

1.0 Purpose

The purpose is to:

- provide clear information to staff on the categories of customer transfers;
- provide directions to staff on how transfers are managed by Hume Housing including evidence required to support requests;
- ensure that the management of transfers is fair, open and non-discriminatory;
- ensure that the management of transfers reflects relevant legislation and government policies as required;
- ensure that transfer requests are managed in a timely and responsive manner.

2.0 Scope

This Policy and Procedure covers in the main unless otherwise mentioned, transfers of customers living in social housing. There are two categories of transfers:

- **Customer Transfers** initiated by the customer
- **Management Transfers** initiated by Hume Housing
(This section also includes customers in Affordable Housing)

2.1 Strategic Alignment

Goal 1 - Customer Focused, Customer Driven

Goal 4 – Vibrant, Sustainable Communities

Goal 6 – Efficient and Effective Services

Goal 7 – Housing Growth, Service Growth

3.0 References

Hume will ensure full compliance with appropriate legislation. Our customer's applications and circumstances will be reviewed in line with legislation and recognition of Governments Policies and the Political Environments.

3.1 Residential Tenancies Act 2010

3.2 Housing NSW – Property Transfer Program

3.3 NSW Future Directions

4.0 Policy

4.1 This section covers applications by customers for transfers and acceptable reasons for a transfer.

In assessing applications for transfer Hume's Social Allocations Policy is the first guide to assessment. In addition Hume will utilise Housing NSW categories as a guide to ensure that we are compliant and transparent in our decision making

4.2 A customer who wishes to apply for a transfer **must** complete the following forms:

- A Housing Pathways Application for Housing Assistance form (completion and assessment of this form ensures the customer is still eligible for social housing);
- Transfer Supplement form;
- Medical Assessment form(s) as required.

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- 4.3 In general, customers will **not** be permitted to transfer if they have rent arrears or other debts, if there is significant concerns about the conduct of their tenancy to date e.g. anti-social behaviour or if they have not lived at their current property for at least 12 months.
- 4.4 However in some instances customers who do not meet these criteria may need to be supported in transferring. Where there is a doubt, staff are to refer the matter to the appropriate Manager.
- 4.5 Applicants can be approved for either a Priority or Wait-Turn/General transfer.
- 4.6 The reasons for which a customer may apply for a **Priority Transfer** include:
- The customer and/or someone in the household is at risk but not at the level where a Management Transfer is required e.g. no immediate danger;
 - Family breakdown such as divorce or separation;
 - The customer or someone in the household has developed a disability and/or serious medical condition;
 - The property is seriously overcrowded;
 - The customer and/or someone in the household has compassionate grounds for seeking a transfer;
 - The customer or their partner’s employer has transferred their position to elsewhere and they cannot reasonably get to work in under two hours from their current property;
 - The customer and/or someone in the household is the victim of serious and continued harassment;
 - A customer has applied to be reinstated.
- 4.7 The reasons for which a customer may apply for a **Wait-Turn/General Transfer** include:
- The property is moderately overcrowded;
 - The property is under occupied.
- 4.8 Management Transfers (Serious Risk to Life and Limb)
- This section covers requests initiated by Hume Housing staff where there is a serious and immediate risk to life or limb;
 - In these cases, the usual application and assessment process may be by-passed and the customer (and their eligible family members) assessed under a streamlined process in cases where there is evidence of a person being in immediate danger/risk of harm the delegated Officer should immediately and without fail instigate the transfer process.
- 4.9 Management Transfers (Other)

This section covers requests initiated by Hume Housing staff for reasons other than risk of serious risk to life or limb. Reasons include:

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- the property is to be sold or redeveloped;
- the property is under occupied;
- the head lease on the property has been terminated;
- the property has had modifications made to it and the current tenants do not require the modifications and there is a tenant in need of a modified property;
- tenancy management issues.

4.10 In these cases, the usual application and assessment process may be by-passed and the customer (and their eligible family members) approved for transfer to a suitable property.

4.11 In such cases the delegated officer should instigate the transfer process as soon as possible.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Non-Management Transfers

- The assessment of all transfer applications is undertaken by the Allocations and Voids Officer.
- Within 5 working days of being received; applications will be entered onto Housing Pathways;
- Within 10 working days of being received; an initial assessment of the application will be undertaken by the Allocations and Voids Officer to ensure that the applicant has completed the necessary forms and supplied relevant supporting evidence;
- Within 15 working days of being received; a face to face interview with the applicant and the Allocations and Voids Officer will be arranged. During this the applicant will be informed of Priority and Wait-Turn/General transfers.
- Prior to the interview the Allocations and Voids Officer will also review the customer's history and check for:
 - any rental or other debts;
 - any allegations of damage to the property which the customer has not paid for;
 - any allegations against the customer for nuisance and annoyance or disturbance to other residents (Anti-Social Behaviour).
- If the review of the customer's history shows any type of poor tenancy record, the Allocations and Voids Officer will raise these matters at the interview and seek the applicant's comments.
- Hume Housing will in general not consider a transfer request if a customer is in arrears (including charges for damage) with no clear plan of how this will be cleared, or if they are believed to be responsible for malicious damage or if they are under investigation for any type of anti-social behaviour.
- However, if the matter is pressing and the Allocations and Voids Officer is of the opinion that a transfer is important then the approval of the Manager, Neighbourhood & Customer Services must be sought.

