

# Elderly Persons Housing Policy

Effective 31 October 2023





# Elderly persons Housing Policy

## Background:

Invercargill City Council owns and maintains a number of Elderly Persons Housing Rental Units ("Rental Units") within Invercargill and Bluff. These Rental Units are made available to rent for older citizens who meet various eligibility criteria.

## Purpose:

This policy provides guidelines on the following:

- Eligibility criteria for prospective tenants
- The expectations and rules for tenants living in Council owned Rental Units.

## Scope:

This policy applies to everyone who wishes to apply for housing at a Rental Unit, and all current tenants of Rental Units.

Rental Units are not provided as social housing, but are intended to help meet the housing needs of elderly persons.



## Related documents:

Further information for tenants is found in the Tenant Information Booklet – tenants are required to comply with their Tenancy Agreement, this policy and the provisions of the Tenant Information Booklet.

## Definitions:

Assets	Assets include investments (including KiwiSaver and other private Superannuation funds), prepaid funeral accounts, money in trusts, savings, real estate and any items of significant value. They do not include furniture, personal effects or (usually) vehicle.
Council	Invercargill City Council
Council Officer	Any officer of Council or any other authorised person carrying out work on behalf of Council.
Disability Assist Dog	As defined in section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996. Generally this means any dog certified to assist a person with a visual, hearing, mobility or other disability.
GRI	Gross New Zealand Superannuation rate.
Rental Units	Housing owned and managed by Council for the purposes of meeting elderly housing needs in the Invercargill City district. As per national standards, Rental Units are not considered social housing.
Smoking	Refers to the use of any smoking device, including vapes, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and e-cigarettes.
Tenancies Act	Residential Tenancies Act 1986



## Eligibility

### Age

Applicants will only be considered for a Rental Unit if they are at least 65 years old at the date of application.

### Asset Limits

The value of an applicant's assets will affect the priority your application receives. The asset limit is set by Council and may be adjusted from time to time. Currently the asset limit is \$50,000 per application.

If an applicant's assets are more than \$50,000 then they will not be eligible for a Rental Unit.

### Income Limits

The income limit for single people and couples is currently GRI (the gross New Zealand Superannuation rate) plus 30%.

### Independence

Council is not an aged care provider. The Rental Units are stand-alone and applicants need to be able to live and care for themselves independently.

The use of home support services will not mean applications are automatically excluded but will be a factor considered when determining the ability of the Rental Unit and this service to meet the needs of the applicant. Applicants may be required to complete a medical assessment at their own cost as part of their application, in order to help us ensure the appropriate unit is allocated for their needs.

### Citizenship / Residency

Applicants must be a New Zealand Citizen or have Residency / Permanent Residency. If an applicant was born overseas they will need to provide proof of Residency or Citizenship.

### Good Character

Council must be satisfied that the applicant will be a good tenant and able to live co-operatively with others on the site. When applying for housing the applicant will be asked to supply two character references, and will also have an informal interview with a member of the Council housing team.



## Waiting List

If the application is successful, the applicant's name will be placed on Council's waiting list. They will be offered the next available Rental Unit when their name reaches the top of the waiting list.

Council will regularly review the waiting list and applicants may be required to submit updated proof of continued eligibility. Council has the discretion to move people up or down the list as needed, based on factors such as urgency, changes in circumstances, and connection to the Invercargill district.

## Change in Circumstances

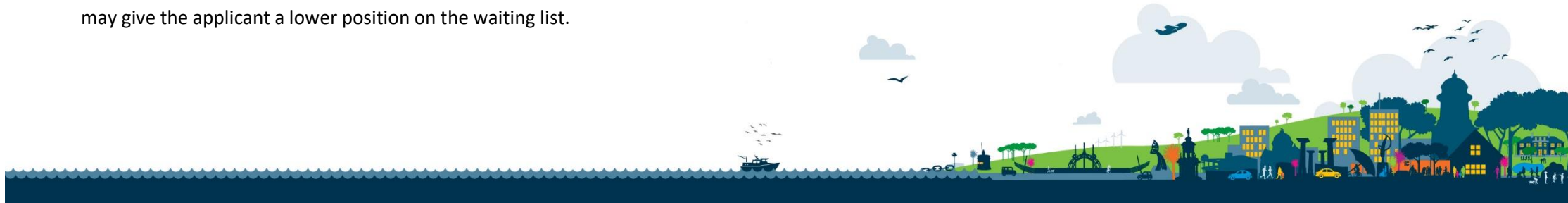
An applicant must inform Council if at any point during the application process their circumstances change significantly so that they may no longer meet the eligibility criteria. This includes if their assets go over the asset limit or if they develop complex medical needs. Applicants may be required to undergo further medical assessment to determine independence, at their own cost.

Existing tenants who have a change in circumstances relating to asset criteria may have this reflected in a market rental being implemented. If an existing tenant develops complex medical needs they are encouraged to inform Council so that these needs can be accommodated as much as possible. Where an existing tenant is no longer able to live independently, Council will work with the tenant and their whānau or next of kin (as appropriate) to help them find more suitable accommodation.

