

PURPOSE

This document defines The Company's approach to allocating long term social housing.

This Policy is intended to:

- Ensure equitable access to all eligible people seeking housing;
- Maintain a fair, needs-based allocations process and non-judgemental attitude to all Applicants;
- Ensure an individual's rights will not be discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, marital status, criminal history, physical and/or intellectual ability, mental health or sexual preference in line with state and federal-anti discrimination laws;
- Provide an open and transparent allocations process;
- Meet funding and regulatory requirements for allocation of community housing and other related housing programs;
- Provide Applicants with coordinated access to social housing through Housing Pathways; and
- Maximise utilisation of scarce housing resources.

POLICY REFERENCE	HS013
POLICY OWNER	Group General Manager Resident Services
APPROVED BY	Group Executive Team
APPROVAL DATE	September 2025
REVIEW DATE	September 2028

1. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Applicants for social housing offered by Evolve Housing Limited as landlord and its controlled entities described in clause 3 of this policy (referred to as the Company).

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Applications for social housing are managed through Housing Pathways. If an Applicant is assessed as being eligible, they are then listed on the NSW Housing Register. The Company then uses the information in this Register to make an offer of housing to an Applicant when a suitable property becomes available.

The Company is committed to promoting successful and sustainable tenancies when matching Applicants to properties. This means matching an Applicant to a property that:

- Is large enough for the Applicant's household;
- Meets any known special needs of the Applicant;
- Encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
- Makes the best use of available housing stock.

2.1 Allocation of social housing

Generally, allocations of social housing will be made according to priority, date of application and the suitability of available properties, although on occasion the Company will make a non-standard allocation. Applicants approved for tenancy reinstatement are housed ahead of other Applicants on the Housing Register. Where a vacancy occurs and there is no suitable Applicant approved for tenancy reinstatement, The Company will allocate the property to the next appropriate person on the Housing Register.

The Company aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those Applicants who need them. These features include:

- Properties suitable for older people;

- Properties built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability; and
- In some cases, properties on the ground floor, properties with level access or properties with a yard/garden.

The Company relies on Applicants to maintain up to date information on the Housing Register to ensure Applicants can be matched to properties which best meet their needs.

2.1.1 Non-standard allocation

In some circumstances the Company may need to make a non-standard allocation. Non-standard allocations will usually only be made in the following situations:

- To meet the needs of an Applicant who is at serious risk or in imminent danger. The Applicant's circumstances must be substantiated and fully documented. Examples of possible situations may include but are not limited to:
 - An applicant's life is at risk if an alternative property is not provided immediately; or
 - An applicant with a priority need has become homeless and temporary accommodation or a refuge (or similar) is unavailable or unsuitable for their needs;
- For an urgent transfer approved for escalation, including Tenants being relocated for management purposes;
- For an Applicant with specific needs, for example if specific location or property modifications are required.

2.2 Supported Housing

The Company partners with various support agencies to help Tenants with specific needs maintain their tenancy and be able to live independently. A Support Partner will normally provide the Company with the name of a potential tenant who requires accommodation. The potential tenant must have an active priority housing application on the Housing Register (unless the requirement is specifically exempted under the program). All allocations to Applicants nominated by a Support Partner are made in accordance with the specific program guidelines and service agreements.

2.3 Planning, Funding and Program requirements

From time to time, the Company may need to comply with planning, funding or program requirements when allocating certain properties. These allocations will be fully documented and may include but are not limited to:

- Meeting agreed, externally determined goals (for example, in relation to Aboriginality and homelessness);
- Allocating properties to meet a designated purpose, such as the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004.

