



## Housing assistance for children in need of protection

The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) is committed to responding to referrals for housing assistance from the Child Safety Services for a child in need of protection. A child in need of protection includes:

- a child who is at risk of being removed from their family
- an unborn child who is at risk of being removed from their family after birth
- a child who is living with an approved foster or kinship carer but is returning to live with their family
- a child who is living with an approved foster or kinship carer, or
- a young person transitioning from care.

All referrals for housing assistance will be considered jointly between Housing Services and the Child Safety Services to determine the most appropriate housing response. All types of housing assistance will be considered to address the housing and support needs, for example social housing or bond loan assistance to rent privately.

### **The referral process**

Child Safety Services uses the referral process to request housing assistance for a child in need of protection.

1. Child Safety Services will forward a written referral for housing assistance to Housing Services after identifying that a child is in need of protection and that housing assistance will address the protective needs of the child.
2. After the referral is received, Housing Services and Child Safety Services will develop a Joint Action Plan to determine:
  - the level of urgency of the housing need
  - what form of housing assistance the child in need of protection requires, and
  - the timeframe for the housing assistance.

You can also request to be part of the referral process.

Child Safety Services will advise you of the outcome of the referral process. After the Joint Action Plan is completed:

- If social housing is considered the most appropriate housing response for the child, you will need to complete an Application for Housing Assistance. If your application is approved, your application is placed on the housing register consistent with your level of housing need.
- If social housing is not considered the appropriate housing response, we will assist you to apply for other housing assistance. For example, if a bond loan is the most appropriate housing response, you will need to complete the Private Rental Assistance Application form.

If you apply directly to Housing Services for housing assistance on the grounds of children in need of protection, but without a referral from Child Safety Services, your application will be assessed against the eligibility criteria for housing assistance.

If you are eligible, your application is placed on the housing register consistent with your level of housing need.

**Note:** Applicants referred for housing assistance through the referral process on the grounds of children in need of protection and who are eligible for housing assistance may be placed ahead of other applicants on the housing register if it is determined in the Joint Action Plan that you have an urgent need for housing assistance.

### **Applying for a transfer on the grounds of children in need of protection**

If you apply for a transfer on the grounds of children in need of protection without a referral from Child Safety Services, your transfer application is assessed against the transfer eligibility criteria and placed on the housing register consistent with your level of housing need.

If your transfer application indicates that you may be eligible for a transfer on the grounds of children in need of protection, Housing Services will explain the referral process to you and refer you to Child Safety Services. **Note:** Applicants eligible for a transfer on the grounds of children in need of protection may be placed ahead of other applicants on the housing register if it is determined in the Joint Action Plan that you have an urgent need for housing assistance.

### **Appealing decisions**

You can ask for any decision about your housing application to be reviewed if you think the decision is wrong. This is called an appeal. The appeal will be managed within Housing Services by an officer senior to the original decision-maker. For more information on the appeals process, see the fact sheet *How to appeal* or talk to your nearest Housing Services office.

### **Further information**

Please contact your nearest Housing Services office.