

Fact sheet

February 2011

Property Transfer Program

Community housing providers are locally based organisations that manage social and affordable housing properties. They are smaller than Housing NSW and as part of a broader government strategy Housing NSW is transferring properties to community housing providers to manage. This program is a way of growing community housing and enables individual community housing organisations to strengthen their financial position and attract investment to build more homes.

Over the last two years the management of close to 3,000 social housing properties have been transferred to community housing providers across NSW, and an additional 500 properties will be transferred by June 2011.

What is the benefit of transferring to community housing?

Community housing organisations are able to work closely with local communities and services. This means that, in some areas, they bring a different approach to the way properties and tenancies are managed. They often respond more quickly to tenants' needs and can be more flexible about how they apply policy and manage their staff and resources.

What does the offer of transfer mean?

An offer of transfer to community housing means that management of the property you live in and your tenancy is transferred from Housing NSW to a community housing organisation. You don't have to move from your home.

If I agree to transfer, will I have to sign a new tenancy agreement?

Yes. Your current tenancy agreement with Housing NSW will end and you will be asked to sign a new tenancy

agreement with the new community housing organisation.

The tenancy agreement with the community housing organisation is very much like the one you have with Housing NSW. It is also governed by the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*. Before signing your new tenancy agreement, the community housing organisation will discuss matters with you, such as how your rent is calculated and options for paying rent. They can also help you access other services that you might need.

Will I have to pay more rent if I transfer to community housing?

The community housing organisation generally calculates rent in a similar way to Housing NSW. The community housing organisation will explain rent setting to you as well as how to apply for Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

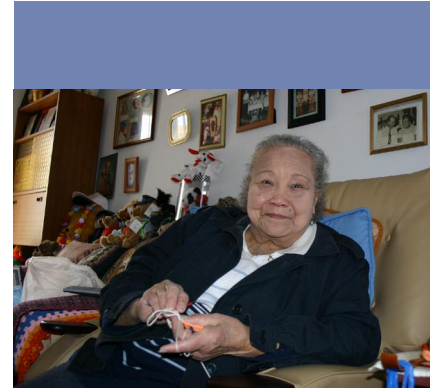
I am on a pensioner concession rental rate – am I still eligible for this?

If you are on a 20 percent revised pensioner concession rental rate, and you agree to transfer management of your tenancy, you will continue to pay 20 percent rent. As with public housing, this will continue until the next NSW State Budget when it will be reviewed.

Will I have to pay a bond?

Normally, community housing tenants pay a bond. However, if you are a tenant transferring management of your tenancy from public to community housing at the request of Housing NSW, you will not have to pay a bond to your community housing organisation.

If, at a later stage you chose to move on to another community housing organisation, you may be required to pay a bond.



Will I have to pay for water use?

Just like Housing NSW, community housing organisations charge for water usage. The community housing organisation will explain how this is calculated.

If I agree to transfer, can I keep my pets?

Most community housing organisations have a pets policy. Tenants transferring to community housing at the request of Housing NSW will be able to keep their existing pets. You will need to ask the community housing organisation if you can keep any additional pets.

Can I still apply to purchase the house I live in?

Just like Housing NSW, you can apply to purchase the home you live in, provided it is owned by Housing NSW and not leased from the private rental market. Your application will be assessed against Housing NSW's Home Sales to Tenants policy and will only progress with the support of the community housing organisation.

Responsibilities of the community housing organisation

The community housing organisation will be responsible for property and tenancy management, such as maintenance, rent collection and dealing with neighbour disputes – all the things that a landlord is responsible for.

There may be some differences in policies. You should check with the community housing organisation about their policies.

Transferring back into public housing

If you are transferring to community housing at the request of Housing NSW, you will be able to apply to be transferred back into public housing.

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There is no time limit on when you can apply to transfer back into public housing but, to be approved, you will need to meet Housing NSW's transfer criteria that is in place at the time you apply to return to public housing.

If you want to transfer back into public housing, you will need to speak to the community housing organisation managing your tenancy. They may be able to meet your rehousing need themselves or they will help you with your application for rehousing to Housing NSW.

If approved for transfer back to Housing NSW, you will be housed

in a public housing property under the same tenure conditions you had previously with Housing NSW. All other Housing NSW policies in place at the time of transferring back to public housing will apply to your tenancy.

What if I don't want to transfer to community housing?

You cannot be forced to transfer to community housing. However, in some circumstances, Housing NSW may not be able to continue to manage your tenancy and property if you decide not to transfer to community housing.

If this is the case, you may be asked to move to another public housing

property. This request is in line with Housing NSW Relocating Tenants for Management Purposes policy. If you are asked to move, Housing NSW will try to make the move as smooth as possible for you.

More information

- phone Housing NSW's Community Housing Division Property Transfer Coordinator on 8753 9004
- go to the Housing NSW website www.housing.nsw.gov.au and click on the Community Housing Division link
- phone 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746)

Stages in a property transfer

Here is an example of a process that was undertaken in a regional town.

1. Receive a letter of advice

Tenants living in properties that have been identified for transfer receive a letter of offer to transfer. An offer of transfer to community housing means that management of the property you live in and your tenancy is transferred from Housing NSW to a community housing organisation.

Someone from Housing NSW will contact you and ask to make a time to sit down and discuss what the transfer means. You are welcome to invite support people or advocates to attend this meeting with you.

2. Attend a tenant information forum

Along with letter of offer of transfer, you will receive an invitation to attend an information forum to hear about the program, meet the local community housing organisation and ask questions. If you cannot attend the forum, your property transfer officer can arrange for a meeting in your home.

3. Consent to share information

The community housing organisation can begin discussions with you when you give your written consent. You can give this consent by signing a form at the information forum. This consent is necessary so that information about you can be shared with the community housing organisation, and staff can meet with you to discuss the transfer process.

4. Sign an Agreement to Transfer form

After you have met the community housing organisation and have agreed to transfer, you sign an Agreement to Transfer form. After signing this form, the community housing organisation will make a time to sign a new tenancy agreement.

5. Sign a new tenancy agreement

Once you agree to transfer and sign a new tenancy agreement (also known as a lease) with the new community housing provider, your tenancy agreement with Housing NSW will end.

The tenancy agreement with the community housing organisation is similar to the one you have with Housing NSW. It is also registered under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987*.

Before signing your new tenancy agreement, the community housing organisation will discuss how your rent is calculated and options for paying rent. They can also help you access other services that you might need.

It is illegal for an officer of Housing NSW to ask for money or favours or other benefits of any kind in exchange for helping you with your housing needs.

It is also illegal for you or anyone else to offer money or favours or other benefits of any kind to an officer of Housing NSW in exchange for helping you. If you have any information regarding this, please contact Business Assurance on 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746). Housing NSW may refuse the provision of further housing services to anyone who has engaged or sought to engage in corrupt or illegal conduct.

Translation service

Arabic	خدمة الترجمة الخيلية والشفهية المجانية اتصل على الرقم 131 450
Chinese	免費的翻譯傳譯服務 致電 131 450
Russian	Служба бесплатного письменного и устного перевода Позвоните по номеру 131 450
Spanish	Servicio Gratuito de Traducción e Interpretación Llame al 131 450
Vietnamese	Dịch vụ Phiên dịch và Thông dịch Miễn phí Điện thoại 131 450