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SA Housing Authority

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Homelessness supportive housing program guideline

Contents

This guideline applies to Housing SA, community housing providers and SA Homelessness and Domestic Family Violence Alliances delivering the Homelessness Supportive Housing Program in line with the Homelessness Supportive Housing Program policy.

All parties involved work together to maintain safe and supportive accommodation that addresses issues affecting customers' ability to get and keep accommodation.

Housing providers record information in either:

- Connect, if it's Housing SA
- the Single Housing Register if it's a community housing provider.

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

Housing providers are responsible for maintaining property numbers in the program.

1. Assessing eligibility

Support providers within the SA Homelessness and Domestic Family Violence 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 update 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 Housing SA or the customer's preferred community housing provider.

The housing provider:

- registers the customer for housing or updates their registration if required
- approves a category in line with the Housing registration and allocation policy
- advises the customer and their support provider of the outcome.

2. Referring customers to the program

Support providers refer eligible customers to the program through the relevant Alliance.

When referring a customer include all the information below:

- their name and date of birth
- their Housing SA person reference number
- names and dates of birth of any other members of their household

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- their current housing situation
- their location preference and local connections
- their housing and support needs
- any safety assessments.

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

3. Managing vacancies

Alliances and housing providers work together to house customers as quickly as possible. The property turnaround target is 14 days from the date the housing provider notifies the Alliance that it's available for occupation to the date the tenant is allocated.

When a property becomes vacant the Central allocations team from Housing SA or the Community housing provider managing the property contacts the relevant Alliance and provides:

- contact information for the property manager if it's a community housing property or the Operations Manager if it's a Housing SA property
- the expected date it will be available for occupation
- the property's address, size and features 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 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.

Customer selections are based on a unanimous decision of the representatives at the housing conference. The housing provider may attend the housing conference or accept the selected customers without attending.

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.

4. Offering the property

The housing provider makes a manual offer in line with either:

- the Allocations guideline if Housing SA is the housing provider
- the Community housing allocations guideline if a community housing provider is the housing provider.

The customer has 48 hours to view the property or the housing provider's property brochure and accept or refuse the offer.

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If they refuse the offer, the housing provider refuses the offer in Connect or the Single Housing Register and includes the reason for the refusal. The housing provider then offers it to the next selected customer.

If the customer accepts the offer, the housing provider notifies their support provider.

The housing provider organises a meeting with the customer and their support provider to discuss:

- the responsibilities of everyone involved
- the conditions of the lease agreement
- any issues that may threaten the customer's ability to maintain their tenancy and strategies to be put in place to manage them.

Tell the customer they are required to pay bond and rent in advance. They may be eligible for financial assistance in line with the Private rental assistance program policy.

5. Allocating the property

Housing providers accept the offer in the Single Housing Register or Connect with the tenancy type as 'Supportive Housing Program' and the tenure type as 'Short Term Lease'.

Connect automatically defers the customer's registration with the reason of 'Short Term Lease' for 12 months when the offer is accepted, and their category is downgraded to Category 2 or 3. The registration remains deferred after 12 months until the 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.

6. Case management plans

The customer must agree to a case management plan with their support provider before their tenancy begins.

The case management plan sets out:

- the customer's needs and issues
- risks and challenges to sustaining the tenancy
- resources available and actions to be taken
- the customer's goals and outcomes
- strategies 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 continually reviews the case management plan in collaboration with the housing provider and the customer. Consider any tenancy or property concerns raised by the housing provider and how they will be addressed.

If a customer is reluctant or difficult to engage, actively pursue their engagement using assertive case management. Aim to:

- build and stabilise their trust, rapport and confidence in you
- give them the best chance of engaging and successfully completing the program.

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

7. Managing the tenancy

The housing provider manages the tenancy in line with their policies. This includes:

- handing over keys to the customer
- setting, charging and reviewing rent
- managing tenancy or property issues, including antisocial behaviour.

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

If their tenancy is at risk, for example because of property damage, neighbourhood issues, the housing provider addresses the issues with the customer in the first instance. If this is unsuccessful and the tenancy is still at risk, contact the customer's support provider to assess the risks to the tenancy and develop appropriate strategies to address them.

Strategies can include:

- carrying out a property inspection
- increasing the frequency of home visits by the housing provider and/ or the support provider
- exploring alternative accommodation and support options
- identifying and engaging other key partners, for example family members, 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 the issues aren't resolved.

8. Ending the tenancy

The housing provider may take action to end a tenancy in line with their agency's policies if all the below conditions are met:

- they tell the support provider of the intent 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.

Housing providers may take immediate action to end the tenancy where there is serious substantiated antisocial behaviour that poses a risk to the safety or security of people or property.

Customers shouldn't become homeless when they leave the program. If the customer's tenancy will end, the support provider helps them find alternative housing so they don't exit into homelessness.

The housing provider reactivates and updates the customer's registration of interest in housing if required.

9. Leaving the program

The program offers support to customers for as long as they need it.

Before a 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 and affordable long-term accommodation, for example renting privately, public housing, community housing.

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

The customer may be eligible for:

- help paying bond or rent into private rental accommodation
- help and advocacy finding and securing a private rental property through the Private Rental Liaison Program
- renting public, Aboriginal or community housing.

If the customer's lease agreement ends before other accommodation has been secured, the housing provider may offer short term lease agreements in 3-month blocks until the customer finds alternative accommodation.

Where community or public housing has been identified as a suitable exit pathway, the customer or their support worker asks the housing provider to reactivate their registration of interest in housing. The support provider can complete a Housing Needs Assessment if the customer has a high or urgent housing need. When the customer leaves the property, the housing provider either:

- reactivates the customer's registration of interest in housing or cancels the registration if they have secured long-term housing
- reviews the Housing Needs Assessment from the support provider if required and approves a category.

Customers may be approved for Category 1 after being supported through the housing program if they still meet the criteria.

10.   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 housing provider and the Alliance on a best for client outcomes basis.

If a dispute about a specific case arises, the relevant 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.

Housing providers or alliance service 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 housing providers within their region, the Alliance Management Team and the relevant housing providers work together to develop potential solutions.

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

11. Related Information

Controlling documents

This guideline is based on and complies with:

- Homelessness Supportive Housing Program policy

Supporting documents

- Housing programs - Olé
- Information Sharing Guidelines
- Managing the housing register guideline
- Community housing managing the housing register guideline
- Allocations guideline
- Community housing allocations guideline
- Occupancy standards in public housing
- Proof of income, identity and rent
- Verify urgent housing needs and barriers – sa.gov.au

12. Version number

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13. Disclaimer

This guideline can be changed, withdrawn or replaced at any time.