HOUSING ELIGIBILITY AND ALLOCATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

pathways southwest
Towards better mental health

Policy Statement

Pathways SouthWest practices clear and transparent processes when allocating properties to consumers. This policy defines Pathways SouthWest's criteria for a person to be considered eligible at the time of allocation and ongoing eligibility defined within Pathways SouthWest program guidelines.

Pathways SouthWest Housing has some Transitional Housing that is provided in conjunction with case management support delivered by our Recovery Workers.

Transitional Housing is designed to assist Pathways SouthWest clients to access safe, secure, and affordable housing for a limited time while working with their Recovery Worker towards sustainable long-term housing options. This may include (but is not limited to) identifying and taking action towards securing suitable long-term housing and addressing issues that may pose a barrier or developing skills required for successful independent long-term housing.

Pathways SouthWest has a selection process that is accountable, meets all legislative requirements, industry standards and guidelines and appropriately matches individual housing needs with available properties. Within this, Pathways SouthWest conforms to agreed federal and state allocation policies as part of maintaining its registration to provide community or/ social housing.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants/referrals for housing managed by Pathways Southwest. This policy is owned by the Management Team.

Definitions

- **Premises:** A general term for a residence. It can mean a house, duplex, unit, flat, apartment or caravan site, caravan or park home and can include the land on which the premises are situated. This will also include, where applicable, common areas and chattels within a common area.
- **Property:** In relation to rental properties, this includes the building, garden and any sheds etc.
- **Rent:** The money the tenant pays the lessor for the right to live in the premises.
- **Tenancy agreement:** The terms and conditions of occupying the premises.
- **Tenant:** The person who rents accommodation from the lessor. At Pathways SouthWest tenants can be referred to as consumers.

- **Termination of a tenancy:** When the lessor, the tenant or the court ends a tenancy

Purpose

Eligibility and Allocation

Prospective tenants are provided with clear and detailed information about the eligibility requirements (including income and assets), potential location and features of the accommodation available.

An offer letter is provided to each prospective tenant with acceptance timelines for accepting the offer, acknowledging that eligibility and allocation in the instance the offer is not accepted it will be offered to the next eligible prospective tenant.

Language support is also provided when advertising a vacancy if required.

Allocation and Eligibility Principles (Reference to the WA Government Department of Housing and Works, Community Housing Allocations Policy- **(**https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/community-housing-policies-and-resources) (accessed 26/08/2026)

- During all eligibility assessments (of prospective and current Pathways SouthWest consumers) and at the time of allocating housing, Pathways SouthWest will comply with National and State laws regarding equal opportunity and antidiscrimination legislation. Pathways SouthWest will also comply with the eligibility requirements of the WA Government Department of Housing and Works, (accessed 26/08/2026) (https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/community-housing-policies-and-resources) (accessed 26/8/2026)

1. Pathways SouthWest will allocate from its internal waitlists and consider all relevant, available information including;
    - Basic housing requirements.
    - Location requirements.
    - Application listing date.

2. Pathways SouthWest will ensure staff carry out their duties using fairness, transparency and in line with required Acts, Regulations and Standards in managing the wait list and the allocation of housing.

3. Pathways SouthWest allocates housing to people experiencing mental health issues who are at greater financial, cultural and/ or social disadvantage, single parents and Indigenous people.

4. People accessing our housing must engage and continue to engage in Pathways SouthWest's mental health programs.

5. Household composition (this is family and carers) plays a key role in determining the eligibility for and allocation of housing.

6. Pathways Southwest aims to ensure appropriate use of properties to meet the housing needs of our tenants and may re-assess the eligibility for housing type throughout a tenancy if the household composition experiences significant changes.

Declining Housing Offers

Prospective tenants may decline the offer of housing, and this will not remove them from the wait list for future housing offers.

Non-Standard Allocations

In seeking to enrich the lives of our tenants and play a critical role in supporting our communities, Pathways SouthWest recognises that at times it may need to vary its standard allocation policies. As such, Pathways SouthWest reserves the right to make non-standard allocations that meet the needs of the individuals and/or the local communities we serve.