2.3.1 Local Allocation Strategy

In some locations and in some instances, management may determine a local strategy for allocations. A Local Allocation Strategy is a specific allocation approach for a local area. Where there is a Local Allocation Strategy in place, the Company considers the needs of the community living in the local area as well as making sure the Applicant is matched to a property that meets their needs. The Company may vary standard selection criteria or give greater priority to certain applicants than would otherwise be the case. These strategies may be implemented for vacancies when:

- There is high concentration of social housing stock;
- There is a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues;
- There are existing tenancy management issues or there is a potential for them to develop;
- There are existing issues which will be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- There is a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

2.4 Matching an Applicant to a property

When a property becomes available, the Company makes sure the information relating to the property is up-to-date. When deciding if a property is suitable for a particular Applicant, the Company considers whether the property is likely to address the Applicant's housing needs and result in a sustainable tenancy. If the property is not suitable, the Company allocates the property to the next Applicant on the housing register whose housing needs would be met by the property.

Some properties will only be matched to Applicants with specific needs. The types of properties that are available and the restrictions that apply to them are listed in the table below:

Type of Property	Applicant
The Company capital properties or properties head-leased from the private rental market	Applicants with needs that can be met by the type, size and location of the particular property.
Bedsit/studios	Applicants who have elected or are deemed to be considered for this type of accommodation.
Properties in complexes specifically for older people.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants who are 45 years of age or over. Applicants aged 55 years or over who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
Properties modified to cater for tenants with a disability	Applicants who have a demonstrated need for a modified property.
Ground floor properties	Applicants who have demonstrated a need for a ground floor property.
Properties with level access	Applicants who have demonstrated a need for a property with level access.
Properties with yards or gardens	Applicants who have demonstrated a need for a backyard.
Properties subject to a Local Allocation Strategy.	Clients who meet the household profile sought under the Local Allocation Strategy.

2.5 Offering a property

Once a suitable match has been identified, the Company will offer the property to an Applicant in accordance with guidelines outlined under Housing Pathways, unless otherwise stated in this Policy. Conditions based on the Applicant's social housing tenancy history will also apply.

2.5.1 Conditions for former social housing tenants

- Where a *satisfactory* former social housing tenant has a debt of less than \$500, the Company will be able to make an offer of housing if the Applicant repays the debt in full.
- Less than satisfactory* former social housing tenants who owe more than \$500 in unpaid rent or other charges (even though they are eligible for admittance to the NSW housing register), will not receive an offer of housing from the Company unless the debt is repaid in full.
- Ineligible* former social housing tenants will not receive an offer of housing from the Company.

2.5.2 Specific conditions for former Company tenants

At the end of a tenancy the Company will conduct the ex-tenant categorising process. Where a former Company tenant owes money to a rent and/or non-rent account, they will not be made an offer of

accommodation by the Company until all debts owed to the Company are paid in full. This will be the case even if the former tenant is eligible for admittance to the NSW housing register.

2.6 Criteria used to match an Applicant to a property

Basic Criteria	Additional criteria that is considered when relevant
Location of property	<p>The Company will match an Applicant to the location/allocation zone (or adjacent allocation zone) as requested by the Applicant</p> <p>The Company will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match to specific locations within an allocation zone or adjacent allocation zone when the Applicant has demonstrated a need to be in the area; Not match an Applicant to a property in an area covered by a Local Allocation Strategy unless the Applicant's household meets the profile sought under the Strategy.
Type of property	<p>The Company will match an Applicant to a house, townhouse or unit according to availability.</p> <p>The Company will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match an Applicant to a specific type of property if the Applicant has demonstrated a need for this type of property; Match an Applicant to properties with specific features (such as a ground floor property, property with level access, a modified property, or property with a maximum number of stairs) if the Applicant has demonstrated a need for this type of property; Not match an Applicant to properties that have specific features if the Applicant has demonstrated that these features would make the property unsuitable for them; Where possible, match households with young children or approved pets to properties with yards, subject to availability.

