

Guidance Note

Class 1: Social Landlord

What sets you apart?

Purpose of this guidance note

This guidance note is intended to outline what it is that typically differentiates a Class 1: Social Landlord from a private landlord.

Introduction

Key objectives of the social housing system are to better integrate a tenant's housing need with other services, and encourage and enable social housing tenants to achieve housing independence; where possible helping them move through the housing continuum.

This is largely achieved through the work of a social landlord, who cares about the outcomes of their tenants.

For the most part, a private landlord will:

- choose tenants based on their own preference
- enter into a Tenancy Agreement with their tenants
- lodge the bond with Tenancy Services
- collect the rent
- maintain the property
- apply to the Tenancy Tribunal as necessary to settle disputes.

It is essentially an exchange of the use of a house for the payment of rent.

What is a social landlord?

By contrast, a social landlord largely performs the same basic activities as a private landlord, but with an additional focus on achieving the best outcomes for their tenants. Social landlords help tenants feel settled in their home and more connected with their community, providing stable housing for the duration of need.

Key characteristics of a good social landlord

In our view, the key characteristics of a good social landlord are to:

- provide a warm, safe and dry home
- allocate housing based on need, either through the Ministry of Social Development process for IRRS tenants, or your own allocation policy for non-IRRS tenants
- provide security of tenure or housing for the duration of a tenant's need
- navigate tenants to appropriate support services such as, budgeting and financial assistance, employment support, mental health and disability services, as well as engage with tenants to ensure they are able to access these services
- be trustworthy, fair and consistent in dealing with tenants
- provide pathways to housing independence where appropriate
- provide early intervention around rent arrears or other issues, to enable tenants to successfully manage their tenancy
- provide information so tenants know their rights and obligations and are prepared, if and when they enter the private rental market
- provide information to tenants about maintaining a healthy home (e.g. ventilation, hanging washing outside, rubbish disposal etc.)
- regularly inspect properties and, if tenants are not meeting their obligations, give them an explanation of the issue and what they can do to remedy it

- be receptive to complaints and committed to investigating them, following a well-documented process
- apply to the Tenancy Tribunal only as a last resort to settle disputes
- provide responsive and adequate property maintenance
- provide opportunities for tenant involvement in your organisation (e.g. tenant surveys, tenant representation on the Board, exit interviews with tenants)
- provide easy methods of communication with tenants.

Finally, the other key characteristic of social landlords is that they have a dedicated focus on the provision of housing services, and that these are separate from any other services that they may offer as part of their wider business operations. Please refer to our [Guidance Note](#) on the separation of services for further information.

Further information

If you have any questions, please contact us at chra@hud.govt.nz.