



Far North  
District Council

# HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

# POLICIES AND INFORMATION

**FAR NORTH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Document Control:**

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## **FAR NORTH DISTRICT COUNCIL'S HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY POLICY:**

The Council's aim is to ensure that adequate facilities are provided for older people. At the present time it does this through providing 147 Pensioner Housing units at 12 locations within the district.

The Council's Housing for the Elderly Funding Policy requires the activity to be funded from rents received. Council endeavours to keep rents as low as possible while providing units that are well maintained and presented.

Council plans to increase rents every year on the 1<sup>st</sup> October by the June Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The following lists the location and the current rents for tenants that meet Council's Housing for the Elderly criteria as at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Type of Unit</b>	<b>Weekly Rent</b>
Kaikohe, Kerikeri, Rawene	Bedsit unit	\$111.60
Ahipara, Awanui, Horeke, Kawakawa, Oxford St, Puckey Ave, Rawene, Kohukohu, Waima	One bedroom unit	\$116.90
Kaikohe, Omapere, Kerikeri	One bedroom unit – larger bedroom	\$120.10
All complexes	Couples	\$124.10

### **1) FEATURES OF THE UNITS:**

#### **LAYOUT:**

All units have a kitchen with electric stove and a separate room containing shower and/or bath and toilet. Some units have a separate bedroom, either single or double while others are bed sitter layout.

#### **BLINDS AND CURTAINS:**

Council do not provide blinds or curtains. Any items left by the previous tenant, become the new tenants property. Council provides curtain rails in the lounge and bedroom areas.

#### **CLOTHES LINES:**

Clotheslines are provided at all locations for the shared use of the tenants.

**FLOOR COVERINGS:**

Vinyl floor covering is provided in the kitchen and bathroom.  
Carpet is provided in the lounge and bedroom areas.

**HEATING/COOLING:**

Some units have heaters wired in and these will be maintained by the Council. The Council does not intend to install further heaters so in any unit where there is no fixed heater the tenant will need to provide their own.

Tenants will also need to provide their own fans or other cooling equipment.

Insulation: All Pensioner units have under floor, ceiling insulation and hot water cylinder insulation wrap.

**LAUNDRY FACILITIES:**

The Kaikohe units have a communal laundry facility with washing machines and dryers. These laundry facilities are for the use of tenants only. Tokens for the use of these facilities are available from the Council office in Kaikohe. The Council does not provide washing machines or dryers at any other locations so tenants will need to provide their own appliances.

**REFRIGERATORS:**

The Council does not provide refrigerators or freezers in any units. Incoming tenants are responsible for the purchase and maintenance of their own appliances.

**TELEVISION AERIALS:**

The Council does not currently supply television aerials for individual tenants.

**2) CRITERIA FOR TENANCY:****ELIGIBLE AGE:**

Housing priority will be given to persons 60 years old and above.

However, if a unit remains empty for more than one month despite all reasonable attempts to find an eligible tenant Council will consider tenants who do not meet the age criteria. These tenants will be on a 6 month fixed term tenancy agreement and will pay market rent. At the end of their tenancy these agreements will be reviewed and terminated if Council has received an application that meets Council's pensioner housing age criteria. Market rents for this type of tenancy are listed at the back of this document.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS;**

- A health condition exists which is not compatible with the current accommodation arrangements e.g. hospital requirements, need to be near family
- Current accommodation is some form of emergency housing, overcrowded, substandard or unhealthy
- Unable to afford private rental accommodation and has limited financial resources

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:**

- Evidence of financial status is required such as bank account statements, proof of income, details of properties and assets owned
- Proof of identification
- A supporting letter from a medical practitioner
- References from previous landlords and a character reference

