

Allocations Policy

Operational policy and procedures for registered housing providers of the Supportive Housing Program (Common Ground)

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Introduction

Brisbane Common Ground (BCG), located at 15 Hope Street Brisbane, is a 146 unit complex funded by the Queensland and Australian Governments under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan-Social Housing Initiative. The property is delivered under the Department of Housing and Public Work's Supportive Housing Program to deliver a Common Ground model of supportive housing.

The Supportive Housing Program provides affordable, long-term and secure housing to assist people stabilise their personal situations and re-establish connections to the community. In supportive housing, support services designed to meet the tenants' needs and preferences are integrated into the provision of housing.

The core principles of the supportive housing program are:

- Affordability
- Long-term tenancies
- Safety and comfort

Support services are accessible and flexible, target housing stability and promote social and economic participation by tenants.

Common Ground Queensland Ltd (CGQ) is the approved tenancy and property manager for the property. The building is owned by the department and leased to CGQ for a period of five years. Micah Projects Inc (Micah) is the approved on-site support provider, for a period of three years, which commenced in June 2010. Micah will provide personal support to tenants within a case management framework.

Purpose

The Allocations policy and procedures are used to fill vacant properties at BCG, with eligible applicants for the Supportive Housing Program (Common Ground) (SHP(CG)).

This policy should be applied in a manner consistent with the Supportive Housing Program specifications, and the property specific requirements for BCG, in particular clauses four and five.

The purpose of the operational policy and procedure is to cover client allocation processes associated with the operation of the housing register and referral processes whereby:

- the Housing Service Centre assesses applicants' housing needs and maintains the housing register
- the SHP(CG) provider notifies the Housing Service Centre that a property is available for tenancing
- the Housing Service Centre identifies and advises the provider of eligible applicants by providing a shortlist on a referral report or confirms the eligibility of a nominated applicant/s
- the SHP(CG) provider determines the final match of the applicant to the property
- the SHP(CG) provider makes an offer of accommodation to an applicant
- the SHP(CG) provider advises the Housing Service Centre of the applicant's acceptance or rejection of the offer and

- the Housing Service Centre records the outcome of the process.

This policy also enables the SHP(CG) provider to fill large numbers of actual or prospective vacancies through a bulk referral process.

This policy is to be applied in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of the Housing Act (2003) including:

- Section 4 – Main objects of the Act
- Section 5 – How the objects are to be primarily achieved
- Section 24 – Purpose of giving assistance to a registered provider.

Eligibility

Clients referred to vacancies in BCG will either be identified as in **chronic homelessness** and referred through the Rough Sleepers Service Coordination Group (RSSCG) or meet **low to moderate income eligibility limits**.

Chronic homeless target group

Applicants in the chronic homeless target group must meet the Common Eligibility Criteria and have an approved application for housing assistance on the housing register.

Low to moderate income target group

Applicants in the low to moderate income target group with a focus on working and/or who have a connection to the local area will fall into two categories:

- Low to moderate income **with** a social housing application – applicants will meet the Common Eligibility Criteria and have an approved application for housing assistance on the housing register in any segment.
- Low to moderate income **without** a social housing application – applicants must meet all aspects of the Common Eligibility Criteria, except the household income limit criteria. Approval has been given for the household income limit for these applicants to be assessed against the National Rental Affordability Scheme Entry Income Limits as published by the Australian Government.

Application management

Chronic homeless target group

Clients in the chronic homeless target group, who may be appropriate for BCG, will have their circumstances assessed and their needs prioritised by the RSSCG. This can occur in two ways:

- Any organisation in contact with rough sleepers may attend the RSSCG to advocate on behalf of the client.
- The Housing Service Centre may identify clients from the housing register, through the existing application and review process, for discussion at the RSSCG.

The RSSCG will assess the client's circumstances and recommend an appropriate housing and support solution. Applicants identified as suitable for BCG will be referred to the SHP(CG) provider by the Housing Service Centre, on the recommendation of the RSSCG.

If the potential applicants do not have an application on the housing register, they must complete and submit the Application for Housing Assistance form. The Housing Service Centre staff will assess the applicant's eligibility and list them for all types of appropriate housing assistance, not just BCG.

The Housing Service Centre will advise the applicant and the tenancy and property manager of their eligibility for BCG.

Low to moderate income target group

If the client is **eligible** for social housing they are placed on the housing register as suitable for BCG with a Common Ground suitable flag.

If the client is **ineligible** for social housing, the Housing Service Centre should work with them to identify other types of housing assistance. This could include assessing the applicant's eligibility for the BCG low to moderate income target group.

Suitable applicants will be given information about BCG and a Common Ground Tenancy Application Form. This information can be supplied to them by Common Ground Queensland, Micah Projects or the Fortitude Valley Housing Service Centre.

