

New Tenancies/Tenant Induction Policy

Foreword

The following is an example of a New Tenancies/Tenant Induction policy. The procedure should be adapted to match your organisation's practice, but you should consider including processes around:

- Collecting and lodging a Bond;
- Tenant induction;
- Carrying out property condition reports;
- Explaining tenancy agreements.

Purpose

This document outlines how [Organisation] will induct and orientate new Tenants.

Scope

This scope applies to all new tenants of [Organisation], including:

- Tenants allocated long-term rental homes through [Organisations] allocations scheme;
- Tenants allocated homes through the Social Housing Allocation System.

Definitions

Client – A person in dealings with [Organisation] who does not currently hold a Residential Tenancy Agreement.

Tenant – The holder of a Residential Tenancy Agreement with [Organisation].

Policy Statement

[Organisation] is committed to ensuring new Tenants have all the information needed to flourish in their new homes. The process of inducting Tenants will be done in compliance with the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 (RTA) and any contractual requirements with the Ministry of Social Development or other governmental authority.

New Tenants will be given information on the property, rent, bond, how to make complaints, and anything else they need to sustain the tenancy and meet their obligations under the RTA. Every new Tenant will sign a Tenancy Agreement and Property Condition Report prior to occupying their new home.

Sign-Up Procedure and Guidance

This procedure is activated when a Client accepts an offer of accommodation owned or managed by [Organisation].

An appointment should be made as soon as possible after the Client has accepted the offer to sign the Tenancy Agreement and carry out a formal induction. The induction procedure includes:

- Agreeing the Tenancy Start Date;
- Paying bond and rent in advance;
- Signing the Residential Tenancy Agreement and agreeing a move-in date;
- Signing a Property Condition Report;
- Issuing a Tenant Handbook/Welcome Pack.

The Tenant will be required to bring proof of their identity, bank account information, proof of income and any other relevant documentation.

Property in Reasonable State of Repair

Prior to the Tenant completing a Property Condition Report [Organisation] should have carried out an inspection of a vacant property and undertaken any repairs necessary to bring the property up to letting standard. [See Asset Management Policy – Lettings Standards]. This will have included a screening for the presence of Methamphetamine – see Methamphetamine Contamination Policy. A record of the test will be included on the tenancy file.

Property Condition Report

As part of the tenancy sign-up process, the Property Condition Report form should be completed and signed by both parties during a property walk through. This can be done at the same time or separate from the induction meeting. The [Organisation] Tenancy Manager will take photographs to ensure absolute certainty as to the condition of the house to limit potential disputes. Ideally this should be completed prior to the tenancy commencement date.

The Property Condition Report and Tenancy Agreement will include the property's chattels, which must be accurately listed and should contain serial numbers where appropriate. The number of keys provided will also be noted. A copy of the Property Condition Report form will be included in the welcome pack.

Bond and Rent in Advance

A bond is a sum of money paid by the Tenant as security against loss or damage caused during a tenancy. If, at the end of the tenancy, no damage or loss has occurred the bond is refunded in full using the Tenancy Services Bond Refund Form. If loss or damage has taken place, part, or all the bond may be claimed by [Organisation].

[Organisation] requires all Tenants to pay a bond at the time of signing a tenancy agreement in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 1986. The bond can be the equivalent of four weeks' rent.

[Organisation] can also charge up to two weeks Rent in Advance once the Client has accepted the property. The full bond is to be paid prior to the handover of keys. Once the bond is paid in full, [Organisation] will issue the receipt to the Tenant and send it, with the Bond Lodgement Form to Tenancy Services within 23 working days in accordance with Section 19 RTA – (Duties of landlord on receipt of bond).

Tenants requiring financial assistance from MSD for their bond must have completed the process and been approved for this assistance at the time of signing the tenancy agreement. [Organisation] will follow the requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 regarding the collection, transfer and refunding of rental bonds from Tenants.

Information on bond lodgement is contained in the Bond Information sheet. [Organisation] may claim some or all the bond money at the end of tenancy to cover costs incurred, if:

- The Tenant damages the property;
- Rent is left unpaid;
- The property is left dirty or the Tenant's property is left behind;

- Because of the Tenant not fulfilling any of his/her legal obligations and [Organisation] suffering a loss;
- Rubbish is left on the property and needs to be removed.

If the claim is greater than the amount of the bond, then [Organisation] may seek a money order from the Tenancy Tribunal to pay an additional amount.

Residential Tenancy Agreements

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's standard Residential Tenancy Agreement can be used with all Fixed Term or Periodic Tenancies. The Agreement must be explained and signed, along with the Property Condition Report, before the Client takes occupation of the premises.

The following needs to be completed in full on the Residential Tenancy Agreement:

- Personal details including the names, addresses, and contact details for both the Landlord and the Tenant;
- The dates of signing the Residential Tenancy Agreement, the commencement of the tenancy, and the end date, if it is a fixed-term tenancy;
- Bond amount: equivalent of up to four weeks rent;
- Rent amount: how much will be paid, how often, and the method of payment;
- A list of all the chattels that the Landlord is providing;
- An Insulation Statement: Outlining the standard of insulation provided;
- A statement confirming the Property has working smoke alarms;
- A copy of the Body Corporate rules (if the premises are part of a Unit Title); and
- [Organisation] can attach Special Conditions to the Residential Tenancy Agreement [See Tenancy Services guidance].

An address for service for both the landlord and the Tenant must be provided on the Residential Tenancy Agreement. It is the official address where official notices and other documents must be sent. The address for service is very important and needs to be accurate even after the tenancy has ended. (Ideally the address of the proposed tenancy is not to be used as the address for service as it will not be accurate after the tenancy has ended). An address for service for the Tenant could be where someone else can accept documents on their behalf, for example a next of kin would be ideal especially if the house is abandoned.

Welcome Pack / Tenant Handbook

All new Tenants will be provided with a Welcome Pack and/or a Tenant Handbook that provides them with the useful information. It may contain copies of:

- The signed Residential Tenancy Agreement;
- A copy of the Property Condition Report;
- Contact details of relevant staff (including an out-of-hours number);
- How to report repairs;
- Receipts for any payments;
- Operating instructions for any chattels such as heat pump, oven etc.;
- The Complaints and Feedback Policy
- How to request alterations;
- The contact details for Tenancy Services; and
- Property-specific instructions.

Relevant legislation/regulatory compliance

- Residential Tenancies Act 1986;
- Privacy Act 1993;
- Housing Restructuring and Tenancy Matters Act 1992;
- Housing Restructuring and Tenancy Matters (Community Housing Provider) Regulations 2014.

Related Policies/Procedures

- Tenant Allocations and Transfers Policy;
- Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Quality Control

Version	Last Reviewed	Reviewer	CHRA Aligned	BPG Aligned
V1	01/01/2018	JK		01/01/2020
V2.1	27/03/2018	MS	Yes	Yes