Number of bedrooms in the property	The Company will match an Applicant to a bedroom allocation based on the Applicant's household composition. The number of bedrooms offered are set out in the table below.	Subject to availability, the Company will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Match Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants to a property with one additional bedroom per household composition upon request. This is in recognition of the family responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants. (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants can ask for an extra bedroom on their Housing Pathways application or at any time while they are on the Housing Register.);Offer an additional bedroom allocation if the Applicant has provided sufficient evidence demonstrating the need for an additional bedroom. For example, the Company may allocate an additional room for a family member or carer if the Applicant has suitably demonstrated a need for this.Consider the future accommodation needs of children currently in the household and where possible, take this into account when matching the Applicant to a property.
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2.7 Bedrooms

Household	Bedroom
Single people	Studio or one bedroom
Couples	One bedroom
Single people or couples with one other household member	Two bedrooms
Single people or couples with two other household members	Two bedrooms
Single people or couples with three other household members	Three bedrooms
Single people or couples with four other household members	Three bedrooms
Single people or couples with five or more other household members	Four bedrooms

2.8 Criteria for accommodating children

Situation	Entitlement
Shared bedrooms	Same sex children up to 18 years of age are expected to share a bedroom. Male and female children are expected to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age.
Child is over 18 years	The person is considered an adult when calculating the minimum bedroom entitlement.

2.9 Accommodating elderly Applicants

The Company acknowledges the special needs of elderly Applicants and their households, as well as the need to deliver services that are culturally appropriate.

Clients who have met the normal eligibility criteria for social housing may be approved for housing assistance as an elderly Applicant if they are:

- Aged 80 years or over; or
- Confirmed to be an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander and aged 55 years or over.

To reduce waiting times for eligible elderly Applicants and settle them into appropriate housing as soon as possible, The Company will generally offer suitable accommodation as it becomes available to elderly Applicants on the NSW Housing Register ahead of wait turn Applicants

Where there are other household members included on an elderly Applicant's application (other than the elderly person's partner), or an elderly person is included in an application with other family members, they may be eligible for this assistance provided the elderly person:

- is totally dependent on another member of the household for 24-hour care, and that person is receiving a Carer Payment from Centrelink; and
- They provide documentation from a doctor or other healthcare professional to support their application.

2.10 Shared households

The Company will only approve shared households when the tenancies are managed under the Supported Housing partnership accommodation program.

Adult members of the household of a shared housing arrangement will have a separate Residential Tenancy Agreement and Property Condition Report, for those areas within the property that are for the exclusive use of the Tenant.

If a vacancy exists in the property, the Support Partner will have nomination rights to a select new tenant in line with the relevant Service Level Agreement.

Any disputes between Residents not related to the tenancy will be resolved by the Support Partner.

2.11 Evidence to substantiate housing needs

The information and evidence requirements necessary for the Company to substantiate an Applicant's housing needs, are consistent with the requirements set out in the NSW Housing Register policy and related policy supplements.

2.12 Appealing decisions

If an Applicant does not agree with a decision the Company has made, they can request a formal first-level review. To do this, the Applicant needs to complete an Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. The Company Appeals Policy sets out information regarding the decisions which can and cannot be appealed. The Appeals Policy and the Appeals Form are available from the Company's offices and can also be downloaded from our website www.evolvehousing.com.au.

If an Applicant believes the decision made by the Company in the first-level review is incorrect and they remain dissatisfied, they can ask the Housing Appeals Committee to review the decision. The NSW Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency which can review appeals from individuals who are dissatisfied with decisions made by social housing providers such as the Company.

3. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to:

Company
Evolve Housing Limited
EchoRealty NSW & ACT Limited
Evolve Arncliffe Limited
Evolve Blacktown Limited
Evolve Penrith Limited
Evolve Melrose Park Limited
Evolve Merrylands Limited
Evolve Granville Limited
Evolve Edgecliff Limited
Evolve Carinya Limited

