Transitional Housing Program guideline

This Transitional Housing Program guideline applies to community housing providers, the SA Housing Authority (the Authority), the SA Homelessness and the SA Domestic and Family Violence Alliances delivering the Transitional Housing Program in line with the Specialised Housing Programs policy and procedure.

The Transitional Housing Program provides accommodation to customers who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and need support in establishing and maintaining a tenancy. All parties involved work together to maintain safe and supportive accommodation that addresses issues affecting customers' ability to get and keep accommodation.

This program does not provide long term accommodation.

Housing providers record information in either:
- Connect, if it's the Authority, or
- Single Housing Register, if it's a community housing provider.

SA Homelessness and Domestic Family Violence record information in Homeless 2 Home (H2H).

Community housing providers manage and report maintenance in line with the Transitional Housing Program Maintenance Guideline.

This guideline does not apply to these programs which are covered by separate guidelines:
- Boarding House Program
- Community lease Program
- Crisis Housing Program
- Disability Housing Program
- Mental Health Housing Program
- Specialised Lease Program

SA Homelessness Alliances and Community Housing Provider responsibilities

Community housing providers, the SA Homelessness Alliance and the SA Domestic and Family Violence Alliance (the Alliances) support providers work collaboratively to support successful tenancies. A higher-level agreement between community housing providers and the Alliances may be useful to clearly define the specific roles of the parties and the timeframes in which each will work to ensure optimal use of the property asset and support for tenants.

Any agreement between the Alliances and community housing providers should address the requirements of each party without including any additional eligibility or selection criteria that contradicts SA Housing Authority policy or guidelines.

Community housing providers are responsible for:
- managing all aspects of the tenancies
- complying with their specific lease requirements
- maintaining documents and evidence to support tenant eligibility and tenant rent charges

- adhering to the [Rent Policy: Addendum 3: Community housing rent procedure for Affordable Tenancies](#) as specified on the schedule to the lease agreement
- making sure vacant properties meet the [Maintenance Accommodation Standards](#) before they are allocated to a customer
- maintain properties to the [Maintenance Accommodation Standards](#)
- checking the lease agreement schedules match the properties under their control
- following correct processes for using the [Single Housing Register (Connect)](#) including registering customers and Housing Needs Assessment forms provided by the Alliance.
- paying all expenses and accounts the Authority isn't responsible for in line with the lease agreement schedules.

Support Providers are responsible for:
- assessing customers for their support and housing needs
- supporting the customer to [Register their interest in housing](#)
- completing a [Housing Needs Assessment form](#) and submitting it to the Authority or the customer's preferred housing provider (as per the [Housing Needs Assessment guideline)](#)
- providing ongoing support and case management for the duration of the tenancy
- coordinating the appropriate supports and required household goods
- developing a suitable exit strategy for when a customer is leaving a tenancy, to ensure they won't become homeless. This includes helping them find, apply for and secure alternative long-term accommodation.

The relevant community housing provider and the SA Homelessness or the SA Domestic and Family Violence Alliance representative jointly selects the customers for the program.

SA Housing Authority responsibilities

The Authority is responsible for:
- paying all expenses and accounts for items listed as its responsibility in line with the lease agreement
- contract management of lease agreements
- reviewing compliance data before a lease agreement is renewed
- carrying out property visits, as determined using sample or risk-based approach.

Eligibility

A customer may be considered for the Transitional Housing Program if they meet the eligibility below:
- they're eligible for public housing in line with the [Eligibility for housing policy](#), if the Authority is the housing provider
- they're eligible for community housing in line with the [Community housing eligibility policy](#), if a community housing provider is the housing provider
- they're experiencing primary, secondary or tertiary homelessness, or are at risk of becoming homeless and are being supported by an Alliance service provider

Assessing eligibility

Support providers within the Alliances assess and triage customers for housing and supports within their geographic region. They:
- assess the customer's housing and support needs using their agency's triage, screening and assessment tools
- help the customer complete a [Registration of Interest in housing form](#), or register online using Housing Connect, if they don't have a current Registration of Interest

- help the customer upgrade their registration details by completing a Change of Circumstances form or updating them online through Housing Connect, if they have a current registration of interest
- complete a Housing Needs Assessment form and return it to the Authority or the customer's preferred community housing provider
- send the completed Housing Needs Assessment form, Registration of Interest in housing form and any supporting documents, including proof of income and identity, to the community housing provider (as per the Housing Needs Assessment Guideline).

The community housing provider:
- registers the customer for housing
- approves a category in line with the Housing registration and allocation policy
- advises the customer and customer's case manager of the outcome.

Selecting customers for vacant properties

Alliances prioritise eligible customers within their region for upcoming vacancies based on customers' relative level of risk and vulnerability and urgency of need.

