

POLICY & PROCEDURE:

OCCUPANCY STANDARDS
Program Policy
Community and Social Services Division
Community Housing Department

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:

Social Housing Reform Act
O. Reg 298/01 S.67, 76, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 33
Rent Geared To Income Guidelines: Section 5

INTENT:

1. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for housing providers and staff in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, direction on determining the size and type of unit a household is eligible to receive as a Rent Geared to Income unit as per Section 67 and 76 of the Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA).

CRITERIA:

1. The Service Manager (United Counties of Leeds and Grenville) has the authority under the SHRA to determine what size of unit a Rent Geared to Income household is eligible for. This is known as ***Occupancy Standards***.

STANDARDS:

1. **Maximum Occupancy Standards**
 - a. The largest size unit that a household is eligible for is:
 - i. 1 bedroom for any 2 members of the household who are spouses/same sex partners;
 - ii. 1 bedroom for each additional member
 - b. An additional bedroom is provided if:
 - i. One of the spouse or same sex partners requires a separate bedroom because of a disability or medical condition (see Section 9.0 for definition & clarification).
 - ii. To store equipment required by a member of the household because of a medical condition. (See Section 9.0 for definition and guidelines).

STANDARDS: (continued)

- iii. To accommodate an individual who provides a member of the household with support services.
- iv. A member of the household is pregnant.
- c. An additional bedroom for a child is provided if:
 - i. A member of the household has joint custody over a child who is not a member of the household.
 - ii. A member of the household has visiting rights with respect to a child and it is a condition of the visiting rights that adequate accommodation for the child must be provided when the child stays overnight, the child will stay overnight frequently and the bedroom is required to accommodate the child.

2. Minimum Occupancy Standards:

- a. The smallest unit that an applicant would be eligible for:
 - i. The smallest unit is defined as “one bedroom for every two members of the household.”
 - ii. An additional bedroom if there are an odd number of members of the household.
 - iii. If the household consists of one individual or two individuals who are spouses or same sex partners, the smallest unit the household is eligible for is a bachelor unit.
 - iv. Children should be of the same sex and not have a difference in age of more than five years in order to share a bedroom.

OCCUPANCY REQUESTS:

- 1. A household may request a particular unit size within the range for which they are eligible. A prospective tenant/member may indicate their preference of unit size, but otherwise the default is the provincial standard.

OVER-HOUSED HOUSEHOLDS:

1. If a household is occupying a unit larger than they would normally be entitled to under local occupancy standards, the housing provider will give the household written notice to advise of their ineligibility for the unit they currently occupy. The letter will advise the tenant / member that they will be placed on the list for internal transfer / portfolio management within the current housing providers portfolio.

STUDENTS LIVING AWAY FROM HOME:

1. Circumstances in which a student living from home is considered a member of the household for the purpose of occupancy standards:
 - a. Full time attendance at a recognized educational institution and, while in attendance does not live with the household.
 - b. Lives with the household while not attending that educational institution.
 - c. Dependent, in whole or in part, on the household for financial support.

ABSENCE FROM UNIT:

1. The service manager has the authority to set a maximum absence period from a unit for continued eligibility for rent geared to income assistance. The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville's standard for maximum absence period is ninety (90) days.
2. All members of the household must be absent from the unit for 90 days consecutively for this rule to apply.
3. If a member of the household is absent from the unit as a result of a medical reason, the absence period will be extended at the discretion of the housing provider.
4. If all members of the household are absent from the unit as a result of the absence of one member because of medical reasons, the absence period may be extended at the discretion of the housing provider.

QUALIFYING MEDICAL CONDITION:

1. To qualify for an additional bedroom for medical reasons the service manager must be satisfied that there is a compelling and ongoing need for the additional space. Written requests must be accompanied by verification from a qualified medical practitioner.

QUALIFYING MEDICAL CONDITION: (continued)

2. For medical conditions that may be adversely affected by sharing a room, the medical verification must indicate the nature of the condition, the degree of severity, and how the person's condition would be aggravated by sharing a bedroom.
3. Occupants preferring different temperature or air quality condition does not constitute a sufficient medical condition.
4. Noise disturbance interfering with sleep must be severe.
5. For conditions requiring additional space for medical equipment, the need for the equipment must be medically verified and the equipment must either:
 - a) Present a danger to anyone sharing the bedroom.
 - b) Encompass 30% of the area of the bedroom.
6. For conditions requiring a person to have attendant care between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., the need for an additional bedroom will be assessed based on the length of time the care will be required and other relevant factors. Approval must be obtained from the Team Leader/Housing Manager/Administrator.
7. Each request for additional space under this clause will be evaluated on its merits by the housing provider involved.
8. If the result of a request for additional space is a negative decision, which is based on 3rd party information, the tenant/ member must be provided with a 30-day period to have an "Opportunity To Comment". (See Policy: Opportunity to Comment and Internal Review)
9. All requests to the Service Manager must be in writing and accompanied by a copy of the original request, the medical certificate, and the housing provider's written decision.
10. The applicant will have 30 days from receipt of the housing providers' decision to appeal to the service manager.

Reviewed and Approved By:

Deborah Gill
Manager, Program Review/Quality Assurance
Department

Date

Dorothy Theobald
Director, Community and Social Services Division

Date