Non-standard allocations may occur in circumstances where Pathways SouthWest:

- Wishes to support someone who is at serious risk or in imminent danger.
- Provides an urgent transfer to support tenancy management, redevelopment or other strategic or operational objectives.
- Supports a person with specific needs e.g. if they need a specific location or property.
- Is supporting the outcomes of partnered support agencies including the Department of Housing and Works.
- Has a property that is difficult to allocate.

The reasons for non-standard allocations must be supported by evidence and documented. Non-standard allocations can only be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and are to be reported to the Management Team at the next available meeting.

Housing Eligibility Guidelines

All Community Housing Organisations will apply the applicable income and asset eligibility tests documented in the WA Government Department of Housing and Works, Community Housing Eligibility Policy-

1. Australian Citizenship and Permanent Residency Eligibility

Applicants who don't hold Australian Citizenship or have permanent residency will not be considered for tenancy until they hold Australian Citizenship or have permanent residency status.

2. Assessing Income Eligibility

The assessment of gross household income is based on the evidence supplied by the prospective tenant of all income sources within the household.
This evidence includes:

- Centrelink payment information
- Payslips and Notice of Assessment from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) Statements from other income sources (e.g. workers compensation, shares) if applicable

Pathways SouthWest must be satisfied that the information provided is a true reflection of the household income including a minimum of:

- 4 weeks of Centrelink benefits
- Previous year Payment Summary (formerly group certificate) or,
- 3-month Notice of Assessment from ATO or Certified Practicing Accountant

Where a tenant requires a co-resident carer and this is the carers principle place of residence, the carers income shall not be assessed for the purposes of eligibility but will be included for rent assessment.

Income of children/adult children or other household members do not form part of the income eligibility assessment unless the person/persons form part of the primary Application or is the named tenant.

3. Social Housing Assessable Assets

Definition of a cash asset:

- Deposit in a bank, credit union, building society, savings/cheque account, cash, term deposit, shares,
- Managed investments such as loans, debentures, friendly society and insurance bonds, unlisted equity and property trusts.

Assets *excluded* from assessment:

- Car,
- Antique furniture,
- Stamp collection,
- Life insurance policies.

4. Superannuation:

Superannuation and annuities that are not accessible are not assessed, but any annual income/return/dividend received are assessed as part of the income assessment process.
Superannuation funds for applicants under the age of 55 years: Superannuation funds that cannot be realised (e.g. superannuation roll-over fund) are not assessed as an asset.

Superannuation funds for applicants 55 years of age and over:
Where a lump sum superannuation payment is taken, it will be treated as a cash asset and any income derived will be assessed for eligibility and rent assessment purposes

5. Other Eligibility Criteria

The following prospective tenants are not eligible to be housed with Pathways SouthWest

- Previous tenants with unattended debts
- Tenants who own realisable residential real estate
- Primary prospective tenant who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident

Matching

Pathways SouthWest will endeavour to achieve sustainable housing outcomes via consideration of the prospective tenants' needs and the available dwelling. Housing suitability is a key component to the creation and development of sustainable tenancies and ensuring that Pathways SouthWest housing stock is utilised in the most appropriate and highest use ways. The household composition, property composition, built form, location and amenity are necessary considerations during the allocation process.

Decision making

Pathways SouthWest believes that sustainable tenancy starts with a quality allocation of housing for a suitable tenant. Decisions are made with care and diligence and with consideration of the consumer, their engagement with Pathways SouthWest services and the contractual requirements under which the property may be managed.

During the application, eligibility assessment and allocation processes, Pathways SouthWest will work proactively with all prospective tenants to identify any barriers to sustaining tenancies, and will take prospective tenants' needs, preferences and tenancy skills into account in making allocations.

Pathways SouthWest will work proactively with all prospective tenants to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities, the features of their property, how rent is calculated, how to contact the organization and what they can expect of Pathways SouthWest during their tenancy.

Pathways SouthWest will maintain engagement with new tenants throughout the tenancy establishment phase to help them settle into their property and community and to ensure they engage with our services.

Withdrawal of Offers

Pathways may rescind an offer of housing if the prospective tenant has provided.

