

Changing Needs Policy

1. Policy Statement

Uniting Vic.Tas (Uniting) provides tenancy and asset management services for community housing to Uniting Housing Victoria (Uniting Housing), a Registered Housing Provider.

This policy describes Uniting’s approach to responding to changing needs of renters and residents.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Uniting Housing community housing tenancies which include, but are not limited to, tenancies in:

- Properties owned by Uniting Housing (Victoria) and Uniting Vic.Tas for use as long-term community housing
- Properties leased by Uniting Housing (Victoria) from Homes Victoria for long term community housing
- Rooming Houses
- Properties managed under the Transitional Housing Management (THM) program, the From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) program and the Homes for Families program; and
- Properties managed as Affordable Housing, including properties under the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

3. Guiding principles

In applying this policy Uniting will ensure:

- All renters are treated with compassion and sensitivity
- We focus on the individual needs and circumstances of renters and how their needs may change over time
- We use fair, consistent and accountable processes and renters are kept well informed about these processes
- We help renters understand their rights and responsibilities under their Residential Rental Agreement
- We are committed to responding to matters which may be family violence related in a manner that is trauma informed and aligns with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)
- We meet our contractual, legal, and regulatory duties and obligations.

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4. Changing needs

Uniting recognises that the needs of renter households can change over time and will endeavour to meet changing needs within program guidelines, legislative requirements and available resources.

Changing household needs may relate to changes in financial circumstances, need for support or changes to housing requirements.

In assisting households where their needs have changed, Uniting will:

- Take a person-centred approach to understanding the circumstances of change and the impact on housing arrangements
- Provide referrals to advice, support and advocacy services which may help the household
- Be flexible and responsive to individual needs, within our capacity

Uniting staff will provide information and referrals for Uniting renters to access support and advocacy services, including services delivered by Uniting Vic Tas (where available).

Uniting directly provides a range of support services:

- Family support services (including family violence support and parenting support services)
- Employment services
- Early learning services
- Financial advisory services
- Homelessness and housing support services
- Mental health services
- Alcohol and other drugs services

Further details are provided at the Uniting website: <https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/>

Our Hardship Policy outlines responses to situations of financial hardship including:

- Clear and regular communication about rent and other payment arrears
- Flexible payment arrangements to reduce rent and non-rent arrears
- Referral to support with financial management including Uniting’s financial support and education services

Our Transfers Policy outlines how we assist Uniting renters who need to change their dwelling due to changes in household need or safety reasons.

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5. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Affordable housing	Rental housing where rent is charged at less than market level
Community housing	Rental housing owned and/or managed by a registered community housing provider
Financial Hardship	Ability to meet rent and other charges is reduced by loss of income beyond the renter's control

6. Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the Uniting Housing and Uniting Vic. Tas websites.

If you require this policy in a language other than English, or in accessible format please contact Uniting.

This policy will be fully reviewed within 3 years of the approval date.

7. Legislation/Regulations

This policy implements the obligations of Uniting under:

- Housing Act 1983
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021

8. Related Documents

Rent Policy and Procedures
 Rent Arrears Policies and Procedures
 Hardship Policy
 Sustaining Tenancies Policy
 Transfers Policy

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