Once the Common Ground Tenancy Application Form has been completed, and the Housing Service Centre has received confirmation of the client's interest, the Housing Service Centre will place the client on the housing register in Segment E with a BCG suitable flag.

Notifying a property vacancy to the department

The SHP(CG) provider must:

- complete the Notification of Vacancy Form
- send it to the Fortitude Valley Housing Service Centre via the community housing referral mailbox at: CHreferralsFortitudeValley@communities.qld.gov.au within one working day of becoming aware of the vacancy

For advice on how to fill out the [Notification of Vacancy Form](#), see **Attachment 1**.

The SHP(CG) provider will use the Notification of Vacancy Form to advise the Housing Service Centre of:

- the preferred target group for the referral (chronic homeless or low to moderate income)
- information to assist in matching applicants to the vacancy such as tenancy issues, location and type of unit
- request a bulk referral if there are multiple vacancies of the same type.

In instances where the preferred target group is low to moderate income and the SHP(CG) provider has an identified client, a [Nominations Form](#) must be completed and attached to the [Notification of Vacancy Form](#).

The referral report process

This process identifies a short-listed group of applicants from the housing register, managed by the Housing Service Centre, whose housing needs match the available property.

The Housing Service Centre will:

- review the housing register and identify a short-listed group of applicants whose needs match the notified property vacancy
- conduct a pre-allocation check of all the short-listed applicants
- provide a minimum, where possible, of three short-listed applicants to the SHP(CG) provider with documentation relating to the applicant's circumstances and housing requirements.

Once the applicant has received a housing assistance offer they will not be considered for further referrals for the duration of the offer period. If the allocation offer is rejected they will be considered for further referrals.

The SHP(CG) provider must:

- accept and consider the applications short-listed by the Housing Service Centre
- notify the Housing Service Centre of the decision to offer housing to the short-listed applicants on the Housing Register Advice Form
- if the referral was not considered suitable, notify the HSC of the reason why.

The Housing Service Centre must return a Referral Report to the SHP(CG) provider within three (3) working days of receiving the Notification of Vacancy Form.

The Referral Report should contain at least three applications matching the property vacancy. The SHP(CG) provider and the Housing Service Centre may agree to the referral of fewer or more than three applications. Expanding the search criteria may be discussed if three applicants cannot be found to match the vacancy.

Trouble-shooting referrals

If all attempts to find an applicant to fill a vacancy have been unsuccessful, the Housing Service Centre may assist the SHP(CG) provider to apply for permission to identify the property as 'hard to let'. Following approval, the provider may, subject to conditions, consider housing an ineligible applicant in the hard-to-let property.

Bulk referrals for multi-unit vacancies

The SHP(CG) provider may request a bulk referral to fill multi-unit vacancies of the same type. This is to be requested on the [Notification of Vacancy Form](#). Bulk referrals are not used to fill single property vacancies.

When requesting the Housing Service Centre to prepare a bulk referral list the SHP(CG) provider must:

- advise the Housing Service Centre of relevant details, including any special features of the vacant properties on the Notification of Vacancy Form
- advise the Housing Service Centre of the outcome of offers of housing assistance made to referred applicants by the SHP(CG) provider on the Housing Register Advice Form.

The Housing Service Centre will:

- review the housing register and identify a group of applicants whose needs are likely to match the notified property vacancies

- conduct a pre-allocation check of the short-listed applicants
- provide a shortlist of applications to the SHP(CG) provider with documentation relating to the applicant's individual circumstance and housing needs and
- maintain the housing register.

The SHP(CG) provider must:

- accept and assess the applications short-listed by the Housing Service Centre and
- notify the Housing Service Centre of the decision to accept a short-listed applicant on the Housing Register Advice Form
- if the referral was not considered suitable, notify the HSC of the reason why.

Nominations

The SHP(CG) provider has been approved to nominate applicants for the low to moderate income target group. Before nominating an applicant the SHP(CG) provider must be satisfied that the applicant is eligible for housing assistance (with the exception of income limit for the low to moderate income housing group) and is a suitable match to the program and property.

Under the nominations process the SHP(CG) provider must:

- nominate an applicant for housing assistance by completing the Nominations Form and attaching to the Notification of Vacancy Form
- seek advice from the Housing Service Centre on the match of the nominated applicant to assistance under the program and to the property
- consider the advice of the Housing Service Centre.

The Housing Service Centre will return a Referral Report containing the details of the nominated applicant/s to the provider within three (3) working days.

