



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Housing and Works**

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Community Housing Allocations Guidelines

Document control

Revision history

Version	Date	Author/Editor	Summary of changes
2.0	September 2026	Community Housing Strategic Policy	Routine review and update including insertion of Bedroom Assessment Guidelines and Multiple Managed Dwellings.
1.0	July 2025	Senior Housing Policy and Planning Officer	Establishment of CHAP Guidelines

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide Community Housing Organisations (CHOs) with guidance when applying the [Community Housing Allocations Policy](#) (CHAP).

The Community Housing Allocations Guidelines (the Guidelines) should be read in conjunction with the CHAP and should not be used or implemented independently.

The CHAP aims to:

- Ensure Social and Affordable Rental Housing is used to provide housing assistance to very low to moderate income earners.
- Provide opportunities for Social Housing Tenants to transition from Social to Affordable Rental Housing.
- Ensure consistency and compliance with legislative and contractual requirements.

2 Scope

The CHAP applies:

- To CHOs that have a legal agreement with the Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Housing and Works) to provide **Social Housing** (Band A) and/ or **Affordable Rental Housing** (Band B);
- Where the Housing Authority has a financial/ interest in Dwelling/s within a CHO portfolio; and
- To **Affordable Rental Housing** (Band B) projects delivered in partnership between the State Government and CHOs.

The CHAP may also be utilised where a CHO provides Social Housing and/ or Affordable Rental Housing programs within their portfolio, as defined by the Housing Authority.

CHOs offering Transitional Accommodation may choose to utilise the CHAP where there is no existing or relevant policy.

The Community Disability Housing Program (CDHP) is not included in the CHAP. For further information, please refer to the [Community Housing Disability Program Policy](#) and [Community Housing Disability Program Guidelines](#).

2.1 General Information

The CHAP works in conjunction with the Community Housing (CH) and Public Housing policies, which can be found at [Community Housing - Policies and Resources](#), and [Department of Housing and Works – Public Housing](#).

There are two categories of CH allocation settings referred to in these Guidelines which relate to Applicants/ co-Applicants, Tenants/ co-Tenants and partners who are income and asset eligible for:

- **Social Housing** (Band A) based on Public Housing eligibility settings determined by the Housing Authority;
- **Affordable Rental Housing** (Band B) based on eligibility settings as set out in the Community Housing Eligibility Policy (CHEP).

3 Application Wait Lists

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 4

Applications may be listed on:

- Housing Authority's Joint Wait List (JWL);
- CHO Wait Lists such as the CHO's own register or waiting list.

3.1 Joint Waitlist

The Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Housing and Works) is responsible for the management of the Joint Wait List (JWL) for Social Housing (Public and Community).

CHOs may sign up to the JWL to access Applicants/ co-Applicants/ Tenants/ co-Tenants from the JWL.

CHOs not signed up to JWL may access applications on the JWL by emailing CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au

The JWL is date-listed based on the date of registration. Urgent and priority circumstances are considered when determining an Allocation.

Applications on the JWL can be considered for Social Housing (Public and Community) unless Applicants opt out of this option.

For assistance regarding the JWL, CHOs may contact CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au.

3.1.1 Access to JWL via Habitat

Access to the JWL is via the Communities' application, Habitat.

To access Habitat, CHOs should contact CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au.

CHOs can receive details to allow for Allocation or Transfer such as:

- Applicant's name;
- registration date of Application;
- waitlist type – Priority or Wait Turn;
- zone of preference; and
- housing needs.

When an Applicant is listed on the JWL, the Housing Authority will share accessible information with the CHO. Should additional information be requested, the CHO will be required to provide a consent form signed by the Applicant to the above email address.

3.2 Non-JWL Allocations

Non-JWL Allocations include:

- CHO Tenant Transfers, either internal or between CHOs; and
- Affordable Rental Housing Applications not listed on the JWL.

4 Available for Allocation

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 5

Before CHOs progress to Allocation, they should:

- Ensure vacant property notifications have been provided to the Housing Authority;
- Conduct an eligibility assessment for the incoming Applicant ([Community Housing Policy and Resources – CHEP](#)); and
- Consider other updated and relevant factors or changes in circumstance from the date of Application to the time of CHO Assessment or Allocation.

When a Dwelling is available for Allocation, CHOs should make a reasonable Offer of Accommodation which:

- Assesses the needs of the Household against the available Dwelling;
- Allocates according to the earliest listing date on the JWL for Wait Turn Applications;
- Considers housing Priority Applications; and
- Allocates in accordance with the CHOs legal agreements and growth commitments.

