

VISITORS POLICY

MAINSTREAM HOUSING

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline:

- Accordwest's requirements whenever tenants have a visitor at their property.
- Consequences for tenants who fail to manage a visitor's conduct.
- Actions that may be taken where tenants fail to inform Accordwest of long stay visitors and any changes to their household composition.
- Outline how Accordwest changes the status of a visitor to an additional occupant.

Definitions

Visitor

Any person (friends, children, family, associates, partner) who visits a tenant as a guest either on a fulltime basis for no more than 14 days, or on a part time basis for no more than one night per week over a longer term.

A visitor must have a permanent residence elsewhere that is not the Accordwest property.

Visitors are not included on Household Declaration Forms and are not required to pay rent. As such, tenants/residents will be responsible for the conduct and behaviour of their visitors, including any property damage caused.

Unauthorised occupant

A person who lives in an AccordWest property without providing the necessary disclosure and who has not been approved to be an additional occupant. Under the Residential Tenancy Agreement (lease agreement) and support requirements, Accordwest must be informed of household composition changes and failure to do so is unlawful. Tenants who do not report occupancy changes are at risk of committing rental fraud.

Overcrowding

Where, following the minimum number of bedrooms allocated to applicants under the Housing Allocations Policy, a household would require one or more additional bedrooms

to accommodate the household members, the household is considered to be overcrowded.

Additional occupant

A member of a household who has been approved by Accordwest to live in an Accordwest property with a tenant or who has become a co-tenant after a tenancy commenced.

Guiding Principals

Tenants are accountable for the actions and inactions of visitors to their home.

Accordwest:

- Has clear and consistent requirements for managing visitors.
- Is responsive to tenants' changing needs.
- Has consistent processes to manage requests for additional occupants and changes to household composition.
- Aims to ensure the suitability of its properties for household growth and change.
- Provides tenants with opportunities to appeal organisational decisions in order to ensure fair and transparent outcomes.
- Upholds accountability and transparency through its record keeping practices.

Policy

Visitor Rights and Restrictions

- Accordwest understands that tenants may occasionally want to have a friend or relative stay at their property. As long as it does not result in overcrowding and can be accounted for within the tenant's support plan, tenants will be permitted to have guests and visitors at their property for:
 - A period of up to 14 days, where a visitor stays at a property on a fulltime basis and has a principal place of residence elsewhere
 - No more than one night per week where a visitor stays at a property on a casual or part time basis.
- Community Housing tenants need to advise their Tenancy Officer if the stay of any visitors is to be a period of 14 days or more.
- Transitional Housing Tenants will be required to inform their support worker where they have a visitor and to confirm the length of stay (irrespective of how long) so that the support plan can be amended to include the visitor if required.

- All tenants/residents will be required to inform their Tenancy Officer and seek approval for an additional occupant if they want a visitor to stay for more than 14 days, or if they want a visitor to stay for more than one night per week on a regular basis.
- Tenants who do not inform their Tenancy Officer in writing, will be in breach of their lease agreement. The visitor may be considered an unauthorised occupant, which may result in termination of the tenancy.

Tenant Requests for Additional Occupants

- Tenants who wish to have another person live with them, whether on a short (over the 14 days), medium or longer term basis, must apply in writing and provide income details for the additional person/s and their household to Accordwest.
- The Tenancy Officer will be responsible for assessing and approving applications for additional occupants. In addition to household income, the tenancy officer will consider:
 - Property size and occupant capacity (application will be declined if it causes overcrowding).
 - The characteristics of existing tenants, occupants and the neighbourhood.
 - Whether all internal and external accommodation options have been explored.
 - Whether a household change would impact a tenant's eligibility.
 - Whether the proposed occupant is a former Accordwest tenant. Any people with a history of tenancy management issues or anti-social behaviour are unlikely to be approved.
 - If the current tenant is in rent arrears and/or has an outstanding non-rent debt (the application may not be approved until the arrears/debt has been paid).
- When an additional occupant is approved, tenants will be advised that the amount of rent they pay may increase. A rent review will be included as part of the application process; the rent will adjust from the very first payment due after the change. Should there be any delay in informing Accordwest of the change, the rent increase will be backdated to the date of the change.

Tenant Responsibility for Visitors

- Tenants are responsible for their visitors and for ensuring they follow tenancy requirements.
- Where a visitor breaches a lease, the tenant will be responsible and the breach will be issued in the tenant's name against the lease agreement.
- Tenants will be responsible for the costs of any property damage, cleaning, repairs or maintenance work required as a result of a visitor.

Appeals Process

- Tenants have the right to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services that they have received from Accordwest. If you do not agree with any of our decisions or actions, you can appeal using our *Appeals Policy (HHPP006)*.
- Accordwest staff will store any information relating to visitors and/or information relating to appeals/issues/incidents in the tenancy management system.



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Office hours
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If you are deaf, or have difficulty speaking or hearing English,
we are committed to helping you to access our services.

Accordwest acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and
traditional custodians of the land we live, learn and work.



Agencies for South West Accommodation (ASWA) Inc. trading as Accordwest
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