

RENT POLICY

Providing affordable accommodation for low income and disadvantaged single people

Policy Statement

St Kilda Community Housing is committed to the supply of affordable accommodation for low income and disadvantaged single people living in the City of Port Phillip and surrounding municipalities. This rent policy is designed to ensure that tenants do not jeopardize their accommodation by falling behind in their rent payments.

The setting of rents by SCH is governed by the information contained within the DHHS Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies. Tenant eligibility, allocation and rent setting for properties. In accordance with DHHS policy, SCH also charges a service fee to cover outgoings such as gas, water and electricity bills.

Reporting on rent arrears are a Key Performance Measure for the Victorian Housing Registrar.

Procedure

Rent Setting

The rent charged consists of 25% of a resident's gross income, plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance and a Service Charge for utilities and other house related charges.

Rent Collection

Rents are collected through one of three means:

1. Those on pensions or benefits sign an approval to have their rents deducted from their Centrelink income (CentrePay).
2. Residents can pay their rent into our bank account using an individually numbered agent deposit book or a direct debit facility; or
3. In restricted cases residents can pay their rent in cash. However, this can only occur with the approval of the General Manager.

Receipts are always given and rent records maintained electronically through CHINTARO software.

Rent in Advance

Section 99 of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 states that a rooming house owner may not charge more than 14 days rent in advance. It is the policy of St Kilda Community Housing to charge rent at 7 days in advance.

Rent Increases

Section 101 (5A) of the Residential Tenancies Act states that rooming house rents may only be increased every 6 months. It is the policy of SCH to increase rents once a year.

All notifications of rent increases must be given to residents at least 60 days prior to the increase and must include the resident's right to make an application to appeal to the Director of Housing if they believe the rent increase to be excessive.

Rent Arrears

It is the policy of SCH that rents must be paid 7 days in advance. Tenants who do not pay their rent by the due date may be issued with a Breach of Duty Notice. Tenants who fall 7 days or more behind in their rent may be issued with a 2 day Notice to Vacate.

If a tenant believes they may be in some financial difficulties and therefore unable to pay their rent in part or in full they should immediately contact the SCH office to make alternative arrangements to pay their rent. This may be through Centrepay deductions or additional payments.

Rent Arrears Procedure

SCH staff meets every Monday morning to discuss rent arrears.

An arrears report is printed highlighting all residents who are 7 days or more in arrears. Residents are discussed individually and actions agreed.

Actions include:

- A note and ledger reminding residents their rent is due; or
- A breach of duty notice for failure to pay rent on time; or
- A notice to vacate for rent being 7 days or more in arrears; or
- Other actions in accordance with the RTA.

Responsibility to follow up with these actions rests with the individual housing managers of the house the resident lives in.

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