## **3) APPLICATION PROCESS:**

- An application form can be posted out (please phone our Contact Centre to request one) or collected from any Council Service Centre.
- Once completed, the Application Form can be dropped into any Council Service Centre or posted to the address on the form.
- The completed application will be assessed against the criteria outlined. Please provide all the information requested in the form as this information will determine which applicants have the highest need.
- Applicants will be notified by letter as to whether or not they have met the criteria and added to the waiting list for a unit.
- When a vacancy occurs in a preferred area, the applicant(s) with the highest need are invited to attend an interview. Applicants are welcome to bring a family member or a caregiver to the interview.
- After the interview Housing for the Elderly staff will select the most appropriate applicant taking into account interview outcome and criteria eligibility.
- Once selected applicants will be invited to make an appointment to inspect the unit.
- If a tenancy is agreed, a Tenancy Agreement will be drawn up and a joint inspection made of the unit. Any flaws or minor damage will be noted on the agreement.
- An occupancy commencement date will be agreed and the Tenancy Agreement and a Bond Lodgement form will be signed by both parties.

**A four week bond and two weeks rent in advance are required.**

**The signed Tenancy Agreement, signed Bond Lodgement form and a Direct Debit or Rent Redirection form for the rent must also be provided before keys are handed over to tenants.**

### **Note:**

- 1) If tenant receives a benefit from Work and Income, they need to make arrangements for the rent to be paid by Work and Income directly to the Council. Tenants should contact their Work and Income Case Manager to make this arrangement.
- 2) Tenants will be given a receipt for the Bond and it is transferred to the Tenancy Services Bond Centre. A letter of confirmation will be sent to both parties, notifying of the transfer. When the tenancy is terminated, Housing for the Elderly staff will arrange for the bond to be refunded provided:
  - a. The unit is left in a satisfactory condition and there are no repairs necessary other than due to normal wear and tear, and
  - b. The tenant's debtor account is clear and no money is owing to the Council.

#### **4) THE TENANCY WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

##### **RENT:**

It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that the rent is paid on time and for the correct amount. Council will provide a 60 day notice of any rent increases and tenants will need to ensure that arrangements are made to pay the increase. Tenants who get behind in their rent are required to contact the Council's Housing for the Elderly staff as soon as possible to discuss how to fix the situation and put in place a debt recovery plan.

##### **TENANT BEHAVIOUR:**

All tenants must respect their neighbour's rights to "quiet enjoyment" of their units and display a reasonable standard of behaviour. If a complaint of unacceptable behaviour by a tenant is received, this will be investigated and may result in a formal warning. If the unacceptable behaviour continues it may result in the termination of the tenancy of the offender. Neighbouring properties adjacent to a Housing for the Elderly Village are to be given the same consideration. No loud music or loud parties will be permitted.

If you are concerned for the safety or well-being of another tenant, you will need to contact that tenant's family or caregiver or the Council Housing for the Elderly staff or if more appropriate, contact the Police.

Note: Council staff will not get involved in personal disputes between tenants / neighbours.

##### **TENANT ONLY TO RESIDE IN UNITS:**

Only the tenant or tenants who sign the Tenancy Agreement shall live in the unit provided. Children or grandchildren are most welcome to visit on a daily basis (no overnights) but they are not permitted to live in the units because of space limitations. Couples occupying a unit will be required to pay the couples rate. If your living arrangements change, please contact the Housing for the Elderly staff immediately.

##### **KEYS:**

One set of keys will be provided to the tenant at the beginning of the tenancy. It is the tenant's responsibility to take care of these keys. If the tenant loses their keys, Housing for the Elderly staff will provide a new set for a \$10 charge. If the tenant locks themselves out of their unit, Housing for the Elderly staff will unlock the unit during normal working hours. If this happens after normal working hours the tenant will need to contact a locksmith. Any damage caused by a tenant to gain access to their unit must be repaired by the tenant. Alternatively, keys may be collected from the local Council Service Centre and a \$10 bond will be charged. The \$10 bond will be refunded when the keys are returned.

