BETTER PRACTICE GUIDE

For Community Housing in New Zealand

April 2011, 4th Edition.

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Editors
Chris Short (Leapfrog Innovation Limited)

Author's Disclaimer
The authors endeavour to provide reliable analysis and believe the material presented is accurate. However, we will not be liable for any claim by any party acting on such information.

Acknowledgments
The Better Practice Guide has been adapted from the National Community Housing Guide published in 2003 by the National Community Housing Forum (NCHF) in Australia. It has been rewritten to reflect the current state of the community housing sector in New Zealand as well as New Zealand practice and legislation.

Commenting on the Guide
It is important that the Better Practice Guide is regularly reviewed and revised to reflect developments in Better Practice in the sector, and to make improvements to content and presentation.

Additionally, Community Housing Aotearoa intends to continue developing this Guide and the accompanying toolkits so that it reflects the various cultural values and languages of Aotearoa with specific references and examples. We can only do this with your help and guidance!

A feedback form has been included at the end of the Better Practice Guide. We encourage organisations using the Guide to make use of the form as a way to pass on any ideas for improvements. Please make your comments refer as specifically as possible to each Standard and/or signpost. The Better Practice Guide will be updated using comments received in this way. For further information about the Guide contact:

Community Housing Aotearoa, Incorporated
Level 1, 94 Dixon St
PO Box 11 543 Manners Street
Wellington
New Zealand

T: 04 3858 722
F: 04 3858 721
E: support@communityhousing.org.nz
W: www.communityhousing.org.nz

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community Housing in New Zealand

What is Community Housing?

Community Housing is housing opportunities and services delivered through a community

This is how Community Housing Aotearoa defines community housing. This definition most clearly gets to the heart of community housing - a housing service that is delivered through a community. Below, is a list of some characteristics that community housing providers have in common.

- Not-for-profit, managed by voluntary or nominally rewarded governing bodies
- Provide homes for rent and affordable models home ownership
- Provide general needs housing and/or supported and emergency housing
- Community housing providers are also often social service providers or Māori/iwi groups, for whom housing is not their primary business
- Funded from a variety of sources including government, private sector lenders, donations etc.
- Can be locally based or regional/nationally based representing "communities of interest".

The Value of Community Housing in New Zealand

Community Housing is uniquely well positioned to provide value to the people of New Zealand in ways that neither public nor private housing can, primarily in the areas of financial value and community development.

Financial Value

- Increased efficiency as providers must maximise their resources
- Fewer administrative costs which are passed on in savings
- Mixed funding from services and products offered, private donations and government assistance
- Providers receive discounted services and products from retailers

Community Value

- Providers are able to quickly assess the needs of a community and develop appropriate and timely solutions to address those needs
- Providers have flexibility with the services and products offered
- Decisions are made and implemented with the direct input of affected stakeholders
- Apolitical; providers continue to offer services regardless of which party is in power or what government agency might change

The Aims of Community Housing

The hallmarks of Community Housing are:

- **Affordability**: To ensure that housing costs do not create hardship for tenants
- **Choice**: To provide people in need of housing with a choice of housing options
- **Responsiveness**: To respond to the needs of individual tenants and their changing circumstances by ensuring that housing is appropriate to tenants' needs and is managed flexibly
- **Security**: To ensure that tenants are secure in their housing, are housed for as long as they wish to be and meet the conditions of their tenancy agreement
- **Sustainability**: To contribute to successful tenancies and the development of sustainable communities, by being supportive of tenants' wider social needs and building their independence
- **Fairness**: To ensure equitable access to community housing regardless of people's cultural identity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and household composition; and to treat tenants fairly in all matters relating to their tenancy
- **Respect**: To ensure that all tenants' rights are respected and to treat tenants with respect in all dealings
- **Participation**: To actively seek the participation of tenants in decisions about their tenancy and the management of organisations
- **Partnerships**: To work in partnership with governments and communities in developing housing and related services which meet tenant and community needs
- **Quality**: To provide the best possible accommodation and housing services to tenants
- **Accountability**: To be accountable to tenants, the community and government for the effectiveness of the service provided and for the use of public funds; and by doing so to enhance the credibility of community housing

The diversity of Community Housing in New Zealand

At the present time the community housing sector in New Zealand is very diverse, and includes a wide range of groups such as community and health-based organisations, Māori/Iwi and Pacific Island groups, small scale housing providers, church groups, emergency accommodation providers, local authorities to name a few. Research commissioned by the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ) and information from a survey of members carried out by Community Housing Aotearoa further reinforces this point.

Some of the findings from Community Housing Aotearoa and CHRANZ research in 2007 include:

- The majority of Community Housing members work with Māori/Iwi groups, social services, mental health and general housing with many other service providers dealing with such groups as elderly housing, low income, homeless, advocacy, women's shelters and more.
- The majority of Community Housing members, 48%, work at the local level while 30% work across the regional level and 22% work at the national level.
- Eighty-two percent of Community Housing members plan to expand their services and 73% plan to increase their stock.
- Community organisations often provide a range of services and describe more than one client group for their services. [1]

[1] Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand; Affordable Housing: The Community Sector in New Zealand, September 2007, SGS Economics and Planning Pty. Ltd.

- Organisations stated the three main groups they target were low income families, individuals and mental health clients *
- Excluding three organisations that own more than 100 units, the median number of houses owned by an organisation is 9 units *

Common Types of Community Housing Providers

- **Non-profit housing trusts** that are run by a voluntary board of management. Typically these agencies provide long term places in self-contained accommodation or in shared housing.

- **Specialist non-government organisations** that link housing services with support for clients with special needs. Examples include group homes for disabled people.

- **Māori providers** that cater specifically for iwi, hapu or whanau members. They may be part of a Runanga, Māori Service Provider or associated with a particular Marae. They often provide a range of services including; health, education, employment, training and social services as well as housing. In many cases they provide kaumatua housing.

- **Tenant cooperatives** where tenant members participate directly in the management of their housing that may be leased or owned by the cooperative. Typically these are smaller organisations that are often formed by clients with a common interest, such as members of a particular cultural group.

- **Providers managing emergency, short-term or transitional housing services** for households with temporary needs or for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

- **Local Authority housing providers**. Of the 73 Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs, that is City, District and Unitary Councils) 69 of them own and manage some form of social housing portfolio. In most cases these cater for low-income super annuitants or people with other social needs, but several, including Christchurch City Council (more than 2,500), Wellington City Council (more than 2,300) and Dunedin City Council (over 950 units) have relatively large portfolios. In total TLAs own in the region of 14,000 units across New Zealand, making them far larger providers than the rest of the community housing sector, and second only to HNZC as providers of social housing.

Note: *Some of these providers provide more than one type of service.*

Background to this Better Practice Guide (BPG)

This is the fourth edition of CHA's Better Practice Guide (BPG).

The goals of the BPG are to be a resource that:

- supports sector development
- is a tool that can be used to build organisational capability and capacity
- supports and encourages continuous quality improvement
- assists in strategic and organisational planning
- is a tool to assist organisations to benchmark their current practices against external 'best' practice standards
- sets a standard of common national better practice in the community housing sector

This edition of the Better Practice Guide has been revised so it can be used as the basis for the Community Housing Quality Assurance Programme. CHA has an MoU with Healthcare Aotearoa, owners of the Te Wana Quality Programme, who will subsequently oversee the accreditation process. The Te Wana Quality Programme standards are endorsed for accreditation by the Quality Improvement Council (QIC). QIC is an Australasian standards development and accreditation body that aims to promote, assist and develop safety and quality in community services.

Using the BPG to Prepare for Accreditation

- **An organisation wanting to complete the accreditation process must be a full financial member of CHA.**

- **The suggested approach to gaining accreditation is:**

  1. Establish interest and commitment from the Governance of your organisation

  2. Become familiar with the CHA Better Practice Guide (BPG) and use it to complete a detailed review of the organisation

  3. Report on areas for improvement and develop an action plan for addressing those areas. **Once the areas for improvement are addressed by the organisation and at least 70% of standards are met for each applicable section the ready to begin the formal process**

  4. Address the areas for improvement and complete the CHA Better Practice Guide Self Assessment booklet in detail. Organisations should reach at least 70% of standards for each section

  5. Use the CHA/Te Wana Alignment Guide as a tool for transfer of evidence from the CHA Self Assessment booklet directly into the Te Wana Evidence Journal format

  6. Arrange accreditation payment through CHA who will then coordinate the formal review of your organisation with Te Wana

The format of the Better Practice Guide

The Better Practice Guide comprises a number of standards of better practice in service delivery for the community housing sector in New Zealand. The standards cover most of the elements that constitute a high quality housing service for tenants in community housing.

The following features and examples listed in this guide are not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive but rather to provide organisations with some guidance in how to achieve these Standards.

The Guide is divided into seven sections, each devoted to a key area of service provision in community housing.

Each section contains:

i. **Standards:** The Guide contains a number of better practice standards. These are broad statements describing standards that an organisation should strive to achieve to demonstrate better practice. There are between three and six standards for each section of the Guide.

ii. **Evidence of Better Practice:** Under each standard there are a number of examples of "Evidence of Better Practice" that are intended to give organisations some guidance about how to achieve the standard, without being exhaustive or prescriptive. These are not meant to be a checklist for accreditation. Organisations might do some of these activities, but might also be doing a range of different actions that equally demonstrate that they meet the standard.

Explanation for each standard is grouped under three different sub-headings:

- **Documentation** that can support better practice
- **Processes** that can support better practice
- **Measuring outcomes** to support better practice.

This is to remind people using the Better Practice Guide of the range of elements which contribute to achieving the standard. Evaluation should be based on how activities are actually done and what is achieved, not just on what is written in policies or procedures.

iii. **Further explanation and examples:** They are designed to assist organisations in understanding what Better Practice might involve. Where there is legislation covering a signpost, this is advised in the further explanation column.

Who should be using the Better Practice Guide?

Whilst most of the standards contained in the BPG relate to all providers of community housing, there are some differences that apply specifically to Māori providers, local authorities and housing cooperatives.

The standards aim to cover the wide range of organisations providing community housing. Most of the standards apply to all organisations irrespective of size, location or type. Where the standard or related evidence does not apply to different types of organisations, this has been specifically noted. For instance, tenant-run co-operatives do not generally employ staff, which means standards about employment of staff are irrelevant to them.

Using the Better Practice Guide to improve service delivery

The Better Practice Guide and its constituent Standards were developed within a framework of quality improvement. Quality improvement is an approach to organisational development that relies on people within the organisation being committed to constantly looking for better ways to do things. The overall aim is improved outcomes for clients and communities served via improved organisational management.

The BPG can be used by community housing organisations as a tool for quality improvement. This might include assisting in:

- writing policies or procedures
- training members of the organisation in better practice
- evaluating parts, or all, of the organisation's work.

It is not expected that every organisation will be able to meet every standard immediately. Most organisations will find that their work in at least some areas is already meeting the standards. Certain aspects of every organisation's work, however, will need improvement.

In some cases, only minor changes may be needed which can be introduced with relative ease. In others, more substantial work such as developing plans or writing new policies might be required. The standards are designed to help organisations make these changes over time.

The further explanation column attempts to indicate that different organisations might do things differently because of their size or type. However, except where standards are actually not applicable, all organisations should attempt to meet all the standards. For instance, one evidence of Better Practice says regular reports should be provided to the board/management committee on allocation of tenancies, rent arrears, and other key performance data: a valid response to these criteria from a small tenant co-operative could be that a report is given verbally, but a larger housing trust would normally be expected to submit a formal written report.

Using the Better Practice Guide to self-assess the work of your organisation

The Guide has been primarily designed to articulate better practice in community housing. However it can be used as criteria for forming judgements about performance for evaluation purposes (either internal or external).

The Guide is designed to have two main purposes:

1. To encourage the adoption of better practices across the sector and to engender a culture of continuous quality improvement in community housing; and
2. To provide the basis and a framework for external accreditation of performance levels.

The Guide and its constituent Standards, therefore, have a strong emphasis on quality improvement but also the capacity to assess for accountability purposes. For most community housing providers, use of the Guide will be an internal process initially.

Using a scorecard to self-assess your organisation

Located in the back of the Guide, there is a detailed explanation on how to self-assess your organisation. Each section is broken into standards which can be assessed on an overall percentage of success rating.

The criteria used to score your organisation are broken into four categories.

1. Better Practice
2. Good Practice
3. Minimum Acceptable Practice
4. Unacceptable Practice

A detailed explanation of these categories and associated scorecard is located in the back of the BPG.

Using the Assessment Booklet

To support the better practice guide an assessment booklet has been designed. The assessment booklet can be used for gathering evidence during your self-assessment process. The booklet is designed so you can record documents you may have in place, processes you undertake, and ways you currently measure outcomes to support better practice. It also contains an action plan section which can be used to document the steps needed to improve current practice.

How the Guide relates to other documents

The Better Practice Guide establishes a framework against which community housing organisations can self-assess themselves, and use as guidance and a framework in developing policies and procedures. It is not, however, a detailed "how to" guide. This will be covered by an existing resource (sign-posted in the Guide) or by one of the Community Housing Aotearoa Toolkits, described below.

Community Housing Aotearoa Toolkits

Community Housing Aotearoa has developed a number of more detailed Toolkits and these are available for full members on the CHA website www.communityhousing.org.nz. The toolkits covering a range of topics including:

- Governance & Risk management
- Organisational Management
- Human Resource Management
- Financial Management
- Tenancy Management
- Property & Asset management
- Working with Tenants & the Community
- Other Resources

Other resources

In addition to the Community Housing Aotearoa Toolkits there are also a range of other resources available to Iwi, Community and Voluntary sector organisations in New Zealand. These include:

- Community Net's Community Resource Kit.
- Keeping it Legal – legal responsibilities of voluntary organisations in New Zealand

- Managing Well – Resources for community and voluntary organisations
- Department of Building and Housing Tenancy Services – Website and publications giving information relating to the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and tenancy management

The introductory section of each standard also contains a *resources and links* section with links to relevant organisations that can provide information, advice and assistance on a specific topic. In addition useful links have been added to some of the further explanation and examples sections of the guide.

PART 2: BETTER PRACTICE STANDARDS

Section 1: Governance and Organisational Management

- ✓ **Standard 1.1 Establishing and Maintaining Governing Bodies** - Members of the governing body of the organisation have the skills and experience needed for their work and the commitment to contribute to the overall strength of the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 1.2 Good Governance** - The organisation has a clearly defined purpose and goals and is accountable for all aspects of its work.

- ✓ **Standard 1.3 Effective Management** - The organisation is managed to ensure accountability and deliver good outcomes for clients.

- ✓ **Standard 1.4 Planning and Development** - The organisation plans to ensure that it maximises the use of its resources towards achieving identified goals and priorities.

- ✓ **Standard 1.5 Organisational Review** - Regular evaluation and review ensures that the organisation is working efficiently and effectively towards achieving its goals.

Section 2: Management Systems

- ✓ **Standard 2.1 Financial Systems** - The organisation's financial systems support effective management and accountability.

- ✓ **Standard 2.2 Administrative Systems** - The organisation's administrative systems support effective management and accountability.

- ✓ **Standard 2.3 Management Information Systems** - Information about the organisation's activities, applicants, tenants and staff (where applicable) is used to support management of the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 2.4 Office Environment** - The organisation's office premises and equipment provide a safe, secure and appropriate work environment for staff and tenants.

Section 3: Human Resource Management

- ✓ **Standard 3.1 Recruiting, Selecting and Appointing Staff** - Staff are appointed to the organisation with the skills and experience needed for their work and for their ability to contribute to the overall strength of the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 3.2 Supervision, Training and Development of Staff** - Staff are provided with appropriate supervision, training and development that enhances their skills, motivation and effectiveness and assists them to further the organisation's goals.

- ✓ **Standard 3.3 Employment Systems** - The organisation has fair and effective systems to support its employment role.

- ✓ **Standard 3.4 Occupational Health and Safety** - Staff and volunteers work in a safe and healthy environment.

- ✓ **Standard 3.5 Management of Volunteers** - Volunteers are supported to do their jobs well and safely

Section 4: Tenancy Management

- ✓ **Standard 4.1 Allocation of Housing** - Tenants are selected openly and fairly, based on an assessment process, which considers individual housing needs and meets the stated aims of the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 4.2 Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies** - The organisation is tenant focused and works with tenants to establish and maintain successful tenancies.

- ✓ **Standard 4.3 Changing Needs of Tenants** - The changing housing needs of tenants are responded to fairly and flexibly within the capacity of the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 4.4 Ending Tenancies** - Tenancies are ended in a way that is legal and minimises the impact on the organisation and tenants.

- ✓ **Standard 4.5 Outsourcing Tenancy Management** - where outsourcing of tenancy management occurs, appropriate organisations are selected and monitored.

Section 5: Asset Management

- ✓ **Standard 5.1 Responsive Maintenance and Repairs** - The organisation's systems enable the effective delivery of repairs and maintenance so that tenants' accommodation meets community living standards.

- ✓ **Standard 5.2 Planned Cyclical Maintenance and Upgrade** - The organisation plans for the maintenance and upgrade of its assets to ensure accommodation quality and overall value is sustained.

- ✓ **Standard 5.3 Acquiring and Developing Stock** -The organisation acquires and develops housing stock that is appropriate to the identified needs of its target population and maximises the assets of the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 5.4 Developing Income Streams for Acquiring New Stock** - The organisation's growth strategy is based on sound financial planning

Section 6: Tenant Rights and Participation

- ✓ **Standard 6.1 Tenant Rights** - Tenants' rights are upheld in all aspects of the organisation's work and people who access the organisation are assisted to exercise their rights.

- ✓ **Standard 6.2 Tenant Participation** - Tenants contribute to and participate in the decision-making of the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 6.3 Participation in Tenant-run Co-operatives** - Co-operative members are selected, trained and supported to maintain a sustainable organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 6.4 Access to Services of the Organisation** - Applicants/tenants are able to access the full range of services provided by the organisation.

- ✓ **Standard 6.5 Confidentiality and Privacy** - Applicants' and tenants' confidentiality and privacy is respected and maintained.

- ✓ **Standard 6.6 Complaints and Appeals** - Complaints and appeals of decisions are addressed promptly and fairly.

Section 7: Working with the Community

- ✓ **Standard 7.1 Tenants' Access to Support** - Tenants have access to relevant support.

- ✓ **Standard 7.2 Building Community Capacity** - Work undertaken by the organisation contributes to sustainable improvements in the well-being of tenants and communities.

- ✓ **Standard 7.3 Providing Housing Information, Advice and Referral** - Community members accessing the service are given up-to-date information and referral that assists them to find safe housing options.

PART 3: USING THE STANDARDS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

SECTION 1: GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Standard 1.1 Establishing and Maintaining Governing Boards

Standard 1.2 Good Governance

Standard 1.3 Effective Management

Standard 1.4 Planning and Development

Standard 1.5 Organisational Review

Overview and definitional issues in this section
Governance is about leadership. It is a separate task from the day-to-day management of an organisation; rather it is looking to the long-term direction, ensuring that the necessary management structures are in place and that its activities keep true to its mission and purpose. Governance is being responsible for deciding the direction of the organisation along with identifying and managing the risks.

The function of governance is usually entrusted by the members to a governance committee or board, though a small group setting up a new organisation or a collective running a service might have to attend to both governance and management.

Whether or not there is a separate governance board, the organisation needs an operational structure and defined systems to implement projects and activities.

Where the housing service is part of a larger organisation (for example, of a local council or Māori land trust) the governance arrangements will have to fit within the structures and authority of this larger parent body.

Governance and How It Compares with Management
The governing role is different from the managing role. Governance is about setting the strategic direction of the organisation and monitoring it while management is responsible for the day to day operation and putting the Board's direction into practice. The Board sets the overall direction and determines the short to long term goals while management organises the work needed to achieve these goals.

Keeping Board meetings focused on governance is challenging. It helps to keep the focus on outcomes and to check that meetings are not diverted into too much organisational trivia. Always begin a board meeting with a pre-delivered set agenda that is broken down into timed segments.

Principles of Good Governance

This framework for good governance provides a useful overview of the key elements in the Better Practice Guide that follows. It is based on current good governance literature.

1. Leadership and Commitment

Leadership

- Leadership roles are clear and recognised by all parties

Purpose and Objectives

- Clear purpose [kaupapa] is established and understood by all participants
- Goals and objectives are clear; outcomes focused, agreed and documented

Commitment

- Participants share collective responsibility for achieving objectives
- There is genuine goodwill between all participants to achieve objectives

2. Coordination and Collaboration

Coordination and Collaboration

- Clear delineation and understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Coordinated approach to policy development is in place
- Mechanisms to avoid duplication of effort and inconsistencies are in place
- Partnerships are facilitated and enabled

Structurally appropriate

- Structures are in place that facilitate the achievement of agreed objectives
- Structures facilitate continual improvement of all aspects of the governance regime

3. Accountability and Transparency

Reporting and accountability

- Minimal reporting burden
- Reporting is clearly linked to agreed objectives and outcomes
- Accountability is linked to the roles of participants

Information

- Systems and processes support reporting
- Accurate and consistent information is available to all participants and supports decision-making

Transparency

- Decision processes can be tracked and are linked to objectives
- Clear understanding of which decisions can be made by which levels of the governance structure

Incentives to perform

- Accountability is linked to performance against objectives

Relevant legislation

The way a governance group is established, its relationship to other groups and individuals and the extent of its powers are framed by the legal structure of the organisation and the constitution or rules which are developed. Members of

governance boards need to be familiar with the obligations and requirements contained in the legislation relevant to their organisation.

