

Policy on Housing Management – 9.3

Queenstown Lakes Community Housing Trust

February 2012

Updated May 2013, May 2014, April 2015, June 2018, July 2018, November 2020, May 2022

Background

The “General Policies” below apply to all QLCHT properties. The remaining policies apply specifically to QLCHT rental properties.

1. General Policies

In fulfilling its role as a housing provider, QLCHT will:

- a. Manage its assets in a professional and financially appropriate manner.
- b. Have a robust system in place to manage its housing stock and collection of revenue.
- c. Have an effective process in place for ensuring necessary maintenance is carried out in a timely manner and completed to a satisfactory standard.
- d. When building new houses, seek to provide quality design and construction and solar efficient positioning, suited to the needs of tenants/owners.
- e. When purchasing houses, ensure the house is in a reasonable condition and that it’s suited to the needs of the tenants/owners.
- f. Be a supportive and helpful landlord, through establishing constructive and open relationships.
- g. Trustees, management and staff will respect the privacy of all QLCHT’s tenants and homeowners, and their right to “quiet enjoyment” of their homes.
- h. Manage its housing and tenancies in accordance with legislative requirements including the Residential Tenancies Act 2020 (RTA), the Healthy Homes Standards, the Health Act and Regulations, the Building Act, Fire regulations and the Consumer Guarantees Act (in relation to contractors’ carrying out work).

2. Tenancy Management

- a. The Residential Tenancy Agreements for the Rent Saver and Affordable Rental programmes are for an initial fixed term of five years, after which they becomes periodic tenancies.
- b. The Residential Tenancy Agreement for the Public Housing Rental programme is a periodic tenancy.
- c. Should the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development determine that a household no longer qualifies for Public Housing, QLCHT may provide 90 days’ notice to end the tenancy. Alternatively, QLCHT may assess a household’s eligibility for an alternative housing programme.

3. Rent Setting Policies and Procedures

- a. Property rents will be set at a market value which falls within a market range (relevant to the size and location of the property), researched via Tenancy Services data and local, independent rental property managers.

- b. QLCHT will review the rent annually taking into account shifts in market rents and any increases in outgoings applicable to the property.
- c. Having undertaken an annual rent review, QLCHT may increase the rent in accordance with the RTA.
- d. When setting rents, QLCHT needs to do so in accordance with its obligations to lenders, donors, or other stakeholders.
- e. Rent Saver tenancies will be set at market rent as determined by QLCHT in the process outlined above.
- f. Rent Saver households must provide QLCHT with a copy of a bank statement, or other form of savings, showing that the minimum \$50 per week has been saved as per their Rent Saver Agreement.
- g. Affordable Rental tenancies will be set at the lower of market rent (as outlined above) or 30% of gross household income provided that the rent is not less than 80% of the lowest rent amount in the market range.
- h. Public Housing Rental tenancies will be set by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.
- i. Affordable Rental households will have a full review of their financial situation annually and if household income has altered, then rents may be adjusted accordingly by giving notice in accordance with the RTA.

4. Rent Payments

- a. Rent is to be paid weekly by automatic payment, one week in advance.
- b. Full bond (a max of 4 weeks rent equivalent) must be received upon moving into the property.
- c. Bond will be lodged with Tenancy Services within 23 working days of receiving it from the tenant.
- d. QLCHT will reconcile rent payments weekly. Private information regarding tenants will be kept locked away or electronically password protected; this is an RTA requirement.

5. Rent Arrears

- a. Tenants are encouraged to contact QLCHT if they have any problems with paying rent on time.
- b. If a payment is missed, QLCHT will undertake the process for rent arrears as outlined in policy 9.13 Policy on Rent Arrears.

6. Pet Policy

- a. No pets are to be kept on the property without first obtaining QLCHT's written consent. As a general rule, one cat or small dog is acceptable.

7. Property Inspections

- a. Property inspections will be carried out by QLCHT six-monthly and in some cases three-monthly where deemed necessary.
- b. Tenants will be asked to agree a suitable time for the inspection to be undertaken, and will be encouraged to give their input and participate in the process.
- c. Tenants are required to keep properties reasonably clean and tidy and report any maintenance items they notice to QLCHT.

- d. Tenants are required to maintain the lawn to the same standard it was when they first moved in, along with weeding the gardens. Hedge and tree maintenance will be the responsibility of QLCHT.

8. Testing for illegal substances

- a. The policy on testing for methamphetamine use will follow that of Kāinga Ora's methamphetamine testing policy.
- b. Where QLCHT suspects methamphetamine use or manufacture, testing will be carried out.
- c. Methamphetamine testing may be carried out between tenancies, or during a tenancy by providing 48 hours' notice, as per the RTA, with the results provided to the tenant within 7 days.
- d. QLCHT may conduct a basic methamphetamine test initially, and if a positive result is returned, testing will be carried out by a qualified agent and results analysed by a qualified laboratory.
- e. Should a methamphetamine test conducted by a qualified agent return a positive result, QLCHT will follow the RTA in determining when decontamination needs to be carried out.

9. Demise, Abandoned Property, Separation, Unauthorised Tenants.

- a. In the event of abandonment or death of a sole signatory, or separation of joint tenants, QLCHT will work with and support any other occupants over the next 8 weeks. QLCHT will contact the remaining occupants after 10 working days to arrange a time to meet. The meeting will then take place within 5 working days and discuss next steps including a tenancy end date. QLCHT may allow the household to stay on for up to another 5 weeks from the date of the meeting if the rent is continued to be met. If the remaining occupants are in need of Public Housing and would like to stay in the property, QLCHT will support them through their process of applying with MSD. If the remaining tenants are unwilling to meet, a 21 day notice to vacate the property will be issued.
- b. Where the Tenancy Agreement is silent on these points, the requirements of the RTA will be followed.

10. Breach of agreement

- a. In the event of an identified breach of agreement (such as the property not being cared for, exceeding the agreed number of occupants, or unapproved pets etc.) a 'Notice to Remedy' will be issued providing a description of the required actions and a timeframe to complete.
- b. Should a breach not be remedied, QLCHT can apply to the Tenancy Tribunal to either:
 - have a work order put in place;
 - have costs reimbursed where QLCHT undertakes the work; or
 - apply to have the tenancy ended.
- c. Where a breach isn't remedied, the course of action taken requires the prior approval of the Chief Executive.
- d. An application to have a tenancy ended requires the prior approval from the Chair and for all Trustees to be advised.