##### **CARS AND PARKING:**

Car parking facilities are very limited in all complexes and can not be reserved by any particular tenant. Tenants are to be considerate of others when using parking facilities. Tenants must not park vehicles on the grassed areas. Non-road worthy or wrecked vehicles will be removed at the owner's expense.

## **SMOKE FREE:**

Council is working towards having all Housing for the Elderly units as “smoke-free” homes with smoking only permitted on balconies or outdoor areas. All new tenants will have this as a condition of their Tenancy Agreement. Smoke alarms have been installed in all units and these are inspected every six months. Any person who is caught removing the alarm batteries may have their tenancy terminated. Continual call-outs made by New Zealand Fire Services to a unit may also result in the tenancy being terminated.

## **PETS:**

Tenants are permitted to keep one cat on the following terms and conditions:

1. The cat **must** be neutered or spayed, and evidence of this provided and
2. The cat **must** always wear a flea collar and bell and
3. Any damage to the unit which is caused by the cat must be repaired by the tenant. If the damage is not repaired, the cost of the work required will be deducted from Tenancy bond and
4. In the event of the tenant becoming ill, the tenant shall make arrangements for the wellbeing of the cat.

Tenants without a cat may keep no more than two caged birds, but no other pets shall be permitted in any of the units.

## **INSTALLATIONS AND OR ALTERATIONS:**

Requests for alterations or installations of fixed equipment in a unit must be made in writing to Council. Should the tenant be granted approval to alter or install, the tenant is responsible for all costs associated with the work, and for the cost of removing the installation/alteration at the end of the tenancy. Council may purchase the installation or alteration if it considers it to be of value to the unit. The purchase price will be the cost of the work.

If a tenant wishes to install their own aerial or additional exterior aerials, Housing for the Elderly staff must be advised.

## **GARDENS AND GROUNDS CARE:**

The lawns and grass edges of the grounds in each area are maintained by the Council. Tenants are encouraged to maintain the gardens in the immediate area of their unit.

## **REFUSE DISPOSAL:**

The disposal of all refuse is the tenant’s responsibility. This must be undertaken regularly and refuse not allowed to accumulate. Council staff will be able to advise when the refuse collections are made in each area and what is required.

## **SEWERAGE AND WASTE WATER BLOCKAGES:**

The Council is responsible for any defects in the plumbing systems but will accept no responsibility to clear internal blockages. Tenants must engage their own plumber to carry out clearances of sinks, drains or toilets. If the tenant or the plumber feels that the blockage was caused by a failure in the plumbing system, reimbursement from the Council may be sought in writing and must include a written report from the plumber.

### **TELEPHONE/INTERNET:**

It is the responsibility of the tenant to arrange for any telephone and/or internet connection and to pay all charges for the connection and ongoing rental.

### **POWER CONNECTION:**

It is the responsibility of the incoming tenant to ensure that a power supply application is lodged with an electricity provider. All charges relating to the electricity supply are the responsibility of the tenant.

### **WATER SUPPLY:**

The majority of units are either on town water or bore water. Tenants must not waste water. Information on water conservation measures is available from any Council Service Centre. Where the water supply is from a tank the Council will only provide two tanker loads of water per unit per year. Any additional requirements will be at the tenant's cost.

### **LIGHT BULBS AND ELECTRIC STOVE ELEMENTS:**

Before a new tenant moves into a unit, the unit is checked to ensure that all lights and stove elements work. Council will arrange for the replacement or repair of all electrical fittings and will replace or repair, as an urgent health and safety job, any hob and oven elements that fail due to normal wear and tear.

It is the tenant's responsibility to replace light bulbs that expire during their occupancy.

### **TERMINATION OF YOUR TENANCY:**

The Tenancy Agreement requires that **three weeks written notice** of your intention to terminate your tenancy is given to Council. The written notice should include details of the tenant's future address so that the bond can be repaid after the final inspection of the unit.