- Misleading/false information
- Fails to respond to the housing offer
- No longer is deemed in need of housing
- Or is no longer eligible under the WA Government Department of Housing and Works, Community Housing Eligibility Policy (https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/community-housing-policies-and-resources) (accessed 26/8/2026)

Clarity of The Information Provided

All materials and formats used ensure information is easy to read, alternative formats are available and indicated in information. Forms, information documents and other organisational materials are reviewed on a regular basis; this includes feedback surveys to our tenants.

Diversity

Pathways SouthWest is committed to helping build connected, thriving communities and seeks to empower its tenants through its approach of creating an equitable and sustainable program of services, in line with Pathways SouthWest Vision and Mission.

Consumer Feedback and Appeals

Feedback: Pathways SouthWest welcomes its tenants and applicants to query any decisions it makes and/or ask questions about our work practices and our services. If a tenant or applicant wishes to provide feedback and/or believes a decision made by Pathways SouthWest is incorrect, they can lodge an appeal using the Pathways SouthWest Tenants and Applicants Feedback and Complaints Form provided in the Tenants Information Pack and by contacting the Pathways SouthWest office.

Appeals: In lodging an appeal, tenants and applicants are encouraged to provide information on why they believe we have been unreasonable in our decision making and why the decision should be overturned.

Tenants can appeal the following types of decisions:

1. Decisions relating to eligibility for social or affordable housing or housing assistance:
    - Property offers.
    - Property entitlements.
    - Rent assessments.

- Tenant liability charges.

2. Decisions that may not be appealable include:
Matters currently subject to legal action (where a Termination Notice has been issued):

- Decisions that are not directly related to the person.
- Our policies and procedures.
- Internal administrative or funding matters.
- Matters not relating to our housing services (e.g. tenant participation, support and referral services).
- Decisions that apply generally to all tenants (e.g. market rent increases and subsidy percentage rates)
- Decisions made more than 12 months ago
- Decisions which are or have been the subject of a Notice of Termination or strikes issued under the Good Neighbour Policy and Procedure
- Decisions reached through legal action
- Decisions made by the Western Australian Ombudsman
- Decisions made by the Western Australian State Administrative Tribunal
- Water Consumption charges as they are not determined by Housing and Works
- Decisions to end a tenancy due to a tenant no longer being eligible for public housing
- Decisions to end a tenancy due to being offered alternative social housing accommodation
- Decisions to not allow another tenant to be added to a tenancy.

Only the person affected by a decision can lodge an appeal (or their advocate who has Authority to Act). The decision will then be reviewed by a staff member not involved in the original decision. The tenant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing with a full explanation of the decision within 10 working days of the lodgement of the appeal.

All tenants are to be provided with a copy of the Pathways SouthWest Tenants Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure in their Tennant Information Pack.

Key Contacts

Questions about how to implement this procedure should be directed to Pathways SouthWest CEO on ceo@pathwayssouthwest.org.au or phone 97911257

Related Policies and Other Documents:

- Charter of Health Care Rights
- Compliance Policy and Procedure
- Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure
- Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services
- Feedback and Complaints Form
- Governance Policy and Procedure
- Incident Management Policy and Procedure and all related reporting forms.
- National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations
- National Regulatory Community Housing Standards
- Tenants Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Western Australian Community Housing Regulatory Framework

External References

- WA Government Department of Housing and Works, Community Housing Eligibility Policy- (https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/community-housing-policies-and-resources)
- WA Government Department of Housing and Works, Community Housing Allocations Policy- **(**https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/community-housing-policies-and-resources)
- WA Government Department of Housing and Works, Appeals Process- **(**https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/community-housing-policies-and-resources)

Relevant Legislation

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
- Australians Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- GST and non-commercial rules – benchmark market rent values (Australian Tax Office) https://www.ato.gov.au/law/view/document?DocID=GII/GSTIICC2/NAT/ATO/00001 (accessed 18/06/2025)
- Housing Assistance Act 1996 (COM)
- Human Rights Act 2019
- Mental Health Act (WA) 2014
- National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (2018) – Bilateral Agreement with WA Schedule E4
- National Regulatory Code for the National Regulatory System of Community Housing 2022
- Privacy Act 1988
- Public Sector Ethics Act 1994
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Residential Tenancies Regulations 1989
- Residential Tenancies Act 1987
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- State Housing Acts (WA 1980)
- Quality of Care Principles 2014
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- Work Health and Safety Act 2020