The most common organisational legislation affecting community housing are:

- Incorporated Societies Act 1908
- Charitable Trusts Act 1957
- Te Ture Whenua Act
- Companies Act 1993

Resources and Links

- **CommunityNet Aotearoa –** An internet resource for communities in New Zealand

  www.community.net.nz

- **SPARC –** Nine Steps to Effective Governance, Second Ed.

  www.sparc.org.nz

- **NZFVWO & Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector** – Legal responsibilities for voluntary organisations in New Zealand**.** *Keeping It Legal* details the responsibilities of voluntary organisations across the country.

  www.keepingitlegal.net.nz

- **NZ legislation**

  www.legislation.co.nz

- **Societies and Trusts Online**

  www.societies.govt.nz

- **Charities Commission**

  www.charities.govt.nz

- **IRD**

  www.ird.govt.nz

Standard 1.1 Establishing and Maintaining Governing Boards

There is an identified group of suitably skilled people responsible for governance which constitute the Board

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
1.1.1 - Minutes or policy documents or the Constitution show that decisions have been made about the size, type, purpose and values of the organisation and the type of governance and governing body that this requires.	**The structure fits the size and stage of development** The size, type and composition of the Board need to fit the size and purpose of the housing service organisation. For example, the early stages of setting up a service may need a steering committee. As a service grows, the committee may need to split its functions so that a subcommittee focuses on management. A large and complex service will have paid management staff and a separate governance Board or committee. The transition to appointing a manager can be a challenge to a Board who often "struggle to let go of the operational reins".
1.1.2 - There are documents that show that the organisation has processes to ensure the governing body has members who are committed to the purpose of the organisation and who provide the mix of skills and experience needed on the Board.	**Composition of the Board** Boards are made up primarily of people who are representative of the members. It is a good idea to think about the mix of skills and expertise needed to be really effective. *It may be necessary to find ways to bring extra people with particular skills onto the Board, for example people with skills and expertise in:* • Legal and financial matters • property and asset management • volunteer management • service user advocacy • tenancy management A balance of member representatives and co-opted specialists often works well. Consider how service users will have a voice and whether they should be represented on the Board.
1.1.3 - There are written processes for the nomination and election (and/or selection, appointment or co-option, if relevant) of Board members and for selection of office holders.	**Selection and appointment processes** The Constitution usually sets out the way office holders and Board members are nominated and elected by members. The processes need to be transparent and fair. Usually a Board has powers to recruit or co-opt a specified number of additional people to ensure it has the skills and expertise it needs. The Board needs to think about how it will decide what it needs and how it will identify and recruit suitable people. Very large organisations often advertise for such members.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
1.1.4 - New members are formally inducted to the Board, the organisation and to their role	**Induction to the Board and governance role** Induction is part of building the Board into a team, and helps ensure that everyone is headed in the same direction. *Induction could involve everyone and might cover:* • a review of the organisation's history, purpose, current goals and structure

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• the role and responsibilities of Board members, including legal and financial responsibilities and liabilities • the difference between governance and management, and the processes this Board uses to keep focused on governance • meeting arrangements and processes • copies of core documents (constitution, annual plan, budget etc) • policy documents (including decision making processes, conflicts of interest policies, privacy and confidentiality etc) • The potential of using a "Board Buddy System" for a specified period of time is an option for new Board members. Induction processes can help the new member identify the added value that they bring, and can help ensure that office holders understand the duties, responsibilities and any liabilities that come with the role. A "Board Development" workshop – possibly with an outside facilitator – can both develop team work and provide induction.
1.1.5 - The governing body finds ways to build and sustain the skills and expertise on the Board through training and succession planning	**Building skills in governance** *Strategies to build skills might include:* • doing a skills audit of the Board • searching out centres of excellence and sharing Better Practice ideas • identifying sources of relevant training and supporting attendance • using a buddy system to support and mentor new members • processes that limit duration on the Board, that seek out likely candidates or that only replace a proportion of the Board at each election The Board helps members access relevant education and development opportunities
1.1.6 - The Board actively builds relationships among board members, and with the members, staff and key stakeholders.	**Relationship building** The organisation will not function well unless the Board members work together and have a positive and constructive relationship with management. The Board also needs to be linked with and accessible to its members on whose behalf it works, and with any overarching parent body. Another key relationship is the Board's relationship with community stakeholders. The Board needs to be well known and respected by potential funders, people with influence in relevant areas, and colleagues in related organisations. *Strategies to build and sustain relationships include:* • protocols within the Board should include procedures for such things as a welcoming for new members, (potentially starting each meeting with a karakia or other culturally significant ritual), making decisions, resolving issues and celebrating achievements • hosting social events that involve management, key stakeholders and members • face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders, especially with Māori and Pacific Island organisations • opportunities for people to work together on sub-committees and projects • regular communication channels such as newsletters, circulation of minutes or summaries, distribution of the annual report

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
1.1.7 - The governing body regularly reviews its own capacity and performance so that it can learn and adapt.	**Evaluation of the Board's own performance** The Board should set standards for its own performance, and regularly review its own effectiveness. *A regular review of the Board might look at:* • its mix of skills and expertise • Board member's self-assessment of their understanding of their role and contribution • assessing how well the board has functioned as a group • feedback from service users, staff (if any), and stakeholders about their view of the Board's effectiveness

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Standard 1.2 - Good Governance

The Board provides leadership to ensure that the organisation has a clearly defined purpose and goals and is accountable for its work

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
1.2.1 - The organisation has documented systems that specifically address the governance role, and cover: • **Purpose / overall goals** • **Roles / responsibilities of the governance group** • **How it conducts business & makes decisions** • **How it manages conflicts of interest**	**The Board documents its purpose and ways of working** The key role of a governance Board is to keep the organisation focused on key issues and the scope of the organisation's mission – its kaupapa. *This needs to be formally discussed, agreed upon, written up and kept up-to-date. It should include:* • A statement of purpose that defines why the organisation exists, its target population and the broad direction it is working towards • A set of goals that defines the long term outcomes The Board is legally responsible for the organisation and its strategic direction. It is not responsible for the day-to-day operation of the organisation. It needs to be clear which decisions it is responsible for and which decisions are delegated to managers. *The Board needs its own written guidelines for how it operates. Appropriate roles and responsibilities for the governing body include:* • Setting the strategic direction (in consultation with key stakeholders) • monitoring organisational performance • appointing, supporting, evaluating and rewarding the manager or CEO • overall policy setting • financial accountability and risk management • legal accountability (for example, for funding contracts, rental agreements, and employment of staff) and being aware of relevant legislation that affects the organisation's business The Board's guidelines need to cover how often the Board meets, how decisions are made, how meetings are conducted, what is recorded and how, and what information is made available to members. The Board needs to carefully think through how it will manage areas of risk such as payments for Board members' expenses and managing conflicts of interest. These issues are particularly difficult for a small organisation where there are few people to do the tasks and hence it is sometimes difficult to provide enough checks and balances. Clear processes can help. **Ways of working reflect and affect the culture and tone** Ways of working affect the culture and tone of the Board and this then affects how the organisation reaches its target groups and supporters in the community. Particular attention is needed to cultural protocols and rituals of greeting, meeting and decision making.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Processes that can support Better Practice	
1.2.2 - The governing body meets regularly enough to ensure effective functioning of the organisation.	**Regular meetings** The Board of an organisation that provides a service needs to meet monthly to be effective. This may be more than the minimum number set in the constitution. Effectiveness also comes for keeping a clear focus on strategic issues rather than the minutiae of day to day operations. Governance meetings are more about making decisions, not just sharing information. Keep asking "What is the governance issue here?" Make sure there is a clear agreed record of decisions made and that minutes are recorded at each meeting
1.2.3 - The governing body receives useful, timely and accessible information to inform its decisions	**Effective reports to the Board support good decisions** The Board needs to find ways to get enough of the right sort of information to underpin good decisions. It's useful to work with managers and subcommittees to find the best ways for them to provide reports and other information to the Board. Useful reports briefly summarise the issue or topic, provide any factual information available, and set out the probable options with a recommendation if appropriate. Board members need reports in time to read the material and think about the issues and options so that decision-making is prompt and efficient.
1.2.4 - At every meeting the Board receives and reviews financial reports that show actual expenditure against the amounts budgeted	**Financial monitoring is essential** Financial monitoring is a critical role for a Board. At least one Board member should have significant financial skills; but every Board member must be able to read and understand the financial report. (This might be an area for training.) The financial report can be simply presented, but needs to be clear and accurate and provide explanation not just numbers.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
1.2.5 - The Board regularly reviews the performance of people who have been delegated key responsibilities	**Evaluating delegated performance** Overall responsibility means that the Board needs systems to monitor the performance of those to whom it has delegated particular tasks and responsibilities. This is part of the Board's accountability to members and funders. Where the Board employs staff directly (such as a manager or Executive Officer) the Board must act as good employer and support the Manager or CEO to manage the operation, while periodically checking that things are on track by monitoring agreed performance targets and also through formal performance assessment.
1.2.6 - The governing body regularly reviews the effectiveness of its own processes and structure	**Evaluating Board performance** Healthy organisations continue to reflect, learn and grow. The Board itself need to look at all aspects of its functioning too. *It might, for example, periodically review the effectiveness of:* • meetings, • committee/sub-committee structures or delegations, • member attendances, • responsiveness to important issues. Brief Member surveys, exit interviews or other creative processes to capture and build on successes and learnings, will support the ongoing development of the organisation and board.

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Standard 1.3 - Effective Management

The Board ensures the organisation is managed in ways that provide accountability and that deliver good outcomes for service users.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
1.3.1 - The management structure of the organisation is clearly defined and documented, particularly in relation to: • **levels of decision making** • **reporting responsibilities,** • **delegations**	**Clear specification of responsibilities** Even a collective or a co-operative require enough workable structure to be able to deliver a service and be accountable for resources. *The governing body needs to assign some of the key responsibilities to one or more suitably skilled people, particularly in relation to:* • property management • financial management • employing a manager Roles and responsibilities need to be documented, using an organisational chart, and with a set of job or role descriptions for each key role. The agreed processes, and any rules that cover how the various roles and responsibilities fit together, need to be recorded and made available to everyone. *It is particularly important to work out and record for each role, sub-committee or working group:* • the extent of their authority to make decisions • when they need to report, about what and to whom • how decisions and deliberations of caucuses are reconnected to the whole group Authority to make key decisions (e.g. about spending money) is usually done through a formal written delegation.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
1.3.2 - There is a system that ensures that regular reports are produced for the governance body on performance in all key areas of the organisation.	**Regular reports from all key areas** Keeping an eye on all main areas of the organisation's work is a key role for the Board. This means they need regular reports about the main areas of work. Reports need to be clear, concise and get to the heart of the matter. The Board needs factual information, patterns and trends and analysis that is relevant to the governance issues. This reflection is Better Practice for workers, managers and sub-committees. Reports are critical information for the Board which is responsible to ensure that the organisation is focused on the purposes it was set up for and the agreed strategic goals. Good information supports good decision making.
1.3.3 - The organisation provides all reports required by law, by funders and by any	**All compliance reports are completed on time** Organisations are accountable for funding received from government and other funders, and reporting requirements and timeframes are usually specified in contracts and agreements.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
statutory bodies within the timeframe specified.	Some statutory approvals come with reporting requirements, and there are statutory reporting requirements if the organisation is a legal entity – such as an Incorporated Society, Charitable Trust or Company
1.3.4 - The organisation has strategies for keeping key people informed, especially members, service users, and key stakeholders	**Information flows between Board and stakeholders** *Strategies to keep key people informed include:* • newsletters, email networks and websites • wide distribution of the Annual Report • articles in local newspapers and in other organisation's newsletters • the AGM • open days, hui, forums and other meetings The annual report is a formal document that needs to include a copy of the audited financial statement for the year. It is also an opportunity to tell the story of the organisation and can be creatively presented. *It might include:* • a clear description of the organisation's reason for being – its purpose/kaupapa and goals • recent highlights – achievements and events • key information about the services delivered or service users assisted – statistics, profiles, charts • a profile of staff and the governance board • a property portfolio summary Information needs to flow two-ways. The Board needs to find ways to listen, not just inform.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
1.3.5 - The organisation reviews its management structures regularly to ensure they are efficient and to ensure accountability.	**Systems and structures are reviewed for effectiveness** The organisation has a regular management review, often as part of the annual planning process. This overall review also links to any performance review process for paid Managers or Chief Executive Officer and the Board's own review of its effectiveness. The review is also an opportunity to check that systems and structures such as Maori and Tauiwi caucusing or service user advisory groups are functioning well for the participants and the organisation. The organisation may bring in outside expertise to facilitate and guide this process, especially at times of rapid growth & change.

Standard 1.4 - Planning and Development

The Board ensures the organisation has plans that best use its resources to achieve agreed goals and priorities

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
1.4.1 - The organisation has a written plan which sets out its priorities for next period, and these are well-connected to the organisation's long term goals	**Short term priority achievements are planned** Usually there is an annual planning process – which can be relatively simple. In a small organisation it might be part of the AGM process, while larger organisations will have a 3-5 year strategic plan with an annual plan that pulls out the parts to be tackled this year and further details are worked out in staff work plans. *Common content of annual plans includes:* • statements about long-term goals, and more specific statements about what is to be achieved this year ("objectives" or "aims") • how the aims will be met ("strategies") and when ("timeframes") • what will show that these are achieved ("performance measures") • the resources needed • who is responsible for what
Processes that can support Better Practice	
1.4.2 - The organisation assesses the ideal size for its ongoing viability and uses this information in developing its plan.	**The organisation's plan fits its size and resources** It is not worthwhile developing a plan if the organisation is not able to deliver it. The size of the plan has to fit the size of the organisation and the resources available, and the organisation has to be viable. *The Board monitors the organisation's viability and its capacity to deliver on an agreed plan. Key elements of viability are:* • financial management (meeting legal requirements, setting and meeting budgets, managing assets, effective financial and management procedures and generating an operating surplus) • organisational effectiveness (quality governance, administration and direction) • community and social relevance (the organisation is well linked to the local community and iwi and the service offered meets a recognised local need) **The Board adjusts the plan if necessary** If the plan is too ambitious for the organisation, it may be time to consider whether the plan is realistic. It may be time to change the structure – to grow or consolidate or restructure; to diversify or form collaboration with others.
1.4.3 - The organisation gathers information about community needs and issues that affect service users and/or the organisation's target	**Plans are built on solid information about needs (external information)** Community housing resources are scarce so it is important to ensure that the service is well-targeted, and based on sound information.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
population and uses this to set priorities for its work.	*An assessment of need can draw on community data such as:* • census and other statistical data • social assessments done by local councils to meet their responsibilities under the Local Government Act • reports from the Social Report or Big Cities projects • Housing New Zealand Corporation reports • Surveys and studies (CHRANZ and Health Board • Information from community meetings and hui Housing needs will always be greater than the capacity of community housing services, so the organisation needs to determine a manageable target group and priority to tackle. **Plans focus on an agreed target** The target group may be a geographic area, an age or ethnic group, a particular type of need or a combination of these. The choice might also be influenced by the particular skills and interests of the members. **Plans have to fit external realities** Sources and levels of funding and funder's requirements realistically affect what can be targeted.
1.4.4 - Data from within the organisation is used in planning.	**Plans build on knowledge from within the organisation and its services (internal information)** *An existing service will use its own information for planning and development. Such information might be:* • profiles of service users • feedback from service users and stakeholders • trends in service usage • vacancies • condition of properties and other resources • research results • knowledge of wider national and international trends
1.4.5 - The planning process deals with organisational issues as well as goals for services and programmes plan	**The plan addresses organisational issues as well as services** The plan needs to fit with where the organisation is at, and may need to include organisational things that need to happen. *For example, the plan might address:* • moving premises • restructuring the Board or management • expanding services or moving into new service directions Planning has to be mindful of the likely outcome of funding applications.
1.4.6 - The organisation identifies and plans for the training and development needs and goals of staff, members, and Board members.	**Put professional development into the plan** Identifying training needs and setting training and development goals is a strategic action that builds capacity. Individual training goals need to relate to the organisation's goals.
1.4.7 - The organisation has strategies to gain	**Plans may include steps to obtaining more resources** The plan needs to be realistic about resources and may need to

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
needed resources	include planned strategies to acquire more resources. *These strategies might include:* • applications to various funding bodies or exploring new funding options • developing partnerships with other organisations; • rationalising costs e.g. sharing accommodation
1.4.8 - The planning process allows for discussion about new ways of doing things and / or the development of new services.	**Plans allow for change and new directions** The discipline of getting together and thinking about the priorities for the next phase, gathering data and brain storming provides an opportunity for fresh thinking. The plan might build in an objective to explore new opportunities or to look into the approaches of other similar organisations .
1.4.9 - The process of developing the plan and the priorities involves input from staff, service users, the governing body and other stakeholders.	**It is not the Board's plan; it is the organisation's plan** While the Board takes a lead and manages the process, the plan relates to the total organisation and needs everyone's input - staff, Board members, stakeholders, members, services users etc. *Ways to get a range of input include:* • holding forums and hui • invitations to part of the formal planning day • surveys
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
1.4.10 - The organisation can cite improvements that have been introduced as a result of the planning process	**Check out whether plans have been effective** Plans are developed to make things better. The Board needs processes to check whether the planned actions contribute to positive development. *The Board might find evidence of positive change through:* • feedback from service users • feedback from other agencies • critical reflection • evidence of changes – such as increased service usage, reduced complaints

Standard 1.5 - Organisational Review

The Board ensures the organisation has processes of regular evaluation and review and that it uses these to learn and adapt as it goes.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
1.5.1 - The organisation's documented systems and plans reflect a commitment to organisational review and service improvement.	**Regular evaluation promotes constant improvement** *Better Practice requires reflection and this can be anchored in policies and processes. Examples might be that:* • it is policy that all new programmes will be evaluated • monitoring and review processes are in place for all key functions • the annual plan shows strategies for service improvement • there is a plan to seek external accreditation
Processes that can support Better Practice	
1.5.2 - The organisation reviews progress against its stated plan	**Review means checking progress against agreed goals** The review needs to involve measurement against a planned goal, target or outcome. A review against the annual plan should be completed every six months. • service users can be consulted about their experience with the overall service or about specific events and projects
1.5.3 - Information from monitoring & reviews is used to improve practice	**The purpose of reviews is to improve practice** Elements of service delivery are reviewed in the formal reviews but also in day-to-day work and periodically in reports to the Board. Reports to the Board about services need to capture elements that show how things are going, such as, housing allocations, rent management, asset management, service user participation, complaints & appeals, and feedback from other agencies. Reflecting on how well these are going should be part of daily practice and be used to improve service delivery.
1.5.5 - The organisation has a process for reviewing all policies and procedures – at least every three years	**Policies and procedures need to be reviewed too** The policies and processes that structure the way things are done in the organisation need to be checked to ensure they still work well and fit the organisation's changes and development. Every policy should have a formal sign off and a review date. The duration of a policy will vary depending on the issue but should be reviewed at least every three years and immediately if a change in practice, process or policy occurs. *Ways to manage the policy reviews may be:* • a rolling process i.e., one policy reviewed at every alternate Board meeting, or • a series of small sub-committees review various policies and report back

Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
1.5.6 - Reviewing progress against the plan shows that most targets and timeframes have been met	**Are we being effective?** Evidence of meeting targets set in plans can be the most tangible measure of effectiveness. If the target or timeframe has not been achieved, the organisation needs to look at why – was the target realistic? Did unexpected things happen? This process of review and learning builds an organisation that is focused, thoughtful and energised. Learning from each review will contribute to the next plan, and guide the Board in its task of steering the organisation to achieve its purpose.

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SECTION 2: MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Standard 2.1 Financial Systems

Standard 2.2 Administrative Systems

Standard 2.3 Management Information Systems

Standard 2.4 Office Environments

Overview and definitional issues in this section
This section deals with the financial, administrative and information systems which need to be in place to support effective service provision, management and accountability. It also covers provision of a safe and appropriate working environment for staff and tenants.

Cash flow projections
This is an approach to budgeting which requires forecasting what income and expenditure will be for each month or quarter of the next year, or annual projections for the next three years. This approach helps an organisation to maintain an adequate balance of funds to cover costs as they arise. It should make allowances for peak spending times when large bills such as insurances are due. Ongoing monitoring of the budget takes into consideration any variation between the actual income/expenditure and the amount forecasted.