### **URGENT TERMINATION:**

If a tenant is required to leave their unit without providing the full three weeks notice due to ill health or death, the three weeks notice period may be reduced at the discretion of Housing for the Elderly staff. Any reduction of notice period that impacts on rent payments will be calculated after the unit has been vacated and the final inspection has been made. If a tenant is being permanently relocated to a hospital or rest home, written proof of this must be provided for a waiver of the notice period to be granted.

## **5) GENERAL INFORMATION:**

### **FAULTS:**

All requests for repairs or other work must be lodged as a Request for Service (RFS) system by phoning Council on 0800 920 029 or 09 401 5200, or by visiting any of the Council Service Centres.

Housing for the Elderly staff will prioritise all requests and complete them on the following basis:

- First priority will be given to urgent health and safety jobs that include:
  - continuity of the means of cooking

- continuity of hot or cold water supply
- continuity of power supply
- rainwater leaks, broken windows or faulty / broken sanitary appliances

The aim is to respond to urgent health and safety requests within 12 hours.

- Second priority will be given to:
  - urgent responsive maintenance - which is where components break or wear out and are likely to place the tenant at risk
  - reinstating essential services or security is necessary
  - maintenance where health and safety is not at immediate risk but remedy is nevertheless an urgent need

The aim is to respond to such urgent responsive maintenance requests within 2-5 days.

- Other (non-urgent) responsive maintenance jobs receive lower priority. These include:
  - redecorating units and/or upgrades resulting from tenancy management inspections.

This work will be prioritised and will be completed subject to sufficient funds being available.

Payment for any contractors that are hired by the tenant without the consent of Housing for the Elderly staff is the responsibility of the tenant. Council will not accept any responsibility for making payment for any unauthorised works.

#### **14 DAY REMEDY LETTER:**

Should it come to the attention of Council that a tenant has failed to make a rent payment or is not following the conditions of their tenancy, a letter will be sent to the tenant reminding them of their obligations.

If the tenant:

- does not resolve the issue or
- does not contact the Housing for the Elderly staff to make arrangements to remedy the default within the time period specified in the letter or
- repeats the defaulting or fails to keep up with any debt repayment arrangements the tenancy will be terminated and any outstanding money owing to the Council will be recovered through the Tenancy Tribunal.

#### **RENT ACCOUNT BALANCE:**

The Council invoicing system may not directly align with your rent payment days. Housing for the Elderly staff can provide you with an accurate rent balance as required.

#### **TRANSFERRING BETWEEN UNITS:**

The Council may allow a tenant to transfer from one unit to another, provided that there are good reasons for the move. Note: The transfer is regarded as a new tenancy and before any approval is given to transfer the bond to the new tenancy, a joint inspection of the unit currently occupied by the tenant will be completed. Should there be any damage to the unit the Council will require the tenant to make the repairs before making the transfer and may call upon the bond if necessary, to meet the cost of those repairs. In this case the Council will then require a new bond to be provided for the tenancy of the new unit.



## MARKET RENTS FOR TENANTS THAT DO NOT MEET COUNCIL'S HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY AGE CRITERIA

The Market Rents as at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 apply to tenants that do not meet Council's age criteria for Housing for the Elderly unit and are as listed:

Location	Type of unit	Market Rent
Kaikohe	Bedsit unit	\$128
Kerikeri	Bedsit unit	\$180
Rawene	Bedsit unit	\$130
Kerikeri	One bedroom unit	\$230
Ahipara, Awanui, Oxford Street, Puckey Ave	One bedroom unit	\$170
Kawakawa, Rawene, Kohukohu, Horeke, Waima	One bedroom unit	\$180
Kaikohe	One bedroom unit	\$170
Omapere	One bedroom unit	\$220

Market Rents are reviewed annually and are adjusted at the same time that Housing for the Elderly rents are adjusted.

Note: Couples will pay an additional \$10 to the Market Rent in the location.