The Application assessment process requires CHOs to conduct sensitive and sustainable Allocations when assessing an Application for assistance.

Sensitive Allocations refers to matching tenants with appropriate Dwelling types, location requirements, cultural and family (including extended) structures. By Sustainable Tenancies, it is meant that the CHO considers sensitive Allocation to ensure that the Allocation is sustainable for the tenant and the CHO.

This is to achieve efficiencies in Social and Affordable Rental Housing through better matching of Tenants with appropriate Dwelling types and provide better social and economic participation for Social and Affordable Rental Housing Tenants by locating housing closer to transport, services and employment opportunities.

4.1 Allocation Targets

Where CHOs have specific Allocation targets, these should be considered according to relevant legal agreements and growth commitments.

4.1.1 Social Housing Allocation Target

Allocations from the JWL (for Social Housing – Band A) should aim to be on an 80:20 ratio for Priority Applications (including Priority Transfers) and Wait Turn Applications in any 12-month period. The recommended Allocation target responds to the growing demand among Applicants with the greatest housing need and is consistent with Public Housing Allocations.

4.1.2 CHOS using the Joint Wait List

Applicant/ co-Applicant/ Tenant/ co-Tenant eligibility for being placed on the JWL is determined in accordance with Housing Authority procedure, and the eligibility of these Applications is reviewed annually by the Housing Authority.

Applications on the JWL are shortlisted and assessed for Allocation in the following order:

1. Application listing date
2. Priority Applications
3. Waitlisted Applications
4. Transfer Applications

CHOs can seek assistance accessing and making allocations via the JWL by emailing CommunityHousing@dohw.wa.gov.au.

4.1.3 Affordable Rental Housing Allocation Target

Not all CHOs will be eligible to allocate Affordable Rental Housing Dwellings.

Unless specified in individual agreements, CHOs who provide Affordable Rental Housing should aim to allocate on a 70:30 ratio for Allocations with an Affordable Rental Housing component and considered according to legal agreements and growth commitments.

- 70% or more Dwellings should aim to be Allocated to Social Housing Applications;
- Up to 30% of the Dwellings may be Allocated to Affordable Rental Housing Applications, according to legal agreements and growth commitments.

Where the over-income Social Housing Tenants transitioning to Affordable Rental Housing has been exhausted, Allocation may then be made to Affordable Rental Housing Applications sourced from the CHOs own register or waiting list.

5 Offer of Accommodation

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 6

CHOs should complete Allocation procedures in a timely and efficient manner.

A decision to make an Offer of Accommodation, or assess the next Application, should be made within 21 working days.

5.1 Social Housing Allocations

Applications considered for Social Housing (both Public and Community Housing – Band A), may be offered a Dwelling by either the Housing Authority or a CHO, via the JWL.

The Housing Authority is responsible for management of JWL Applications, until Allocation.

Where a CHO has a Dwelling for Allocation, the CHO will manage this Allocation.

CHOs who use the JWL should record Allocations in Habitat within three (3) working days of the Allocation occurring.

Discussion with Housing Authority Regional Managers may occur when (but not limited to):

- Considering out-of-turn Transfers; and
- An Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant becomes over-income.

5.2 Affordable Rental Housing Allocations

Affordable Rental Housing Allocations should occur in accordance with CHO growth commitments, legal agreements, the [Targeted Affordable Rental Housing Policy](#) and any other relevant policies.

Affordable Rental Housing Applicants on the JWL are Public Housing Tenants no longer income or asset eligible for Social Housing and have been asked to transfer out of Public (or Social) Housing (listed on the JWL as a Transfer).

Where CHOs provide Affordable Rental Housing they should aim to Allocate a 70:30 ratio in any 12-month period, for Social Housing and Affordable Rental Housing, respectively (see section 4.1.3, above), and in accordance with their legal agreements.

In this ratio, the 30% is the maximum Affordable Rental Housing Dwellings that should be Allocated.

CHOs select Applications where needs match the vacant Dwelling, in the following order:

1. Current Social Housing tenants on the JWL who have become ineligible for Public Housing, according to the earliest listing date.
2. Applications sourced by the CHO from their internal waitlists and/or registers in accordance with the [Targeted Affordable Rental Housing Policy](#).

5.3 Bedroom Assessment Guidelines

The Canadian National Occupancy Standards (CNOS) is a measure of the appropriateness of housing that is sensitive to the household size and composition. CNOS provides a recognised framework for assessing the appropriateness of housing by considering household size, age, exceptional circumstances and composition. The minimum standard states:

- No more than 2 people shall share a bedroom,
- Parents or couples may share a bedroom,
- Children under 5, either of the same gender or opposite gender may share a bedroom,
- Children under the age of 18 of the same gender may share a bedroom,
- A child aged 5-17 should not share a bedroom with a child under 5 of the opposite gender, and,
- Single adults 18 and over, including any unpaired children require a separate bedroom.