Resources and Links
For more information on management systems see resources below:

- **Ministry of Economic Development** – for information on Law, finance and business
regulation
http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/StandardSummary____184.aspx

- **Inland Revenue Department** – for information on tax, GST and accounting
practices for not-for-profits
http://www.ird.govt.nz/notforprofits/

- ManagementHelp.Org – thorough website for a variety of management and financial issues relating to business and nonprofits
http://www.managementhelp.org/strt_org/strt_np/strt_np.htm

Standard 2.1 - Financial Systems

The organisation's financial systems support effective management and accountability

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
2.1.1 - The organisation has clearly documented systems to guide its financial management, which ensures viability and probity	**Financial management systems** *Documented financial systems will need to include:* • policies covering responsibility and sign-off for all financial matters (such as delegation powers) • procedures to guard against financial fraud and ensuring accurate and honest reporting • the development and monitoring of the annual budget • cash flow projections (i.e. budget forecasts by quarter or month) and monitoring • investment of monies to safeguard and maximise any surpluses • how expenditure and income data will be recorded • reporting formats that allow analysis of monthly income and expenditure against year-to-date budgets, and reports on other key financial matters such as arrears, and vacancy rates. **Budgets** The budget should be structured in a way that separates income and expenditure that require separate accountability and reporting. It should accurately reflect the activities of the programs that are funded. Long-term cross-subsidisation that undermines the original purpose of the source of funding is not Better Practice. Where organisations manage a number of funded programs, it is legitimate to charge each program an administrative fee to cover a proportion of the management costs. **Recording of financial transactions** It is important that financial transactions are regularly recorded. Weekly entries are desirable in some organisations, whereas fortnightly or monthly data entry may be sufficient in smaller organisations with few financial transactions. At least two people need to assure the accuracy of monthly reports. One of these would normally be the Treasurer or another member of the Executive of the board/management committee with oversight of finances. **Investment of surpluses** Organisations will often have cash surpluses that are substantial enough to invest in short or medium-term investments. *The organisation's guidelines should identify:* • the minimum balance desired in savings accounts • the procedure for considering investments of money above this amount • the types of investments which might be made.
2.1.2 - The organisation uses cash flow projections to help guide	**Cash flow projections** Three-year cash flow projections are important to ensure the financial viability of larger organisations and to address potential

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
its work	cash shortfalls or surpluses. The first year will be the most realistic with the next two years being more approximate. Regular review is needed to ensure that money can be transferred to deal with unexpected variables as they arise. For smaller organisations, one year projections may be more appropriate. For organisations engaged in development of new projects, more sophisticated economic modelling might be needed to predict cash flow and income streams.
2.1.3 - The organisation's audited financial statement meets appropriate accounting Standards	**Audited financial statements** There are accounting standards that provide some guidance for how audited statements should be prepared and presented. Financial year (at a minimum) accrual accounting is considered Better Practice.
2.1.4 -The organisation encourages rent payment systems that minimise cash handling	**Rent payment systems** Handling large amounts of cash creates opportunities for embezzlement and theft. Careful monitoring of cash income is necessary to ensure that fraud does not occur. Staff safety issues must also be considered.
2.1.5 - The organisation has appropriate checks and balances in place to ensure that funds are not mismanaged	**Processes to prevent financial mismanagement** There needs to be strong checks and balances in place for authorising all financial transactions. *Some examples of appropriate checks and balances organisations might use are:* • financial reports to the board/management committee listing all cheques written for the period • two signatories to all cheques, one of whom is normally the Treasurer; any cheques not signed by the Treasurer to be noted in financial report • two people to give authority for electronic transfer of funds • no forward signing of cheques • two people to check cash income and bank deposits • rent receipting procedures that ensure that only official receipts are issued • checking of invoices received against goods and services delivered by someone other than the person that ordered the goods • accountable petty cash procedures • quotes for all substantial items (e.g. computers, vehicles).
2.1.6 - The organisation has sound financial management practices that ensure its ongoing financial viability	**Practices to ensure ongoing financial viability** *This could include such things as:* • asset management plans • adequate funds set aside to meet liabilities (such as staff entitlements, maintenance and repairs) • appropriate insurances • debt prevention, recovery, and write-off procedures • investment strategy

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• depreciation schedules • comparing the costs and benefits of lease or purchase of major items • considering how a range of income and expenditure targets would affect the organisation. Where the organisation manages properties for a fee, they need to sign a formal contractual agreement. The fees set should cover the real costs of administering the property but be consistent with the non-profit status of the organisation. This includes taking into consideration the circumstances of the tenants and the other organisation.
2.1.7 - The organisation has considered the appropriateness of its legal structure to ensuring its financial viability and capacity to achieve its goals	**Legal structures to support financial viability** Organisations need to consider what legal structures can be used to best manage and maximise the organisation's finances. This might mean for example, setting up a Trust that can be used to separate development funds from the organisation's normal operational budget and guard against cross-subsidisation. It is equally important to ensure that in any legal structures set up for this purpose, financial control is retained by the original organisation.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
2.1.8 - The organisation conducts internal and external reviews of its financial systems on a planned basis	**Review of financial systems** For everyone's protection, it is important that an annual or bi-annual review of the financial systems is done to make sure that the right checks and balances are in place. Internal reviews might include things such as tracking a range of standard payments from start to completion (large repairs, large purchases, staff entitlements, workers compensation). Once every three to five years an external/independent body should do a review of the financial systems.

Standard 2.2 - Administrative Systems

The organisation's administrative systems support effective management and accountability

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
2.2.1 - Tenancy files contain appropriate and adequate information to assist good tenancy management	**Tenancy files** Tenancy files should include only information related to housing management. Where organisations do both welfare casework and housing provision, there needs to be a separation of processes and files. Tenancy files should allow easy cross-referencing to property files. *Tenancy files need to include:* • application details • tenancy agreement • all correspondence • all incidents related to the tenancy (including marking of files if there are security concerns) • a record of the formal referrals made • rental information (including current financial status and income reviews) • emergency and ordinary contact information • support agreements (where they exist) • bond information.
2.2.2 - There is an asset register or file for each property that contains adequate information to ensure quality management of assets	**Property files** *Property files should allow easy cross-referencing to tenancy files. Individual property files would normally contain:* • acquisition information (surveys, certificates, lease agreements, upgrade reports and so on) • property description (e.g. materials, location, size) • property condition (e.g. inspection and condition reports) • repairs and maintenance undertaken and planned • special conditions applying to the property • emergency contacts (related to the property, not the tenant) • insurances and warranties. • valuations
2.2.3 - There is a documented system for the use of motor vehicles which ensures appropriate access, usage and maintenance	**System for the use of motor vehicles** *Documentation needs to cover vehicles owned or leased by the organisation as well as personal vehicles owned by staff and used for work purposes. This is likely to include:* • bookings • mileage • servicing • insurance • storage • systems for calculating mileage for reimbursement of staff or volunteers. Guidance on reimbursement of staff will be covered in the employment contracts. Where a vehicle is part of salary packaging, there needs to be clarity about private usage and insurance

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	coverage. Organisations should investigate the cost effectiveness of various means of transport for different activities.
2.2.4 - The organisation has documented appropriate, up-to-date insurances which cover all assets and potential liabilities	**Insurance coverage required** *Organisations should have insurances that cover:* • equipment (eg electronic) and premises • housing stock for which the organisation is responsible • public liability (housing stock, commercial and product public liability) • workers' compensation • professional indemnity and directors' fidelity insurance • volunteers (where appropriate). **Housing stock insurance** Insurances need to be monitored to prevent under-insurance or inappropriate coverage. *Housing stock insurances should cover:* • new-for-old reinstatement • landscaping • alterations or additions • accidental damage • storm and tempest • additional cover as appropriate to the location or stock type.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
2.2.5 - There is an efficient procedure for managing electronic and posted mail to ensure that it is received by the appropriate person in a timely manner	**Effective communication systems** This is particularly significant where there are outlying offices, or part-time staff, where there may be delays in accessing mail. In co-operatives it will be particularly important to develop effective communication systems between those taking responsibility for different aspects of the organisation's work.
2.2.6 - The organisation has efficient filing systems that ensure timeliness, appropriate access and secure storage	**Filing systems** *An organisation's filing systems should include files for legal issues, accounting, funding agreements and so on. It is useful to identify:* • who is responsible for filing • methods for timely filing of documents • access to sufficient storage space • regular culling of files • how easy access for authorised people can be assured to all the organisation's documents.
2.2.7 - The organisation has a system for secure storage of keys to properties	**Secure storage of keys** Keys need to be easily accessible to staff but also secured to prevent unauthorised people from gaining access to tenants' homes. Keys should not be labelled with the address of the property. Some other system of identification such as numbering cross-referenced to property files can be used. A few large organisation have purchased equipment and been trained to cut their own keys.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
2.2.8 - Equipment is recorded to ensure it is appropriately maintained and replaced	**Recording equipment** *This should include:* • warranties • service schedule • record of maintenance expenditure • that the equipment has been stamped or engraved as protection against theft.
2.2.9 - The computer system is well set up and maintained including: • **security measures** • **virus protection** • **back-up of files**	**Computer systems** Computerised tenancy management databases need to be adequately maintained, and systematically backed-up. It is most important to have good technical support which is easy to access. It is a good idea to store backed-up data off site in case of fire or theft.
2.2.10 - The telephone system operates efficiently	**Efficient telephone system** *Procedures for an efficient telephone system might ensure, among other things, that:* • there are enough telephone lines for incoming and outgoing calls, as well as fax and internet usage • people can contact the organisation without undue delay • provision has been made for after hours service (e.g. answering machine/service) • clear and accurate messages are taken and passed on to people • messages are promptly returned • staff members have access to telephone facilities when they are away from the normal business telephones (e.g. mobile phone, call cards, reimbursement of calls).
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
2.2.11 - The organisation regularly reviews its administrative systems and resources to ensure they are effective	**Review of administrative systems** *For example, a review could involve:* • analysis of calls unanswered (done by your telecommunication provider) • adequacy of computer and administrative systems to meet projected demands • getting a member from another organisation to look at the systems used • getting a peak body to evaluate the systems • discussing administrative systems in a regional forum.

Standard 2.3 - Management Information Systems

Information about the organisation's activities, applicants, tenants and staff (where applicable) is used to support management of the organisation

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
2.3.1 - The organisation has adequate and appropriate records of its service usage, tenant and applicant characteristics, and housing stock to support planning and good housing management	**Performance monitoring information** *Information collected and recorded might include:* • number of inquiries for housing and referrals • applicant characteristics (age, gender, household size and type, ethnicity, income, current housing situation) • number of applications, waiting list numbers and number of tenants housed • tenant characteristics (age, gender, household size and type, ethnicity, income) • monthly rent collected and rent owed • vacancy periods and costs • housing stock (quality, history, occupancy) • client complaints and appeals (type, outcome) • repairs (type and number, response times). The organisation will also need to consider how it collects information about other aspects of its work (contacts with the media, tenant participation levels, committee work, membership, community liaison, advocacy, referrals etc). Even small organisations need to collect data to inform their work and ensure they are meeting their objectives.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
2.3.2 - There are efficient methods for collating and analysing the information collected so it can be used in reporting and monitoring	**Data collection and reporting** Data needs to be collected regularly and in the most efficient way. Analysis and summaries of the data will be needed in most cases to inform management decisions. **Computerised databases** Before setting up a database for tenancy, property and financial management it is a good idea to look at the systems other similar-sized organisations are using. You can then weigh up the benefits of developing your own against using or adapting somebody else's. Large organisations may require different levels of access within the data system (e.g. administrative assistants and housing managers). This will require different access codes for different people.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
2.3.3 - The organisation reviews the usefulness of the information it collects and uses for	**Using data for planning and service development** The value of good data is in being able to easily use it to compare trends over time or between different groups or properties. Such a review may point to the need to collect different data or produce a

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
planning, service development and evaluation	different type of report.

NOTES:

Standard 2.4 - Office Environment

The organisation's office premises and equipment provide a safe, secure and appropriate work environment for staff and tenants

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Processes that support Better Practice	
2.4.1 - Space in which to undertake management has been established for organisations without staff	**Adequate space to undertake management** This evidence only applies to organisations without staff who may or may not have a separate space for these activities. It may carry them out by using the homes of members or the premises of other organisations. *Either way, it needs to ensure:* • access to private spaces for interviews • space for computer and other equipment • space for filing systems.
2.4.2 - Action has been taken to ensure fire safety of the office premises	**Fire safety of office premises** *Appropriate fire safety measures include:* • ensuring that the landlord has had a fire safety inspection of premises and equipment done recently by an appropriate authority • clearly marked fire exits and evacuation procedures • appropriate fire safety equipment is available (e.g. smoke alarms, fire blanket, fire extinguishers) • staff trained and informed on fire safety, including fire drills. • a provision for the evacuation of disabled employees For co-operatives which have offices (e.g. a space identified to carry out the business of the co-operative) in a tenant's premises, fire safety would at a minimum include smoke alarms, and appropriate fire safety equipment (extinguisher, fire blanket).
Facilities that can support Better Practice	
2.4.3 - The organisation has adequate and appropriate office equipment and furniture that is well maintained	**Office equipment** Depending on the size of the organisation this could include computers, faxes, telephones, photocopier, etc. Office furniture and equipment need to be ergonomically sound and suitable for office work. Somebody needs to be responsible for ensuring equipment is regularly serviced and that maintenance is carried out in a timely fashion.
2.4.4 - The organisation ensures physical access for staff with disabilities	**Access for staff with a disability** To make premises accessible might require ramps, lifts, automatic doors, wheelchair accessible toilets and an internal layout that allows wheelchair access (accessibility to tenants is covered under Standard 3.3).
2.4.5 - The organisation ensures that its office premises are safe for tenants and staff and are adequately secured	**Safety and security of premises** Safety issues might include correctly secured floor coverings and electrical cords, and positioning of photocopiers. (Safety for staff is covered in Standard 3.4)
2.4.6 - There is adequate well-maintained office space	**Adequate office space** This evidence applies to the office premises of housing trusts, not to tenant-run housing co-operatives or to organisations without staff.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	Adequate office space includes: • staff work areas • space for office equipment (e.g. filing cabinets, computers) • access to private interview spaces for tenants • access to meeting room/s • kitchen facilities • staff amenities areas • reception and waiting areas.
2.4.7 - The areas where tenants meet or wait provide adequate comfort	**Waiting areas** This signpost applies to the office premises of housing trusts or social services providers. It is not applicable to tenant run housing co-operatives or to organisations without staff. Adequate comfort might include: refreshments, comfortable chairs, magazines, pictures and toys for children.
2.4.8 - There is adequate lighting, ventilation and air temperature control in the premises	**Lighting, ventilation and temperature control** This would not apply to organisations without a permanent office.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
2.4.9 - The organisation has reviewed the accessibility, safety, adequacy and comfort of its office environment and developed strategies to address any shortcomings	**Reviewing safety and adequacy of the work environment** *The review should include:* • the perspectives of staff • the perspectives of tenants • inspection by an appropriate fire authority.

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SECTION 3: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Standard 3.1 Recruiting, Selecting and Appointing Staff

Standard 3.2 Supervision, Training and Development of Staff

Standard 3.3 Employment Systems

Standard 3.4 Occupational Health and Safety

Standard 3.5 Management of Volunteers

Overview and definitional issues in this section
This section deals with the management of people within an organisation: how they are selected, supervised, trained and developed. It also covers the processes used by the organisation to maximise the safety of staff, volunteers and tenants. Section 5 deals with overall governance and management of the organisation.

Performance review
Performance review refers to a system for examining, measuring and discussing the performance of individual staff within the context of organisational goals over an agreed period of time.

Risk Assessment
Risk assessment is a structured process to identify potential hazards to the safety of staff, tenants or other visitors, and to put in place strategies to address all identified hazards.

Volunteers
Volunteers who are board/management committee members of organisations or tenants in tenant run co-operatives are not covered by Standard 3.5. For development of board/management committee members, refer to Section 1. For development of tenant members, refer to Standard 6.3.

Resources and Links
For more information on human resource and volunteering issues see resources below:

- **Human Resource Institute of New Zealand** (HRINZ) – A thorough HR site
http://www.hrinz.org.nz/

- **NZ Association of Training and Development –** A professional association for workplace learning and performance, training and development, and adult education
http://www.nzatd.org.nz/

- **Work Place Health & Safety –** Occupational Safety and Health Service (OSH)
http://www.osh.govt.nz/

- **Volunteering New Zealand –** Represents, promotes and supports volunteering
http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/

- **Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992** (HSE Act 1992)
http://www.osh.govt.nz/law/hse.shtml

- **Department of Labour** – Advice on Employment Relations and relevant legislation

http://www.ers.dol.govt.nz/

- **Office of the Privacy Commissioner** – Advice on privacy act issues and personal

records

http://www.privacy.org.nz/home.php

Standard 3.1 - Recruiting, Selecting and Appointing Staff

Staff are appointed to the organisation with the skills and experience needed for their work and for their ability to contribute to the overall strength of the organisation

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
3.1.1 - The organisation has a documented system for recruiting, selecting and appointing casual and permanent staff	**Recruitment, selection and appointment processes** Documents should include reference to equal employment principles that ensure people are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, race, marital status or sexual preference, religion or disability as outlined in the relevant anti-discrimination legislation. *Documentation covering processes for recruitment, selection and appointment will need to cover:* • job descriptions and selection criteria • how selection decisions are documented • appointment documentation (information for new employees, reporting requirements, conditions of employment, how performance will be reviewed and so on) • how unsuccessful applicants will be informed. Documents might also cover the employment of tenants. Where organisations do employ tenants the system will need to deal with any real or perceived conflict of interest issues that might arise in relation to maintenance and housing.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
3.1.2 - The organisation has clear processes for assessing and reviewing the need for positions prior to recruitment	**Reviewing staff roles and skills** When staff leaves or funds are available for a new appointment, it is useful to review the current roles and skills of staff against the likely directions the organisation is going in. The review may lead to changes in job description, employment status, selection criteria, pay and reporting structure and may also determine recruitment strategies.
3.1.3 - The organisation selects staff through a transparent and fair process	**Fair staff selection processes** Organisations will need to think through how to make selection of staff transparent and fair. Different processes might be used for appointing a casual gardener than for a full-time executive officer, but both need to be open to scrutiny. *Issues that could be considered include:* • how the position is advertised and what information is provided to applicants • when selection panels are required and whether the panel needs to have an independent member • the selection process itself (what applications need to include, how interviews are conducted and assessed against selection criteria, how references are to be checked) • how the appointment decision is to be made (delegations, recommendations of selection panel etc.)

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• how feedback to successful and unsuccessful applicants will be provided • how applicant confidentiality will be maintained and the decision communicated.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
3.1.4 - The organisation is viewed by tenants, other agencies and staff as having fair and transparent recruitment and selection practices	**Monitoring employment practices** *Useful approaches to assessing whether the organisation's reputation is good in relation to recruitment and selection practices might include:* • discussion of the practices at board and/or staff meetings during reviews of personnel procedures • including questions on reputation in surveys of other agencies and/or tenants • monitoring and following up complaints in relation to employment practices.
3.1.5 - The organisation has staff employed that can competently do their work and contribute to the overall strength of the organisation	**Assessing the competence of staff** Initial assessment of staff and ongoing performance review are useful means for assessing the competence of staff. Performance review could also include assessment of the staff member's capacity to contribute to the organisation as a whole (refer Standard 3.2).

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Standard 3.2 - Supervision, Training and Development of Staff

Staff are provided with appropriate supervision, training and development that enhances their skills, motivation and effectiveness and assists them to further the organisation's goals

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
3.2.1 - The organisation has a documented system for the supervision, performance review and development and training of staff	**Employment policies** Policy relating to employment practices might be a single, simple document or might include a range of inter-related documents if the organisation employs a large number of staff. **Supervision and performance review** *Issues that will need to be covered in supervision and performance review policies include:* • everyday reporting and supervision goals and procedures • performance review goals and procedures • how conflicts between staff and/or between staff and supervisor will be dealt with • how poor performance will be dealt with (including processes for dismissal) • how staff will be supported in their work. Depending on the size, complexity and different roles of staff, a budget may be needed to access external assistance for supervision and/or performance review. **Training Policies** *Documents to guide access to and approval for training might include:* • organisational goals in relation to training of staff including formal and informal training opportunities • a clear budget for training and/or a notional training allocation for each staff member annually • how training needs are assessed (for instance through the performance review process, through organisational planning) • how training will be prioritised to balance individual and organisational needs • entitlements for study leave, conference fees and attendance time • the formal procedures for requesting and approving training • how staff will report back on training undertaken.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
3.2.2 - Staff receive appropriate orientation to the organisation, the position and to the community housing context when starting work	**Staff orientation** *Orientation will vary according to the type of position and the scope of the organisation, but should probably include:* • information on the organisation's history, policies, current and long term goals, and structure • information on the specific position • opportunities to meet people within the organisation and from other agencies • the organisation's work culture and how conflict is dealt with and how good working relationships are promoted.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
3.2.3 - All staff have access to some relevant training and professional development opportunities	**Training and Professional Development** Organisations will have different needs in relation to prioritising training depending on the range of staff they employ and the scope of the organisation. For organisations with staff who do not have formal qualifications, priority may be given to making sure staff receive accredited training in housing management (or are assessed for prior learning that will be formally recognised). For organisations with staff who already have these qualifications, priority may be on gaining access to further development of particular skills, such as management training. Both informal and formal training opportunities may need to be explored.
3.2.4 - All staff have access to regular and effective supervision of their work	**Staff supervision** *Supervision has two main goals:* • to assist staff to maintain clarity about their work, provide guidance on what is expected and to assist in improving performance • to ensure accountability to agreed work plans. A range of supervision approaches might be used (internal, external, peer based). Supervisors need to be clear about their role and responsibilities to assist staff in maintaining and/or improving performance. Good supervision enables staff members to be clear about their work and gives recognition for good performance. Where poorer performance is found, supervisors can first work with the staff member to identify ways of addressing the issue to build on what the person already does well. It is useful to have a regular time set aside for supervision, such as a short meeting each fortnight.
3.2.5 - The organisation has a system for annual performance review of all staff	**Performance review** Effective performance review systems focus on outcomes for the individual and assist them in reviewing their work and setting goals for the coming year. Performance reviews might result in a change in the job description/role, plans for training or professional development as well as the staff member and reviewer acknowledging areas of good performance. Performance reviews also provide the staff member and the reviewer with an opportunity to set concrete plans to address poor performance or skills gaps where these exist. The review system needs to be clear to all of those involved and should provide the opportunity for reflection and honest feedback. A record of the outcomes of each review should be kept in the staff member's personnel file.
3.2.6 - There are processes in place to promote a positive work environment where staff feel their contributions to	**Strategies to promote a positive organisational culture** A positive environment will assist the capacity of staff members to work well and further the goals of the organisation. *Processes that can assist building a positive work environment*

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
the organisation are welcomed and valued	*include:* • regular appreciation of staff member's individual and collective efforts (such as genuine and routine appreciation of individuals, acknowledgement/thank you from boards/management committee for work done by the team in a particularly difficult period) • transparent, fair and prompt processes for addressing conflict between staff • regular opportunities for staff to meet to discuss work issues in a relaxed and open manner (formal opportunities such as staff meetings and more informal events) • management styles that are open and encourage effective communication • consulting staff about decisions that affect them (for instance restructuring the organisation).
3.2.7 - Staff are supported to broaden their knowledge and understanding of issues related to the work of the organisation	**Building staff knowledge of housing issues** *Supporting staff to broaden their knowledge and understanding could include:* • encouraging participation in housing and related forums • paying for attendance at conferences and seminars • collecting resource materials (eg: journals, relevant internet subscription lists) and sharing them within the organisation • encouraging reflection and discussion on social housing issues in meetings • reports back from staff attending training to others in the organisation on what they learnt.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
3.2.8 - Staff view the organisation as a positive work environment	**Monitoring staff satisfaction with work environment** Monitoring overall patterns of sick and stress leave can be useful at indicating the strength of the organisation's work environment. Organisations can do periodic 'culture audits' of staff to see if they regard it as a positive environment to work within. Audits can also help to identify problem areas and what might improve the work environment. Where only one or two staff members are employed this might be found out through annual performance reviews. Exit interviews can also assist in identifying the health of the organisational culture.
3.2.9 - Access to appropriate supervision, performance review and some relevant training/development each year is monitored and reviewed	**Monitoring supervision, performance review and training** Information on supervision, reviews and training might be monitored by simple recording systems for each individual or across the team. Confirmation that staff are happy with each component might be gained in a 'culture audit' or by asking them. It is important to monitor training to ensure training resources are spent equitably and according to training plans.

