



## Charter of Client Rights and Responsibilities Policy

ASES Standard	<p><b>Standard 7: Service Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirement 7.1 Outcomes Monitored Standard</li> </ul> <p><b>Standard 8: Consumer Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirement 8.1 Consumer and Community Engagement Standard</li> </ul>
Contractual Obligation(s)	NSW DCJ Specialist Homelessness Services Funding Agreement: Lead Entity and/or Joint Working Agreements
Related Policies	Client Feedback Client Intake Complaints Management Service Access

### 1. SCOPE

The scope of this policy includes all people requesting or receiving a service from SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation.

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline a clear expectation for all staff and volunteers of SEARMS to comprehend and inform clients and or tenants and prospective clients and/or tenants of their rights and responsibilities in relation to requesting and receiving services from the organisation.

### 3. POLICY

SEARMS retains a Charter of Rights and Responsibilities (SEARMS Service Charter) that applies to all people requesting or receiving a service from the organisation. The SEARMS Service Charter is the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities that are distributed within the organisation that cover the Rights and Responsibilities of all Client, Tenant and community members that access our services.

<b>Charter of Rights and Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Be treated with respect and dignity in a way that's fair and free from discrimination	Paying your fees/invoices on time (including rent, water usage)
Have access to safe, affordable and secure housing and/or Housing Supports	Treat our staff, volunteers and service partners with respect and dignity
Be informed about changes that impact the service that you receive	Being respectful and considerate of others

Be consulted on your housing needs and preferences	Letting us know as soon as there's a change to your living or financial situation
Have the right to make a complaint or appeal, without fear of retaliation	Keeping the property leased clean, free of pests and damage
Have the right to use an advocacy service	Paying for any damage caused by you or your guests
Have access to your information we have on file	Not making alterations or additions without the owner's permission (including removing or adding a lock or security device)
Participate in the organisation and contribute to decision-making	Reporting any required maintenance or damage to the property as soon as it occurs and providing uninhibited access to our staff and trades
Be provided with services that are in line with current legislation	Informing us when you're going away for more than four weeks or no longer require a service
Be given a copy of your residential tenancy or occupancy agreement, a condition report, and the NSW Fair Trading New Tenant Checklist where applicable	Allowing access for property inspections, condition assessments, scopes and safety compliance checks
Your personal privacy will be respected and confidentiality protected, except when we have a legal obligation (we will explain what this means when you use the service)	Abiding by the terms provided in your lease/occupancy agreement in line with the SEARMS policies and this charter
You have the right to use our service if it matches your needs and what we are funded to provide	Being an active participant in the service
We will work in partnership with you to identify your needs and develop a plan with you and other agencies to meet those needs	Attend the service not under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
We will advise you of your rights and responsibilities when you receive a service from us	You will not create any hazards physical, verbal or emotional
You will be provided opportunities to take an active role in the decision-making processes of our service	You ensure your visitors, Family and associates behave appropriately when engaging on your behalf
We will provide a service that meet health and safety requirements	You provide adequate written notice if you no longer wish to receive a service from SEARMS including tenancy (property relinquishment)
You have the right to provide feedback to the service	Try to engage calmly and respectfully with staff to rectify any grievances

All staff and volunteers are made aware of the SEARMS Service Charter and are expected to uphold the rights of clients and/or tenants in all aspects of their work.

All clients and/or tenants are made aware of their rights and responsibilities, at service entry, in a way that is aligned with their communication needs. If required, SEARMS provides the SEARMS Service Charter in alternative formats, or in translations into community languages.

To support the implementation of the SEARMS Service Charter, SEARMS:

- ensures that the organisation can adequately deliver the rights statements identified in the Service Charter
- implements processes at service entry to ensure that all clients and/or tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities
- encourages regular feedback from clients, tenants and other stakeholders regarding the service provided
- encourages client and/or tenant participation in improving services
- provides an integrated service response with external service providers to meet the identified needs of clients and to uphold their rights
- employs skilled staff who respect the clients' and/or tenant rights and who understand the organisation's responsibilities to clients and/or tenants
- raises awareness about the Services Charter with all staff and volunteers at induction, in team meetings, through training and in regular supervision.

## 4. PROCEDURE

SEARMS understands and supports the principles of fairness and human rights in all aspects of service delivery. It ensures that services are provided in an environment that is free from discrimination, financial, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation.

### 1. Charter distribution

The Service Charter is provided to all clients upon their entry to the service. To ensure that clients understand the Service Charter contents, the following strategies are applied:

- The client's and/or tenants worker explains each point in a manner that is aligned with the client's and/or tenants communication needs. This may mean providing the Service Charter in alternative formats, such as in plain English, Braille or translated into a community language.
- If required, an interpreter is engaged to explain the Service Charter in another language verbally.
- The client and/or tenant is provided with the Service Charter in writing and, if needed, in an alternative or translated format.
- A copy of the Service Charter and SEARMS's complaints policy is provided in the client's and/or tenant onboarding Pack as a tenant starter pack or within the Personal Journey Booklet.
- All clients and/or tenants are asked to sign a copy of the Service Charter to ensure that they have understood their rights and responsibilities.

### 2. Charter access

The Service Charter is made accessible through the following mechanisms

- displaying it in key areas of the service's premises, where clients, tenants and community members will see it
- making it available in accessible formats or in other languages
- offering copies to individual clients
- explaining it to clients and/or tenants as part of the assessment process.

### 3. Ongoing monitoring of the Service Charter implementation

- Staff are reminded of the Service Charter at the team meeting and in supervision sessions. They are provided an opportunity to clarify its application in any specific situation that they may be experiencing with clients and/or tenants and, if needed, to receive further training.
- Clients and/or tenants are occasionally reminded of the Service Charter by an allocated staff member working with them as a part of case reviews; clients and/or tenants are asked whether they feel that their rights are being respected. SEARMS will act promptly to address any concerns that a client and/or tenant raises in relation to their rights not being respected.
- If a client and/or tenant is not following their responsibilities, SEARMS will go over the responsibilities with the client and/or tenant again in a manner that is aligned with the client's and/or tenants communication needs. Allocated staff will work with each client and/or tenant to support them in complying with their responsibilities. If the client and/or tenant is still unable to meet his or her responsibilities, then the effects of this will be assessed at the workplace—such as in relation to workplace health and safety, service capacity and efficiency—by Chief Services Officer. The client's and/or tenants non-compliance with his or her responsibilities will be raised with the client and/or tenant, along with the consequences of further non-compliance.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Delegation
Ensure policy and procedure adherence	Chief Services Officer
Obtain client consent	Housing Officer
Conduct intake process Tenant	Housing Officer
Conduct intake process SHS Client	SHS Case Worker

## 6. LEGISLATION

- Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW)

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2010-042>

- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00143>

- Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cwlth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2012A00197>

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00034>

- NSW Ombudsman Act 1974 (Cwlth)

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/inforce/e2aba61e-c735-e89a-b8a2-f1b2328c0938/1974-68.pdf>

## 8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Tenant Starter Pack

Appendix 2: Personal Journey Booklet

## 9. FURTHER RESOURCES

- SHS Practice Guideline (2014) Module 3

[https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/327996/GHSHPracticeGuidelines.pdf](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/327996/GHSHPracticeGuidelines.pdf)

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