



TENANT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy Number	QA04
Version	2
Date	December 2018
Review Date	December 2020

1 Purpose

This policy identifies how Access 2 Place Housing (A2P) will seek feedback from tenants, consult on management changes that impact on their housing and encourage participation in the decision making of the organisation. This policy also identifies how A2P will undertake tenant engagement strategies to support and promote sustainable tenancies; and encourage community inclusion and connection.

2 Context

A2P is committed to providing a high level of service to tenants and recognises that it is more likely to effectively meet the needs of tenants if they are provided with opportunities to offer information and advice about services that A2P delivers to them. A high level of service can only come through tenant participation in the planning and delivery of housing services in a variety of accessible ways. A2P is also committed to creating opportunities for tenants to participate in activities that create opportunities for creating community, inclusion and connection.

In addition to organisational objectives, A2P has tenant engagement requirements that it must meet as a National Regulatory System (NRS) Tier 2 Provider and as a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) registered service provider.

This policy has a focus on engaging with individuals and compliments the *A2P Community Engagement Policy* which has a greater focus on engagement with communities. This policy also informs the *A2P Engagement Strategy*.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all A2P staff and all A2P tenants. Tenant Engagement initiatives and activities will be within the scale and scope of A2P business.

4 Risk

Without a Tenant Engagement Policy, there is a risk that A2P will not maintain a high level of service provision that continue to meet tenant needs, due to a paucity of tenant involvement in decision making and planning. There is also a risk that A2P will fail to meet NRS and NDIS regulatory obligations and performance indicators.

5 Policy Detail

5.1 General Principles

All staff will engage with tenants in accordance with the *A2P Code of Conduct Policy*, *A2P Service Charter* and the *A2P Tenant Charter (in development)*.

A2P will undertake tenant engagement in a manner that reflects best practice.

A2P is committed to the involvement of tenants in the planning, delivery, evaluation and management of the organisation. Tenant engagement activities will provide genuine, meaningful and appropriate opportunities for tenants to be informed of A2P services, to participate in inclusion activities and provide feedback on the future direction of A2P.



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A2P will develop and maintain an *A2P Engagement Strategy* that identifies a variety of tenant engagement activities and initiatives to maximise tenant engagement and participation.

A2P will, through its continuous improvement process, actively look for ways to increase tenant participation.

A2P will keep tenants informed of current events and publish the results of any tenant engagement activities, such as surveys, questionnaires, evaluations through the organisational newsletter and website.

Tenant participation is voluntary. A2P acknowledges that tenants have different needs and wants in relation to engagement and inclusion and will respect the rights of tenants who choose not to be involved in tenant engagement opportunities.

A2P aims to minimise barriers to tenant participation and encourage diversity within tenant engagement endeavours. This includes:

- Consideration of language, physical, cognitive, cultural and financial impacts and needs within engagement activities.
- Holding meetings at accessible locations and in places that are close to public transport.
- Competent facilitation of meetings to promote equal participation and contribution.
- Alternative models of participation that do not require travel, such as a survey.

5.2 Regulatory Requirements

5.2.1 National Regulatory System (NRS)

A2P will meet NRS requirements relating to supporting tenant engagement (Performance Outcome 1d) through:

- Involving tenants and residents in the planning and delivery of housing services in a variety of accessible ways.
- Promoting appropriate opportunities for tenants and residents to be involved in their community.
- Obtaining feedback from tenants and residents on its services and consulting them on proposals that will affect them.

As a Tier 2 Provider, this means developing:

- Formal mechanisms such as governing body position(s), representative forum or tenant advocate position.
- A tenant survey is conducted at least every two years with positive outcomes for feedback and consultation opportunities.

5.2.2 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

A2P will meet NDIS requirements relating to supporting tenant engagement (relative to scope and scale of A2P service provision) through ensuring that:

- Each participant's legal and human rights are understood and incorporated into everyday practice.
- Communication with each participant is provided in the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand.



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- Each participant is supported to engage with their family, friends and chosen community as directed by the participant.
- Active decision-making and individual choice are supported for each participant including the timely provision of information using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is likely to understand.
- Each participant's right to dignity of risk in decision making is supported. When needed, each participant is supported to make informed choices about the benefits and risks of the housing options under consideration.
- Each participant's autonomy is respected.
- Each participant has enough time to consider and review their housing services options and seek advice if required.
- Each participant's right to access an advocate (including an independent advocate) of their choosing is supported, as is their right to have the advocate present.
- Each participant is supported to understand their service agreement and conditions using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand.