NOTES:

Standard 3.3 - Employment Systems

The organisation has fair and effective systems to support its employment role

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
3.3.1 - The organisation has a documented system covering the employment conditions of staff	**Employment conditions** This might be a single document setting out the basis for employment of an individual staff member or might be a number of interrelated documents outlining a range of employment conditions. Organisations will vary in how these employment conditions are established but will need to ensure they comply with NZ legislation. This might be through the negotiation of individual contracts or through an enterprise agreement. Policies should outline how staff will be consulted with over major changes to work conditions and structures and the process for negotiating changes in pay and conditions. All employment agreements must comply with the Employment Relations Act 2000 http://www.ers.dol.govt.nz/ **Documentation of pay and conditions** *Documentation of pay and conditions needs to include:* • hours worked and payment (including core hours, time in lieu, overtime) • leave arrangements (including sick leave, annual leave, long service leave, family leave, study leave and leave without pay) • redundancy arrangements • review procedure for employment conditions • how family and other care responsibilities will be accommodated. **Dispute and grievance mechanisms** *The system also needs to cover dispute and grievance mechanisms including:* • steps to be taken in raising, assessing and resolving grievances • informing staff members of any complaints/grievances that have been made against them and providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the story (except where this might affect the outcome of criminal investigations) • use of mediation • access to independent support or advocacy • confidentiality • time frames for responding to agreed action plans • how processes will be documented to ensure there are no grounds for claims of unfair dismissal.
3.3.2 - Personnel records are kept up-to-date for each staff member employed	**Personnel records** Personnel records should include basic information for any person employed (casual, temporary or permanent) such as: • application and supporting documents such as copies of qualifications/references • signed and dated copies of the letter of appointment or contract

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• details of employment conditions • record of training attended • reports of performance reviews • records of any grievance procedures. Records containing information relating to performance reviews/grievances should be kept confidential in a secure place. All records should comply with the Privacy Act 1993 http://www.privacy.org.nz/home.php
Processes that can support Better Practice	
3.3.3 - The organisation has effective systems for managing employment issues	**Effective systems for management of employment issues** *Effective systems might include:* • a person or committee delegated with management responsibility for employment matters • confidentiality and secure storage procedures • staff having easy access to their own files • a transparent method of recording and monitoring hours worked, leave taken and payments given (including superannuation payments).
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
3.3.4 - Staff are satisfied that the employment practices of the organisation reflect the terms of their employment and are in line with industrial legislation	**Monitoring staff satisfaction with employment practices** *Employment practices that staff might consider in making this judgement include:* • being paid correctly, on time, with written payslips • being able to take leave entitlements at convenient times • working the correct number of hours or being compensated for additional hours worked (such as time-in-lieu, paid overtime) • duties undertaken accord with their job description and rate of pay.

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Standard 3.4 - Occupational Safety and Health

Staff and volunteers work in a safe and healthy environment

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
3.4.1 - The organisation has a documented system covering occupational health and safety which includes an up-to-date risk management plan	**Occupational Safety and Health System** The organisation's system for occupational safety and health should comply with the Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992 (HSE Act 1992) http://www.osh.govt.nz/law/hse.shtml *A system will generally cover:* • differing responsibilities of management and staff for health and safety matters • identifying potential workplace and job hazards via a regular risk management assessment • reporting and responding to accidents • training of staff/volunteers in health and safety. **Risk assessment** Workplace risk assessments should be undertaken regularly and a plan to address any hazards should then be put in place and monitored. Larger organisations with multiple sites and staff will need to do risk assessments more frequently than smaller organisations. The Department of Labour Occupational Safety and Health service (OSH) provide guidance and tools to assist organisations to identify hazards in the workplace. http://www.osh.govt.nz/ *Common hazards that might be included in the community housing context include:* • work with aggressive tenants • building sites and inspections of buildings • handling cash when receiving rent • stressful situations when dealing with critical incidents (e.g. discovering the death of a tenant) • being exposed to communicable diseases or other people's smoking while at work.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
3.4.2 - Work practices and the design of the work environment supports health and safety of staff, volunteers, and tenants	**Work practices to ensure safety** A range of equipment and measures might be needed to ensure health and safety of staff and tenants. *Equipment/procedures needed might include:* • provision of sharps containers, tongs, gloves to prevent needle stick injuries • fire equipment and exit plans • closing the office and having a recorded message so that in organisations with single staff work breaks can be taken • use of alarms or security firms to minimise risk to staff when

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	handling cash • staff are supported following critical incidents such as a tenant's violent death.
3.4.3 - Staff are trained in addressing work hazards where these are identified	**Staff training in addressing work hazards** Training may be required for a range of hazards identified. Common training often needed is in handling aggression and in infection control. Training in handling aggression might include how to calm threatening situations, prevention measures (such as being close to exit doors, not visiting tenants alone when physical threats have been identified as an issue etc).
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
3.4.4 - The organisation regularly reviews its success in providing a safe and healthy work environment for staff and volunteers	**Reviewing safety/health outcomes** *Ways of assessing the safety/health outcomes could include:* • monitoring the number of workers on compensation and amount of sick leave taken by staff • examining any claims for workers compensation and setting strategies for preventing future claims • monitoring the currency of risk audits and their outcomes.

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Standard 3.5 - Management of Volunteers

Volunteers are supported to do their jobs well and safely

NOTE: This Standard does not apply to organisations that do not have volunteers.

Board members of organisations acting in their governance role (refer to Section 5) are not covered by this Standard. If a person who happens to be a member of the governing body also undertakes a housing management or administrative role in the organisation, they are then covered by this Standard.

Signposts of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
3.5.1 - The organisation has a documented system to guide and record the use of volunteers	**System to guide the use of volunteers** *Documentation should cover:* • a rationale for the use of volunteers and the type of work they will do • how they will be recruited and screened (for example whether police checks are required) • code of ethics/guide for how the volunteers will work, (including how tenant confidentiality will be maintained) • orientation and ongoing training • how supervision will occur • what expenses will be reimbursed. **Record of the use of volunteers** *Records of each volunteer and the amount and type of work they have undertaken should include basic information such as:* • contact details • police checks (if done) • signed code of ethics • training undertaken • dates of volunteer work and scope of work undertaken. These records can be useful for volunteers seeking to use their experience to obtain paid employment.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
3.5.2 - The organisation has effective approaches to recruit, support, train and supervise volunteers	**Recruitment** A range of approaches to recruitment/selection might be used depending on the work involved. In some cases volunteers may need skills for specific tasks and students may be most useful to recruit. For other volunteer work the most important requirement may be the capacity to work respectfully with specific categories of tenants. Where volunteers will be working alone for periods in positions related to finance or vulnerable tenants it is important to have police checks and/or other screening approaches in place. **Support and training** Orientation to the work should include some background to the overall organisation and its goals and methods of working. Volunteers will need to be clear on what they can and cannot do and who is responsible for supervising their work. Ongoing opportunities for further training and development of skills will need to be considered for long-term volunteers. A code of ethics may be a useful tool for volunteers when beginning

Signposts of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	work.
3.5.3 - Volunteers are provided with opportunities to give and receive feedback on their work	**Valuing the work of volunteers** This should include matching the needs of the volunteer with the needs of the organisation. It is important for organisations to find ways in which to acknowledge and value the work of volunteers. *Some possible ways to do this could be:* • providing a written reference • opportunities for public recognition – citizenship awards, articles in the local paper • providing occasional social events • mention in annual report.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
3.5.4 - The work of volunteers adds value to the organisation	**Assessing benefits of using volunteers** *Measures for assessing value adding include:* • perception of benefits of volunteers reported by staff, board/management committee and tenants • the organisation continues to attract and retain volunteers.

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SECTION 4: TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Standard 4.1 Allocation of Housing

Standard 4.2 Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies

Standard 4.3 Changing Needs of Tenants

Standard 4.4 Ending Tenancies

Standard 4.5 Outsourcing Tenancy Management

Overview and definitional issues in this section
Assisting tenants to establish and maintain affordable, secure tenancies is a key goal of community housing. The ways in which CHO's try to ensure both affordable and secure tenure will differ, depending on the nature of their funding and the type of housing stock available.

Security of tenure
Some community housing organisations may not be able to guarantee security of tenure to all their tenants, for example, those occupying properties leased from private landlords, as they will not be able to guarantee security of tenure for a particular dwelling beyond the length of the lease given by the landlord. However, they might commit themselves to providing security of assistance to the tenant, by helping them get a further tenancy. Also some CHOs that provide crisis and short-term housing will not provide security of tenure as this is contrary to their objectives, but they can commit themselves to assisting the tenant to gain stable longer-term housing.

Providing security of tenure will be easier for organisations that control their own stock. In such cases, tenancies would only be broken by the organisation when the tenant breaks a specific condition of the tenancy agreement. That is to say, the organisation would only cancel the tenancy for just cause, and only after it had tried all reasonable avenues to solve the problem and maintain the tenancy.

Affordable housing
Similarly, the choices that community housing organisations have in trying to ensure affordable housing may be affected by their funding conditions and by the type and location of their housing stock.

Common ways that organisations try to ensure affordable tenancies include:

- providing quality housing at around 70% of market rent or no more than 25% of tenants' income
- communicating clearly to tenants how rents are set and how income is assessed
- assessing market rent levels and income in a fair, confidential and consistent manner, and
- engaging in advocacy to increase low income people's access to low cost housing.

Fair and non-discriminatory practice
Recording details of people who have had unsuccessful tenancies (e.g. late rent payments, property damage) is common in the rental accommodation industry. People are often refused housing based on such information. Social housing providers take a different approach.

The ethos of social housing recognises that people experiencing social disadvantage sometimes experience difficulties that impact on their tenancies. Better Practice in community housing means dealing with individuals on a one-to-one basis and assisting people to find workable solutions to their housing problems.

Resources and Links
For more information on tenancy management Issues see resources below:

- **Department of Building and Housing, Tenancy Services** - Administer the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, receive and hold bonds and provide dispute resolution services

http://www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-index

- **Australasian Housing Institute -** The professional body for social housing across New Zealand and Australia.

http://www.housinginstitute.org/

- **Charted Institute of Housing** (UK) – The professional body for people working in housing across the UK

http://www.cih.org/

- **Barfoot & Thompson** – Advice on the RTA for landlords and tenants

http://www.barfoot.co.nz/management/tenants.asp

Standard 4.1 - Allocation of Housing

Tenants are selected openly and fairly, based on an assessment process which considers individual housing needs and meets the stated aims of the organisation

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
4.1.1 - The organisation has a documented system for allocating housing that ensures transparency and consistency, and covers: **• Eligibility based on relative need** **• A Standard application form** **• How housing stock is allocated, including any priority categories** **•Mechanisms for managing conflict of interest**	**Eligibility criteria** Eligibility criteria need to be linked to the needs identified in the organisational plan. Criteria must comply with relevant legislation, funding guidelines and the organisation's aims. Eligibility criteria must not discriminate unlawfully against people on the grounds of gender, race, age, marital status, disability or sexual preference. However, some organisations may wish to provide services to a particular group (such as single women), which inevitably means they do not provide services to other groups (such as men or women with partners). They may need to seek an exemption to anti-discrimination legislation to practice this 'positive discrimination'. The eligibility criteria should be made available to potential applicants. The eligibility criteria for co-operatives will include the applicant's willingness and capacity to participate in management of the co-operative. The organisation needs to ensure that any information used to assess potential tenants has a fair and non-discriminatory effect on their access to housing. This would include giving potential tenants access to information that the organisation has about them and the opportunity to respond to it. **Standard application forms** Application forms need to collect enough information to inform decision-making processes around eligibility and priority for allocation. They also need to fulfil data reporting requirements. In co-operatives, it may be useful to collect some extra information on an applicant's willingness to participate, and other skills and experience they have to contribute. **Decision-making and conflicts of interest** *The allocation system should cover :* • the grounds on which decisions are made • who makes the decisions • how decisions are communicated to applicants • how conflicts of interest will be handled. It should ensure that decisions are not made by people who have a conflict of interest. This does not mean that the relatives of the housing organisation's members must be automatically denied housing. It does mean that these members should not participate in that decision, and that the application should be determined on its merits. **Ranking of eligibility** Many organisations will develop a list of eligible applicants ranked in

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	order. To establish the ranking procedure, organisations will need to compare the relative importance of different circumstances (such as the local housing situation, living arrangements to suit relationships, health status, or the priority attached to reducing homelessness or overcrowding). For co-operatives, priority might be given to criteria such as the applicant's compatibility with existing members, their understanding and support of the co-operative model, their skills, and their willingness to participate. **Grounds for refusal/withdrawal of an offer** The allocation system needs to balance the rights of a tenant to refuse offers on reasonable grounds, with the needs of the organisation to manage the property efficiently and to assist other applicants. Defining the 'reasonable grounds' a tenant may have for refusing an offer, as well as the reasons why an organisation might withdraw an offer, will help make the system more understandable and transparent. Time frames for responses and communication should be set within the system. *For the appeal rights of applicants and tenants, see Standard 6.6.*
Processes that can support Better Practice	
4.1.2 - The organisation makes it easy for people in the target population to apply for tenancy	**Promotion** This could include promotion of the organisation's services and eligibility criteria to target groups identified through the planning process. Promotion could take a variety of forms. It could be holding an open day or publishing information sheets or packages (in a form to suit the target group) and distributing them to other community organisations and Housing New Zealand Corporation's Neighbourhood Units, Work and Income Service Centres and in rural areas Heartland Service Centres. For small organisations with low turnover, less frequent promotion may be appropriate **Assistance to complete applications** Many applicants may need assistance to complete the application form, and all applicants should be offered a copy of their completed form.
4.1.3 - The assessment process allows applicants to present their case, and to understand the process and have	**Personal interview** Wherever possible, supplement the application form with a personal interview – either at the time of application or when an allocation is being considered. For co-operatives, the applicant may meet a selection committee.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
their questions answered	Interviews should be held at times that suit the applicants. It may need to be done by telephone, but face-to-face is preferable. Interpreters may be needed and the Office of Ethnic Affairs Language Line service may be useful. **A two-way process** Applicants should be given information about: the assessment process, when they will get a decision, and how long they can realistically expect to wait for housing. They should also have the chance to ask questions.
4.1.4 - Applicants are properly notified of an offer and given adequate opportunity to make an informed choice about whether to accept it	**Notification** A letter of offer may not always reach its destination. A follow-up telephone call will ensure that the applicant has been properly notified. **Informed choice** *In order to make an informed decision, the applicant would need to be given opportunities to:* • ask any questions • visit the property • refuse the offer • request modifications and repairs.
4.1.5 - The eligibility status of applicants is regularly updated and applicants are routinely informed before being removed from the waiting list	**Getting and recording updated information** Applicants should be advised about the frequency and manner of reviews. It is useful to encourage applicants (especially those who may be transient) to actively keep themselves on the eligibility list by providing a 'next of kin' contact and/or regularly confirming their interest. These contacts need to be routinely recorded as an indication of ongoing interest. **Status reviews** It is desirable to review eligibility status annually and essential to review it at the time of allocation. A letter can be sent advising applicants that they will be removed from the waiting list if they do not make contact to update their information.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
4.1.6 - The organisation regularly monitors allocations to ensure that they are made as quickly and efficiently as possible, and that the documented systems have been followed	**Reports on allocations** *Regular reports on allocations could include:* • frequency and length of vacancy periods • numbers of allocations by household type • satisfaction of tenants with the process • assessment of how well the properties have been matched to tenant needs. **Monitoring** Depending on the governance structure of the organisation, monitoring of allocations may be done either by management level staff or by the board/management committee. In larger housing organisations, the board is more likely to restrict its

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	role to setting targets and approving policies and then receive reports against targets and review the policies if necessary. In smaller organisations and co-operatives, there is likely to be a much more direct supervision of allocations by the governing body. **Efficient allocation** Eligibility lists that are regularly updated and sorted by key characteristics can help reduce vacancy times. Allocation procedures should be started as soon as notice is given. Offers should be made when keys are handed in. The organisation should match households to the housing available.

