

Scope

This policy outlines how tenancy inspections are conducted by Pacific Link Housing Limited (PLH) for all tenancies.

Purpose

The policy is intended to ensure that tenancy inspections are carried out in a way that:

- respects the right of tenants to enjoy reasonable peace, comfort and privacy in their property
- provides due notice to our tenant in accordance with the residential tenancy agreement
- ensures that tenants understand their legal rights and responsibilities as a tenant and makes them aware of our policies, and
- ensures that PLH meets our legal and policy requirements in relation to ensuring properties are maintained to an appropriate standard.

Inspections – Contact with tenants and access to the property

The Residential Tenancies Act 2010 requires that tenants must allow Pacific Link Housing and/or its agents access to their property for specific reasons. PLH makes regular contact with its tenants to assist in maintaining its properties and sustaining tenancies. In properties that are leased from private landlords PLH staff may be accompanied on visits by the landlord or real estate agent.

PLH, our contractors or Housing NSW inspectors may visit a tenant's property for one or more of the following reasons:

- A routine inspection – every PLH property is visited at least once every 12 months. Up to four visits each year are permitted under the tenancy agreement.
- If requested by the landlord or real estate agent of a leasehold property.
- Visits will generally be conducted within 3 months of a new tenancy, including a transfer.
- Smoke alarm and pest inspections which are completed annually by a PLH contractor.
- Updating PLH's information about the condition of the property – inspections that are undertaken at least once every three years to assess the condition of the property and identify any maintenance issues. These may be conducted by both PLH staff or Land & Housing Corporation inspectors.
- For emergency, responsive or planned maintenance from time to time, as necessary, or for quality control or to ensure contractors work is to an appropriate standard and workplace health and safety requirements are being met.
- To comply with health and safety obligations or fire risk inspections. Fire risk factors, such as hoarding, blocking of exits and disabling of smoke alarms will be taken into account when deciding whether to inspect a property.
- On request, when the tenant has asked for a visit
- To assist with problems a tenant may be experiencing with their tenancy such as maintenance issues, problems with neighbours, difficulties paying rent or property care issues.
- Identifying if tenants need support to live independently, or need to be linked in with support services to maintain their tenancy.
- If PLH has good reason for serious concern about the health or safety of the tenant or other occupants
- If there are serious concerns about property care
- To repossess the property when it suspects the property has been abandoned

- Confirming that both the tenant and PLH are meeting their obligations under the tenancy agreement.

Notice

PLH will provide notice of and conduct all inspections in accordance with the requirements of the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2010*. Visits may be made at any time, with the consent of the tenant which can be either verbal or in writing. Visits may be made without consent as permitted by the Act.

Conducting Visits

Tenants can expect that PLH staff arranging and conducting inspections will:

- Tell them the purpose of the visit.
- Coordinate visits to ensure minimum disruption to tenants.
- Treat tenants with courtesy and respect, in line with PLH's Code of Conduct.
- Enable tenants to arrange to have a support person with them during the visit if they wish.
- Arrive well prepared for the visit by bringing any necessary information or paperwork with them.
- When conducting the visit, wear their PLH uniform and carry a business card to leave with the tenant if necessary.
- Confirm clearly the outcomes of the visit and the broad timeframes for any actions agreed during the visit.
- Keep a written record of any agreements made with the tenant during the visit.
- Will not inspect the contents of cupboards or drawers, without the tenant's permission to inspect cupboards.
- Will immediately report any suspected illegal activities including drug manufacture or dealing to the Police.
- Photograph the property condition and items requiring maintenance, as permitted by the Act.

Access in an Emergency

If PLH has any reason to believe that the tenant's wellbeing is at risk, and the tenant cannot be contacted, PLH will contact the next of kin, if known. Where the next of kin cannot be contacted, PLH will contact the police and request that they immediately enter the property.

Actions taken if a tenant refuses access to their property

Under the conditions set out in the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, if proper notice has been given a tenant must not deny or hinder PLH's right of access. If access is refused the tenant will be in breach of their Residential Tenancy Agreement and PLH can then make an application to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) requesting an order allowing entry. Where there is good reason to suspect that the property has been abandoned, PLH will arrange to enter and repossess the property.

Complaints and Appeals

If a tenant is not satisfied with a service provided by PLH or does not agree with a decision it has made, they should first discuss their concerns with their Housing Manager. If they are still not satisfied they can ask for a formal review. Refer Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Craig Brennan

Craig Brennan, CEO December 2018