5.3 Sustaining Tenancies and Disruptive Behaviour

A2P believes that everyone has the right to enjoy reasonable peace, comfort and privacy in their home. A2P will support our staff to make proactive decisions to resolve difficult situations as early as possible and with sensitivity to people's differing needs.

A2P will adopt a 'sustaining tenancies' approach¹ when engaging with tenants in matters related to disruptive behaviour. A sustaining tenancies approach has a focus on strategies for organisational learning, adequate tenancy staff training, information management and preventative strategies. Staff are required to refer to the Sustaining Tenancies and Disruptive Behaviour Procedure (to be developed).

5.4 Tenant Feedback

A2P will provide a range of options to tenants to provide feedback, including:

- Tenant surveys.
- Ongoing maintenance contractor satisfaction.
- Via the appeals and the complaints process.
- Regular property inspections.
- A2P staff member via phone or email.

When managing complaints, all staff are required to act in accordance with the *A2P Dealing with Complaints* policy.

¹ How Can demanding behaviour in public housing be managed effectively? Issue 94 AHURI 2007



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5.5 Collaboration

A2P will work in collaboration with support providers and other community organisations to promote positive economic and social outcomes for tenants and the community.

5.6 Data Collection and Reporting

A2P will maintain effective data collection and reporting systems to ensure accurate records are kept for organisational and compliance requirements.

All staff must manage tenant information in accordance with the *A2P Record Retention Policy* and the *A2P Information Management Policy (in development)*.

5.7 Responsibilities

Tenant Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are responsible for working in an inclusive way that encourages tenant engagement and participation. The Operations Manager is responsible for supervising the planning, implementation and review of the engagement strategy. The Tenant Engagement Coordinator is responsible for the planning, implementation and review of the Engagement Strategy.
Sustaining Tenancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tenant Engagement Coordinator is responsible for engaging with tenants in relation to complaints and disruptive behaviour to support sustainable tenancies. The Tenant Engagement Coordinator is responsible for preventative strategies in relation to disruptive behaviour. The Operations Manager is responsible for supervising the planning, implementation and review of sustaining tenancy activities and initiatives.
Data Collection	The Tenant Engagement Coordinator be responsible for maintaining the collection of accurate data and provide it to the Operations Manager for compliance requirements.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tenant Engagement Coordinator is responsible for reporting to the Operations Manager on matters related to tenant engagement activities and initiatives. The Operations Manager is responsible for reporting to the CEO on matters related to tenant engagement activities and initiatives.



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6 Procedure

Refer to the 'A2P Sustaining Tenancies and Disruptive Behaviour' Procedure (to be developed).

7 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, **Tenant Engagement** refers to ensuring tenants are actively engaged in influencing A2P housing services.

8 Reference Documents and Links

8.1 Directive Documents

- A2P Strategic Plan 2015-2020
- A2P Service Charter
- NRS Evidence Guidelines
- NDIS Practice Standards and Rules.

8.2 Supportive Documents

- How Can demanding behaviour in public housing be managed effectively? Issue 94 AHURI 2007
- A sustaining tenancies approach to managing demanding behaviour in public housing: a good practice guide, Daphne Habibis, Rowland Atkinson, Terry Dunbar, Dan Goss, Hazel Easthope and Paul Maginn for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Southern Research Centre, July 2007 AHURI Final Report No. 103

8.3 Related Documents and Resources

A2P Tenant Wellbeing and Reporting Policy,
 A2P Record Retention Policy,
 A2P Dealing with Complaints Policy,
 A2P Community Engagement Policy,
 A2P Engagement Strategy,
 A2P Tenant Charter,
 A2P Tenancy Management Policy (in development)

9 Policy Approval

Content Author:	Delegated Authority:	
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Position: Policy Consultant	Position: CEO	
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10 Revision History

Date	Version	Author / Amended By	Comments / Review History
June 2016	1	Lyndi Gepp	G308 Tenant Engagement Policy and Procedures
September 2018	2	Rebecca Chapman	G308 reviewed and reformatted to new policy template. Significant amendments made to support NDIS & NRS requirements; and development of an Engagement strategy.