NOTES:

Standard 4.2 - Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies

The organisation is tenant focused and works with tenants to establish and maintain successful tenancies.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
4.2.1 - The organisation has documented systems for tenancy management that are consistent with relevant legislation and cover: **• how the range of household types will be treated** **• how bonds (where collected) are handled** **• rent management** **• how disputes between tenants and neighbours will be addressed** **• how reports of racial and other forms of harassment will be responded to**	**Tenancy agreements** Tenants should be advised of their rights under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 (RTA) to be a party to the tenancy agreement (which could involve multiple signatories to the same tenancy agreement). This advice should be given at the time the agreement is first signed, and may need to be given again during the course of the tenancy if the household composition changes. **Shared households** In shared households, each tenant might have a separate tenancy agreement. Where the organisation manages share accommodation, the system needs to provide clarity about: how new household members are selected, how the household will operate, how disputes between tenants will be resolved, how irreconcilable disputes will be handled. **Bonds** Where bonds are collected, the system should not disadvantage tenants who are unable to pay the full bond at the beginning of the tenancy. All Bonds should be lodged with the Tenancy Services using the standard Department of Building and Housing Bond Lodgement Forms. See DBH Website for further information and guidance. **Rent Management** The organisation's rent management approach needs to both ensure the financial viability of the organisation and be sensitive to the needs and circumstances of social housing tenants. *The documented system might include:* • affordable rent benchmarks • rent setting policies • methods of rent payment • procedures for handling rental arrears in accordance with the RTA • when and on what basis rental and income reviews are conducted (including any program guidelines the organisation must comply with). Affordable rent should be determined in comparison with similar organisations and housing types. It is usually considered to be either 70% of Market Rent or 30-35 percent of gross household income for low-income tenants. Some organisations may charge service charges in addition to rent when they provide other services (for example, food might be provided in a youth refuge). In such instances, it is important to clearly show how the rent is made up, showing the rent component

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	of the total payment, and to have this clearly included in the tenancy agreement. **Disputes between the landlord and tenants, and between tenants and neighbours** *The system for dealing with disputes between the landlord and tenant or between tenants and neighbours might include:* • determining whether the organisation has a responsibility for the matter • how to investigate • when not to investigate but to refer to police (such as allegations of criminal activity) • steps and time frames in mediation (internal and external) • confidentiality • how complainants are informed of outcomes • documentation requirements • when to refer to outside mediation • The Residential Tenancies Act 1986. It may be useful to contact local mediation services and to get written information and training in dispute resolution. In some instances, relocation of the tenant may be the most appropriate option. Investigation by the organisation could compromise the case for the victim or the rights of the accused in some situations so this must be guarded against. **Processes for responding to reports of harassment** The organisation should consider how it will collect evidence of harassment, what legal remedies are available and what action can be taken to protect and support victims. Support may include providing information on their rights or how to access help and/or relocating the tenant. Organisations may be liable under anti-discrimination legislation if action is not taken to protect tenants.
4.2.2 – The organisation provides clear, useful information to ensure that the full range of tenants/members understands their rights and responsibilities as tenants and how the organisation can assist them. **This includes expectations under both tenancy legislation and the organisation's own policies and procedures**	**Information on rights and responsibilities** Information is best understood when repeated more than once and at different times. Accessible written information is visual, uses simple English and is translated if need be. Audiotapes might also be useful. The organisation may need to use interpreters (including telephone interpreters). Some tenants might require an advocate. *Tenants are likely to need information about:* • the organisation's services and procedures for housing management • how to participate in the organisation (eg, feedback, consultation, decision-making) • organisational by-laws and membership • their specific tenancy and any conditions created by funding or program guidelines • sources of advice such as Tenancy Services • other services in the area. **Tenancy agreements** It is important that tenant responsibilities are clearly outlined in tenancy agreements and other materials.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	As a minimum tenancy agreements must contain the following information required by the RTA: • the name and contact address of the landlord • the address of the property • the date the tenancy is signed • the date the tenancy is to begin • address for service for both landlord and tenant • whether the tenant is under the age of 18 • the rent amount and frequency of payments • the amount of any bond • the place or bank number where the rent is to be paid • any fees (real estate or solicitors) to be paid (if applicable) • a statement that the tenant is to pay for metered water (if applicable) • a list of any chattels (like furniture, curtains and other fittings) provided by the landlord • the type of tenancy and the date the tenancy will end if it is a fixed-term tenancy Further information can be found on the Department of Building and Housing Website www.dbh.govt.nz/tenancy-agreement *In addition agreements could also include information on:* • the organisation's approach to tenant improvements and repairs • procedures for reporting repairs that are needed • maintenance the tenant is responsible for • disputes and conflict with neighbours • for leasehold premises, the various roles and responsibilities of the landlord, real estate agent and organisation.
4.2.3 - When establishing a tenancy, tenants are taken verbally through all of the materials and are specifically shown all of the major clauses in the tenancy agreement	**Ensuring that tenants understand tenancy agreements** The formal tenancy agreement is written in legal language. A challenge for organisations is to make this agreement understandable. *Particular attention should be given to pointing out and explaining:* • the length and type of tenancy agreement • the circumstances around eviction • tenants' responsibilities and rights • policy on security of tenure • any additional clauses Any additional clauses need to be consistent with the RTA and the principles of social housing and should be explained to tenants. When tenants are under 18, the organisation must ensure that it has gained their informed consent in signing the agreement as set out in the legislation.
4.2.4 -The organisation always ensures that condition reports are completed prior to occupancy	**Condition Reports** Inspection reports need to comply with the RTA and DBH provide a standard property inspection report as part of their standard Residential Tenancy Agreement.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	It is useful to provide information for tenants on how to inspect the premises for a condition report – a simple checklist could be used or a verbal explanation given. In some organisations, videos or photographs are used to record the condition of premises. Other organisations do a joint inspection with the tenant. The tenant should be given a completed and signed copy of the report. Any repairs needed should be documented
4.2.5 - The organisation uses a rental payment system designed to maximise the ability of tenants to keep up-to-date with their payments and maintain successful tenancies	**Payment Options** It is best for tenants to pay their rent by Automatic Payment into the organisation's account. As direct debit can incur a fee, organisations should consider bearing this cost themselves. Tenants need to be informed of this cost if they are required to pay it. **Information on rent accounts** Giving tenants information about their rent accounts on a regular basis helps them to keep up-to-date with their rent. *Some methods might be:* • a quarterly statement • dated receipts for cash or cheque payments (consistent with legislative requirements) • statement of accounts when the organisation claims arrears • a rent deposit book. **Management of rent arrears** Where the tenant does get behind with the rent, prompt identification of the problem can prevent the debt from becoming unmanageable for the tenant. Some organisations have found it useful to hold group discussions with tenants to help to develop strategies for reducing rent arrears. *Strategies could include:* • maximising tenants' incomes by providing information about their eligibility for benefits • checking people's entitlement to the Accommodation Supplement and forging good links with your local Work and Income Service Centre • linking them to employment training programs • referrals to organisations who can assist with budgeting for example the Citizen's Advice Bureaux or a member of the New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services www.familybudgeting.org.nz Management of rent arrears must comply with the RTA. *The organisation's system could include:* • clear and prompt time frames for notification and contact • personal contact where possible • correspondence in respectful and simple language • negotiation mechanisms for realistic repayment • documentation of the agreement for repayment and monitoring • direct debit from bank account or deductions from benefit payments by Work and Income (where the tenant consents) • clear documentation of the process • encouraging tenants to give early notice of future financial

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	difficulties. In co-operatives where there are no employed staff, responsibility for dealing with rent arrears needs to be clearly delegated. This will prevent other members of the co-operative from becoming involved unnecessarily.
4.2.6 – The organisation regularly reviews rents and clearly explains to tenants when and how this will be done	**Rent Increases and Rent Reviews** Tenants should be provided with a simple explanation of how their rent is calculated. In some cases rent levels are set as a percentage of tenant's incomes (income-related rents). Not all housing providers set their rent in this way, and many community housing providers base rent on a fixed percentage of the market rent (as assessed by Tenancy Services). Some base the rent on a combination of these two methods. In the case of organisations that base rents on tenant's incomes, tenants should be informed of how and when rents can be reviewed, and the implications of their income changing. They should also be informed of any right of appeal against a rent increase. Having a clear and transparent rent setting policy in place and clear information will make it less likely that tenants will appeal inappropriately. In the case of landlords who base their rent on a % of the market rent, they will probably wish to review the rent level every twelve months. Under the RTA landlords are allowed to increase rents every 180 days, and must give the tenant at least 60 days' written notice to increase the rent in addition to a period allowed to correctly serve the notice. There is no limit as to how much a landlord may increase the rent by, as long as the rent is not increased excessively above market rate. *A rent review process could involve:* • Informing tenants of what information they must provide and how to initiate a review • Giving tenants adequate notice of a change in rebate and/or rent (consistent with the RTA or funding conditions) • having guidelines for dealing with income fluctuations • If the rent is set as a percentage of market rent it should be explicit on which figure this is based, as Tenancy Services provide a range of figures covering lower, median and upper quartile figures. • An accurate calculation of rent in accordance with policy/guidelines requirements of the funder. According to social housing principles, increased rent payments should not be backdated.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
4.2.7 - The organisation monitors its service delivery to tenants to ensure quality	**Tenant feedback** *Regular feedback from tenants/co-operative members could seek their views on:* • the usefulness and accessibility of information provided to them • their satisfaction with the rent arrears/rent review policies and procedures.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	Records of management of rent arrears and disputes *Other information to be monitored could be:* • records of management of rent arrears • records of disputes • records of rent increases and appeals against rent reviews. It is important to analyse changes/trends over time that might point to a need to change service delivery practices. It is useful to keep a record of any disputes and how they have been resolved in a central file so that they can be more easily monitored. *These records could include:* • the nature of the dispute • who was involved • what action was taken • time taken to resolve the dispute • the outcome achieved.

Standard 4.3 - Changing Needs of Tenants

The changing housing needs of tenants are responded to fairly and flexibly within the capacity of the organisation.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
4.3.1 - The organisation has a documented system for how it will respond to changes in tenants' needs that is consistent with legislation and its own eligibility criteria and allocation system, and covers: **• existing tenants who want to change housing stock within the organisation** **• mutual exchange** **• status of other household members when a principle tenant leaves**	**Documentation** *Documentation could include:* • A Transfer policy giving grounds for eligibility for re-housing • Specification of the priority which re-housing applications attract • Procedures to assist mutual exchange opportunities. **Transfer Policy** The organisation needs to consider how it will treat applications from its tenants for transfers, and the relative priority of re-housing existing tenants against factors such as: availability of stock, length of the wait list, turnover time, and state and other public housing waiting lists. Priority for transfers should take account of changes in tenants' support needs, including those that are identified and raised by external support agencies working with the tenant. It should be borne in mind that a tenant who is transferred will free up a property which can be allocated to a waiting list applicant. **Mutual exchange** One option to facilitate tenants transferring is a Mutual Exchange Scheme. Mutual exchange may occur within the organisation or between social housing providers. The organisation might have a means of collecting information and making it available to those seeking exchanges. This may be done by having a notice board or exchange book. Information about individual tenants or their circumstances should never be shared without their consent. **Status of household members when a principle tenant leaves or dies – succession and assignment of tenancies** *The organisation might need to consider, for example, how to deal with:* • other family members when a tenant dies • a carer (who may also be a partner) remaining in a household after the tenant moves to a nursing home • People to whom the tenant has illegally sublet the property without the landlord's permission • squatters who have moved into a household *Tenancy status of existing household members should be determined by:* • how they fit with the defined target group of the organisation • any legislation that might apply. For co-operatives the issue of succession of tenancies will need to be thought through and well-documented.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Processes that can support Better practice	
4.3.2 - The organisation has a process for defining and identifying over/under-utilisation of stock, and strategies for dealing with these situations productively	**Utilisation of housing stock** Recognising under/over-utilisation situations and encouraging exchanges will be mutually beneficial to tenants and the financial viability of the organisation. All such exchanges should, however, be voluntary. Strategies might include re-housing tenants or offering to assist tenants with relocation costs.
4.3.3 - The organisation works with tenants who are experiencing domestic violence, or whose relationships have broken down, to find appropriate housing solutions	**Domestic violence or relationship break-down** Relationship break-up and domestic violence are common. Organisations need sensitive, speedy and confidential processes to deal with these circumstances. The housing needs of victims of domestic violence should be given priority. In many cases, organisations may re-house the tenant with another provider. In order to allow the victim of domestic violence to stay in the property if they choose, even if they are not a tenant, it is also reasonable to assist in re-housing the perpetrator or renegotiating tenancies. It will often be necessary to involve other agencies to provide the victim with other forms of assistance and support.
4.3.4 - The organisation has strategies to support tenants who require home modifications due to ageing or disability	**Home modifications** The organisation may arrange changes to the property itself or may assist the tenant to access other home modification services.
Measuring outcomes that support Better practice	
4.3.5 - The organisation documents and reviews its performance in dealing with the changing needs of tenants	**Reviewing performance** *Review could include:* • analysis of the number of requests made and the responses • outcomes in domestic violence cases • satisfaction of tenants who have requested changes • whether reallocations have been done in line with eligibility criteria and allocations system. For many small organisations, re-housing will not be possible due to resource constraints. However, they should ensure that they have at least reviewed their capacity to re-house people.

Standard 4.4 - Ending Tenancies

Tenancies are ended in a way that is legal and minimises the impact on the organisation and tenants

Note: Tenancies can end voluntarily or by eviction.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better practice	
4.4.1 - The organisation has written documentation to deal with voluntary and forced termination of tenancies that is consistent with legislation. It ensures that a tenancy is secure unless the tenants have broken specific conditions of the tenancy agreement	**Secure tenancy** Security of tenure means that community housing organisations cannot evict without a just cause. The length of a tenancy agreement may be limited by funding program guidelines, but the tenancy is legally secure until the end of the term of the agreement. When the organisation leases properties on the private rental market, it may be more difficult to ensure security of tenure. In these situations, the organisation should assist the tenant to find alternative housing. **Evictions and terminating the tenancy** The system needs to ensure that due legal process is followed in 'breach of agreement' situations leading to termination. Proceedings to terminate a tenancy need to be both efficient and respectful of tenants' rights, and adhere to procedures laid down in the RTA 1986. Organisations should actively prevent intimidation and harassment of tenants, including those who are in breach of their tenancy agreement, and provide information to tenants on their rights and how to access advocacy services. Information about unsuccessful tenancies should be kept confidential within the organisation and only used for legal proceedings to deal with the matter. As there are a number of procedures involved in ending a tenancy, it is important to keep good documentation and systems for monitoring the steps involved. A decision to apply for termination of a tenancy is routine and does not usually result in termination, but can in fact result in a performance order such as, to pay rent. All organisations should have clear lines of responsibility and delegations regarding who is empowered to make decisions regarding terminations. In most organisations, the board/management committee would be notified of all terminations.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Processes that can support Better practice	
4.4.2 - When the organisation considers that termination proceedings may be necessary, it continues to treat the tenants fairly and with respect and to try to rectify the breach	**Prevention of Evictions** *Preventative action might include:* • holding a personal interview with the tenant outlining the situation • providing information (for example, on housing alternatives) • encouraging the tenant to attend meetings with the Mediator or Tenancy Tribunal hearings • facilitating access to support agencies or advocates.
4.4.3 - When a tenant gives notice of ending a tenancy, the organisation: • **attempts to organise a joint inspection of the premises** • **calculates rental payment and assesses bond conditions**	**Voluntary terminations** The organisation needs to make clear to tenants that it may make a claim against the bond (where there is one) to cover the costs of any damages done beyond normal wear and tear. Offering the opportunity to conduct a joint inspection of the premises (using the conditions report produced at the beginning of the tenancy) gives the tenant added protection. A joint inspection provides the opportunity for the parties to make an agreement about any outstanding issues or actions that need to be taken for the bond refund.
4.4.4 - The organisation has a clear procedure which is consistent with the RTA 1986 to recover possession of an abandoned property and deal with any of the tenant's goods	**Abandonment of tenancy** *The organisation needs to take steps in line with legislation to:* • contact the tenant and inform them of how long their property will be stored • take an inventory of the goods • store the goods for a reasonable period • dispose of the goods • recover any debts (if permitted under the RTA 1986).
Measuring outcomes that support Better practice	
4.4.5 - The organisation seeks feedback from tenants when they end their tenancies	**Exit interviews** *An interview with the tenant at the end of a tenancy can provide useful information and feedback for the organisation on matters such as:* • the type and location of housing the tenant is moving to • their views about the services provided during their tenancy • the quality of the property and any faults which need to be rectified • the co-operative model (where applicable) • reason for ending the tenancy.

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Standard 4.5 - Outsourcing Tenancy Management

Where outsourcing of tenancy management occurs, appropriate organisations are selected and monitored

NOTE: This Standard only applies to those organisations that outsource their tenancy management.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
4.5.1 - The organisation has a documented system for outsourcing tenancy management which ensures that the best interests of tenants and the organisation will be served	**Selection processes** *Selection processes should ensure fairness and transparency. Some criteria for selection which might be documented are:* • sensitive to cultural issues relevant to the housing organisation's target group(s) • demonstrated capacity to work with people in the target group(s) • understands the difference between providing social housing and housing for profit • understands the nature of disadvantage and its impact in the housing market • offers value for money • willing to negotiate a management agreement and work co-operatively • good understanding of the RTA 1986 and the role of the Tenancy Tribunal • willing to adhere to Better Practice Standards • no conflicts of interest.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
4.5.2 - A formal agreement is signed which clearly details the roles and responsibilities of both parties, monitoring arrangements, and how any disputes will be handled	**Management agency agreements** *The organisation should ensure that the agreement they sign with the managing agent includes:* • what the management agency have authority to act on and what matters need to go back to the housing organisation/co-operative for a decision • reporting requirements and length of the agreement • frequency of property inspections and how they should be handled • expectations regarding meetings with tenants and the organisation • compliance with the organisation's policy framework and these Standards • how the agreement will be monitored and complaints will be handled. • break clauses for non-performance *The two key responsibilities that a social housing organisation may wish to maintain control over are:* • selection and allocation of tenants • final approval of any terminations. Where a standard management agency agreement is used, special conditions in line with social housing principles will need to be added.
4.5.3 - Staff and management meet with the selected agent to	**Clear communication of expectations** *It will be particularly important to have a clear and shared understanding about how to handle:*

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
explain the organisation's policies, cultural issues, how they are expected to work with tenants, and the Standards with they are expected to comply as part of the selection process	• rent arrears • tenant inflicted damage • breaches of the tenancy agreement that could lead to an eviction.
4.5.4 - **There is regular two-way communication between the organisation and the managing agent**	**Regular two-way communication** It is crucial that the organisation receives regular reports that include: financial information, details of any maintenance and interactions with tenants. In particular the agent will need to promptly inform the organisation when a tenant comes into rent arrears or there is any other breach of the tenancy agreement that could result in eviction. Where there is a complaint, the organisation should seek to resolve this with the managing agent promptly.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
4.5.5 - **The performance of the managing agent is regularly monitored and reviewed by the organisation to ensure that the conditions of the agreement are being met and that the agent is delivering value for money**	**Monitoring the performance of the agent** The views of tenants should be sought in the monitoring process. The organisation should meet with the agent to discuss the outcomes of the review process, whether the performance is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The review may raise issues that need be addressed or may even point to a need for a change of managing agent.

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SECTION 5: ASSET MANAGEMENT

Standard 5.1 Responsive Maintenance and Repairs

Standard 5.2 Planned Cyclical Maintenance and Upgrade

Standard 5.3 Acquiring and Developing Stock

Standard 5.4 Developing Income Streams for Acquiring New Stock

Overview and definitional issues in this section

Maintaining the organisation's assets

The first standard in this section covers responsive maintenance and repairs. Responsive maintenance is carried out in response to a need as it arises. This could occur because a tenant notifies the organisation of the need for a repair, or as a result of an inspection of the property (for instance, after a tenant has vacated). There should be clear policy guidelines and systems in place to define types of repairs and response times, and these should be clearly communicated to tenants, and supported by good information.

There may be a number of responsive maintenance and repair categories with different time frames. Urgent repairs should be clearly defined and usually need a response within 24 hours. They generally include: burst water services; blocked or broken sewerage systems; serious roof leaks; gas leaks; dangerous electrical faults; flooding; storm or fire damage; failure of electricity, gas or water supply; failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance provided by the landlord; serious damage or fault to a lift or staircase. Normal repairs need a response within set periods, usually less than 21 days. Responsive repairs for head leasing schemes can take longer to organise due to the need to involve a third party. However, the organisation should undertake to ensure that these repairs are completed within appropriate time frames which do not unfairly inconvenience the tenant.

The second standard covers planned maintenance and upgrades. 'Planned maintenance' has two elements: cyclical and upgrade. Planned cyclical maintenance is predictable, regular maintenance that is planned for, such as regular external painting, gutter-proofing, or pest control spraying. Planned upgrade is done over a longer term and is required as buildings wear out. 'Upgrades' mean replacing more costly components of the building, such as a kitchen or a roof. Both of these standards deal with maintaining rather than developing an asset. The latter is covered by the third and fourth standards in this section.

Developing assets

The standard on acquiring and developing stock covers all types of stock: leased, donated, purpose built and bought. It also allows for a variety of roles for the organisation in stock acquisition and development. In some cases, an organisation might have primary responsibility for all aspects of this work, while in others this may be done wholly or partly by other organisations.

As the community housing sector grows, many organisations are looking to develop partnerships to attract additional income streams for development. This work requires a whole new set of skills and processes to ensure the viability of such ventures and protect existing assets. The final standard in this section should be considered by organisations which are moving into this area of activity.

Rulings
Rulings are any legal decisions that could set a precedent regarding the organisation's responsibilities. There have been, for instance, 'duty of care' rulings which have made the community housing provider (as the landlord responsible for ensuring that any repairs carried out on a property are safe. One example of the implications of such a ruling is that, even if a licensed electrician has completed electrical work, the housing organisation could still be held responsible if the tenant is electrocuted.

Community living standards
This refers to the level of comfort or amenity which average New Zealanders normally expect in their accommodation. Standards will naturally vary across New Zealand, and between rural and urban locations and with the nature of the occupying tenants. Community housing organisations should be committed to ensuring that their tenants are not disadvantaged in the community as a result of being housed by them.

