

Urgent access to housing and support

This information is for services and people using those services where someone presents to a social housing or support organisation, or Housing Connect, with an urgent and immediate housing and support need resulting from immediate personal danger.

Why is urgent action sometimes needed?

This approach applies to all people that are in immediate personal danger and need to change their current accommodation by seeking alternative housing arrangements.

The actions will usually occur outside normal procedures to ensure the risk to the person is minimised and their safety and security issues can be addressed immediately.

Defining urgent and immediate need

People who are in imminent danger, where one or more of the household member's safety is at risk, are considered to have an urgent need.

The immediate need will relate to the person's housing needs and the assistance must be offered as soon as practicable, in conjunction with other relevant services.

People in these situations are likely to have been referred directly through to Housing Connect, a support or social housing organisation, or a homelessness service.

These referrals may result from:

- Federal Police referral (eg witness relocation)
- Tasmania Police referral (eg severe family or community violence, victims of violent crime).

Other referrals directly from support or homelessness organisations will not be generally considered as immediate and urgent need. If followed by a written or verbal confirmation directly from Tasmania Police or Federal Police, action to locate alternative housing for the household may be taken.

Housing support

The housing support offered may be temporary or longer term depending on the circumstances. The general needs of the household should be confirmed at the time the request is made.

The immediate options considered may include temporary accommodation or accommodation in a location that may not suit the household for the longer term. Once the immediate safety needs of the household have been met, the longer-term housing and support options can be fully considered with an assessment by Housing Connect.

Therefore, the temporary accommodation that is offered is an immediate response to address the person's safety and household security issues.

Eligibility

People with an urgent need must be eligible for social housing to be assisted. While eligibility does not need to be established at the first point of contact with a service, or at the time of the first request, eligibility will need to be established at a later date. This is particularly important if the household is going to be referred to Housing Connect for longer-term housing support.

Collaboration

For this process to be effective, collaboration between services is vital. It requires trust and open communication, with the person seeking help at the centre of the action taken. At all times, the person must be given timely and adequate information to allow them to make the most appropriate decision for their housing and support need.

The services involved act as a conduit to ensure the household remains safe.

Confidentiality

All personal information is collected and stored according to the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

Under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*, people can expect that:

- their information will be kept securely and confidentially
- their personal information will not be shared with another service without their permission
- and their information will be handled in accordance with privacy and personal information laws.

Verification of circumstances and applying discretion

Verification of the circumstances can only be provided through either the Federal or Tasmania Police. Other referrals will generally not be considered under this approach.

Senior managers within the organisations have the discretion to take action in situations of this nature and may choose to take action where verification has not been available.

Role of Housing Connect

Housing Connect may be the first point of contact, but it is likely that the first contact will be from Federal or Tasmania Police directly to a social housing organisation.

Requests for urgent assistance from Housing Connect should be directed to a senior manager of Housing Connect who can contact relevant housing providers to seek a suitable vacant property that may accommodate the request. Housing Connect may also assist the person access crisis accommodation.

Where necessary, Tasmania or Federal Police should contact Housing Connect during business hours so that appropriate longer-term accommodation can be found.

Role of social housing organisations

For community housing providers, requests for urgent assistance should be directed to a senior manager.

For Homes Tasmania, requests for urgent assistance should be directed to either an Area Manager or the Director Tenancy Services.

Role of homelessness services

A homelessness service may be the first point of contact for a person needing urgent help, particularly if the assistance is required outside of business hours.

People contacting a homelessness service may need a referral to Housing Connect to have their longer-term housing support needs met.

Suitable areas of housing

Tasmania Police or Federal Police need to provide adequate information to enable a suitable property to be located in a suitable suburb for the person seeking assistance.

This information will be protected under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

More information



1800 800 588



TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 135 513.

Speak and Listen users: phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 135 513.

Internet relay users: connect to the NRS then ask for 1300 135 513.



housingconnect@homes.tas.gov.au



www.homestasmania.com.au/