

HOUSING FOR SENIORS POLICY

Rationale

1. Purpose

To provide housing for elderly and others in the community with special housing needs.

2. Council Housing Units Guidelines

2.1 Eligibility

- 2.1.1 Units are let only to persons being 65 years of age or over and in receipt of New Zealand Superannuation, or 55 years of age or over and in receipt of a benefit.
- 2.1.2 All such persons must have a housing need. i.e. an inability to afford market rentals. Income must be below the level set by Work and Income (or its successor agency) to qualify for social housing i.e. single people up to 1.5 x the net weekly rate of living alone rate of New Zealand Superannuation, and for couples up to 1.5 x the net weekly married rate of New Zealand Superannuation.
- 2.1.3 The value of the applicant's assets must not exceed the cash asset limit set by Work and Income to qualify for social housing, which is 10% of the national median house sales price. The following assets are excluded from the asset test :
- personal effects
 - motor vehicle principally used by the client for private use
 - funds held in KiwiSaver and other retirement scheme accounts (unless the person is able to withdraw them due to being aged over 65 years)
 - Maori land where the title is in tribal trust and individual ownership cannot be identified, the client cannot realise or readily convert the land into a cash asset.
- 2.1.4 The above qualifications do not apply to existing tenants; however, if officers believe on reasonable grounds that an existing tenant's circumstances have changed, they can initiate a review of the tenant's circumstances to ensure that they still meet the eligibility requirements that applied at the commencement of their tenancy. If the existing tenant does not meet the eligibility requirements that applied at the commencement of their tenancy, they can be given notice to vacate in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act and any other relevant legislation.

2.1.5 Preference is given to those who are living or have lived in the South Wairarapa district. Factors to be considered include:

- a. length of time resident in the district; or*
- b. if from out of the district, the length of time immediate family have lived in the district.*

2.1.6 Tenants must be able to live harmoniously and in a non-disruptive manner with other tenants and neighbours.

2.1.7 Tenants must be able to live independently or be receiving sufficient support e.g. housework, assisted showering, to enable them to live safely and maintain a reasonable standard of personal and household hygiene without modifications to the unit.

2.1.8 In the event that there is no-one either on the waiting list or who has responded to advertising for the flats who meets the eligibility criteria, a flat may be rented to a person who is otherwise ineligible at full market rent for a fixed term of three months. This may be renewed for further three month terms unless there are eligible people on the waiting list.

2.2 Applications

Applications for tenancy must be in writing on the Housing for Seniors Application Form.

2.3 Rental

Rental is to be paid fortnightly in advance by bank automatic payment. A bond of four weeks rent shall apply.

2.4 Tenant obligations and responsibilities

2.4.1 Tenants are to supply their own furniture and furnishings, appliances and services such as telephone, electricity and television.

2.4.2 Tenants are to pay for all services they use, including electricity, telephone, internet and television.

2.4.3 Tenants will supply any aerial or satellite dish required for their television service, the installation of which shall be carried out by an appropriate tradesperson. Existing aerials/satellite dishes and cabling left in place by previous tenants become the tenant's responsibility to maintain, unless they ask for them to be removed at the time of taking up the tenancy.

2.4.4 Tenants must keep their unit in a clean and tidy condition.

2.4.5 Tenants will advise Council immediately of any leaks, damage or maintenance issues.

- 2.4.6 Vacating tenants must leave their unit in a clean and tidy condition, with all rubbish removed from the premises.

2.5 Council obligations and responsibilities

- 2.5.1 The Council supplies and maintains the wall and floor coverings, stove (including replacement elements), drapes, telephone jacks, and one built-in heater.
- 2.5.2 The Council is responsible for the maintenance of the units including electrical and plumbing systems.
- 2.5.3 Council officers will carry out flat inspections on a six-monthly basis to ensure that each tenant is meeting their obligations.

2.6 Grounds

Lawns and gardens are maintained by Council. Tenants may have their own garden immediately adjacent to their own flat. If there is no existing garden, and a tenant wishes to create one, the location and size must be agreed with Council. Tenants must be able to maintain these themselves.

2.7 Outbuildings

Where tenants finance the construction of carports or garden sheds, these buildings become the property of Council and will be maintained by the council. No additional rental will be payable as a result of the additions. Council reserves the right to remove additions where they become too expensive or difficult to maintain.

2.8 Smoking

All units are smoke-free. Tenants may smoke in the exterior porch of their unit as long as this does not cause inconvenience to their neighbours.

2.9 Animals

Tenants wishing to keep a pet such as a bird, cat or small dog must seek Council permission in writing. Pets are permitted provided they are well behaved, properly cared for, and do not pose a nuisance to other tenants.

Tenants will immediately repair at their own expense any damage to Council or other tenants' property caused by the animal.

Tenants with pets will arrange for the flat to be commercially cleaned at their expense on vacating the flat. A certificate for the work must be produced when handing in the keys and before getting the bond back.

2.10 Marketing and Usage

The Council will maintain a waiting list of prospective tenants which will be regularly reviewed and updated. If there are no waiting applicants, the Council will advertise and promote its community housing to ensure maximum usage.

2.11 Welfare

As a responsible landlord, Council will be accessible and diligent towards the general welfare of its tenants. This will not extend to the provision of social services to tenants as these services are better provided by other professional service providers.

The Council will endeavour to provide its tenants with the contact information for professional service providers. Council staff will consult with health, social welfare and other professional service providers where tenant concerns or difficulties arise outside of the Council's expertise.