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- At interview the Allocations and Voids Officer will discuss the customer’s reasons for wanting to transfer and assist the customer to explore other options if available.
- The Allocations and Voids Officer will also discuss the customers preferred location and if it is in a high demand area, explain that the availability of properties in the high demand area is limited.
- Within 20 working days of being received; the assessment will be finalised and the application assessed as:
 - approved for Priory transfer;
 - approved for Wait-Turn/General transfer;
 - not approved.
- The applicant will be advised of the outcome immediately and in cases where an application is not approved, the applicant will be advised of their right to appeal.
- Completed assessments are to include documentation of reasons for each of the above outcomes so that should an appeal be lodged, the decision can be explained and substantiated.

5.2 Mutual Transfers

- Hume Housing operates a mutual transfer system whereby customers may apply to be placed on the Mutual Transfer Notice Board.
- Customers wishing to be placed on the Mutual Transfer Notice Board must first have their continued eligibility for social housing confirmed and their tenancy record assessed by the Allocations and Voids Officer.
- Where two households identify an interest in one another’s properties for the purpose of mutual exchange, the customers of both households are required to complete separate Mutual Exchange Application forms.
- Within 5 working days of the application being received; the Allocations and Voids Officer will assess the suitability of the proposed exchange in terms of program type, medical requirements, property size, number of bedrooms and location;
- The Allocations and Voids Officer will also assess the tenant’s eligibility and review the customer’s history and check for:
 - any rental or other debts;
 - any allegations of damage to the property which the customer has not paid for;
 - any allegations against the customer for nuisance and annoyance or disturbance to other tenants.
- Hume Housing Assets Team will undertake an inspection of each property and advise what if any works are required. An exchange will not be allowed if identified works are outstanding.
- If approved for the Mutual Transfer Notice Board; the Allocations and Voids Officer will:
 - update all files and records within 5 working days from approval;
 - add the name of the customers, their preferred locations and the size of the property they require to the electronic Notice Board;

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- advise both sets of customers by telephone and in writing of the outcome and advise any conditions clearly.
- If not approved for the Mutual Transfer Board; the Allocations and Voids Officer will:
- inform the customer(s) that they are not approved and the reasons why;
- if applicable, explain that they will be able to have their name added once all debts have been paid and if found to have substantiated allegations of nuisance and annoyance, that at least 12 months of good customer performance has passed.
- Hume Housing does not provide financial assistance for tenants transferring through mutual exchange.

5.3 Management Transfers (Serious Risk to Life and Limb)

- In all such cases the Neighbourhood Officer must supply to the Allocations and Voids Officer the following:
 - A fully completed Management Transfer request form;
 - Supporting documentation dated within the previous 1 month e.g. police report, report from the Assets Team, etc;
 - Recommendation(s).
- On receipt the Allocations and Voids Officer will:
 - Immediately and without fail review the request, make comment and present with their recommendations to the Manager, Neighbourhood & Customer Services or in their absence the Chief Operating Officer;
 - Immediately and without fail advise the requesting officer of the result who will then inform the customer.
- In cases where a transfer is authorised, the customer may be moved to another property within Hume Housing stock or if one is not available, to short-term accommodation e.g. crisis accommodation or a motel whilst the Allocations and Voids Officer as a matter of urgency identifies appropriate longer term accommodation.
- All such transfers must be approved in writing by the Manager, Neighbourhood & Customer Services or the Chief Operating Officer. In extreme cases a verbal decision may be given but should be supported in writing within 1 working day.
- These transfers do not need to be entered onto Pathways; however a register of all requests will be maintained by the Manager, Neighbourhood & Customer Services and held in the SMT Folder. However Pathways will be updated as appropriate to release this information or finalisation of the tenancy.

5.4 Management Transfers (Other)

- In all such cases the Allocations and Voids Officer must be supplied with the following:
 - A fully completed Management Transfer request form;
 - Supporting documentation dated within the previous 3 months;
 - Recommendation(s).
- On receipt the Allocations and Voids Officer will:
 - Review the request;

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- Make contact with the affected customer and arrange to meet with them where they will clearly advise the reason for the transfer and listen to their needs and wishes;
- Present their recommendations to the Manager, Neighbourhood & Customer Services or in their absence the Chief Operating Officer at the next available Management Transfer Meeting;
- Update the tenant and requesting officer of the result (including timeframes).
- The Allocations and Voids Officer will coordinate the process working with the Property Coordinator (where applicable).
- These transfers do not need to be entered onto Pathways; however a register of all requests will be maintained by the Manager, Neighbourhood & Customer Services and held in the SMT Folder.

