# TENANTS HANDBOOK

pathways southwest
Towards better mental health

Pathways SouthWest is an independent community based mental health service located in the SouthWest of Western Australia. We provide support, education advocacy to people with lived or living experience of mental health issues in our region.
We support our local communities to embrace the concept of mental health wellbeing via community consultation, education and advocacy.
Pathways SouthWest demonstrates cultural safety, financial responsibility and good governance in all its operations.
Pathways SouthWest operates a service delivery system that complies with and is accredited with the requirements of the National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations and the Residential Tenancies Act 1987

## Our Purpose

Providing access to responsive, holistic services for consumers, carers, families and the community to reduce the impact of mental illness.

## Our Vision

To see anyone impacted by mental illness supported, nurtured and encouraged to live their best lives free from fear and discrimination.

## Our Values

Hope: Belief in the potential of individuals affected by mental illness to live life to the full
Courage: Ensuring mental health be seen
Respect: Acknowledging other opinions as having value
Humility: Willing to appreciate others
Responsibility: Everyone is responsible to commit to action towards our Purpose

## Your Residential Housing Tenancy Agreement

People who become tenants in a Pathways Southwest property will sign a Residential Tenancy Agreement before moving into their home. As a new tenant, you will receive a copy of this agreement. If you don't, please ask for a copy from the Housing Officer as your agreement is an important document that sets out for you, your rights and responsibilities as a tenant of Pathways SouthWest. (it's an important document to keep throughout your tenancy as you might need it for things like Commonwealth Rent Assistance applications.)

You will need to sign this agreement before you move into your home as it details your agreement to pay a fortnightly rent, your responsibilities and Pathways Southwest responsibilities regards to maintenance at the property and other relevant conditions of your tenancy.

The Residential Tenancies Act (1987) governs all rental housing in Western Australia. All Pathways SouthWest Residential tenancies are managed in accordance with the Act.

## Your rent assessment and calculation

Your rent is calculated in line with the Department of Housing and Work Rent Setting Policy and Guidelines.
(https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/community-housing-policies-and-resources (accessed 21.10.2026)

Your rent is calculated at 25% of total gross assessable household income (except for some transitional properties who are charged 30%) plus any entitlement to Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). Total gross income is your income before tax.

Household income Household income is the total gross income of all adults (over 16 years old) who are living in your home. Your rent is 'income related', so it will change if the people living in your home or the income of any household member changes. If your household circumstances change, please get in touch with us. You can ask for a rent review at any time.

You can request a copy of the Pathways SouthWest Rent Setting Policy and Procedure.

## Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Depending on your circumstances, you might be eligible to claim Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) from Centrelink to help pay your rent. This is an income supplement that's based on the type of accommodation you live in and the amount of rent you pay. The amount you're entitled to is factored into your rent assessment and calculation.

Please be aware that you'll need to submit a copy of your Tenancy Agreement when applying for CRA.

**Market rent** – Pathways SouthWest never charge more than 74.99% of the current market rent, which is the rent you would pay for a property of the same size, type and location if you were renting privately (this figure is set by the Australian Tax Office). The rent you pay will either be 25% of total gross assessable household income plus any entitlement to CRA, or 74.99% of the current Market Rent — whichever is the lower amount.

## Bills and insurance

### 1. Water consumption

You pay for all the water you use at your property. Pathways SouthWest issue you with a water usage invoice every second month and you pay the amount directly to us. If you'd like to pre-pay an amount every fortnight to go towards your water bill, please get in touch with the Housing Officer and they can calculate the amount you'll need to pre-pay and set it up with you. This is particularly important if you are having trouble with your financial budgeting.

### 2. Gas and electricity

Gas and electricity are also your responsibility as a tenant. If your property is in a strata complex, the strata might send invoices for your charges to us. In this situation, we'll issue you with an invoice for the charges and you pay the amount owing directly to us.

