

## GUIDANCE NOTE

# Housing Registrar update on COVID-19

This guidance note provides an update for registered agencies on the impacts of COVID-19 on the Housing Registrar's regulatory approach and the community housing sector (the sector).

## This guidance note contains

1. The Housing Registrar's approach to annual compliance assessments for 2019-2020 including impacts of coronavirus.
2. Coronavirus reportable events requirements for registered agencies.
3. Registered agencies' ongoing regulatory requirements.

## Introduction

The Housing Registrar recognises that registered agencies are now facing unprecedented new challenges as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are conscious that this may be affecting your business and priorities and that the full impact to your organisation may not be known at this time. This guidance note is to clarify regulatory reporting requirements on registered agencies and what to do if you are having difficulties meeting regulatory plans due to changing priorities and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Annual compliance assessments for 2019-2020

The next major tranche of reporting for the 2019-2020 performance year is currently due at the end of August 2020. These annual reporting requirements will continue at this stage, however, the Housing Registrar will continue to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as it evolves and provide further guidance as necessary.

The outcomes of the 2018-19 annual compliance reviews will be published on the Housing Registrar's website on the Public Register over the next couple of weeks.

For the 2019-20 performance year, the Housing Registrar will take into account any environmental factors when determining compliance against Performance Standards and treatment of Key Performance Metrics (including the impact of COVID-19).

## Reportable events

Registered agencies must report any event that has or may have an adverse impact on compliance with Performance Standards and/or other regulatory obligations under the Housing Act 1983.

Accordingly, you are currently required to notify the Registrar of any confirmed cases of COVID-19 within your organisation or tenancies under your management. Reportable event notifications should identify any actions your organisation has/will take in response to the issues raised.

To minimise the reporting burden on registered agencies you are not required to notify us of each confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in your workplace. Instead, for those agencies that are materially impacted by COVID-19, please provide a short weekly report that includes:

- number of tenants/staff tested positive for COVID-19 and action taken;
- suspected cases of COVID-19 and action taken;
- measures implemented to reduce COVID-19 spread in high density accommodation;
- any material impact on financial position (including capacity to service loans and comply with contractual agreements);
- workforce impacts (e.g. number of staff not working during to COVID-19 related issues); and
- service delivery impact (e.g. only urgent works for maintenance services).

The requirement to report any confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be continually reviewed as the pandemic and control measures continue to evolve. If there is a change to the requirement to report any confirmed case, you will be notified.

The Registrar will use the information collected to:

- assess the financial and non-financial impacts on individual registered agencies and the sector;
- amend regulatory action plans where required;
- provide input on emerging risks and impacts on sector to other parts of government; and
- share learnings and (non-identified) data with the sector.

For further information please review the reportable events guidance.

## Regulatory plans

Registered agencies' ongoing regulatory requirements include progressing any regulatory action items, submitting reportable events and responding to complaints. These regulatory obligations ensure that the Registrar continues to have sufficient oversight of the sector during these challenging times. Please let us know if you are having difficulties with any regulatory requirement, and we can discuss timelines and any amendments to regulatory plans that may be required.