

# OPERATIONS: Transitional Housing Management (THM) Policy

## POLICY STATEMENT

*Haven Home Safe (HHS) provides short-term transitional housing and integrated support to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or housing crisis. The program ensures fair access, transparent management, and a clear pathway toward long-term, stable housing in collaboration with support partners and in accordance with government policy and legislative requirements.*

## PURPOSE OF POLICY

This Level 2 policy sets out how Haven Home Safe (HHS) manages Transitional Housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It ensures consistent and fair processes for allocation, tenancy management, rent setting, and exits in partnership with support agencies, helping clients stabilise and transition to long-term housing.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Haven Home Safe (HHS) is committed to providing safe, short-term housing and tailored support to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or housing crisis through its Transitional Housing Management (THM) program. Our approach prioritises stability, dignity, and progression toward long-term housing outcomes. HHS will:

- Manage all Transitional Housing consistently and in line with legislative, funding, and policy requirements.
- Ensure fair, transparent access for those with the highest housing and support needs.
- Support Renters to achieve stability and plan for sustainable housing outcomes.
- Deliver respectful, culturally safe, and trauma-informed services that uphold dignity and inclusion.
- Partner with support agencies to provide coordinated housing and support services.
- Begin exit planning at tenancy start, focusing on independence and long-term stability.
- Maintain accountability through accurate tenancy records and compliance reporting.
- Endeavour to support THM Renters into long term housing within 18 months to ensure ongoing access to THM properties for those most in need.
- Minimise the accrual of Arrears, endeavour to prevent Arrears, and recover Arrears in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic).

Recommended by: TOMI Working Group

Dec 2025

Approved by: Executive

Scheduled review:

Dec 2027

Policy level: 2 Version: v2.2

Risk Rating: **MODERATE**

*This policy has been approved by Haven Home Safe CEO.*

Signed:



Name/Position: Trudi Ray, CEO

15.12.25

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all transitional housing dwellings managed under agreements with Homes Vic / DFFH, and to all staff and partner agencies involved in managing or supporting Renters.

This policy *does not* apply to:

- HHS-owned or managed social or affordable housing.
- Crisis accommodation (tenure under six weeks).
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) or other specialised programs governed by separate policy frameworks.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive	Approve policy
CBSO	Executive owner of this Policy
Snr Lead Housing Governance	Responsible for the administration of this Policy and associated SOPs, and for ensuring compliance with this Policy.
Operational & Finance Employees	Operational and finance staff are responsible for tenancy management, rent setting, rent reviews and rent administration. Any issues or breaches of this Policy must be reported to the line manager or Senior Lead, Housing Governance

## DEFINITIONS

Agreement to Pay	A payment arrangement for the repayment of Arrears in an amount that is manageable for the Renter and acceptable to HHS.
Arrears	Accrued unpaid rental debt
Household Income	Total assessable income of all adult household members, including income for dependents.
Household Members	People other than the Renter who have been authorised by HHS to reside at the property
Market Rent	The rent payable for an equivalent property in a similar location set by DFFH.
Rental Rebate	Is the rebate that HHS applies, being the difference between Market Rent and the amount of rent a Renter pays, based on assessable Household Income.
Renter	The person or persons who sign a Residential Rental Agreement with HHS
Residential Rental Agreement	Is a legally binding contract between HHS and the Renter that outlines the terms, conditions and responsibilities for renting a residential rental property, in accordance with the <i>Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)</i> .
Transitional Housing Management (THM)	Short term rental housing owned or managed by HHS, with eligibility determined by the Victorian Government.
Weekly Rent Payable	Is the dollar amount of rent which will be charged to the Renter each week plus any additional costs (where applicable)

## DETAILS

### *Eligibility and Referrals*

- Applicants must be homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness.
- Referrals are accepted via recognised pathways such as SHS agencies, local housing entry points or other partnered support agencies.
- Eligibility requires active engagement with a support agency.
- Other eligibility requirements include but are not limited to income and asset limits, vulnerability and current housing status.

### *Allocation Process*

Allocations will prioritise Renters with highest assessed housing and support need. Vacancies will be matched through the Victorian Housing Register (VHR) or referral network. Allocation decisions will be documented and approved by HHS.