When a property becomes vacant the community housing provider contacts the relevant Alliance and provides:
- relevant property manager contact information
- expected allocation date
- property address, size, and any other relevant information to inform appropriate matching.

Within 5 days of receiving the vacancy notification the Alliance:
- collates their customer referrals for the vacancy
- provides the customer referrals to the housing conference representatives
- holds a housing conference to select two customers, based on their priority and suitability for the property, including that the match is in line with the occupancy standards, emails the first and second customer selections to the housing provider with proof of their income and identity in line with Proof of Income, Identity and Rent.

The community housing provider may attend the housing conference or accept the selected customers without attending. Customer selections are based on a unanimous decision between the Alliance and the community housing provider.

If the selected customers have any known tenancy risks, housing conference representatives should ensure a mitigation strategy is put in place so the customer is set up to succeed in their tenancy.

Where agreement can't be reached between the community housing provider and the Alliance, disputes can be escalated through to the respective leadership. If issues are systematic, they can be raised through the relevant Alliance Senior Manager and escalated to the Alliance Leadership to resolve. Further information is at section 13 Dispute Resolution process.

Offering the property

The community housing provider makes a manual offer in line with the Community housing allocations guideline.

The customer has 48 hours to accept or refuse the offer. If they refuse the offer, the housing provider refuses the offer in the Single Housing Register with a reason. The community housing provider offers it to the next selected customer.

If they accept the offer, the community housing provider notifies the customer's support provider. The community housing provider organises with the customer and customer's support provider to attend to discuss how the program works with the customer.

They discuss:
- coordinating appropriate supports and household goods, for example fridge, bed
- whether the customer is eligible for bond and rent in advance, if yes, arrange this in line with the [Private Rental Assistance Program Policy](#)
- roles and responsibilities related to tenancy management and support provision
- any issues that may threaten the customer's ability to maintain their tenancy and putting strategies in place to manage them

Allocating the property

Community housing providers accept the offer in Single Housing Register with the Tenancy Type as the housing program name 'Transitional Housing Program' and the tenure type as 'Short Term Lease'.

After accepting the offer in system, the Single Housing Register automatically defers the active registration with the reason of 'Short Term Lease' for 12 months. The registration remains deferred after 12 months until a housing provider reactivates it.

Their registration may be reassessed at the end of the deferral period to determine if they're eligible for a higher category.

Case management plans

The case management plan is the responsibility of the support provider. It is confidential between the customer and their worker from their support provider, and usually contains sensitive personal information. It identifies the:
- customer's needs and issues
- potential risks and challenges for the tenancy
- resources available and actions to be taken
- customer's goals and outcomes
- strategies that will be used to help the customer maintain the tenancy, including paying rent, being a good neighbour and looking after the property, and to transition out of the program.

The support provider will continually review case management plans in collaboration with all parties involved, including by holding joint case conferences. Include any tenancy or property concerns raised by the community housing provider. Be flexible, and change strategies based on experience.

If a customer is reluctant or difficult to engage, the support provider will actively pursue their engagement by using assertive case management. Aim to:
- build and stabilise their trust, rapport and confidence in the support worker
- give them the best chance of engaging and successfully completing the program.

If the customer stops engaging or refuses to engage, the support provider will develop a suitable exit strategy with the customer and their community housing provider. Identify alternative, safe and appropriate accommodation options.

Managing the tenancy

The community housing provider manages the tenancy in line with their policies and in collaboration with the customer and their support provider. This includes:

- handing over keys to the customer
- setting, charging and reviewing rent as per [Rent Policy Addendum 3](#) on the schedule to the lease agreement
- managing tenancy or property issues, including antisocial behaviour.

The support provider collaborates with the community housing provider and the customer to address any tenancy issues that arise. They aim to help the customer successfully maintain their tenancy and engage appropriate strategies to minimise tenancy and property issues.

Tenancy at risk

Customers shouldn't become homeless when they leave the program.

If their tenancy is at risk, for example because of property damage, neighbourhood issues, the housing provider addresses the issue with the customer. Once the matter is resolved no further action is needed.

If the tenancy is still at risk, meet with the customer's support provider to:
- share relevant information
- assess the risks to the tenancy and determine what strategies could be used
- discuss if anyone else, for example another support worker, should be involved.

Potential strategies could include:
- carrying out a property inspection
- increasing the frequency of home visits by the community housing provider and the support provider
- listening to the customer's views and exploring alternative accommodation and support options
- identifying and engaging other key partners for example family member, other supports
- holding a joint case conference.

Record any actions taken and send the customer a letter outlining the actions to be taken or consequences if issues can't be resolved.

Ending the tenancy

Refusing to engage in a case management plan isn't grounds to end the tenancy.

