

Housing Pathways – Access to Waitlist for ACHPs

Frequently Asked Questions

These Frequently asked Questions are aimed at providing clarity around the Housing Pathways – Access to Waitlist process.

This process enables you, as the ACHP, to contact applicants on the NSW Housing Register for the purposes of allocating a vacant AHO social housing property.

It is important to remember that the Access to Waitlist process is just the start of the larger conversation on *Exploring ACHP Participation in Housing Pathways*.

1. Can my organisation still maintain its own waiting list?

Yes. At this point in time your organisation can still maintain its own waiting list because there may be applicants waiting on your list that may not be on the NSW Housing Register (Housing Pathways).

You may also need to keep your own waiting list if your organisation manages properties where the eligibility criteria is set by the owner of the property and is different from Housing Pathways eligibility for social housing.

2. Will the AHO make this policy and process mandatory in the future?

Yes. The policy will be mandatory in the future, so that AHO social housing properties are managed in the same way across NSW.

3. How will I know when the AHO makes this policy and process mandatory?

The AHO is committed to open communication and making sure that Providers are made fully aware of any new policies and processes. The AHO will ensure information is provided to you whenever possible through information sessions to ensure your organisation is notified prior to the policy and process becoming mandatory. We are aiming wherever possible to co-design new initiatives.

4. Why don't ACHP waitlists and Housing Pathways work together?

A project to consider amalgamating ACHP waiting lists with Housing Pathways will be conducted in Phase 2 of the *Exploring ACHP Participation in Housing Pathways* project. The AHO will make sure your organisation is part of the consultation phase when the time comes.

5. Who is responsible for ensuring an applicant of the Housing Pathways is eligible for an offer?

ACHPs are responsible for confirming the applicant still meets your eligibility income limits for the property you are managing. This is similar to what all Housing Pathways providers do, as they conduct a pre-offer eligibility check before making an offer.

If you require more information before making an offer you can request additional information from the applicant to make an informed decision about whether to make an offer.

6. How many applicants can my organisation ask for in a short list from the Housing Pathways provider?

The number of applicants proposed for each short list is three to five (3-5).

However your organisation and the Housing Pathways provider can negotiate locally for more or less applicants, if required. The maximum number is 15.

7. Who is responsible for confirming Aboriginality with the applicant?

Your organisation will only be provided with applicants who are confirmed through the Housing Pathway system as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and are waiting for an AHO social housing property.

8. Can I access the tenancy histories, including history of rental arrears from the Housing Pathways provider?

No. This is not allowed due to privacy restrictions. Your organisation will be responsible for asking the applicant about their tenancy history and whether they have any debts with a previous provider. If you want to contact the applicant's former landlord (including FACS or a community housing provider) to ask about debt or other issues, you will need to get the client's written consent to do this.

9. What needs to be negotiated in the Local Service Level Agreement?

The Guidelines include a template for a local Service Level Agreement.

This template includes the key features that your organisation and the Housing Pathways provider will need to agree on. This includes:

- the number of applicants to be put on the short-list
- the number of days it will take the Housing Pathways provider to provide the short-list once it is requested
- the number of days you have to process the short-list, once received
- the staff positions in each organisation who will manage this process
- the governance group representatives and how often they meet.

This template is provided as a guide only. It can be changed as needed by your organisation or the Housing Pathways provider.

10. What happens if there is a breach of the local Service Level Agreement by either the Housing Pathways provider or my organisation?

This can be addressed at the local governance group. The governance group will be set up once the agreement is signed. This group should meet regularly to monitor how the process is working for each party and solve implementation issues where possible.

11. Does my organisation need to record an offer to an applicant?

If the offer is accepted, and the applicant signs a tenancy agreement with your organisation, you should notify the Housing Pathways provider that the applicant has been housed (using the Notice of Applicant Housed form).

12. What if the applicant rejects the offer?

If the applicant rejects the offer, your organisation should record this according to your internal procedures, however, you don't need to notify the Housing Pathways provider.

13. What if the applicants on the short-list are not suitable?

If the next applicant on the short-list is not suitable for the property, record why they are not suitable on the Notice of Applicant By-passed form, and go to the next applicant on the list. There is no need to notify the Housing Pathways provider.

If none of the applicants on the short-list are suitable, you may need to revise the restrictions you included in the Request for Applicant short-list form, and if necessary, submit it again.

If there are still no applicants on the short-list, you may need to ask the Housing Pathways provider to relax the search (look out of the area). If there are still no suitable applicants on the waiting list you should apply your own policy for finding a tenant, while encouraging the applicant to apply to be listed on the NSW Housing Register.

14. Does this process enable an Aboriginal community housing tenant to apply for a transfer to a Housing Pathways provider?

No, however a tenant can apply for a transfer through the ACHP which currently houses them. If the ACHP assesses them as eligible for a transfer, but they cannot re-house them in the immediate future, the ACHP should document this in a letter to the tenant. The tenant may be able to use this letter to discuss their situation with a Housing Pathways provider and find out about their options.

The issue of transfers from an ACHP to another Housing Pathways provider will be considered further in Phase 2 of the *Exploring ACHP Participation in Housing Pathways* project.