

Good neighbours

North Coast Community Housing will aim to resolve neighbourhood disputes and behaviours which impact adversely on other residents in a manner which is respectful of the rights of all parties.

NCCH will aim to determine the relevant issues without judgement and will attempt to find a resolution which seeks to improve the outcomes for all parties involved. NCCH also commits to working in partnership with other services to enhance community well being through shared skills and resources where appropriate.

NCCH recognises the need to embrace a holistic approach to enhancing community well being through resident participation, partnering with support services and mediation. NCCH will adopt a range of methods which will include prevention, intervention, support and enforcement, as outlined below, to manage negative behaviour in the community.

Prevention

- Communicate acceptable standards of behaviour to new tenants using our residential tenancy agreements, standard sign-up procedures, NCCH Tenant Handbook, factsheets, newsletters and our website.
- Encourage resident feedback, communication and participation, including the encouragement of the establishment of local tenant committees and councils in apartments
- Work with tenants to improve their environment through regular property inspections and client service visits.
- Devote particular attention to providing information and advice to tenants about the impact of behaviours on neighbours in higher-density living
- Take opportunities to promote the NCCH "Good Neighbour" policies at relevant events, eg the celebration of national and international Good Neighbour days
- Identify and support tenants needing assistance by providing support directly or by referring to specialist agencies and support groups.
- Use sensitive and flexible local allocation strategies wherever necessary.
- Promote and encourage neighbourhood strategies which have enhanced resident satisfaction.

Intervention

- Sustain tenancies through resolution, and view termination as a "last resort".
- Mediate in common, less-serious matters of dispute between tenants of NCCH.
- Use professional mediation services to resolve major and ongoing disputes (where the parties are willing to participate).
- Refer residents to support services and programs where appropriate.
- Provide information to all parties about their rights under the law and relevant NCCH policies and procedures

- Consider transfers, where other measures (such as mediation and referrals) have failed to resolve issues and a transfer is considered to be an appropriate response and in line with NCCH's (internal) Management Transfer policies.

Support

- Provide a confidential and non-judgemental method to report and investigate incidents and disputes
- Contact or refer residents to appropriate support services where applicable.
- Provide feedback where possible of proposed actions taken to resolve issues, and provide information about timeframes
- Actively encourage and support residents (to resolve neighbourhood disputes directly in a constructive and non-confrontational manner.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with partner agencies including, but not limited to, welfare services, education, police and health services.

Enforcement

- Use enforcement where prevention, intervention and support measures have failed or were deemed to be inappropriate.
- Apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) to address persistent and or serious breaches of the current Residential Tenancies legislation. Applications may be for Specific Performance Orders or Possession Orders, with appropriate delegation, dependent on individual circumstances.

Complainants

NCCH appreciates the importance of supporting complainants. NCCH staff will respond promptly to complainants.

Complainants have the right to expect that personal information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner. Wherever possible, NCCH will maintain confidentiality as a fundamental principle, however, we may not be able to do this where the complaint involves child protection issues, risk of violence or harm, criminal activity, fraud or legal proceedings.

All reported incidents will be investigated; however enforcement action can only be taken where incidents are able to be substantiated and where the behaviour is a breach of the current Residential Tenancy Agreement.

Safety

- The personal safety of residents, staff and contractors will be prioritised in the application of these rules:
 - All staff investigating complaints must consider all associated risks and check tenancy database information prior to an investigation commencing.
 - It is the responsibility of all staff members to withdraw from any potentially dangerous situation and report immediately to their manager. The incident should also be recorded on Complispace and, in consultation with the manager, be escalated to a future two person visit on the tenancy database where appropriate.
 - Appropriate service restrictions and boundaries may be imposed on residents where deemed necessary, according to delegation.
- Threats, abuse, intimidation or harassment to staff or contractors by residents are not acceptable to NCCH. Action may be taken under the current Residential Tenancies legislation if warranted.

Ethical behaviour and tenants rights

The policy will ensure that all clients are treated in a fair, equitable and transparent manner. All tenants will be afforded natural justice and due process.

INFORMATION	
Title	Good neighbours
Section	Housing Services
National Regulatory Code Evidence Guideline	Performance Outcome 1: Tenant and Housing Services
National Community Housing Standard	Standard 1.2 Establishing and maintaining tenancies
Last review	31 July 2014
Next review	31 July 2016
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