The SHP(CG) provider must convene their allocation panel and:

- consider the Referral Report and apply their matching process
- make a final allocation decision
- notify the Housing Service Centre of the outcome of any offer using the Housing Register Advice Form
- if the referral was not considered suitable, notify the Housing Service Centre of the reason why
- advise the applicant to update their details with the Housing Service Centre
- keep a record of all nominations processes.

If the SHP(CG) provider decides that a nominated applicant is not suitable for allocation after assessing the Referral Report, they may either make a new nomination or request a standard referral report from the Housing Service Centre to fill the vacancy.

Making an offer

After receiving a Referral Report, the SHP(CG) provider must:

- assess the Referral Report and apply their matching process

- offer housing to the chosen applicant/s or, if no applicants are suitable, contact the Housing Service Centre immediately to request another Referral Report
- give the applicant/s three (3) working days to consider and accept or reject the offer.

When an applicant accepts an offer of housing, the SHP(CG) provider must:

- immediately email or telephone the Housing Service Centre, telling them that the applicant has accepted an offer (this ensures the applicant is not made another offer)
- send the completed Housing Register Advice form to the Housing Service Centre within one (1) working day of the applicant accepting the offer.

When an applicant rejects an offer of housing, the SHP(CG) provider must:

- immediately email or telephone the Housing Service Centre of the applicant's reasons for rejection and
- send the completed Housing Register Advice form to the Housing Service Centre within four (4) working days of the applicant rejecting the offer.

Note: if the applicant rejects an offer of accommodation in BCG they will not be penalised.

Applicants who accept an offer of accommodation within BCG are removed from the housing register.

The SHP(CG) provider must give the tenant a [Duration of Need Notice](#), indicating when the tenancy will be reviewed under the [Duration of Need Policy](#).

Transfer

Transfers may be appropriate if the accommodation no longer meets the tenant's needs. Please refer to the operational procedure for managing tenant transfers.

Record-keeping

The SHP(CG) provider must keep records of all property transactions and allocation processes outlined above.

The SHP(CG) provider must:

- copy any documents obtained through the conduct of business
- store documents in the appropriate file
- update their electronic systems to reflect relevant transactions (such as the beginning of a tenancy agreement).

Enquiries

For assistance with applicant referral processes, please contact the relevant Housing Service Centre.

For other enquiries, contact the Department of Housing and Public Works.

BNCR – 3007 4377	HS ODCM Brisbane North Coast HSODCMBrisbaneNorthCoast@hpw.qld.gov.au
Central – 4848 7054	HS CDM ODCM Central Region HSCDMODCMCentralRegion@hpw.qld.gov.au
Northern – 4036 5538	HS ODCM Northern HSMailboxODCMNorthern@hpw.qld.gov.au
Southern – 3437 6047	HS ODCM Southern HSODCMSouthernregion@hpw.qld.gov.au

Attachment 1

Completing the Notification of Vacancy Form

Please note that the Notification of Vacancy Form is a generic form used across all community housing property vacancies. Not all sections will be relevant for the SHP(CG) provider. The below instructions only pertain to the sections that are relevant to the SHP(CG) provider.

Service provider details

In this section, providers fill out their contact details.

Service provider details	
Provider name:	Contact name:
Telephone number:	Fax number:
Email address:	

Please nominate a contact person in case further information about the vacant property is required by the Housing Service Centre.

Vacant property details

Enter information about the property and the vacancy. Please fill out all fields.

Vacant property details	
House/unit number:	Street address:
Suburb:	Postcode:
Unique Property Identifier (UPI):	Program:
Date vacant:	Date for allocation:
Number of entry stairs:	Number of internal stairs:
Describe shared facilities (if any):	
Note: if this vacancy is due to a transitional housing transfer, the client must update their details with the department.	

Term	Meaning and why the department needs to know
Unique Property Identifier (UPI)	This is a code given to a property in the department's referral system (SAP Real Estate). Always include this number if you have it, as this is the quickest and surest way for Housing Service Centres to identify the property in SAP Real Estate.
Program	This is the program the property is funded under.
Date vacant	This is the date the property is vacant from. This does not mean anyone can move in, as some maintenance or cleaning might need to happen. It is the date the last tenant moved out.
Date for allocation	This is the date when someone can start a tenancy, after any maintenance or cleaning.
Number of entry stairs	This helps with finding applicants who can manage the amount of stairs.
Number of internal stairs	This helps with finding applicants who can manage the amount of stairs.
Describe shared facilities	This is used when finding applicants who are willing to accept some shared facilities. It also helps when describing the property to applicants
Vacancy due to transfer	If a vacancy is due to a transfer the department needs to know so the

Multi-unit vacancy details (bulk referral request)

Multi-unit vacancy details (bulk referral requests)		
Multi-vacancy notification:	Number of bedrooms:	Number of units:
Number of accessible units		

Term	Meaning and why the department needs to know
Multi-vacancy notification	Check this if the referral request is for a multi-unit vacancy. As per the service provider procedures there is one notification form per bulk referral. For example, one for 12 x one bedroom, and one for 6 x two bedrooms.
Number of bedrooms and number of units	How many bedrooms are in these units? For example, one bedroom, 12 units.
Number of accessible units	Demand is always high for suitably accessible units. This lets the department know that applicants who require an accessible unit should be referred for some of these vacancies. Refer to page 2 of the Notification Form for further details on accessibility.