Resources and Links
For more information on asset management Issues see resources below:

- **National Asset Management Steering** (NAMS) - is a non-profit industry organisation

established to promote asset management through the development of Better practice guidelines and training.
http://www.nams.org.nz/Home

- **Brookers Online** databases offer a subscription based service giving information on a range of case law, including building case law covering New Zealand building legislation

http://www.brookersonline.co.nz/databases/modus/home?si=57359

- **Department of Building and Housing** for resources and information on current

building legislation and the building code
http://www.dbh.govt.nz/building-index

Standard 5.1 - Responsive Maintenance and Repairs

The organisation's systems enable the effective delivery of repairs and maintenance so that tenants' accommodation meets community living Standards.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
5.1.1 - The organisation has a documented system for responsive maintenance and repairs that: • **ensures transparency of decisions** • **provides good service in a timely manner, and** • **is equitable between tenants and across properties** • **provides financial control and optimises limited resources**	**General guidelines for maintenance and repairs** *A maintenance and repairs system might include:* • time frames for different categories of repairs • guidance on the fair and equitable expenditure of maintenance funds to meet community living standards • criteria for how budgets for repairs/maintenance will be prioritised • procedures for all repairs, including those where a property is head-leased from the public or private sector • tenant responsibilities and rights, including how tenant damage and/or maintenance responsibilities will be assessed and costs recovered • guidelines for the maintenance of properties after they have been vacated • assessment of repairs and the approvals process for initiating repairs • documentation and monitoring of repairs • relates to availability of resource and income streams Guidelines can assist in demonstrating that funds for repairs and maintenance are distributed fairly across properties. Where organisations do not have direct control of repairs (for example, where they are carried out by the landlord or government asset manager) policies and procedures on repairs will need to reflect how the organisation will monitor these arrangements. These need to take into account duty-of-care rulings. **Vacated properties** *Guidelines for the maintenance of properties after they have been vacated might include:* • condition reports • withholding/releasing bonds (consistent with the RTA 1986) • non-standard and standard work to be done • prioritising health and safety issues • bringing forward of planned maintenance or major upgrades • re-decoration Standard work might include cleaning, carpet cleaning, changing locks. Non-standard work might include things such as gradual introduction of increased security screens. Upgrading might include new heating systems. **Documentation of maintenance and repairs** Record systems will need to document the whole process – from the initial needs assessment and approval through to completion. *Record systems might include:*

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• property and equipment details • request forms • order forms • maintenance log • feedback • evaluation and signing off system • contractual agreements and any variations to the job • costs The records need to reflect the role the organisation has in initiating and monitoring repairs for each property. (Organisations may have different levels of responsibility for maintenance of different properties they manage.)
Processes that can support Better Practice	
5.1.2 - The organisation has budgeted an appropriate amount for responsive maintenance and repairs	The organisation needs to take into account funding guidelines, income streams and arrangements as well as the types, ages and current condition of its properties.
5.1.3 - The organisation provides tenants with easy-to-use information on repairs and maintenance including: **• how to request repairs** **• time frames for different categories of repairs** **• ways to comment on the repairs**	**A variety of mechanisms for tenant access and feedback** Organisations might think about a variety of ways to enable tenants to request and comment on repairs. *Some useful approaches might include:* • written information provided as part of establishing the tenancy (welcome packs and tenant manuals) • fridge magnets with emergency contacts details • a calendar that outlines a variety of tenancy information including repairs and maintenance • phone calls/visits to tenants following repairs • feedback cards on repairs and contractors • surveys and/or meetings with tenants about satisfaction with overall approach to repairs and maintenance • post occupancy evaluations • feedback on termination of tenancy • accessibility of tenancy managers • regular newsletters It is important to ensure tenants understand the process for getting requests for repairs approved and acted upon so they have realistic expectations.
5.1.4 - The organisation works with tenants to reduce the need for maintenance call-outs	**Preventative strategies** Organisations can work with tenants to reduce costs of maintenance. *Useful approaches might include:* • informing tenants of ways to fix minor problems such as how to relight a stove's pilot light • purchasing gardening tools/lawnmowers to assist tenants to maintain outside areas • giving tenants a simple checklist of things to do when vacating a property to increase their chance of getting their bond back • provide tenant manuals with information on controlling

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	condensation, saving power and water • clarification of tenant's and landlord's responsibilities as part of welcome pack/tenant manual.
5.1.5 - The organisation has a program for regularly inspecting properties	**Property inspections** *Inspection systems might include:* • annual inspections for each property • inspection after vacancies (internal and external areas) • inspections before and after complex repairs • procedures for how inspection results will be documented and reported (including to landlords). Inspections need to comply with the conditions set by the RTA 1986. Frequency of inspections and how they are handled should ensure that the tenants' right to privacy and quiet enjoyment is not violated. A new inspection report should be completed after each inspection. Inspections should include things such as smoke alarms and termites to meet the conditions of building insurances. Condition inspections should be used to indicate when cyclical maintenance or responsive repairs are needed. The organisation will need to consider which inspections will need higher level professional skills. Check-lists could be developed for different types of inspections.
5.1.6 - The organisation selects and works with contractors to ensure that the interests of the organisation are protected and, in particular, that the contractors: **• respect the tenants** **• deliver good quality work in a timely fashion** **• get and charge the Better possible prices**	**Selection of contractors** Organisations may use a single contractor or contract a range of individual tradespersons to manage their maintenance and repairs. In either situation, the organisation will need guidelines to assist their selection processes. *These guidelines might include:* • requirements for skills (including ability to communicate well with tenants), security clearance if necessary, experience and trade qualifications for types of work • insurance coverage requirements of contractors • references for reliability, timeliness, quality and meeting price targets • information from any internal reviews of the contractor's work (including tenant feedback) • development of a list of approved contractors by trade type • how potential conflict of interest will be dealt with • indicative costing for standard jobs with an upper limit and competitive tendering for jobs over the limit. Some organisations have asked external trades people who are not tendering for the job to be part of a panel that selects the contractor(s). **Written agreements with contractors** The performance of contractors can be improved by having clear written agreements with them about the organisation's expectations

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	(such as courtesy to tenants, reliability, and quality, response times) and what the contractor can expect from the organisation (such as payment timeframes and prompt feedback). Some organisations have found it useful to have contractors sign a 'code of conduct' prior to being engaged. **Agreements with a private landlord or HNZC** Where a private landlord or HNZC is in charge of organising repairs and maintenance, the organisation might also need to develop agreements about repairs. Such agreements might cover response times, quality of work, monitoring arrangements for repairs completed, and how tenant complaints will be addressed. Organisations should be aware of any legislation that requires contracts to be in place, and whether this is a responsibility of the contractor or the organisation. **Approval for variation on jobs** Tenants and contractors should be given clear information on the need for approval of any variations on jobs. This could be provided as part of contractors' agreements and in the information provided to tenants on the system for repairs and maintenance. Where variations are agreed to, this needs to be documented in the maintenance records. **Reviewing contractors' work** It is Better Practice to regularly review contractors' work and provide them with feedback. *Useful approaches to reviewing work might include:* • feedback from tenants following each job and/or following introduction of new contractors • reviewing reliability/timeliness of contractors' quality of work for price • obtaining feedback from the contractor around any issues in carrying out work Processes should also include consideration of when it is important to remove a contractor following unsatisfactory performance or when a contractor might be provided with clear feedback to improve performance. Penalties for failure to complete/unsatisfactory work or tardiness in response times should be built into larger contracts. In some rural areas, it may be difficult to find alternative contractors. Organisations in these situations may need to place extra emphasis on building a relationship with its contractors and providing feedback. Specific tenants can be encouraged to take on simpler maintenance tasks such as garden maintenance where appropriate.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
5.1.7 - The organisation measures its performance in the area of repairs and maintenance, using indicators such as tenant satisfaction, timeliness, quality and price	**Setting performance targets** *Useful approaches to measuring performance might include setting targets such as:* • 80% of tenants report satisfaction with the process and results • 80% of repairs are completed on time and within estimates and quotes • less than 2% of repairs are subject to rework. Setting targets then allows the organisation to find ways of measuring its progress through its repairs procedures and through its system for gaining feedback from tenants. It can be useful to monitor the percentage of variations to orders.

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Standard 5.2 - Planned Cyclical Maintenance and Upgrade

The organisation plans for the maintenance and upgrade of its assets to ensure accommodation quality and overall value is sustained.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
5.2.1 - The organisation has a documented system for cyclical maintenance and upgrading of properties that includes an asset plan for each property it controls which is linked to financial planning and budgets	**Planned maintenance and upgrades** *Planned maintenance has two different but related aspects:* •***long-term maintenance*** which covers the life cycle of the building and makes plans to replace key components over this period (such as kitchens and bathrooms) •***cyclical maintenance*** which is most usefully planned in five to ten year cycles and covers everyday aspects of the property (such as internal and external painting). **Asset plans** Asset plans should link to the organisation's annual plan and budget projections, with planned maintenance being undertaken each year. An asset plan would normally include: • costings • projected life expectancy of components • time frames • who is responsible for implementation. Larger organisations with a substantial financial turnover and asset base are likely to have plans for 15-20 years. A reserve based on a percentage of the replacement value of a property should be set up to adequately cover cyclical maintenance and upgrades. The organisation should set some agreed Standards for the quality of the materials purchased or work undertaken, such as size and type of hot water services, types of floor coverings etc. Consideration in this process should always be given to environmental issues, such as water and power efficiency. The organisation should consider under what circumstances there is a need for inspection by an independent building consultant. Tenants can be involved in identifying long-term maintenance needs through checklists or focus groups. Where the organisation has a long-term head-lease arrangement, the organisation will need to negotiate with the landlord to ensure that the appropriate cyclical maintenance is done. Tenants should not be disadvantaged. When a substantial amount of work is required to upgrade a property, disposal may be a more cost-effective option. This will depend on the organisation's funding agreement. Where organisations do not hold title, they may need to negotiate with the funding body about disposal. Retaining the property might require re-modelling or extending it to better meet tenants' needs and maintain its overall value.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Processes that can support Better Practice	
5.2.2 - Cyclical maintenance and upgrade is co-ordinated to balance the needs of tenants with getting the Better value for money	**Balancing the needs of the tenant and the organisation** Cyclical maintenance is best co-ordinated with vacancies to minimise disruption to tenants. Where possible, maintenance work can be planned to be tendered as one package (for example, painting a number of properties in one year). Priority should be given to items that enhance the safety and security of tenants. This could be things such as replacing battery operated smoke detectors with hard-wired ones or installing deadlocks to all external doors. Some organisations have policies that allow tenants to do minor maintenance work themselves and be credited for their labour. This should only be allowed if the work does not require a licensed tradesperson, or if the tenant is licensed to perform such work.
5.2.3 - The organisation ensures that its own interests are protected when major upgrades are contracted	**Protecting the organisation's interests** *Processes to protect the interests of the organisation might include:* • putting the work out to tender • sighting qualifications and insurances of contractors • clearly identifying specifications for work quality • having a defects clause in the contract • having completed work inspected by a qualified building consultant to assess its standard.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
5.2.4 - The organisation monitors the progress made against its asset management plan	**Monitoring progress** *The monitoring system could include looking at:* • quality of work done • appropriateness of materials used • timeframes for decisions on work performed • budgeted costs compared to actual costs • adequacy of reserved funds to cover projected costs • costs compared to benefits. Recording needs to ensure that information can be easily collated and trends can be identified. This information can then be linked to developing budgets and making future decisions about contractors and materials.

Standard 5.3 - Acquiring and Developing Stock

The organisation acquires and develops housing stock that is appropriate to the identified needs of its target population and maximises the assets of the organisation.

NOTE: This Standard is not applicable to organisations that have not acquired or developed stock in the past three years, or have no plans to expand in the next five years.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
5.3.1 - The organisation has a documented strategy for stock acquisition, disposal and development that is consistent with its organisational mission and corporate plan **Organisations should consider adopting *Lifetime Design* principles and standards to their projects that will suit all people for all the changes in their lives. Additionally, Lifetime Design saves on building costs and alterations in the future.** ***Lifetime Design Principles:*** **1. Usability** **2. Adaptability** **3. Accessibility** **4. Inclusion** **5. Lifetime Value** www.lifetimedesign.org.nz	**Integrated strategy** The strategy is likely to have a number of elements. The level of complexity will vary depending on the size and context of the organisation. *It should be linked to the asset management plan and could include:* • ways to use existing stock more effectively • assessing the need to change stock through modification, dual occupancy or sale • assessment of future needs and strategies to meet them • financial assessment of return on investment The strategy should specify how sites will be chosen, whether by the organisation or by a project contractor. If the organisation does the work, it is best to involve a range of real estate agents in order to minimise any potential conflicts of interest. **Design principles to guide acquisition or development** It is useful to develop broad property (land and building) design principles to guide housing stock acquisition or development. (Development of stock could mean initiating extensions or major re-modelling of existing stock.) *Design principles might include:* • siting of stock with consideration of the health and well-being of tenants • relationship to local facilities • site/area characteristics (including open space, existing housing Standards, car parking) • planning of communal spaces (if appropriate) • construction methods and ability to be adapted, upgraded or converted • energy and material efficiency • durability • passive solar design • ecologically sustainable development • special/cultural needs (eg: disability) • long-term maintenance • affordable rent, health and safety for tenants • affordable design • accessibility and universal design • designing for the needs of children • designing for crime prevention. When organisations are given or offered properties, a similar set of criteria should be applied before the property is accepted or used.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	Important considerations are the presence of fire and safety equipment such as smoke detectors and security locks/grills on doors and windows, and access to public transport and local facilities such as supermarkets. In remote areas, construction materials need special consideration to ensure durability, health and safety of tenants. **Head-leasing properties** Where the organisation head-leases properties, it needs to ensure that these acquisitions meet the needs of the tenants and do not pose any risks to the organisation. *Criteria for assessing whether the property meets the needs of the organisation might include:* • compatibility with the needs of people on the waiting list • levels of safety and security similar to those in the organisation's own capital properties (for example, security screen doors, smoke alarms, secure fencing if there are children) • clarification of whether pets are allowed • likelihood of being given the property on a long lease (at least 12 months) • processes to ensure appropriate maintenance and repairs (inspections, emergency and cyclical maintenance) are carried out • public liability coverage to cover duty of care responsibilities • bond requirements • no landlord's conditions to require discriminatory practices. **Disposal** Where stock begins to develop a high market value without a high strategic value, the organisation may wish to consider selling it to maximise its housing stock. Where the organisation has the power to sell stock, the system needs to ensure transparency and consistency with the organisation's goals. *Guidelines that might be documented could include:* • when a property should be considered for sale • who should be involved in selling the property • how the sale price will be determined • who has final decision-making power (consistent with the organisation's constitutional requirements).
Processes that can support Better Practice	
5.3.2 - The organisation prepares specific individual project briefs which describe the stock to be acquired	**Project briefs for acquisitions** *A detailed project brief is needed when the organisation has the power to design and construct new stock. It might include:* • household requirements (size, type and design) • performance requirements in use and durability • location (access to facilities, geographic spread, special service

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Lifetime Design **principles and standards should be applied during briefs**	needs) • unit cost (derived at by comparing costs/benchmarks with other housing providers) • management costs and day-to-day maintenance (for example, municipal rates, water rates, insurance) • long-term cost to the organisation (including cyclical maintenance and relative re-sale value and replacement costs) • affordable rent and operating costs for tenants • cognisance of District Plan requirements. Other types of acquisitions, such as stock transfers may only require a very brief outline of requirements (eg: type of property, number of bedrooms etc.) To be prepared for short lead time in funding, the organisation could produce some Standard project briefs for spot purchase, transfer or construction based on prior consultations.
5.3.3 - Before deciding on the best method to acquire new stock, the organisation researches the feasibility of the various options ***Lifetime Design*** **principles and standards should be applied in a feasibility study**	**Feasibility study** A feasibility study will need to consider: availability of stock or land, implications of long-term maintenance, council requirements (current and future), architect/technical report, community feeling, and target group needs. As social housing can sometimes be contentious, community attitudes should first be assessed through discussion with key community organisations and leaders. The organisation should aim to acquire properties that need minimal maintenance for the first five years. Before acquiring any new stock the organisation should inspect the property and also get an independent valuation and a professional technical report.
5.3.4 - The organisation involves tenants/members in the process of acquisition and development of housing stock, where possible and appropriate	**Tenant input** *When new stock is developed tenants/members might be involved in:* • input to setting briefs • input to appointing advisers • input to determining and reviewing designs/property selection briefs. It is best for tenants/members to provide input and feedback throughout the process of acquisition. Different tenants might be involved over the course of the project. Initially, current tenants or tenants from other similar housing developments could be consulted. Post-occupancy surveys may also be a useful source of information. Support or peak agencies for target groups could be consulted on the initial design. For head leased stock, prospective tenants could be involved in selection of the property where possible. Consideration could be given to leasing the property the prospective tenant is already renting.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
5.3.5 - When employing an architect, project manager and/or builder, the selection and appointment process ensures transparency, quality service, value and minimal risk to the organisation	**Selection of contractors** Even if a project firm employs its own staff, it is important that the organisation retains some ability to select the most appropriate people. *A good selection and appointment process might include:* • checking previous work and clients, including site visits • looking for residential/community sector/special needs experience • requiring the ability to work with tenants and the organisation • capacity an capability to undertake the work • insurance cover including professional indemnity cover • identification of any conflict of interest • referee checks • tendering/cost comparisons • letter of agreement/contract • stated variations and allowances for contingencies.
5.3.6 - Whenever it signs agreements for another party to develop a property, the organisation ensures that the agreement delineates rights and responsibilities of all parties and how any conflicts will be resolved	**Clear contracts that are actively managed** Before signing an agreement, organisations should ensure they understand the legal implications of the contract. Organisations need to be more than passive partners in the development process. They will need to review reports in the given time frames, work hard to involve tenants at key points in the process, and build a good working relationship with the project managers. In instances where this relationship is with HNZC, as in the Community Group Housing (CGH) programme, building good working relationships with Project Managers is just as important. It can help to maximise the capacity to be involved in decision-making and to influence future policy development.
5.3.7 - When taking possession of a property (leased or acquired), all relevant documentation is received	**Gathering the documentation** Documentation might include leases or other contractual agreements, property history, upgrade reports, survey results, building certificate, building warranties, equipment and maintenance information and pest reports. Sometimes this might be difficult for organisations to achieve but every attempt should be made to gain documentation. For capital properties, ensure that insurance coverage is in place for any property loss or damage.
5.3.8 - The organisation monitors any defects and ensures they are rectified	**Defect identification and rectification** This can apply to either a newly constructed property as well as to leased or capital properties that have had major works or upgrades. Organisations should be aware of when the defects liability period ends, in order to give a list to the builder or project manager of the defects to ensure they are rectified. A list of defects should be prepared with input from the tenant.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
5.3.9 -The organisation monitors and reviews its acquisition and development processes	**Monitoring** *Information to be collected and considered could include:* • over or under expenditure of budget • time taken to complete projects against planned timeframes

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
to ensure they are efficient and effective	• satisfaction with performance of contractors and project managers • post-occupancy surveys of tenants for feedback. Where the organisation head-leases properties, all agreements should be systematically reviewed before they are renewed. *Review of head-leased properties should include consideration of:* • responsiveness of lessor in completing repairs • need for major refurbishment • value for money • feedback from tenants about the property and its suitability to their needs.

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Standard 5.4 - Developing Income for Acquiring New Stock

The organisation's growth strategy is based on sound financial planning.

NOTE: This Standard is not applicable to organisations which are not attempting to acquire stock through new income streams and have no plans to do so.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
5.4.1 - The organisation has written documents to guide its development of property partnerships which includes a statement of ethics	**General guidelines** *This could include:* • aims of partnerships • parameters for assessing partnerships • how partnerships will be maintained • the required documentation • responsibilities and authority of parties involved **Ethics statement** *A statement of ethics might include things such as:* • declaration of any conflicts of interest • adherence to social housing principles • transparency • accountability.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
5.4.2 - The organisation assesses the viability of potential partnership arrangements	**Assessing viability of possible partnerships** *The assessment process might include identifying:* • contributions each partner could make • likely interests of potential partners • areas of common interest • possible challenges or points of difference • any potential risks from the potential partner • whether the scale and timelines of the project are realistic to the resources of the organisation. For example, churches are likely to be interested in partnerships that assist them to provide high quality supported housing, while private developers will have financial returns as their primary consideration. Local government could be useful in helping to identify developers that are likely to have greater common interests with social housing. **Risk assessment of potential partners** *Some indicators to consider in risk assessment of potential project partners could be:* • financial records • reputation for quality • analysis of corporate records • history of compliance with building codes and regulations • defaults (financial and other) • discussion with previous partners • company search • annual report.
5.4.3 - The organisation	**Identifying and using planning incentives**

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
explores and utilises the full range of planning incentives set by local authorities to maximise its potential in developing financial partnerships	Planning incentives could include things such as reductions in public space, car parking, use allowances (rezoning), design issues (e.g. height restrictions). Although not yet common in New Zealand a local authority may place a levy on development as a contribution to social housing. Avoiding having to pay this levy, can be used as a strong incentive for private developers to work in partnership with a social housing provider. Community Housing Organisations could work with local councils to encourage them to adopt such approaches.
5.4.4 - When entering into partnerships with other organisations to develop stock, formal contractual agreements are signed which include sound risk management strategies	
5.4.5 - Development strategies seek to build community capacity	**Contributing to community capacity building** In developing new stock, consideration should be given to maximising the opportunities to improve social housing tenants' links to the community and social connectedness.
5.4.6 - The organisation promotes and markets its potential as a partner for property development	
5.4.7 - The organisation ensures that it has access to appropriate and high level expertise in business planning, project management and property development	**Access to appropriate expertise** This could mean employing staff or utilising consultants. Organisations engaging in this type of development will need to ensure that the board also has an appropriate knowledge and skill level in these areas.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
5.4.8 - The organisation monitors and reviews its efforts to develop new income streams	**Cost/benefit analysis** This is likely to involve a cost/benefit analysis of the time and other resources taken in developing partnerships compared with the relative benefits to the organisation and its constituents. Careful consideration should also be given to what has worked and what has not in developing future directions.

SECTION 6: TENANT RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION

Standard 6.1 Tenant Rights

Standard 6.2 Tenant Participation

Standard 6.3 Participation in Tenant-Run Co-operatives

Standard 6.4 Access to Services of the Organisation

Standard 6.5 Confidentiality and Privacy

Standard 6.6 Complaints and Appeals

Overview and definitional issues in this section

Dual roles of some tenants
In this section, a distinction is made between tenants in their role as tenants, and tenants in their role as managers of community housing organisations, in particular, in tenant-managed co-operatives. The term 'member' refers to an individual in her or his management role, while 'tenant' refers to an individual, possibly even the same person, in the housing tenant role. It is important to acknowledge that these roles are distinct and can on occasion conflict. This section focuses on the tenant role, not the management role.

Participation
The standard entitled Tenant Participation covers the rights of tenants to be involved in the organisation's decision-making process. Tenants can be and should be involved in decision-making through their role as members of the trust, company or co-operative. Their perspectives and suggestions provide decision makers with valuable insights into housing issues. However this is not the only way for organisations to ensure that tenants have input into the range of decisions. This standard takes the perspective that organisations need to find many ways for tenants' views to be heard, and representation on a board/management committee is only one (though important) way.

A standard on participation in tenant-run co-operatives is also included to highlight the particular issues involved in participation of tenants beyond their specific roles in governance of the co-operative. (The selection and work of board/management committees is covered in Section 1: Governance and Organisational Management.)