When assessing an Application for allocation, the CHO must consider the household needs based on the information provided by the applicant.

Housing allocations should ensure that the housing provided is well suited to each household's composition, that households are neither under-housed nor over-housed, and that bedroom allocations reasonably reflect the needs of individuals and families while promoting fair and equitable use of available housing stock.

Attachment 1 details exceptional circumstances that may be considered.

Where exceptional circumstances are identified, Applicants may choose to be listed for an additional bedroom. In these situations, it is important that Applicants are informed that this choice may result in a longer waiting time. In these cases, discretionary decision-making may be used to update the household's bedroom entitlement in a way that reflects their needs (section 11 – Discretionary Decision Making).

See *Bedroom Assessment Guidelines Attachment 1*.

6 Declines

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 7

6.1 Reasonable Decline

CHOs may consider any extenuating circumstances that fall outside of what is considered a reasonable decline.

Grounds for a reasonable decline by the Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant after an Offer of Accommodation has been made, include (but are not limited to):

- The Dwelling does not meet the Applicant's demonstrated housing need;
- The Dwelling is not in the metropolitan zone or country town of the Applicant's choice;
- The Applicant is committed to private leasing arrangements; or
- Where discretionary decision-making is required (*refer to section 11*)

Where an Applicant on the JWL declines an offer and the CHO deems this to be reasonable, the Application will remain on the JWL and retain the listing date.

6.2 Unreasonable Decline

Where the CHO deems the decline of an offer as unreasonable, the CHO should;

- Enter the unreasonable decline into Habitat, with clarifying comments; and
- Advise the Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant that their decline has been deemed unreasonable.

If an Applicant/ co-Applicant, Tenant/ co-Tenant refuses a valid Offer of Accommodation, the Application may be removed from the JWL.

CHOs should have an Appeals mechanism to account for circumstances when an Applicant believes an unfavourable decision has been made.

7 Withdrawals

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 8

7.1 Withdrawal of Applications from the JWL

Applications may be withdrawn from the JWL by the CHO and/ or Housing Authority if the Applicant/ Tenant makes an unreasonable decline of an Offer of Accommodation. Further information is contained in the [Public Housing Application Management Policy](#).

8 Fully Accessible Housing

Refer to [CHAP](#), section 9

Fully Accessible housing (previously known as Mobility housing), that are not Community Disability Housing Program (CDHP), should be utilised by Applicants with a physical disability or impaired mobility.

9 Transfer Allocations

A Tenant may Transfer from Public Housing to Community Housing where a priority housing need is established.

Tenants are not eligible for Transfer back into a Public Housing property unless one of the following circumstances is established:

- They have a priority housing need which the CHO cannot deliver;
- The accommodation provided by the CHO is short-term; or
- They are in rehabilitation, recovery or therapy provided by the CHO.

The [Priority Housing Need Policy](#) provides further information on key risk and vulnerability factors.

CHOs may Transfer a Tenant within their own portfolio or between other CHO Dwellings from the JWL, in accordance with its own policies.

10 Residential Tenancy Agreements

CHOs are required to use Periodic Tenancy Agreements, unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a Fixed Term Agreement.

Exceptional circumstances may include, but is not limited to poor tenancy history, anti-social behaviour or major breaches of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1987 (WA)*.

11 Discretionary Decision Making

A discretionary decision is used to address a situation where an Applicant's circumstances fall outside existing policy parameters or where a decision made solely within current policy could result in inequitable treatment of the client.

CHOs have discretion to make decisions that fall outside of Social and Affordable Rental Housing requirements. CHOs may consider future requirements of a Tenant/Applicant in accordance with sensitive and sustainable Allocation principals during the Allocation process, ensuring access to Social and Affordable Housing is equitable, fair and transparent.

These may include (but are not limited to):

- circumstances that require Allocation outside of the Application listing date;
- zone preferences that fall outside of an Applicants preferred zone;
- housing entitlements such as bedroom ratios;
- access to essential support services;

- safety issues;
- medical considerations; and/or
- cultural considerations.

Prior to making a discretionary decision, CHOs should ensure they have assessed the circumstances against all existing policies and legal agreements.

12 Multiple Managed Dwellings

In determining the allocation of a particular dwelling within a development comprising of multiple dwellings, a CHO may consider operational, tenancy and community factors relevant to the effective functioning of the development.