### *Tenancy Arrangements*

Transitional housing properties are managed under fixed-term rental agreements for 18 months, as defined under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)*.

### *Rent Setting and Rebate*

HHS calculates rent in accordance with DFFH's *Homelessness Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding May 2014*, operational guidelines:

- **Assessable Income:** Rent payments are set at 25 per cent of gross assessable Household Income plus 15% of assessable Centrelink Family Payments (Family Tax Benefit FTB).
- **Youth Rent:** Rental payments for Renters/occupants aged 15-17 years are set at \$15 per week if receiving an independent rate of Centrelink benefit.

- **Income Verification:** Employment income is averaged over the most recent 13 weeks of payslips.
- **Imputed Income:** Applies when a Renter or Household Member is not receiving an income or benefit, they are otherwise eligible to receive.
- **Arrears:** Renters should contact their TPM as early as possible if financial difficulty occurs.
- Renters in the THM program are not eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).

#### *Support Partnership*

- Each Renter must have an active support plan and engage with a qualified support agency that assists with case management, life skills, and long-term housing planning.
- Collaboration between HHS and the support provider ensures Renters receive both housing stability and support towards independent living.
- Support agencies are responsible for providing case management, crisis intervention, and progress reporting and advocating and supporting the Renter to acquire long-term housing. Planned, regularly scheduled meetings between HHS and support providers will review tenancy and support outcomes.

#### *Duration and Exit*

- Lease terms are fixed for 18 months in line with DFFH requirements.
- Transitional Housing is intended to be short term and focused on helping sustain a Renter to transition into alternative long-term, stable housing.
- Exit planning begins at tenancy commencement and is reviewed before lease expiry.
- HHS works with Renters and their support agencies throughout their fixed term lease period to develop and review exit plans.

#### *Preventing Debt & Recovering Rent Arrears*

HHS aims to minimise the accrual of Arrears. HHS will:

- Endeavour to prevent Arrears and recover rent debt in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic).
- Regularly monitor rental accounts and clearly explain payment expectations to Renters throughout their tenancy.
- Clearly communicate to Renters.
- Negotiate an Agreement to Pay (ATP) for the repayment of Arrears in an amount that is manageable for the Renter and acceptable to HHS.

Renters should contact their TPM as early as possible if they are experiencing financial difficulty.

*HHS, at its absolute discretion, may refuse a rental application from a person who has a history of vacated arrears where any such debts have not been satisfied.*

#### *Hardship*

Renters must continue to pay their current rent during any period of absence from the property. However, where a Renter's income is reduced or they are required to pay for alternate accommodation for a period of time not exceeding 12 weeks a Renter can apply for hardship relief on the grounds of special or exceptional circumstances. (Refer to HHS' *Hardship Policy*)

Early termination may occur where:

- A Renter is no longer eligible for THM housing.
- Long term housing has been secured, or offered and rejected more than once.
- The Renter fails to meet their obligations under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic) and DFFH program requirements.

All tenancy decisions, including Notices to Vacate, will comply with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic) and DFFH program eligibility requirements.

#### *Complaints*

Renters who are dissatisfied with HHS' service delivery may lodge complaints in accordance with HHS' *Feedback – Enquiries, Compliments and Complaints Policy*.

#### **RELATIVITIES**

##### *Relevant Legislation and Standards*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • <i>Residential Tenancies Act 1997</i> (Vic)         | • <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> (Vic) |
| • <i>Housing Act 1983</i> (Vic)                       | • <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth)                                      |
| • <i>Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021</i> (Vic) |  |

- DFFH Homelessness Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding May 2014
- Housing Registrar Performance Standard 1 (Tenancy & Housing Services)

#### *Policies*

- Operational Instrument of Delegation
- Eligibility and Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy and SOP (TBD)
- Operations – THM Rental Process SOP
- Rent Calculation Form
- Hardship Policy

END

This policy replaces the following policies and associated SOPs:

- Rent Calculation
- Rental Bonds
- Rent in Advance
- Preventing Debt and Recovering Rent Arrears
- Rental Arrears