Complaints and Appeals
The standard entitled *Complaints and Appeals* covers the right of applicant/tenants' or people or agencies in the community to complain about anything they think is unfair or which makes them dissatisfied with the organisation or the service received. An appeal specifically refers to a decision that the tenant/applicant believes to be unfair and wants to be reconsidered.

Resources and Links
For more information on tenant rights and participation see resources below:

- **Department of Internal Affairs** – Local Government and Community branch provide resources and guidance on community development via CommunityNet Aotearoa

http://www.community.net.nz/how-toguides/crk

- **The Tenant Participation Advisory Service** (TPAS) - a consultancy on Tenant participation based in the UK
http://www.tpas.org.uk/

- **Tenants Protection Association of Christchurch** – offers advice and information about tenant's and landlord's rights and responsibilities
http://www.tpa.org.nz/

- **Tenants Protection Association of Auckland -** operates in Auckland and offers a tenancy advocacy manual free to community based groups. Their contact details are:

  2nd floor, 147 Great North Road, Grey Lynn
  Auckland 1021
  Ph (09) 360 1473
  Fax (09) 360 1473
  tpaauckland@xtra.co.nz

Standard 6.1 – Tenants' Rights

Tenants' rights and responsibilities identified and respected in all aspects of the organisation's work.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
6.1.1 - All the organisation's policies and procedures demonstrate a clear commitment to the rights of tenants.	**Legal and other rights** Tenants should have the same rights as home owners as long as they comply with their tenancy agreements. *This includes such rights as:* • have the option to reside in their property as long as is necessary and they abide by their tenancy agreement • take in lodgers and sublet part of their home • carry out improvements to their home • be paid for some improvements to their home if they move on • take part in management • exchange their home for another • be consulted on housing management issues • receive information about how the landlord runs the homes it owns. *The Residential Tenancies Act (1986) gives New Zealand tenants the right to:* • have the property maintained reasonably • notification of rent changes • 24 hours notice of a landlord's visit except in emergency situations • peaceful enjoyment of the property. *Tenant responsibilities include:* • paying the rent on time • using the property mainly as a home • keeping the property clean and tidy • promptly reporting any damage/repairs • repairing any damage caused by the tenant or guests • permitting no more than the specified number of residents • ending a tenancy on the due date, leaving the property clean and clear of rubbish and goods. Other relevant legislation includes human rights law which says a landlord cannot discriminate against tenants on the grounds of pregnancy, gender, ethnic background, national origin, religion, marital status, age or because you are unemployed or have children; and the Privacy Act which gives tenants rights to privacy and access to personal information. These are the rights and responsibilities that must be included in your policies and procedures. However, good landlords find that tenants are more likely to keep their properties in good condition, pay their rent on time and stay long term when they develop a sense of tenure.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	To achieve this, the organisation should consider other rights such as those listed in the International Union of Tenants charter: • to participate in the decision making of the organisation • to establish and operate a tenant organisation • to have their rents negotiated • to request an independent inspection of housing services • to be fully consulted and involved in the development and implementation of any plans for action to remedy failure to meet agreed service standards and performance targets. • security of tenure • quality housing, including collective services in blocks of units, safety, adequate green spaces, adequate ventilation and noise reduction.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
6.1.2 - Housing units are treated as people's homes.	**Respectful treatment** *Examples of Better Practice include:* • referring to units as people's homes • always treating it as their home when there for a visit, inspection or maintenance reasons • negotiating suitable times for such visits and for visits of contractors e.g. plumbers • having timeframes for responding to tenant requests • involving tenants in decisions, particularly about upgrading and in decisions such as internal paint colours.
6.1.3 - Tenants are informed of their rights and responsibilities in a form they understand.	**Provision of accessible information** *Examples of Better Practice include:* • informing tenants of their legal rights and responsibilities during the tenancy agreement signing process. Then give a written handout for future reference • keeping a copy of the Residential Tenancies Act (1986) and the organisation's policies and procedures available Many community housing groups cater for those with special needs. *This can require innovative methods to effectively communicate with tenants, such a:* • providing information in different languages or pictorially • using large font for people with limited vision. • using language that is appropriate for your client group • using interpreters where appropriate.
6.1.4 - Tenants are assisted to exercise their rights.	**Supporting tenants** *Examples of Better Practice include:* • reminding tenants from time to time of their rights and how to exercise them i.e. through newsletters and property inspections • keeping a list of advocates and encourage their use • having an annual review of tenancies where tenants are asked to give feedback on how well the organisation honours their rights • making governance meetings open to tenants • welcoming tenants' feedback and comments on the

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	organisation's functioning and informing tenants of the outcomes of their feedback.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
6.1.5 Work around tenants' rights is monitored.	**Reviewing performance** *Examples of Better Practice include:* • discussing tenants' rights as part of regular policy and procedure reviews • giving feedback to staff during staff performance reviews about how respectful they are of tenants' rights • seeking feedback from tenants through informal social events, discussions and a record of ongoing feedback.

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Standard 6.2 -Tenant Involvement

Tenants contribute to the decision making of the organisation.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
6.2.1 - The structure and processes of the organisation encourage tenant involvement.	**Advantages of tenant involvement** Tenant involvement refers to processes that actively encourage and support tenant involvement in the governance of the organisation. It includes seeking feedback, consultation and participation as well as, in some cases, tenant-led organisations or cooperatives. The prime contribution tenants can make is ensuring tenant knowledge informs organisational decisions. 'Tenant knowledge' is information and understanding of the experience of being a resident in a unit owned and/or managed by someone else. Tenant involvement in the governance and management of their homes is rare in New Zealand. It is, however, a right in many countries and is extensively practised in countries such as Britain, Europe, Australia and Canada. *Some of the benefits for the organisation are:* • economic sustainability from happier, more settled tenants who do less damage to their homes and stay longer, paying rent regularly • social sustainability from less behaviour-related problems • greater satisfaction for tenants and organisational members because of better relationships • healthier, more sustainable organisations, which tenants and organisational members work together to maintain. In small organisations tenant involvement may mean working with people from the target group to establish the organisation and ensuring they have a voice in the organisation. In larger organisations, there may be tenant committees, formal tenant representation structures, feedback and dialogue processes and training and support for tenant structures. In short term accommodation, there may be a simple feedback system and advocates of the target group involved in governance. All organisations will benefit from welcoming tenant involvement. Written documentation should include a statement of principle as well as strategies for achieving involvement.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
6.2.2 - Tenants are involved in as many aspects of the organisation as is practicable and appropriate.	**Seeking out tenant knowledge** *Access to tenant knowledge can be gained by* • involving tenants in formulating and reviewing policies and procedures • seeking feedback from tenants • including trained tenant representatives on applicant interview panels • opening governance meetings to tenants and holding meetings in locations and at times convenient to tenants

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• seeking feedback on specific issues such as repairs and interactions with staff as well as general issues such as selection policies • collecting, collating and integrating feedback from tenants into organisational change processes. Informing tenants of outcomes of their suggestions • informing tenants of planned maintenance and involving those affected in designing changes to their homes • meeting reasonable requests from tenants if economically feasible and appropriate e.g. for improvements to outside areas or shared facilities in blocks of apartments.
6.2.3 - Tenants know how they can continue to be heard within the organisation.	**Listening to tenant voices** *Examples of Better Practice include:* • encouraging and supporting tenant organisations • allocating funding to support tenant involvement e.g. covering travel expenses and expenses for holding their own meetings • making at least two places on the governing body for tenants– it is intimidating to be a lone advocate • if tenants in a block of units want to have a collective voice in your organisation, supporting them doing this • in larger organisations, considering options such as tenant management boards • holding regular formal meetings with any tenant organisation
6.2.4 - Training offered to tenants supports their involvement in the organisation.	**Appropriate support** Anyone involved in an organisation needs to develop skills and knowledge to carry out their role effectively. Tenants are no exception. While their prime contribution will be their experiential knowledge of living in units of an organisation, they, and the organisation, will benefit from training. The nature of training will depend on the type of involvement. This could vary from advocacy and governance training to labour skills such as repair and maintenance of the property.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
6.2.5 - The organisation reviews levels and types of involvement and acknowledges outcomes of this involvement.	**Measurement and review** If tenant involvement is low, the organisation should consider the reasons for this. If the organisation is small and there is regular open and respectful contact with tenants, information may flow freely without formal systems. Larger organisations need more structured systems. Monitoring levels of satisfaction, maintenance spending, rent arrears and property damage can provide information about the effectiveness of including tenant knowledge in decision making.

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Standard 6.3 – Access to the Organisation's Services

Applicants and tenants are able to access the full range of services provided by the organisation.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
6.3.1 - The organisation's written documents reflect a commitment to ensuring equitable access to its activities and services.	**Equality of access** Documentation will need to be consistent with relevant legislation around equality of access such as the Human Rights Act 1993, the Equal Opportunities legislation within the Human Rights Act, the Health & Disabilities Services Act 2001 and the Privacy Act 1995.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
6.3.2 - The organisation's offices/venues and activities are accessible to its potential and actual tenants.	**Accessibility** If the organisation's offices are not accessible to tenants because they are not on public transport routes, are not wheelchair accessible or are not close to other services used by tenants, then the organisation should consider using community centres and other facilities to undertake activities such as holding interviews or meeting with tenants. Home visits are a possibility as long as this is the tenant's preference and does not interfere with their peaceful occupation of their home.
6.3.3 - The organisation has operating hours that meet the needs of the range of tenants.	**Appropriate operating hours** The needs of small organisations and part time staff or use of volunteers need to be balanced against appropriate patterns of availability. For example, if potential or actual tenants work during the day, it may be necessary to hold events such as interviews, reviews and meetings in evenings or weekends. A 24 hour emergency maintenance system needs to be in place and an answer phone message above phones in units (or fridge magnets) can remind tenants of such systems.
6.3.4 - The organisation uses culturally appropriate approaches and undertakes to cater for tenants with special needs.	**An inclusive approach** The Treaty of Waitangi requires non-Māori organisations to respect and include Maori cultural in their structure and functions. Each organisation interprets this in its own way, depending on their locality, client group and advice from relevant iwi. It may include having a Māori caucus as part of the governance group to guide development of services, training of organisational members in Treaty issues or including a karakia at the beginning of meetings. Māori organisations that have non-Māori clients will consult with their clients over appropriate ways of ensuring their full access to services. *Depending on the needs of the individual and/or client group, the organisation may need to consider:* • Supplying information in different languages • Offering non written information • Ensuring disabled access is available • Home visits

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• Accessing help for tenants from specialist agencies • Consulting specialist agencies about the special needs of clients • Training organisational members to recognise and cater appropriately for special needs.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
6.3.5 - The organisation reviews its accessibility to the full range of its potential and actual tenants.	**Monitoring accessibility** *This could include:* • Tenant satisfaction surveys • Keeping statistics of tenant involvement and outcomes • Having a record book where potential and actual tenants can write or have recorded their thoughts and experience about access • Gaining feedback from other agencies that are involved with the target group • Peer review alternating with another housing organisation

NOTES:

Standard 6.4 – Confidentiality and Privacy

Potential and actual tenants' confidentiality and privacy is respected and maintained.

The following features and examples are not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive but rather to provide services with some guidance in how to achieve this Standard.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
6.4.1 - The organisation documents how they will maintain tenant confidentiality and privacy. All documentation will be consistent with New Zealand legislation.	**Privacy principles** *The Privacy Act has twelve information privacy principles:* **Principles 1-4** govern the collection of personal information. This includes the reasons why personal information may be collected, where it may be collected from, and how it is collected. To comply with these principles, the organisation's documentation will include • Forms designed for collection of information that is necessary to decision making and tenancy purposes only • Tenant selection policies that require all personal information to be collected directly from the applicant unless the information is publicly available or this is not practical in a particular case. Where this is not possible, permission must be gained from the applicant to collect the information. For instance, an organisation may want to complete a reference check or a credit check. The application process can include requesting the applicant's signature on a form agreeing to this. **Principle 5** governs the way personal information is stored. It is designed to protect personal information from unauthorised use or disclosure. *To comply with this principle, the organisation's documentation will include* • Specifications for secure storage of personal information in both online and hard copy forms. For example, applications, interview forms, complaints etc may be kept in a locked filing cabinet and personal files on computers will be password protected • Identification of who can access this information and on what grounds. This will usually be a 'need to know' basis. For instance, a governance group may need to know how many tenants are in arrears but only the tenant manager needs to know which tenants are in arrears. A contractor may need access to personal information. The contractor's agreement should specify how this information can be stored and used and require the contractor to return or destroy any such information on completion of the contract. **Principle 6** gives individuals the right to access information about themselves. For example, information sheets for tenants can include a statement of their right to access their own information, as long as this access does not breach anyone else's privacy. The organisation should have written procedures for handling

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	requests for personal information. **Principle 7** gives individuals the right to correct information about themselves. To comply with this principle, the organisation's documentation will include procedures for checking and integrating applicants' and tenants' corrections to their personal information. If an organisation has passed personal information to anyone else, they should inform the recipients of any corrections. **Principles 8-9** place restrictions on how people and organisations can use or disclose personal information. These include ensuring information is accurate and up-to-date, and that it isn't improperly disclosed. To comply with these principles, the organisation's documentation will include a timeframe for the disposal of personal information. For example, a policy may state that the personal information of applicants who do not qualify for housing will be destroyed or returned two months after a decision is made. Personal information about ex-tenants may be destroyed one year after vacation of premises. Complaints information may be stored for the duration of the tenancy or for a specified period. **Principles 10 and 11** state that if you collect information to support a tenancy, you cannot use it for other purposes. For example, a housing organisation may also have health and social services. The organisation may not share a tenant's personal information with other parts of the organisation, or with other organisations unless the tenant agrees to this. There are exceptions to this. For instance, it can supply information if it will help save a tenant's life or will prevent or lessen a threat to public health or safety. This situation may arise with a sick tenant or a fire in a block of apartments. Documentation should include this principle and associated practices. **Principle 12** governs how "unique identifiers" – such as IRD numbers, bank client numbers, driver's licence and passport numbers – can be used. To comply with this principle, organisations will not use unique identifiers unless this is necessary for efficient functioning of the organisation. If they are used they must be truly unique. For example, an organisation with 300 tenants may want to use unique identifiers to ensure that two tenants with the same name are not confused. Serial numbers are often used, or numbers made up from the year of tenancy commencement with a unique number. Policies will state the nature of the unique identifier.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
6.4.2 - Applicants and tenants are informed that information is being collected and why.	**Collecting personal information** People need to know that their information is being recorded and why. Information gained in casual conversations should not be recorded without the person's permission. Information should be collected in private spaces. This applies to phone conversations as

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	well as face to face meetings.
6.4.3 - Applicants and tenants are given opportunities to access and correct personal information.	**Accessing personal information** *Better Practices include:* • on completion of an interview checking with the potential tenant that recorded information is accurate and complete • informing tenants of their right to view and correct personal information held about them.
6.4.4 - The organisation checks that information supplied is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading.	**Checking personal information** *Better Practices include:* • checking that tenants' names are correctly spelt • keeping next of kin contacts up to date.
6.4.5 - The organisation uses the principle of 'informed consent'.	**Using informed consent** If the organisation wants to share personal information, they should get written permission from the tenant to do this and specify the purpose of this sharing. If informed consent is not possible, the organisation needs to carefully decide how to protect the person's interests. Such cases may arise through personal illness or other emergencies. Situations may also arise where the governance group needs personal information about a tenant. Before this happens, any conflicts of interest need to be acknowledged and addressed. This is particularly likely to happen where tenants are part of the governance group.
6.4.6 - There is a Privacy Officer.	**Meeting legal requirements** The Privacy Act 1993 requires each organisation to have a Privacy Officer who is familiar with the legal requirements and can ensure the organisation is compliant.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
6.4.7 - The organisation regularly reviews its practice to ensure all involved in the organisation comply with the law and are respectful of tenants.	**Effective reviews** The organisation can use performance reviews and tenant feedback to ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained. These reviews may necessitate changes in policies and procedures.

NOTES:

Standard 6.5 – Sorting Issues

Issues raised by tenants are sorted promptly and fairly, through a complaints and appeals process where appropriate.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
6.5.1 - The organisation has a fair and clear complaints procedure for situations where the complainant believes the organisation has failed to follow its own policies and procedures.	**Effective complaints procedures** Complaints are a source of feedback, providing opportunities for the organisation to understand the tenant perspective and to monitor their own systems. They may arise from applicants, tenants or those associated with tenants e.g. advocates. Encourage tenants to take part in developing an effective complaints procedure. *Effective complaints policies:* • Are simple and easy to use • Are appropriate for tenants • Are available • Give appropriate weight to each complaint • Are flexible enough to be appropriate for a range of complaints • Ensure that all parties' are respected and listened to • Seek an outcome that is satisfactory to all parties • Provide a feedback mechanism to help the organisation identify policy or practice that requires review. The procedures need to be appropriate to the size of the organisation. *Complaints' policies and procedures can determine* • Whether complaint must be made in writing • What is recorded and where records are kept • Who is responsible for managing the complaint • How complainants can be encouraged and supported to receive assistance from advocates • How decisions will be reached and by whom • How the complainant can be involved • How the complainant will be kept informed of progress • What types of complaints may be referred to external bodies e.g. Police, Human Rights Commission, Tenancy Services, or an internal appeals process • What independent body a complaint will be referred to if the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
6.5.2 - Open, trusting relationships are established and maintained with tenants.	**Developing healthy relationships** Strong relationships lead to more effective communication, reducing difficulties. Goodwill from all parties leads to more flexibility in resolving issues. *Ways to establish such relationships include:* • Ensuring that interactions with prospective tenants involve listening carefully and respectfully to them, negotiating openly, giving appropriate information and encouraging respect and understanding of the organisation • Ensuring the tenant selection and introductory process is welcoming, respectful and open

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• Asking new tenants for feedback on these processes and address issues raised. Inform tenants of the outcomes • Ensuring tenants know how they can continue to be heard within the organisation.
6.5.3 - Complaints are handled promptly and appropriately.	**Identifying issues** *Issues usually arise for tenants in one of three scenarios:* **a.** They perceive the organisation as not meeting its obligations **b.** They struggle to meet their tenancy obligations, or **c.** There is dissatisfaction with the organisation's policies, procedures or actions. Organisations need effective means of addressing each of these types of issues if they are to have sustainable relationships with tenants. **a**. Category Issues can be addressed through a complaints procedure. **b**. Category Issues can be addressed in the first instance by adopting a supportive and flexible approach while maintaining firm boundaries for the overall health of the organisation. When a tenant feels safe to approach the organisation to say they are struggling to pay the rent, to maintain their unit in an acceptable state, or to pay for damage caused, the difficulties are more likely to be raised and addressed before they become very difficult, or impossible to address. Issues that cannot be resolved between the tenant and the organisation can be referred to outside arbitrator such as the Department of Building & Housing's mediation service, the Human Rights Commissioner or the Privacy Commissioner. **c.** Category issues can be addressed by having structures and processes that ensure there are means for tenants to be involved in developing and reviewing organisational policies and procedures. **Prompt processing** The faster a complaint is addressed, the less likely it is to escalate. The first step is to identify that there is an issue and what the nature of the issue is. If it is not an issue that can be dealt with immediately, discuss options for resolving it with the tenant.
6.5.4 - There is an appeal process	**Effective appeal processes** Appeals give the complainant a double check on the decision and give the organisation an opportunity to prove that is following its own policies and procedures appropriately. *Effective appeal processes:* • are available for any complainant • specify timeframe and decision making process • use an independent body or person to review correct use of the complaints procedure and that the decision is in line with the organisation's policies and procedures • either uphold the decision or recommend a course of action for review of the decision.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
6.5.5 - All organisational members and tenants know these procedures and, where appropriate, are given training in using them.	**Informing relevant parties** *Ways of providing accessible information include:* • having a short explanation of the complaints procedure in written information for new tenants • having a poster that explains the procedure • reminding tenants of the procedure and encouraging its use when they raise an issue • having a policy and procedures manual available where it is accessible to advocates and tenants • assuring tenants and potential tenants that they will not be penalised for making a complaint • encouraging organisational members to welcome complaints as opportunities to improve the organisation.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
6.5.6 - The organisation monitors its effectiveness in addressing tenants' issues.	**Effective monitoring** *Monitoring can involve:* • tenant satisfaction surveys which question satisfaction levels with the organisation's response to complaints • asking tenants who have used the complaints procedure about their satisfaction with the process and recording this on the complaints form • keeping statistics of numbers and types of complaints, numbers of appeals, length of time taken to resolve issues, usage of mediators, and outcomes of formal complaints and appeals • reporting findings to governance and to tenants. If no or few complaints are received, review the accessibility of the complaints procedures.

SECTION 7: WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Standard 7.1 Tenants' Access to Support

Standard 7.2 Building Community Capacities

Standard 7.3 Providing Housing Information, Advice and Referral

Overview and definitional issues in this section
This section covers much of the work that distinguishes the community housing sector within social housing. Providers come from, and are based within communities. It is understood that there is a direct link between providing quality services to tenants and applicants and working well with other organisations and services within the community.
The first standard, Tenants' Access to Support covers what organisations do to support individual tenants who may require additional assistance beyond housing. The second standard Building Community Capacity covers the broader role that organisations play in the community as partners in working to improve the well-being of communities.

Community capacity building
Community capacity relates to the ability of individuals, organisations and communities to manage their own affairs and to work together to make and sustain positive changes in their lives and communities.