6.0 Responsibilities

- 6.1 The COO is authorised to approve this policy;
- 6.2 Managers are responsible and authorised to ensure that staff comply with this policy;
- 6.3 Employees are responsible to comply with this policy;
- 6.4 Quality Assurance Coordinator is responsible to review this policy as per the Policy and Procedure Schedule.

7.0 Related Documents

- 7.1 Housing Pathways form - Application for Housing Assistance
- 7.2 Housing Pathways form - Transfer Supplement
- 7.3 Letter – Notice to applicants for transfers regarding interview and evidence required.
- 7.4 Letter – Notice to transfer applicant where offer has been approved
- 7.5 Letter – Notice to transfer applicant where offer has been declined
- 7.6 Mutual Exchange Application forms.

8.0 Summary of Changes

Version Nr.	Date:	Details of Changes:
V1.0	12 th November 2012	Initial Issue
V2.0	30 th September 2016	Review – removal of family reunion and noting changing Government Policies and Political environment e.g. Future Directions. REFORMATTED – Evidence list to be a schedule, placed at the end of the policy/procedure

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SCHEDULE 1

Hume utilise Housing NSW categories as a guide and the undernoted explanatory notes from *Housing NSW's – Property Transfer Program* for each of the categories listed within this policy and details the types of evidence that need to be provided by the customer in support of their application for a transfer.

Table 1

EXPLANATORY NOTES	EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Reasons for a Priority Transfer	
<p>1. Household member being at risk and requiring transfer for their safety. Note: If the matter is urgent refer to Section (Management Transfers)</p> <p>This is where the safety and/or mental health of a customer or a household member is at risk because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - domestic violence; - child abuse or neglect; - physical or sexual assault; - neglect; - threatening behaviour; - torture or trauma. <p>The customer needs to show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the risk is serious and ongoing and that they cannot remain in the current dwelling and/or location beyond a medium length of time; - the property and/or location contributes to the risk and reduces their safety; - there are no other practical steps that can be taken by the tenant's household to address the risk; - being relocated will help or resolve the situation and remove or significantly decrease the risk. 	<p>Evidence Requirements (minimum of two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a report from the police; - an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order or an Apprehended Personal Violence Order; - a report/letter from the Department of Community Services for matters relating to safety of the children; - a report/letter from Corrective Services NSW; - a report/letter from a community support agency, such as a refuge, community centre or neighbourhood centre worker; - a report/letter from a medical practitioner or health professional; - a report/letter from a school principal or school counsellor.
Family breakdown requiring transfer for the member/s of the family who are leaving the property	
<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - separation or divorce between a customer and spouse or de facto partner; - irreconcilable breakdown between a parent and child or children (including an adult child or children). <p>In the case of divorce or separation. There needs to be proof that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the spouse/partner was a member of the household for at least two years on a continuous basis, and that Hume Housing's record show the person as a resident at the property; and - the spouse or partner is eligible for social housing, and - the spouse or partner applies for a transfer within six months of moving out of the property. <p>In the case of a family breakdown the family member will need to prove that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they are a permanent member of the household, and - they are listed on Hume Housing's or other housing provider's records as living in the property (e.g. approved additional occupant), and - they have declared their income to Hume Housing or other housing provider and it is recorded in a rent subsidy (if the tenant receives a rent subsidy). 	<p>Evidence Requirements (minimum of two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - documentation regarding a legal separation/divorce; - letters or reports from a social worker, community worker, or neighbourhood centre regarding counselling or similar; - letters or reports from the Department of Community Services regarding the relationship breakdown between the child/ren and parent/s; - income statement from Centrelink or employer; - family payment confirmation from Centrelink; - evidence of new residential address.