These may include (but are not limited to):

- suitability of the dwelling for the household;
- accessibility requirements;
- household composition;
- support and service requirements;
- factors that support community sustainability;
- the objectives of a supported housing model;
- management of vacancies and transfers;
- resident wellbeing and safety;
- efficient utilisation of housing stock; and
- building, strata or operational requirements.

13 Definitions

The terms and definitions in the CHAP and Guidelines are contained in the [Community Housing Policy Definitions](#).

14 Support and Advice

For support and advice about CH policies, procedures and guidelines, please email CHPolicy@dohw.wa.gov.au. Further information may also be found at wa.gov.au.

For further information regarding the registration process, please contact the Registrar of Community Housing at Registrar@dohw.wa.gov.au.

Attachment 1 – Bedroom Assessment Guidelines

Minimum Standard	Assessment
The Bedroom Assessment Guideline is a minimum standard based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standards (CNOS) which is a measure of the appropriateness of housing that is sensitive to the household size and composition. The minimum standard states: • No more than 2 people shall share a bedroom, • Parents or couples may share a bedroom, • Children under 5, either of the same gender or opposite gender may share a bedroom, • Children under the age of 18 of the same gender may share a bedroom, • A child aged 5-17 should not share a bedroom with a child under 5 of the opposite gender, and, • Single adults 18 and over, including any unpaired children require a separate bedroom.	The Bedroom Assessment Guideline is to be used during: • The allocation process, • An application review, • Where there is a change in the client/household's circumstances, and, • Prior to allocation.

Bedroom Assessment Guidelines EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES			
	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
MEDICAL	An additional bedroom may be approved: • To store medical equipment, • Where the client or partners wellbeing is impacted by bedroom sharing, • For carer (live-in or non-live in where overnight care is required), or, • To allow for future care.	• Support letter from a medical practitioner or facility, • Medical and Disability information form, • Written confirmation from a government agency or body, or, • Approved NDIS plan or care plan	• Evidence must demonstrate that an additional bedroom is required, • Evidence must demonstrate that the wellbeing of the client or partner is impacted by bedroom sharing.
AGED CLIENTS	An additional bedroom may be approved: • Where the client is part of a couple and one person is 70 years or older	• Identification including date of birth	• Evidence must reflect client or partners date of birth establishing age

Bedroom Assessment Guidelines EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES			
	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
GROWING FAMILIES	An additional bedroom may be approved where: - The client has no children and is pregnant, - The gender of the expected child is within the measurement of the CNOS (or will be soon) warranting an additional bedroom, or, - Regardless of the gender, and additional bedroom is required.	- Support letter from a medical practitioner or. - Written confirmation from a government agency or body	- Evidence must demonstrate that an additional bedroom is required, - Evidence must confirm the gender of the expected child where the gender is within the measurement of the CNOS.
REUNIFICATION	An additional bedroom may be approved where: The client has a child/ren in the care of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Communities and the case plan includes working towards reunification with a parent/s who is the client, and suitable accommodation is required before reunification can occur.	- Written confirmation from a government agency or body, - Family court order, - A statutory declaration from the primary caregiver, - Written confirmation from Communities (Child Protection and Family Support), or, - Written confirmation from an associated solicitor.	- Evidence must demonstrate that an additional bedroom is required, - Evidence must outline the details of the child (name, gender, date of birth).

Bedroom Assessment Guidelines EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES			
	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
CARE OF A CHILD (INCLUDING RELATIVE, RESPITE AND FOSTER CARE)	An additional bedroom may be approved where: • Client has care arrangements in place, or • A child frequently stays overnight, or • It is in the child's best interest.	• Written confirmation from a government agency or body, • Family court order, • A statutory declaration from the primary care giver, • Written confirmation from Communities (Child Protection and Family Support), or • Written confirmation from an associated solicitor.	• Evidence must demonstrate that an additional bedroom is required, • Evidence must outline the details of the care arrangement, including the frequency, • Evidence must stipulate if an additional bedroom is required for the best interest of the child.

Bedroom Assessment Guidelines EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES			
	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CLIENTS WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES	An additional bedroom may be approved for clients: - Who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or, - Who have family responsibilities, including but not limited to care of children.	- Written confirmation from a government agency or body, - Documentation provided to the Department of Communities (Housing) that have previously established heritage or family responsibilities, - A letter of confirmation from an incorporated indigenous organisation confirming heritage, - Family court order, or, - A statutory declaration from the primary caregiver.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients must prove their heritage and demonstrate they have family responsibilities, including, but not limited to care of children.