### 3. Insurance

Tenants are responsible for insuring their own personal property. This is called Contents Insurance.
Concessions. If you have a concession card, you might be able to get discounts on things like:

• Electricity and gas bills
• Water bills (contact the Housing Officer for your water account number, then contact Water Corporation on 1300 659 951)
• Public transport fares
• Ambulance costs
• Motor vehicle registration
• Cheaper medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
• Bulk-billed doctor visits (check with your doctor)
• A bigger refund for medical costs when you reach the Medicare safety net
• Help with hearing services
• A discount to redirect your mail though Australia Post
• Selected entertainment activities, such as movie tickets and entry to events.

For more information about concessions, contact Centrelink or ask your Recovery Worker.

**Your Property Condition Report (PCR)**

A PCR is a report that details the condition of the property at the time you move in. It's completed and signed by the Pathways SouthWest Housing Officer and then provided to you when you move in. We recommend you keep your PCR in a safe place. If you disagree with anything in the PCR or want to add extra comments, you have 7 days to do this and return it to us. If you don't provide us with an amended copy of the PCR within 7 days, it's taken that you agree with the condition of the property stated within the report.

**Paying your rent**

Your rent should be paid fortnightly in line with the rent charge dates set by Pathways SouthWest. You can get a copy of the rent charge dates from the Housing Officer at any time. Your Tenancy Agreement will state the fortnightly amount payable, and you'll receive advance notification of any rent reviews and changes during your tenancy.

Pathways SouthWest uses Centrepay deductions — Centrelink will pay your rent directly to Pathways SouthWest, with the amount deducted from your regular Centrelink payments. The Housing Officer will provide you with the form(s) you need to set this up

**Rent reviews**

In line with the Pathways SouthWest Rent Setting Policy, Pathways SouthWest reviews the amount of rent you pay annually. This is to ensure that you are charged an affordable rent based on your household income.

We will notify you by letter when your rent is due for review. It's important that you provide the documents and information requested to the Housing Officer. These are needed to be reviewed so the Housing Officer can make sure you're paying the right amount of rent. If your annual rent review results in a decrease in your rent, this will take effect from the next rental charge immediately after your rent review. If the review results in an increase in your rent, you'll be given 14 days' notice before your new rent amount takes effect.

As well as an annual rent review, Pathways SouthWest will also re-assess your eligibility and rent if your household income increases or decreases or someone moves in or out of your home. If your rent change is a direct result of a change in circumstances, the increase or decrease in your rent will take effect from the next rental charge immediately after your rent review.

If you have any questions about the rent eligibility and review process, you can speak to the Housing Officer

**Financial hardship**

If you ever have difficulty paying your rent, you should contact the Housing Officer or your Recovery Worker immediately. If you make us aware that you are facing financial difficulties, we will be better able to support you and make arrangements that helps you get back on track and avoid rental arrears. Pathways SouthWest can assist you by referring you to a financial counselling service that may be able to assist you if you're in financial hardship.

**Maintenance**

1. **Advice Regarding Repairs and Maintenance at Your Property**

Response times to maintenance requests Your maintenance request will be assessed based on the information you provide. Below is a guide on the estimated response times to expect when reporting repairs or making a maintenance request.

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|---|---|
| **Urgent (1-3 hours)** | **Gas leak, burst water pipe, electrical issues** |
| **High (same day)** | **Major water leak, blocked toilet, no hot water, faulty smoke detector** |
| **Medium (3 days)** | **Leaking tap, low water pressure** |
| **Low (7-10 days)** | **Broken blinds, pest control, broken towel rail** |
| **Non-urgent (14+ days)** | **Torn fly screen, property alteration requests.** |

2. **Emergency maintenance**

Any event or repair needed that might affect the safety of residents or lead to property damage could be considered an emergency maintenance request.
Examples of emergency maintenance requests:

- Gas leaks or electrical faults
- Fire damage, burst water pipes or blocked drains
- Broken external doors or windows.

3. **After hours maintenance (emergencies only)**

If there's an emergency after hours please phone 0438911287 for assistance.
Examples of emergency after hours situations:

- Gas leak
- Burst water pipe or damaged water fitting that causes a large water loss
- Electricity, gas or water supply loss or fault

- Faulty smoke alarms or Residual Current Devices (RCDs).