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Capital Property** - A property that is fully managed by the Company. The Company organises and pays for all repairs, as well as property insurances, Council and water rates.
- **Client** – for the purpose of this Policy, a Client is an Applicant for social housing offered by the Company.
- **Housing Pathways** - the way applications for housing assistance are managed in NSW. Housing assistance available through Housing Pathways includes social housing (including AHO properties) managed by Homes NSW and by participating community housing providers such as the Company. Housing Pathways provides 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.
- **Ineligible Former Tenant** – a category assigned to a former tenant after they move out of a social housing property. An Ineligible Former Tenant is someone who was evicted from a property or vacated it prior to eviction, **due to an extreme breach** of their Tenancy Agreement (eg conducting illegal activities). An Ineligible Former Tenant is not eligible for any future social housing assistance.
- **Landlord** – the person or entity granting the right to occupy residential premises under the Residential Tenancy Agreement.
- **Less Than Satisfactory Former Tenant** – a category assigned to a former tenant after they move out of a social housing property. A Less Than Satisfactory Former Tenant is someone who abandoned or left a property in an unsatisfactory condition, or vacated a property owing more than \$500, or left a property having had substantiated complaints of antisocial behaviour.
- **NSW Housing Register** - a single list of approved applicants waiting for social housing. When a social housing provider approves an applicant for social housing, the provider places them on the NSW Housing Register. Homes NSW Housing and community housing organisations use this register to offer housing when a suitable property becomes available.
- **Property** – the property or residential premises as described in the Residential Tenancy Agreement between the landlord and the Tenant.
- **Property Condition Report** – records the general condition of the property on a room-by-room basis (including fixtures and fittings) as at the time the Applicant signs the Residential Tenancy Agreement.
- **Residential Tenancy Agreement (or Tenancy Agreement)** – a written agreement between a Landlord and a Tenant, which governs the terms on which that Tenant occupies the property described in the Agreement.
- **Social Housing** – is secure and affordable rental housing for people on low incomes with housing needs. It includes public, community and Aboriginal housing. Public housing is managed by Homes NSW. Community housing is managed by non-government organisations such as the Company.
- **Supported Housing** – housing provided to a Tenant nominated by a Support Partner through a formal written agreement with that Support Partner.
- **Support Partner** – an organisation which has a Service Level Agreement with The Company to assist clients in need, where support services provided by the organisation are matched with housing provided by the Company
- **Tenancy Reinstatement** – can apply to former Tenants who vacated their property for specific reasons including being under duress or having to move into a residential care facility.
- **Tenant** – a person who signs the Residential Tenancy Agreement with the Company and who has certain rights and obligations under that Agreement.
- **Termination Notice** – a Notice to Terminate Tenancy Agreement under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010
- **Unsatisfactory Former Tenant** - a category assigned to a former tenant after they move out of a social housing property. An Unsatisfactory Former Tenant is someone who was evicted from a property or vacated it prior to eviction, **due to a breach** of their Tenancy Agreement (eg anti-social behaviour). They are not eligible for social housing until they have shown they can sustain a tenancy (ie no breaches) for at least six months.

- Violence - is any incident in which an individual is abused, threatened or assaulted and includes verbal, physical or psychological abuse, threats or other intimidating behaviours, intentional physical attacks, aggravated assault, threats with an offensive weapon, sexual harassment and sexual assault.

5. RELATED RESOURCES

- Evolve Housing Appeals Policy
- Evolve Housing Privacy Policy
- Evolve Housing Supported Housing Policy
- Evolve Housing Terminating a Tenancy Policy
- Evolve Housing Transfer Policy
- Housing Act 2001 (NSW)
- Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW)
- Homes NSW

This Policy is subject to change from time to time at the discretion of the Company. Any approvals required under this Policy will be granted in accordance with the Company Delegations of Authority Policy. Further information on this Policy and other topics, is available on the Evolve Housing website www.evolvehousing.com.au. If you have any specific questions regarding this Policy, please contact Evolve Housing on 1800 693 865 or email your enquiry to myevolve@evolvehousing.com.au.

6. VERSION CONTROL

Date Reviewed	Policy Reviewer	Key Changes
1/08/2017		Policy adopted
31/10/2022	Raylee Golding, GM GAL/ Co Sec	Application of policy extended to controlled entities excluding Evolve Housing Vic Ltd
29/05/2025	Greg Locke EMSH Housing Services	Minor updates e.g Homes NSW
29/01/2026	Greg Locke EMSH Housing Services	Amendment to Section 2.7 Bedrooms