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A medical condition and/or disability resulting in a need to live elsewhere			
<p>A customer may apply for a transfer as a consequence of one of the household members having a medical condition and/or disability which makes the current property difficult to live in. The customer will need to show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the medical condition and/or disability is permanent or likely to be permanent, and - the current property and/or location no longer meets their housing need, or - the sick and/or disabled household member can't get to medical and/or support services from their current property because of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduced mobility of the sick/disabled household member; - the person can no longer use transport; - the frequency of visits to medical and/or therapeutic services, and - the necessary medical and therapeutic services will be available from another location (i.e where they want to be housed), and - they can't remain in the property beyond a medium length of time, and - relocating will assist in the management of the medical condition and/or disability. 		<p>Evidence Requirements (minimum of two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a general practitioner or specialist doctor; - occupational therapist or physiotherapist; - brain injury rehabilitation program; - lifetime care and support; - living skills assessment; - Aged Care Assessment Team; - Community Disability Service; - ventilator dependent quadriplegic program. 	
Severe overcrowding requiring transfer to a larger property			
<p>Severe overcrowding can result from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a parent receiving custody of a child/ren; - marriage; - birth of child/ren. <p>Severe overcrowding includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parent/s sharing a bedroom with their child aged over five years. - four or more children sharing a bedroom. - three or more unrelated adults sharing a bedroom. <p>Severe overcrowding can also occur if children currently sharing a bedroom now need their own bedroom because of the development by one child of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a disability or serious health problem - serious behavioural problems. - children of different genders sharing a room after one of them reaches puberty. <p>Customers will be required to prove that the severe overcrowding is the result of one of the above reasons and explain why the current dwelling is unsuitable.</p>		<p>Evidence Requirements (minimum of two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - documents which show age and gender of household members; - marriage certificate; - legal documents confirming family reunion; - legal documents confirming placement of children; - legal documents confirming custody of children; - Centrelink family payment income statement; - court orders; - Immigration papers; - medical assessment or report/letter from doctor or specialist confirming disability or serious health problem or serious behavioural problem; - report from the Department of Community Services. 	
Compassionate grounds for transfer to another location			
Employment on the part of the tenant or their spouse or partner requiring transfer to a location closer to work			
<p>A customer may apply for a transfer due to the them or their spouse/partner gaining employment, or change of location of the tenant's or spouse's/partner's current employment. The customer must show that the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - customer/spouse/partner are currently unemployed and have been offered a job in or near the area to which they need to move; - customer/spouse/partner has a full- or part-time job and is required by their employer to move in order to keep their job, 		<p>Evidence Requirements (minimum of two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - letter of offer of employment from employer and copy of acceptance by the tenant or their spouse/partner; - letter from employer identifying the location of employment, confirming the job as permanent and stating the number of hours to be worked; - letter confirming change of employment 	
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<p>and the employment is in a location that too far to travel from their existing location, i.e. more than two hours travel each way.</p> <p>Note: Employment must be long term and at least three days work per week. In some circumstances, such as where there are medical factors or care of dependents, the minimum number of working days may be reduced to two and the travel time reduced to one hour each way.</p>	<p>location from employer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - letter from employer confirming loss of employment if unable to relocate/change location.
<p>Harassment of a tenant or household member requiring transfer</p>	
<p>A customer may apply for a transfer on the basis that s/he and/or a member of the tenant's household is being harassed. Examples of harassment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - verbal abuse; - threats; - intimidation; - vilification; - property damage. <p>The customer will need to show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the harassment is serious and ongoing, and - they have attempted to resolve the harassment themselves, possibly with help, and - their current property and/or location significantly increases the risk of harassment, and - the harassment means they cannot remain in their current dwelling and/or location beyond a medium length of time, and - relocation will help to resolve the situation and remove or significantly decrease the harassment. 	<p>Evidence Requirements (minimum of two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - police reports; - a report/letter from the Community Justice Centre (CJC); - a report/letter from a community support agency, such as a refuge, community centre or neighbourhood centre worker; - report/letter from a mediation service; - report/letter from neighbours substantiating the harassment; - a record that the incidents are ongoing. - evidence that the incidents are escalating in seriousness.
<p>Tenancy reinstatement after absence of six months or less</p>	
<p>This is where a customer has had to leave their property without letting Hume Housing know. Possible reasons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - moving into a residential care facility (eg a psychiatric unit, rehabilitation centre, aged care hostel, or nursing home) either voluntarily or under a court order, or - being were sent to prison, or - having to move to care for a family member. 	<p>Evidence for consideration of a transfer for tenancy reinstatement can include documents from a hospital or a prison. If the reason is harassment or threats, the same documentation for harassment applies.</p> <p>The customer will also need to provide appropriate and adequate reasons as to why they were unable to inform Hume Housing of their need to leave their property.</p>
<p>Reasons for a Wait-Turn/General Transfer</p>	
<p>Moderate overcrowding</p>	
<p>Moderate overcrowding includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more than 3 children sleeping in a bedroom; - a child over the age of 8 sharing a bedroom with an adult; - two adults not related or in a relationship sharing a bedroom. 	<p>The applicant will need to provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number, age and gender of household members; - size of the bedrooms; - size of the living areas.
<p>Under occupancy</p>	
<p>Under occupancy is when there are more bedrooms than household members.</p>	<p>The applicant will need to provide evidence of the number of household members and number of bedrooms in the property.</p> <p>Please refer to Hume's Under occupancy Strategy</p>

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