4. **Regular maintenance**

If you need a repair that doesn't cause a risk to tenants or is unlikely to lead to damage to the building, it's considered a regular maintenance request.
Examples of regular maintenance requests:

- Leaking taps and tap washers
- Torn fly screens
- Repairs to doors and cupboards.

5. **Long-term maintenance**

Properties will need long-term maintenance work from time to time.
Examples of long-term maintenance work:

- Renovating bathrooms or kitchens
- Replacing floor coverings
- Replacing hot water systems or stoves.

If this type of work needs to be carried out in your home, the Housing Officer will work with you to organise a time that best suits you.

**What you need to know during your tenancy.**

1. **Home improvements and property alterations**

Tenants aren't permitted to carry out any structural changes or alterations to their property without the permission of Pathways SouthWest. Please contact the Housing Officer beforehand if you want to alter something in your home.

Things like installing picture hooks and shelving, air-conditioning, a garden shed or painting a room would all be considered property alterations.

Please remember that these are just some examples - please get in touch with us before you make any alterations. If you get permission to go ahead with the property alteration, it will be at your cost and the work will need to be done by a qualified contractor. You might also have to restore the property to its original condition at the end of your tenancy, at your own cost.

2. **Lock outs or lost keys**

If you accidently lock yourself out of your property or lose your keys, please contact the Housing Officer on 97911267 during work hours.

If you lock yourself out and it's on a weekend or before 8:30am or after 4:30pm on a weekday, please contact the After-Hours Service on 0438911287

Arrangements can be made to provide you with a new set of keys if you need them, but please note that this could be at your own cost.

3. **Tenant liability**

You will be responsible for any repairs to the property that are caused by neglect, misuse, accidental or wilful damage. If there's an insurance claim associated with repairs, you could be asked to pay any excess payable on the claim.

As a tenant, you don't have to pay for fair wear and tear such as fading paint or normal wear on floor coverings.

#### 4. Pests and vermin

Pathways SouthWest is responsible for the treatment of white ants (termites), Singapore Ants and bees in all its properties. You are responsible for the eradication of mice, rats, fleas, bed bugs and cockroaches, except where an infestation occurs within one month of moving into the property.

## Property Inspections

The Residential Tenancy Act requires Pathways SouthWest to carry out property inspections at your home on a regular basis. Inspections aren't something to be worried or anxious about — think of them as an opportunity to chat with the Housing Officer and or your Recovery Worker about any support you need, or anything else to do with your tenancy.

Tenancy laws allow a landlord to enter a tenant's premises for reasons such as routine property inspections, up to a maximum of 4 per year. We'll write to you and give you 7-14 days' notice of your upcoming property inspection. If the time or date isn't suitable, please get in touch with the Housing Officer in advance. We'll always try and negotiate a date and time that suits you. We prefer it if you're present during our visit so you can let us know how things are going and whether there's any maintenance issues. If you're not available and you're happy for Pathways SouthWest to attend in your absence, we'll use the keys we hold to gain access, in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act.

> Please leave the Housing Officer a note if there's any issues you'd like to address. If there are property standards issues identified during an inspection, we'll notify you in writing. Depending on the situation, we might organise a follow up visit to check that property conditions have been improved.

#### 1. Accessing your home in your absence

Tenancy laws allow a landlord to enter your home in your absence to carry out inspections. The landlord may also enter if there's an emergency, if they think the property has been abandoned or if necessary repairs need to be inspected or carried out. 72 hours of written notice is required from the landlord. We'll always try and negotiate a time and date that suits you to access your property, but if we can't contact you, we will issue a letter advising you of our intended entry to your home. This enables our Housing Officer and associated contractors to access your property to carry out necessary repairs or maintenance.