Ending a tenancy is a last resort and can only be done if the tenant is breaking the conditions of their lease agreement.

The community housing provider can take action to end a tenancy in line with their agency's policies provided all the below conditions are met:
- the customer has told the support provider of their intention to end the tenancy
- the support provider agrees the customer has been given all reasonable opportunities to address and resolve the issues
- all attempts have been made to preserve the tenancy using assertive case management
- all other strategies for example joint case conferences, have failed.

If the customer's tenancy is going to end, the support provider helps them find alternative housing, so they don't exit into homelessness.

The community housing provider reactivates and updates any Registration of Interest in housing the customer has, for example updating contact details. Determine if the customer needs a Housing Needs Assessment.

Leaving the program

Before the customer leaves a program property, their support provider develops a suitable exit strategy to make sure they don't become homeless.

This includes helping them find, apply for and secure safe, appropriate, viable and affordable long-term accommodation.

The community housing provider can provide advice about the housing options available to the customer.

In some cases, the customer may be eligible for:
- help paying bond or rent into private rental accommodation in line with the Private Rental Assistance Program policy
- help and advocacy finding and securing a private rental property through the Private Rental Liaison Program
- renting public, Aboriginal or community housing.
- buying a home through HomeSeeker SA.

Registering interest in public and community housing

When the customer leaves the property, the community housing provider either:
- reactivates the customer's registration of interest in housing as part of the exit strategy
- cancels the registration with the customer's permission if they have secured long-term housing.

Transferring properties in or out of the program

Community housing providers are responsible for maintaining property numbers in the program.

Returning properties to the SA Housing Authority

The Authority recognises that the nature of transitional housing can place stress on neighbourhoods. When the community housing provider and support provider agree a property is no longer suitable, the community housing provider looks for property to swap with from within its own portfolio.

If no suitable property is available, the community housing provider can ask to return to the property to the Authority and ask for it to be replaced in line with the Specialised Housing Program Procedures.

The Authority will endeavour to find a suitable replacement in the same area, however vacant properties are in short supply due to ongoing redevelopment programs. It is possible that no replacement can be provided. In this case, the community housing provider may choose to either:
- keep the property, except if it's required for the Authority's Future Planning Intent
- return the property to the Authority anyway.

If a property in this program is designated for domestic violence/abuse purposes needs to be returned for the Authority's purposes, the Authority will try to provide a suitable replacement.

When a replacement property is provided, the community housing provider works with the relevant Authority Housing Officer and Regional Manager to address appropriate property alterations for domestic violence situations. These will be provided at the Authority's expense when property is returned at the Authority's request.

Dispute resolution process

Disputes can include but are not limited to:
- customer selection for program vacancies
- delays in customer selections or allocations
- withholding, or sharing partial information impeding decision making
- differences in service philosophy, principles, or conflicting internal policies.

Decisions should be made unanimously between the relevant community housing provider and the Alliance on a best for client outcomes basis.

If a dispute about a specific case arises, the relevant community housing provider and Alliance Senior Manager attempt to resolve the dispute between themselves in the first instance. Where a decision can't be reached, they escalate through their respective leadership structures to negotiate an outcome.

Disputes about selections or allocations should be resolved promptly to ensure customers are allocated within 14 days to meet the vacancy turnaround timeframes.

Community housing providers or Alliance support providers can raise systemic issues with the Alliance Senior Manager to escalate through to the appropriate Alliance governance structure for a resolution.

If the issue is specific to a particular Alliance and community housing providers within their region, the Alliance Management Team and the relevant community housing providers work together to develop potential solutions.

For strategic or cross-Alliance issues, community housing providers and Alliance Senior Managers escalate through to the Alliance Leadership Teams and the Alliance System Steering Group.

Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
SA Homelessness Alliances	- assess and triage customers for housing and supports within their geographic region - prioritise eligible customers within their region for upcoming vacancies based on customers' relative level of risk and vulnerability and urgency of need. - develops a suitable exit strategy before a customer leaves a property to make sure they don't become homeless.
Community housing providers	- Select tenants in consultation with the Alliances - registers the customer for housing - approves a category in line with the Housing registration and allocation policy - offers the property to the customer on the Single Housing Register and allocate the tenancy if the customer accepts the property. - manages the tenancy in line with their policies and in collaboration with the customer and their support provider

Related documents

- [Specialised Housing Program policy](#)
- [Specialised Housing Program procedure](#)
- [Community housing eligibility policy](#)
- [Community housing eligibility guideline](#)
- [Community housing allocations policy](#)
- [Community housing allocations guideline](#)
- [Community housing - housing needs assessment guideline](#)
- [Community housing managing the housing register guideline](#)
- [Transitional Housing Program maintenance guideline](#)