**NSW Department of Housing:**

Telephone: **Housing Contact Centre on 1300 468 746 = (1300 HOUSING)**  [www.housing.nsw.gov.au](http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au)

Housing NSW encompasses Public Housing Services, the Office of Community Housing, the Home Purchase Advisory Service and the Centre of Affordable Housing. Through these offices, the NSW Government provides long term subsidised rental housing through Public Housing and Community Housing.

**Housing assistance for elderly clients on low incomes.**

**Housing Pathways:** Housing NSW and participating community housing providers are now combined under the one **Housing Pathway**. This means you can apply for social housing assistance from any participating social housing provider by using one single application form. The “Application for Housing Assistance” form can be lodged at all Housing NSW local offices and participating community housing providers. For more details go to Housing Pathways website at [www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au](http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 468 746

**Social Housing Register**

Eligible clients who apply for social housing and who have not demonstrated an urgent need for housing, will be placed on the Housing Register in order of application date. If you are listed on the Housing Register, your eligibility will be periodically reassessed, including current income limits. Elderly clients that are placed on the Housing Register will be offered suitable accommodation ahead of wait-turn applicants, as it becomes available. Generally, social housing providers will house clients in the following order:

- Need for emergency temporary accommodation
- Need for urgent housing, and clients approved for transfers or relocations on the grounds of under-occupancy
- Elderly clients (clients who are aged 80 and over, or 55 and over if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander)
- Transfers on a priority basis, or clients being relocated for management purposes
- Clients approved for wait turn housing and wait turn transfer.

When a property becomes available and there are no suitable high-needs clients on the Housing Register, it will be offered to the next appropriate person who has been waiting the longest. Be aware that waiting times are extensive and are influenced by the regions/suburbs that have been requested. Waiting times can stretch from 4 years to over 10 years according to popularity of area. To check waiting times for specific areas visit: [http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/How%2Bto%2BApply/Expected%2BWaiting%2BTimes/](http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/How%2Bto%2BApply/Expected%2BWaiting%2BTimes/)

Most clients will be eligible to receive two offers, but will only ever receive one offer at a time. If you refuse both offers your name will be struck off the register. In some cases where a tenant is relocating due to Housing NSW management purposes, or when a client has been approved for emergency temporary accommodation, they may receive only one reasonable offer.

**Fixed Term Leases**

Public housing leases are no longer for life. The tenant will be offered a lease of 2, 5, or 10 years depending on their need. Fixed term leases will be reviewed before they end to decide if an extension to the lease should be offered and if so, how long it should be. [http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Changes+to+Social+Housing/Reshaping+Public+Housing/Fixed+Term+Leases+and+Lease+Review.htm](http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Changes+to+Social+Housing/Reshaping+Public+Housing/Fixed+Term+Leases+and+Lease+Review.htm)
“New South Wales has the largest social housing portfolio in Australia, comprising over 150,000 dwellings... About 214,000 people are currently living in public housing. There are a further 55,000 eligible households (representing about 120,000 people) on the waiting list for such accommodation.”


There are currently over 65,000 older people living in public and community housing across NSW, and this number is expected to rise considerably over the next two decades. Older people are entitled to accelerated progression on the Housing Register for appropriate public or community managed housing.

**Type of Housing**

Bedsits, flats, separate houses are available depending on whether single, couple or family. It is possible to share with a friend, providing they too, are eligible. There are a range of dwellings which can be allocated to elderly clients, with special features such as modifications and ground floor access. The quality varies enormously from place to place. These properties are in limited supply, so they will only be offered to clients with a demonstrated need for them. Therefore, the Department may ask for documentation to support these requests.

It will be necessary to provide and attach proof of income information/support, letters about any medical condition or any other condition which affects your ability to house yourself on the private rental market. Clients receiving Centrelink payments will be asked to participate in the Income Confirmation Scheme, where Centrelink supplies appropriate details. The first $5000 of each adult household member’s total amount of savings and financial assets is exempt from assessment for social housing eligibility.

**Rent Cost and Controls**

Every public housing tenancy has a ‘market rent’. Housing NSW bases the market rent for a public housing property on the rent a tenant would be likely to pay for a property in the private rental market that:

- Is in a similar geographical location, and
- Is a similar size, and
- Has similar features.

A rent subsidy is the difference between the market rent and the rent a tenant pays, based on the household’s gross assessable income, household size and age of household members. If total income into the home exceeds all limits, then a ‘full market rent’ will be charged for the residence. If income remains within the limits, rental rebates apply = Rent is usually 25% to 30% of gross income coming into the household.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</th>
<th>WEEKLY INCOME LIMIT INCLUDING FAMILY TAX BENEFITS (as at 6/7/15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult (Single)</td>
<td>$745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each additional Adult (18 years or older)</td>
<td>add $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st child</td>
<td>add $145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each additional Child (under 18)</td>
<td>add $100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Rent Assistance from Centrelink is **not** available to public housing tenants.

**Water usage:**
Public housing tenants are required to pay for water and this charge is in addition to the rent. New tenants will pay a percentage water charge until Housing NSW processes the first water authority bill for their property where the tenant has been living in the property for the full billing period. Following this, tenants will pay either a percentage water charge or an **actual** water charge, depending whether the property where the tenant lives has a separate or a shared water meter. Payments are calculated at a weekly rate. If a tenant’s water usage is excessive, their water charges will reflect that usage.

**Vacant Bedroom Charge:**
Where a tenant lives in a property that has more bedrooms than Housing NSW deems they are entitled to, and that person refuses to relocate when they have been offered alternative accommodation, a ‘vacant bedroom charge’ will be applied to their rent. This could be an extra $20 per week for a single person, or $30 per week for a couple.

**Eligibility:**
To apply for public housing, you must meet all of the following criteria:
- Be a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia
- Be a resident in NSW
- Have a household income within the income eligibility limits (see table above)
- Comply with the Department’s policy on asset ownership
- Be able to sustain a successful tenancy
- If a former tenant, make repayments of any former debts to the Department
- Generally, be at least 18 years of age (there may be special circumstances in a crisis)

**Department of Housing - Head Office**
223-239 Liverpool Road, Ashfield NSW 2131
Ph: 02 8753 8000
Fax: 02 8753 8888

**Community and Private Market Housing - Head Office**
223-239 Liverpool Road, Ashfield NSW 2131
Ph: (02) 8753 8280
Fax: (02) 8753 8294

**Financial Help** for Private Sector Renters from Department of Housing.
NSW Housing Department provides short-term assistance to people renting in the private rental market if they are eligible for public housing and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
See our fact sheet on Financial Assistance Schemes for Accommodation.