## Your Community and Your Neighbours

#### 1. Your rights as a tenant

You and your neighbours have an equal right to the quiet enjoyment of your homes. Situations that disturb this 'quiet enjoyment' include high levels of noise, inconsiderate actions and illegal or anti-social behaviour that disturbs other people. If you feel that your neighbour's actions are unfairly disturbing you, you should first have a polite word with them to explain your concerns. If this doesn't

work or you don't feel comfortable enough to do this, the Housing Officer or your Recovery Worker can provide you with further advice.

It's important that you also report antisocial behaviour to other appropriate agencies:

- If you are hearing excessive noise, you should also contact the Environmental Health Department at your local council.
- If a crime has been committed, you must also report it to the police.
- In an emergency, phone 000.

### 2. Your responsibilities as a tenant

As a tenant you have an obligation not to disturb your neighbours. Please remember that, as the primary tenant (the person holding the lease), you're always responsible for the behaviour of anyone living in or visiting your home.

### 3. Pets

Pets are allowed in some properties on a case-by-case basis. If you're considering getting a pet, please get in touch with the Housing Officer before the pet moves in and they'll be able to advise you what you need to do to seek permission. Please note that properties where Strata Rules apply may not be able to have pets. Restricted dog breeds are not allowed. This includes Pit Bull Terriers and cross breeds of the same dog (Dog Regulations 2002 – restricted breeds). Pets need to be secured within the grounds of your property and not cause angst with your neighbours.

## Your Safety Is Important In Your Residential Property

Domestic and family violence is any behaviour that results in physical, sexual and/or psychological damage, forced social isolation, economic deprivation or behaviour that causes the victim to live in fear. If your tenancy is being affected by domestic and/or family violence, please speak to your Pathways SouthWest Recovery Worker. We can refer you to other agencies that can offer help and support.

- In an emergency, call 000.
- Women's Domestic Violence Helpline
- 08 9223 1188 or 1800 007 339 (free call)
- Men's Domestic Violence Helpline
- 08 9223 1199 or 1800 000 599 (free call)
- Kids Helpline (people up to 24 years old)
- 1800 551 800 (free call)

### 1. Family and Domestic Violence and Your Rights as a Tenant

Everyone has the right to feel safe. If you are a tenant dealing with a family or domestic violence situation, you have options on managing your tenancy agreement. Remember, whatever path you choose, your safety is the most important thing and there are support agencies around to help you. Pathways SouthWest Recovery Workers can assist you with information and support and referrals, if you are going through any family and domestic violence.

### 2. Tenants affected by family and domestic violence (FDV) can:

- GO - leave a tenancy agreement without going to court and with as little as seven (7) days'

notice (you can leave right away for safety but will need to pay rent until the end of the notice period)
• STAY - apply to court to have a perpetrator's name removed from a lease/tenancy agreement, your Recovery Worker can support you through this process.
• Make a rental home safer through lock changes or security upgrades – speak to the Housing Officer regarding security changes to the property, the use of Pathways SouthWest preferred contractors may expediate the process.
• Sort out disputes about property damage, unpaid rent or bonds with the Housing Officer
• Seek removal from, or avoid being listed on, a tenancy database if the listing was because of FDV.

- For more information, please visit the Department of Local Government, Industry, Regulation and Safety at https://www.consumerprotection.wa.gov.au/safe-tenancy (accessed 21.10.20226) or contact your Recovery Worker

**What Happens At The End of Your Tenancy**

Moving on and Vacating your unit

The amount of notice you need to give Pathways SouthWest before you leave your property depends on what type of tenancy agreement, you're on (fixed-term or periodic). If you don't know what type of tenancy you're on, check with the Housing Officer.

- **Fixed-term tenancy** – you must give 30 days' written notice of your intention to vacate.

Periodic tenancy - you must give 21 days' written notice of your intention to vacate.
If you don't provide written notice of your intent to vacate, you might continue to be charged rent.

**Your responsibilities when vacating a Pathways SouthWest property.** You must provide Pathways SouthWest with a forwarding address - this is a legal obligation that you must comply with.
All Keys to the property must be given back to Pathways SouthWest on the day you move out (if keys aren't returned you might be charged for a lock change)

- **Your property must be clean and free of all belongings and rubbish.**

A final property condition inspection will be carried out on the day you move out. Any damage, cleaning and carpet cleaning may be charged to you, though you'll have the opportunity to do this yourself where possible.

