



Rent Account Management Policy

Policy Intent

The purpose of this Policy is to obtain statewide consistency on how Public Housing rent accounts are managed.

Rent Arrears

Housing Tasmania funds a significant proportion of its operations, including maintenance of properties, from rent payments collected from tenants. Rental arrears can be a serious problem as they limit Housing Tasmania's ability to provide services.

Rental arrears can also be a serious problem for tenants as they may place their tenancy at risk and even result in eviction.

Rental arrears occur when:

- A payment is not received by the due date;
- A payment has been underpaid; or
- A tenant contribution increases which has been backdated.

If tenants have nominated to pay weekly, they are required to pay one week in advance. If they have nominated to pay fortnightly they are required to pay one fortnight in advance. If they have nominated to pay monthly they are required to pay one month in advance. This will provide sufficient funds on their account to cover the week(s) when they are not required to make a payment. As soon as a payment is missed or underpaid, the account is considered to be in rental arrears.

Tenants cannot have a negative balance on their account at any time.

Arrears Management

Housing Tasmania adopts an early intervention strategy for arrears management and follows a 5 step process.

If a tenant is in rental arrears and defaults on an agreement, the Tenancy Officer is to take the next step in the arrears management process.

These steps are followed until the tenant clears their rental arrears. If the tenant continually defaults and does not clear their rental arrears, the Tenancy Officer may need to proceed with the Eviction process.

Backdating

Under condition 3.1 (e) of the lease the tenant is required to provide current proof of income immediately when:

- The tenant's income changes;
- The income of another member of the tenant's household changes;
or



- Housing Tasmania request it.

When the tenant provides Housing Tasmania with the information that their household income has changed, the Tenancy Officer will adjust the tenant contribution. The tenant contribution will be adjusted to the date the income changed. This may result in a backdate.

A backdate to the tenant's rental account will usually result in rental arrears. When this occurs, the normal arrears management processes are followed.

For further information relating to this policy please email the helpdesk housing.policyhelpdesk@dhhs.tas.gov.au