## Allocation of Rental Units

When a Rental Unit is vacated it will be offered to the next applicant on the list for whom it would be suitable. The applicant usually has five days to decide whether to accept. However, an extension may be given in certain circumstances.

Please note that whilst we will try to accommodate preferences and special requirements this is not always possible. If an applicant refuses a Rental Unit, Council may give the applicant a lower position on the waiting list.



Council will not allow shifts between Rental Units unless this will significantly improve the wellbeing of the tenant applying for the shift. For example, a tenant in Bluff requires ongoing medical assistance and moves to an Invercargill Rental Unit to accommodate this. Any change of tenancy in these circumstances would require the tenant to complete a new tenancy agreement and adhere to the current Policy.

## Making an Application

Applicants need to fill out the Elderly Persons Housing application form (available from Te Hīnaki Civic Building on Esk Street or Council's website – [www.icc.govt.nz](http://www.icc.govt.nz)). Council will require two independent character references, and confirmation of assets and income values. Council may also undertake credit reference checks or request further information to determine the applicant's assets and income eligibility, or require medical assessment to determine independence.

If the applicant meets the eligibility criteria they will be invited to have an informal interview with the Housing Officer to discuss their needs and any further requirements for the applicants.

Once the interview process is successfully completed they may be added to the wait list and Council will advise the applicant in writing about the outcome.

## Tenancies Act

Council will at all times comply with its legal duties as a landlord under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

When starting a new tenancy, Council will sign a tenancy agreement with the new tenant. Refer to the Tenancy Services website for a sample ([www.tenancy.govt.nz/forms-and-resources](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/forms-and-resources)). New tenants are encouraged to seek legal advice before signing the agreement.

Per the Tenancies Act, Council charges a bond of up to four weeks' rent payable before the tenant moves in.



## Council Supplied Facilities

Council provides various amenities. Further details can be found in the Tenant Information Booklet and individual Tenancy Agreements.

## Tenant Supplied Facilities

As a general rule tenants are to supply their own furniture. Further guidance can be found in the Tenant Information Booklet.

## Parking

Limited car parking is available for tenant use only. Car parks are generally not allocated to particular tenants or Rental Units (except in specific circumstances), so courtesy and co-operation over use of car parking is necessary. Tenants must inform Council of their vehicle's registration plate so it can be noted as a permitted vehicle.

Visitors to tenants (including service agents) may use the car parks briefly, for instance when collecting and dropping off tenants for shopping or appointments, but are asked not to use them for extended periods of time.

## Alterations

Tenants may not make any alterations to units without written permission, not to be unreasonably withheld, in accordance with the Tenancies Act.

## Repairs and maintenance

Council will carry out regular tenancy inspections to determine if any repairs or maintenance are required. Tenants should notify Council of any repairs or maintenance issues as soon as possible.





## Pets

No dogs are allowed, with the exception of a certified Disability Assist Dog.

Tenants may keep a cat (one only), a bird, or fish. When moving into a Rental Unit or if acquiring a cat, the tenant must provide Council with proof of desexing, microchipping, and vaccinations.

Tenants must not leave pet food out for long periods of time as this can attract mice, rats and other pests. Tenants are responsible for cleaning up after their pet in all circumstances.

If a pet is found to be causing a nuisance, Council may require the tenant to rehome it.

## Smoking

Council encourages a healthy community and clean air environment with a view to improving the health and wellbeing of its tenants. Smoking and vaping is not allowed inside any housing unit by any person.

All new tenancy agreements from the effective date of this policy will include a clause stating that smoking and vaping is banned.

No changes will be made to existing tenancy agreements regarding smoking as a result of this policy, but tenants are kindly reminded that they are requested not to smoke indoors.

## Welfare

Council acknowledges its role as landlord, and as such, will be diligent and accessible towards the general welfare of tenants.

It is not the responsibility of Council to provide social services to the tenants, as these services are better provided by other professional service providers.





Where Council staff are concerned about the health or welfare of any tenants, the next of kin / emergency contact will be contacted in the first instance.

## Privacy

Council will not enter a Housing Unit without the tenant's permission. The only exception to this is where proper notice has been given, or in an emergency.

## Rent

Rent is paid fortnightly, in advance. Tenants will be asked to pay rent up to the next billing cycle at the beginning of the tenancy, and then every fortnight from that time (preferably by automatic payment).

Rents are set by Council during the Annual Plan and Long Term Plan process and current rental amounts can be found under the Housing applications area on [www.icc.govt.nz](http://www.icc.govt.nz). Rents may differ between units based on the amenities provided.

### Rent Reviews:

Rent will not be increased in the first twelve months of a tenancy, but it will be reviewed annually thereafter.



**Revision History:**

N/A

**Effective Date:**

31 October 2023

**Review Period:**

This policy will be reviewed every six (6) years unless earlier review is required due to legislative change, or is warranted by another reason requested by Council.

**New Review Date:**

October 2029

**Associated Documents / References:**

Tenant Information Booklet (A4785624)

**Supersedes:**

N/A

**Reference Number:**

A4691619

**Policy Owner:**

Property Portfolio Manager