Brisbane Common Ground

Multi-unit vacancy details (bulk referral requests)	
Chronic homeless target group: <input type="checkbox"/>	Low to moderate income target group: <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Brisbane Common Ground specific information relating to target group:	

Term	Meaning and why the department needs to know
Chronic homelessness target group	Indicate whether the property vacancy should be tenanted to an applicant in the chronic homeless group to achieve the desired tenant mix.
Low to moderate income target group	Indicate whether the property vacancy should be tenanted to an applicant in the low to moderate income group to achieve the desired tenant mix.
Other Brisbane Common Ground specific information relating to target	Indicate any other information regarding the target group to assist the Housing Service Centre to search for applicants to achieve an appropriate tenant mix.

Property details

Property details (Community Rent Scheme new property and bulk only)		
Lot number:	Number of floors within building:	
Floor number of unit:	Number of buildings onsite:	Number of rooms in unit:
Property/dwelling type		
Bedrooms (e.g. 1 x 2 brm)		

Term	Meaning and why the department needs to know
Lot number	This number is a Queensland specific identifier for the state. Whilst addresses may be duplicated, the lot number will never be. If you know this number please supply it. This is not the UPI.
Number of floors within building	The building might have six storeys. Please let the department know how many storeys there are. This is in case applicants cannot manage multiple storey buildings.

Floor number of unit	This is the storey the front door of the unit of accommodation/dwelling is on. Floors are storeys, which means the first storey (1) is the ground floor. The second storey (2) is the first floor.
Number of buildings onsite	There may be two separate buildings on the property. Please let the department know how many buildings there are. This is in case the same
Number of rooms in dwelling	This is the total number of rooms in the accommodation.
Property/dwelling type	Buildings are constructed in different ways. Sometimes a detached house is more suitable for applicants that require distance from neighbours. Refer to Appendix 1 for descriptions of property/dwelling types.
Bedrooms	This clearly describes the number of bedrooms in the rental dwelling. The department uses this information to find applicants whose bedroom entitlements match. Refer to the department's website for more information on entitlements – www.hpw.qld.gov.au .

Other information and approvals

In this section the SHP (CG) provider should supply other relevant information, such as the application of the provider's pet policy to the rental unit.

This section also requires a provider to indicate who requested the referral. If the form is being completed electronically, the signature does not need to be supplied. If this form is printed, a scanned or faxed signature is required.

Other information relevant to allocation	
Signed:	Position:
Name:	Date:

- Information regarding property location, amenity and proximity to services
- Issues, including any sensitive information, that Housing Service Centres should be aware of when making referrals
- Information about the application of the provider's pet policy to the unit, including whether pets are allowed in the dwelling and if so, whether there are restrictions on the type, number or size of pet
- Describing features of ideal applicant/s to suit the vacancy, e.g. 'suit mature single person'.

Property accessibility features

In this section, record whether the property has full or partial wheelchair access or has had major modifications. This information will be used to identify properties that may be suitable for applicants

with accessibility issues. Please ensure this assessment is completed even if the property is department-owned as this will assist the department to ensure the integrity of its property records.

Check each entry that matches the property. This supports the Housing Service Centre in finding well matched applicants that can make best use of the property. Ticking all of this section means a property is fully wheelchair accessible.

Note: SHP(CG) providers do not need to measure all access features of a property to determine if it is wheelchair accessible. However, it is recommended that measurements of door clearances for a bedroom door and the bathroom/toilet door are taken to ensure wheelchair accessibility.

Other modifications

If the property cannot be described as having full wheelchair access, but has had at least one significant modification, (e.g. hobless shower installed), please identify the major modification/s by ticking the boxes supplied.

This information lets the department identify applicants who will benefit most from the availability of these features.

Note: minor modifications do not need to be identified on the form (e.g. grab rails, handrails, door wedges, hand held shower, level taps and large rocker switches).

Other information on the [Notification of Vacancy Form](#) may include, but is not limited to:

- information about neighbourhood and community issues that may impact on the matching and allocations decisions. For example, neighbourhood fatigue
- information about local support services and access to transport
- any other information the SHP (CG) provider considers relevant.