.16 Feedback Policy](#)  
[02.09 Correspondence and Communication Policy](#)  
[02.19 Ethical Decision-Making Policy](#)  
[03.01 Client Eligibility Policy](#)  
[03.02 Client Information and Access Policy](#)  
[03.04 Privacy and Confidentiality of Information Policy](#)  
[03.05 Client Rights Policy](#)  
[03.06 Termination of Client Services Policy](#)  
[03.12 Documentation Policy](#)  
[03.17 Home and Community Meetings Policy](#)  
[06.05 Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy](#)  
DCHDE Notification of community managed property vacancy.  
DCHDE Community housing allocation/offer advice form.  
DCHDE Waitlist Referral Report for community-managed housing service providers.  
RQ Housing Services Housing Interview and Assessment Form (LTCH & CMSU)  
RQ Housing Services Housing Interview and Assessment Form (CAP)  
RQ Client Consent Form  
DCHDE Application for Transfer Form  
DCHDE Transfers Checklist  
DCHDE Housing Services Allocations Policy for Funded Social Housing Providers  
DCHDE SPPR01: Allocation Procedures for Funded Social Housing Providers  
DCHDE SPPRO3: Transfer Procedures for Funded Social Housing Providers

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Category	Current document details
Document owner	RQ Board
Current author/s	Sherrie Stringer

## 04.02 HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SERVICE APPLICATION AND ALLOCATION PROCESS POLICY

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Review Date	Version	Summary of Changes	Approved By and Date	
22/05/2018	V1.0		RQ Board	05/06/2018
November 2018	V2.0		RQ Board	
16/03/2020	V3.0		RQ Board	27/06/2022
03/2/2023	V4.0	Minor updates- CAP taken out	General Manager	10/2/2023