If you've got money owing on your account, you'll be asked to settle the balance before you move out. If for any reason this isn't possible, please get in touch with the Housing Officer before you move out, as they might be able to negotiate a payment plan with you.

## Transfers to other properties

Sometimes tenants ask or need to transfer to another property. There are limited properties available, so priority is given to people with medical needs or other urgent requirements. If you believe this situation applies to you, please discuss it with the Housing Officer.

## Abandoned goods

If you can't take all of your personal items with you when you leave the property, please talk to the Housing Officer before you move out. Items left behind when you leave the property will be dealt with in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act.

### Access to Information

As a tenant, you have access to all the personal information we hold about you. To access your personal information, you'll need to complete a Freedom of Information Application Form. Ask your Housing Officer for a form and within 20 days of receiving your request we'll either:

- Provide you with access to all or some of your personal information, or
- Provide you with a reason why we can't provide access to your personal information.

If you believe that the personal information that Pathways SouthWest holds about you is wrong, you can request that we change the information. We'll either change the information or make a permanent notation that you believe the information is incorrect.

### Confidentiality

Pathways SouthWest is committed to managing the personal information of all people we support in accordance with the requirements outlined in the relevant legislation.

### Feedback and Complaints

We appreciate all forms of feedback — good and bad. And we acknowledge the rights of tenants to complain if they're not satisfied. We're committed to providing tenants with a complaints process that is accessible, responsive, prompt and fair. This is the process to follow if you'd like to make a complaint:

- In the first instance, you should try to resolve the complaint by speaking with the Housing Officer or your Recovery Worker or the Manager Client Services
- If it's not possible to resolve the complaint at this level, you'll have the opportunity to put your complaint in writing. Please ask the Housing Officer for a copy of the Pathways SouthWest Tennant Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure or a Services Feedback Form if you'd like to make a complaint, or visit the feedback and complaints page on the Pathways SouthWest website at **https://www.pathwayssouthwest.org.au/**

### Advance Health Care Directive

An Advance Health Directive (AHD) is a voluntary, person-led legal document completed by an adult with full legal capacity that focuses on an individual's values and preferences for future care decisions, including their preferred outcomes and care. It specifies the treatment(s) for which consent is provided, refused or withdrawn under specific circumstances.

The term 'treatment' includes medical, surgical and dental treatments, including palliative care and life-sustaining measures. For more information, please check out www.health.gov.au or ask your Recovery Worker to access the information and forms for you so you can discuss this with your General Practioner or clinician.

### Crisis numbers and helplines

- Emergency Services 000
- Alcohol & Drug Information Service 08 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024
- ATAPS On The Line – suicide support 1800 859 585
- Crisis Care WA 08 9223 1111 or 1800 199 088
- Lifeline WA 13 11 14
- Men's Domestic Violence Helpline 08 9223 1199 or 1800 000 599 (free call)
- Mental Health Emergency Response Line 1300 555 788
- Police 13 14 44 or 000
- Samaritans 13 52 47
- Sexual Assault Resource Centre Emergency Crisis line: 08 9340 1828
- Counselling: 08 9340 1899
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- Women's Domestic Violence Helpline 08 9223 1188 or 1800 007 339 (free call)

**Relevant Legislation**

- Australian Corporation Housing Act 1975
- Accounting Standard AASB 1048 Interpretation of Standards (December 2017)
- Australians Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012
- Corporations Act 2001
- Housing Australia Act 2018.
- Housing Australia Future Fund Bill 2023 [Provisions] National Housing Supply and Affordability Council Bill 2023 [Provisions] and Treasury Laws Amendment (Housing Measures No. 1) Bill 2023 [Provisions]
- Mental Health Act (WA) 2014
- Privacy Act 1988
- Public Sector Ethics Act 1994
- Quality of Care Principles 2014
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Residential Tenancies Act 1987
- Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2024
- The Auditors Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of Financial Report – October 2009