Capacity building can be done at many levels. For community housing providers it can involve:

- work with tenants, helping them to develop skills and expertise that they can use to assist other tenants and to contribute to their communities
- providing services that meet the needs of tenants and communities, and are responsive to their ideas
- building partnerships with other people and organisations to tackle issues that are affecting people's lives
- participation in forums and campaigns within the community that seek to build support for social housing and meet the needs of people on low incomes.

Capacity building is about solving problems, and then building on what has been learnt to take further steps in improving the well-being of tenants and their communities.

Resources and Links
For more information on working with the community see resources below:

- **New Zealand Council of Social Services -** A national umbrella organisation for local Councils of Social Services and other social service networks throughout New Zealand.

http://www.nzcoss.org.nz/

- **NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisation -** A national umbrella group for voluntary social service agencies.

http://www.nzfvwo.org.nz/

- **ANGOA -** ANGOA is a unique network of organisations from across the range of NGO's in Aotearoa New Zealand including national, regional and local groups. Member organisations are active in the areas of health, education, international development, human rights, the environment, youth, women and ethnicity.

http://www.angoa.org.nz/home.php

- **Ministry of Social Development -** MSD provides the government with advice on strategic social policy, sectoral policy and social research and evaluation in the areas of income support, child, youth and family as well as community.

http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/communities-hapu-iwi/

- **Department of Internal Affairs -** The Community Development Scheme was established to support community, hapü / iwi / Mäori, Pacific and Ethnic groups in areas of identified need to determine their own development priorities to achieve sustainable community outcomes.

http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Community-Funding-Community-Development-Scheme?OpenDocument

Standard 7.1 - Tenants' Access to Support

Tenants have access to relevant support

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
7.1.1 - The organisation has documented systems to ensure tenants have access to relevant support	**Information on support agencies** Tenants may simply need information about, or referral to, other relevant agencies to gain support. In cases where tenants have a high level of need for support for their tenancy to be successful, a formal agreement with a support agency may be needed. To meet tenants'/members' needs for information and/or referral, organisations will need to have at least a simple resource file/list of relevant agencies. Larger organisations may need a computerised database that includes individual contacts and a description of the services provided. Local government and other community organisations are good sources of information for developing comprehensive directories of services. Co-operatives might want to record details of caseworkers, professional specialists, or next of kin for members (with their consent) so they can be contacted to provide assistance when required. **Formal support agreements** Before entering into an agreement, it is important for both organisations to discuss their approach to clients and services. *Where a formal agreement is developed it will need to be consistent with privacy legislation and include:* • contact protocols, including after hours responses • time period for the support • roles and responsibilities of each agency • confidentiality • cost and payment periods (if any) • services to be provided • review processes • how breaches in the agreed procedures will be dealt with. • how any dispute will be resolved For many small co-operatives, individual members (rather than the co-operative) would negotiate their own support arrangements with providers.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Processes that can support Better Practice	
7.1.2 - The organisation has established good working relationships with key government departments and community agencies	**Developing positive relationships** Good working relationships could entail regular contact, joint projects and discussion of issues relating to tenancies. Good working relationships with other agencies can help tenants access the full range of support. They can also ensure that other agencies are clear about the organisation's own services. For tenant based co-operatives this might only be a few agencies that are likely to be of most use for the particular membership of the co-operative. *Relevant agencies might include:* • real estate agents • local offices of government departments, particularly HNZC or MSD (Work & Income, Child, Youth & Family) • support agencies • other community agencies including recreation, employment and welfare agencies • cultural organisations or organisations representing the interests of different groups of tenants (eg: a youth agency, a Maori/iwi social service or health providers, a church).
7.1.3 - Where a tenant would benefit from support from another agency in order to remain housed and agrees to referral, the organisation assists them to gain this support	**Assisting tenants to gain support** It is important that the organisation gains the client's informed consent prior to making a referral. *Organisations might, for example, contact other agencies to refer:* • tenants with mental health problems who may need active support from a community mental health team • an elderly or sick tenant who may need house modifications and support services to remain independent.
7.1.4 - The organisation customises services to maximise the success of tenancies for people with high support needs	**Adapting services for people with high support needs** *This could mean things such as:* • greater flexibility in rent payment options • additional steps in dealing with potential breaches of the tenancy agreement • use of advocates whenever there are problems, etc.
7.1.5 - The organisation monitors its links to other agencies	**Monitoring links to other agencies** *Monitoring might include:* • ensuring that contact details and information is up-to-date • seeking feedback on how well communication and/or referral processes are working.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
7.1.6 - The organisation regularly reviews the arrangements it has set up with support agencies	**Reviewing agreements with support agencies** Good working relationships require ongoing maintenance. It is important to have both formal and informal opportunities to discuss how things are working and to find better ways to support mutual clients. Tenants also need to be asked if they are satisfied with the arrangements. This is unlikely to apply to tenant-run co-operatives.

NOTES:

Standard 7.2 - Building Community Capacity

Work undertaken by the organisation contributes to sustainable improvements in the well-being of tenants and communities

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
7.2.1 - The organisation's written documentation reflects a commitment to building sustainable improvements in the well-being of tenants and communities	**Sustainable improvements** *Sustainable improvements in the lives of tenants and communities can relate to things such as:* • improved social relationships among and between groups of people • improved physical environments • improved life outcomes for individual tenants. This work can also have a flow-on effect on the long-term viability of organisations though more sustainable tenancies. **Documentation** These commitments might be expressed within a range of documents such as the aims of the organisation, mission statement, strategic plan, job descriptions or embedded in policy statements.
Processes that can support Better Practice	
7.2.2 - Strategies used to build sustainable improvements in the lives of tenants and communities are developed in response to identified needs and relate to the organisation's target communities	**Target communities** Target communities can be geographic, communities of interest, or defined by culture, age, gender and circumstance. **Identifying needs** Needs can be identified by tenant requests, staff observations, through the organisation's monitoring and planning processes, or through collaborative work with other community agencies. **Strategies to build sustainable improvements in well-being** *Strategies could be things such as:* • establishing a social group to break down isolation • establishing a community garden • linking tenants to training and employment agencies • supporting work being done by the local Council to develop a safety plan for older people • advocating to change bus routes to improve access to public transport. **Co-operative housing** The co-operative housing model is based on the same principles involved in building community capacity. It embodies the ripple effect that often results from projects that build people's self-esteem and skills so that they can help themselves and also assist other people in the community. Strategies used by co-operatives could focus on their own membership, or might involve links with other organisations in the social housing sector or the local community. *Some examples might be:*

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	• organising collective purchase of food and groceries • car pool to get children to school • informal child-minding by tenants for tenants • cleaning bees for the membership • participation in local council greening events etc.
7.2.3 - The organisation actively seeks out people and organisations to collaborate with in order to maximise resources and gain broader ownership of initiatives	**Collaborative working relationships** Collaborative working relationships are usually built over time as trust develops. There needs to be mutual benefits, or at least a common vision identified, for people to commit to working together. Potential project partners are likely to include tenants and tenant groups, and other agencies that have a common interest in building community capacity. These might include agencies in health, education, or the arts, which have access to other resources that housing providers may not be aware of. **Ownership** The organisation does not have to "own" every initiative. It may play a larger or smaller part in joint initiatives depending on the fit of the initiative with its own work. *The organisation needs to realistically consider:* • whether being involved fits with the organisation's own mission, directions, and philosophy • what resources it will require and how this might impact on other services/activities • management capacity of the group proposing the initiative • how the partnership will be negotiated • potential for success. **Interagency forums** There may be a range of forums that it would be useful for the organisation to attend to both gain and share information/approaches with other organisations. For co-operatives, this might be meetings with other co-operatives or in a local interagency forum. For larger housing trusts the number of relevant forums may be greater and it will be necessary to prioritise to ensure the most useful ones are attended. Organisations also have a shared responsibility to contribute to the development of policies and debates in the sector. This might be through representation in peak bodies and forums, commenting on submissions and attending workshops.
7.2.4 - Initiatives are promoted so that successes can be built upon and the organisation and its community can gain appropriate recognition	**Promoting successes** Social housing often attracts only negative publicity which focuses on tenants' disadvantage. Recognition of positive community outcomes can be very valuable for individual tenants and their communities. Sharing what has and has not worked, can help social housing

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	providers, tenant groups and other community agencies to learn from one another to achieve even greater successes. Media releases, writing up strategies as part of annual reports or presentations in forums or conferences can be simple methods for sharing information more widely.
7.2.5 - The organisation keeps itself and its tenants informed of developments in the social housing sector	**Keeping informed about social housing** For example, organisations might subscribe to housing newsletters or journals, attend seminars and conferences organised by HNZC or the Australasian Housing Institute (AHI), and/or utilise the internet and electronic networking. Relevant information might be provided to tenants through tenant meetings or flyers, particularly where it is clear how tenants could become involved in these issues.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
7.2.6 - The organisation monitors and reviews the scope and level of its contribution and commitment to building community capacity	**Measuring benefits to tenants and the community** Review needs to measure more than just how much activity there has been. It should consider what benefits were gained for the organisation, tenants and the wider community. It needs to ask whether or not the benefits match the amount of time and energy spent in doing the work. Realistic measurements will need to be set in the planning stage, depending on what the work undertaken is intended to achieve. *For example, some realistic measures of benefits could be:* • impact on vacancy rates (for tenant social groups) • impact on maintenance call-outs for common areas (for a community garden) • community members report they feel safer (implementing a local safety plan) • increased levels of participation in community events • positive promotion in the local media (work to remove stigma attached to social housing).

NOTES:

Standard 7.3 - Providing Housing Information, Advice and Referral

Community members accessing the service are given up-to-date information and referral that assists them to find safe housing options.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
Documentation that can support Better Practice	
7.3.1 - The organisation has documented systems that provide adequate guidance for the conduct of housing information, advice and referral services	**Documented systems** *Documentation could include things such as:* • standard response times • how to ensure access to accurate and up to date information • confidentiality • how they will work with other agencies, both government and non-government • having written protocols with other agencies (where appropriate).
Processes that can support Better Practice	
7.3.2 - Staff have a thorough knowledge of housing and support options within the area served, and how these options can best be accessed	**Staff knowledge of housing and support options** *To provide effective services, staff will need to have a knowledge of housing options that goes beyond having a contact list. This would include:* • relationships with key individuals in other organisations (such as HNZC Neighbourhood Units, real estate agents, other housing providers, support organisations) • a knowledge of their selection/allocation practices • what information users of the service will need to provide to gain housing • a detailed understanding of housing application and allocation procedures.
7.3.3 - The service has operating systems that ensure users have timely access to assistance	**Systems to ensure timely access to assistance** *Operating systems that impact on the timeliness of access could include:* • effective phone systems that queue callers and provide information while waiting, or help after hours • hours of operation that are linked to peak usage periods and fulfil funding requirements • staff hours spread to ensure maximum coverage for peak periods • service users can access the service in a variety of ways including by phone, by appointment and by drop-in • the service sets and monitors maximum waiting times for access on a regular basis
7.3.4 - The organisation has systems in place to support the effective assessment of the housing and support needs of service users	**Effective assessment** *Systems to support effective assessment of housing and support needs might include:* • checklists and flow charts for assessment that assist staff to gain an understanding of the service user's situation • record systems that allow information to be recorded on each user so that future contact can be assessed well • supervision and staff training to assist staff to effectively assess users' needs.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
	It may be particularly useful to develop and use a common assessment system across similar organisations so that common information is gained that meets the needs of support organisations. Common assessment tools also decrease the need for the service user to repeat their story to each agency.
7.3.5 - The assessment process actively involves individual service users in identifying their short term and longer term needs	**Involving service users in the assessment process** Actively involving users in identifying their needs is likely to lead to more sustainable housing solutions. Because of the urgency of the situation, initial assessment might focus on meeting immediate needs. However, good assessment processes will use sensitive interview techniques that help to identify issues that might assist longer-term solutions.
7.3.6 - The organisation has effective systems to support referral of service users based on their presenting situation and the assessment of their needs	**Referral systems** Depending on the urgency of the user's situation and the assessment of their needs, referral might be more or less active. Effective systems would assist staff to determine when a service user would need to be offered greater assistance in gaining housing or support, and when it is appropriate for the service user to undertake this work themselves. Active referral assistance would include checking the other agency will accept the referral, assisting the user to present their case, and assisting with transportation.
7.3.7 - The organisation provides clear information to service users on their housing options and what steps they will need to take to access them	**Information on housing options** Some standard information might be prepared that also allows more individual information to be included. Standard information might include, for example, how to apply for HNZC housing, and how to claim Accommodation Supplement from Work and Income. Copies of the information should be given to the service users in written form.
7.3.8 - The organisation has effective systems to guide use of financial assistance to service users.	**Systems to guide use of financial assistance** *Effective systems would include:* • guidelines for staff on allocation of funds • not allocating funds to service users directly • good records to track funds allocated • guidelines in relation to repeat usage.
Measuring outcomes that support Better Practice	
7.3.9 - The organisation monitors allocations of financial assistance to service users	**Monitoring of financial assistance** Financial assistance provided should be linked to the overall budget and monitored on an ongoing basis. Risk management guidelines would alert staff when monthly budget allocations are overspent. This could trigger the introduction of prioritising allocations to ensure access for those most in need.

Evidence of Better Practice	Further Explanation and Examples
7.3.10 - The organisation monitors the timeliness and usefulness of its referrals to other agencies	**Monitoring and review** *Data for monitoring needs to be kept on things like:* • presenting issues • how long it took to identify housing or referral options • outcomes achieved • unmet need. Methods for gaining feedback from both clients and other agencies also need to be developed.

NOTES:

Self Assessing Your Organisation

As briefly explained in the introduction, the Guide has been primarily designed to articulate Better Practice in community housing. This will be an iterative process of examining and re-examining each organisation's capacity and delivery. Community Housing Aotearoa self-assessment tool is designed to give you an idea of where your organisation is relative to the standards in the BPG.

A rubric has been developed to help you define how your organisation scores on each Evidence of Better Practice. There are five possible scores your organisation can receive.

BETTER PRACTICE = *3 points*

- The evidence must be applied consistently and accurately.
- This does not imply perfection, but that an overwhelming majority of evidence meets the criteria.

GOOD PRACTICE = *2 points*

- The evidence is applied frequently and accurately.
- The evidence is apparent more often than lacking.

MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE PRACTICE = *1 points*

- The evidence is minimally and inaccurately applied.
- The practice is giving only a limited amount of evidence that the provider understands the standard and/or is struggling to apply the skills.

UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICE = 0 points

- There is no support for the stated evidence in the practice or the organisation is not attempting to implement the criteria

NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)

- This evidence does not apply to the organisation. Points do not count in total %.

To determine the overall percentage of a standard, add all of the points scored and divide them by the potential points available. If there is a criteria that does not apply to your organisation, mark it N/A and do not tally its potential points in the final count.

EXAMPLE = STANDARD 3.3

ABC Housing

Evidence 3.3.1 -	■	*2*	*1*	*0*	*N/A*
Evidence 3.3.2 -	*3*	*2*	*1*	■	*N/A*
Evidence 3.3.3 -	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*	■
Evidence 3.3.4 -	*3*	■	*1*	*0*	*N/A*

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 3.3 = 55%

There are a total of 12 points available for Standard 3.3. However, Evidence 3.3.3 does not apply to *ABC Housing*. Therefore, only nine points are possible. *ABC Housing* scored a total of five points. Divide five by nine to arrive at a score of 55%. This scoring is used to give you an approximate idea of where your organisation stands and where it can improve.

It is important to note that *ABC Housing* received zero points for Evidence 3.3.4. This would be considered an Unacceptable Practice and would indicate that the *ABC Housing* needs to take active steps to increase its capacity or delivery.

BPG Self Assessment Scorecard

Take an honest assessment of your organisation's current position for each standard. Remember, the purpose in this self-assessment stage is to develop a realistic understanding of what areas your organisation is proficient and what areas can be improved.

*Section 1 – Governance and Organisational Management

STANDARD 1.1 - Establishing and Maintaining Governing Boards

Evidence 1.1.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.1.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.1.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.1.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.1.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.1.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.1.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 1.1 _____

STANDARD 1.2 - Good Governance

Evidence 1.2.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.2.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.2.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.2.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.2.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.2.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 1.2 _____

STANDARD 1.3 - Effective Management

Evidence 1.3.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.3.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.3.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.3.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.3.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 1.3 _____

STANDARD 1.4 - Planning and Development

Evidence 1.4.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.9 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.4.10 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 1.4 _____

STANDARD 1.5 - Organisational Review

Evidence 1.5.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.5.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.5.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.5.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.5.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 1.5.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 1.5 _____

*Section 2 – Management Systems

STANDARD 2.1 - Financial Systems

Evidence 2.1.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.1.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.1.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.1.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.1.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.1.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.1.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.1.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 2.1 _____

STANDARD 2.2 - Administrative Systems

Evidence 2.2.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.9 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.10 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.2.11 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 2.2 _____

STANDARD 2.3 - Management Information Systems

Evidence 2.3.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.3.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.3.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 2.3 _____

STANDARD 2.4 - Office Environment

Evidence 2.4.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 2.4.9 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 2.4 _____

*Section 3 – Human Resource Management

STANDARD 3.1 - Recruiting, Selecting and Appointing Staff

Evidence 3.1.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.1.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.1.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.1.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.1.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 3.1 _____

STANDARD 3.2 - Supervision, Training and Development of Staff

Evidence 3.2.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.2.9 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 3.2 _____

STANDARD 3.3 - Employment Systems

Evidence 3.3.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.3.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.3.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.3.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 3.3 _____

STANDARD 3.4 - Occupational Safety and Health

Evidence 3.4.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.4.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.4.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.4.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 3.4 _____

STANDARD 3.5 - Management of Volunteers

Evidence 3.5.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.5.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.5.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 3.5.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 3.5 _____

*Section 4 – Tenancy Management

STANDARD 4.1 - Allocation of Housing

Evidence 4.1.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.1.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.1.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.1.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.1.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.1.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 4.1 _____

STANDARD 4.2 - Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies

Evidence 4.2.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.2.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.2.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.2.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.2.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.2.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.2.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 4.2 _____

STANDARD 4.3 - Changing Needs of Tenants

Evidence 4.3.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.3.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.3.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.3.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.3.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 4.3 _____

STANDARD 4.4 - Ending Tenancies

Evidence 4.4.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.4.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.4.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.4.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.4.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 4.4 _____

STANDARD 4.5 - Outsourcing Tenancy Management

Evidence 4.5.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.5.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.5.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.5.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 4.5.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 4.5 _____

*Section 5 – Asset Management

STANDARD 5.1 - Responsive Maintenance and Repairs

Evidence 5.1.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.1.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.1.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.1.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.1.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.1.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.1.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 5.1 _____

STANDARD 5.2 - Planned Cyclical Maintenance and Upgrade

Evidence 5.2.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.2.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.2.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.2.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 5.2 _____

STANDARD 5.3 - Acquiring and Developing Stock

Evidence 5.3.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.3.9 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 5.3 _____

STANDARD 5.4 - Developing Income Streams for Acquiring New Stock

Evidence 5.4.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 5.4.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 5.4 _____

*Section 6 – Tenant Rights and Participation

STANDARD 6.1 - Tenants' Rights

Evidence 6.1.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.9 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.1.10 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 6.1 _____

STANDARD 6.2 - Tenant Involvement

Evidence 6.2.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.2.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.2.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.2.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.2.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 6.2 _____

STANDARD 6.3 - Access to the Organisation's Services

Evidence 6.3.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.3.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.3.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.3.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.3.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 6.3_____

STANDARD 6.4 - Confidentiality and Privacy

Evidence 6.4.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.4.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.4.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.4.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.4.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 6.4 _____

STANDARD 6.5 - Sorting Issues

Evidence 6.5.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.5.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.5.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.5.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.5.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.5.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 6.5.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 6.5 _____

*Section 7 – Working with the Community

STANDARD 7.1 - Tenants' Access to Support

Evidence 7.1.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.1.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.1.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.1.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.1.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.1.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 7.1 _____

STANDARD 7.2 - Building Community Capacity

Evidence 7.2.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.2.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.2.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.2.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.2.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.2.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 7.2 _____

STANDARD 7.3 - Providing Housing Information, Advice and Referral

Evidence 7.3.1 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.2 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.3 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.4 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.5 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.6 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.7 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.8 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.9 -	3	2	1	0	N/A
Evidence 7.3.10 -	3	2	1	0	N/A

TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR STANDARD 7.3 _____

Examples of Evidence

Note: To undertake a detailed recording exercise and to note actions required to improve current practice it is recommended that you use the ***Better Practice Assessment Booklet***. The Better Practice Assessment Booklet will enable you to record documents you may have in place, processes you undertake, and ways you currently measure outcomes to support Better Practice. Use the action plan section to document the steps needed to improve current practice

BPG Feedback Form

This form is designed to assist you in providing feedback on the Better Practice Guide.

We encourage you to add your comments so that we can improve this for everyone!

1. Overall, are the standards easy to read & follow? Please circle one. **Yes** **No**

2. What words or concepts used in the Guide do you think need defining?

_____

_____

_____

3. What aspects of community housing do you feel the Guide does not cover?

_____

_____

_____

4. Would you like to have changes included to any standard, signposts or further explanation?

_____

_____

_____

5. Can you suggest any new standards, signposts or further explanations you would like added?

_____

Please send this completed form to:

Community Housing Aotearoa, Inc.,

Po Box 11543, Wellington

Or, email your input to: projects@communityhousing.org.nz

We cannot develop the community housing sector without your help!!