



Mental Health Housing Program Guideline

The Mental Health Housing Program is a collaboration between the SA Housing Authority, Mental Health Services (Local Health Networks), SA Health Office of the Chief Psychiatrist and the Community Housing sector.

The SA Housing Authority (the Authority) leases properties on behalf of the SA Housing Trust (SAHT) to community housing providers for the Mental Health Housing Program, in line with the [Specialised Housing Programs Policy](#). This guideline describes the framework for the Mental Health Housing Program and the responsibilities of the parties involved.

This guideline has been developed for Authority staff and community housing providers and provides information in relation to:

- roles and responsibilities of the parties involved
- eligibility, nomination rights and allocation
- dispute Resolution
- rent setting
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)
- property modifications
- tenant damage

Program Objectives

The objectives of the Mental Health Housing Program are to:

- provide secure and affordable housing to customers with mental health issues who are currently within a range of settings which may include hospital, long term rehabilitation, forensic mental health services or the community.
- provide coordinated tenancy and support services to customers who have complex needs and an approach to service delivery that is planned, co-ordinated and delivered in partnership.
- ensure that customers eligible for the program receive housing services from community housing providers who understand the customer group and have a demonstrated commitment to the delivery of housing services as part of a coordinated mental health care plan.

Most properties in the Mental Health Housing Program were specifically built to accommodate customers eligible to receive Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) funding from the NDIS. As the NDIS has rolled out, it has become apparent that fewer customers are likely to receive SDA funding than originally thought, however, to the extent possible, this original intent (to house customers who receive SDA) remains a program objective.

Roles and Responsibilities

➤ SA Housing Authority

The Authority leases properties on behalf of the SA Housing Trust (SAHT) to community housing providers for the Mental Health Housing Program in line with the Specialised Housing Programs Policy.

Unless agreed otherwise in the lease agreement, the Authority is responsible for:

- carrying out maintenance in line with the [Specialised Housing Program Maintenance Guideline](#)

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- paying all expenses and accounts for items listed as an Authority 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 necessary, to determine if properties are being maintained to the Authority's [Maintenance Accommodation Standards](#).

➤ SA Health Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services are responsible for ensuring that the customer is eligible and registered for public and community housing and that the application has been approved. If the customer is allocated a property, the Mental Health care coordinator will work with the community housing provider to assist the customer to transition into the property and community.

The Mental Health care coordinator will work with the community housing tenancy officer to establish a successful tenancy and will remain involved for as long as is necessary. If the customer requires support and Mental Health Services are no longer involved, the community housing provider will contact the Local Health Network - Mental Health Service, where the property is located, to discuss the resumption of services.

Where possible, customers nominated for the Mental Health Housing Program will be eligible for NDIS, Specialist Disability Accommodation. SDA funding is provided to the community housing provider to assist in ensuring that housing meets the needs of eligible SDA customers i.e., customers with significant functional disability who may require disability housing modifications to live in the community.

➤ Community Housing Providers

Community housing providers are responsible for:

- managing and reporting maintenance in line with the [Specialised Housing Programs Maintenance Guideline](#) and any applicable lease terms and conditions
- assessing rent in line with the [Community Housing Rent Procedure for Supported Tenancies](#) (or the [Rent Procedure for NDIS-SDA tenancies](#) where relevant)
- managing the tenancy, including antisocial behaviour, in line with its own policy
- complying with their specific lease agreement requirements
- maintaining documents and evidence to support tenant eligibility and tenant rent charges
- paying all expenses and accounts the Authority isn't responsible for in line with the lease agreement schedules
- providing specified data and reports by the reporting dates in line with the lease agreement schedules

Eligibility, Nomination and Allocation

➤ Eligibility

- The Mental Health Housing Program is designed to assist mental health customers who require secure and affordable accommodation. The customers will be referred from a range of settings which may include hospital, long term rehabilitation, forensic mental health services or the community.

A customer may be nominated for the program by Mental Health Services if they:

- Are eligible for public or community housing
- Are a registered customer of Mental Health services
- Have a mental health care coordinator and mental health care plan

➤ Nomination

- The Mental Health Services Long Stay Governance Group are responsible for reviewing property nomination applications and for decisions relating to the nomination of customers for vacant properties.
- The Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (OCP) will facilitate the property nomination process, via the OCP Inbox to assist with communication between community housing providers and mental health services, in relation to vacant properties.
- When a Mental Health Housing Program property becomes vacant, the mental health service lead from where the property is located, is responsible for notifying the OCP.
- The OCP will call for and collate nominations and supporting evidence from mental health service leads.
- The OCP will facilitate a meeting of the Mental Health Services Long Stay Governance Group members to reviews nominations and make a decision in relation to the most appropriate customer for the vacancy. The agreed nomination will be made via majority vote of mental health service leads in attendance. OCP is not a voting member but will support and facilitate the nomination process.
- The OCP will advise the Community Housing Organisation of the agreed mental health service nomination.
- The Community Housing Organisation will review the nomination to ensure that all information has been provided and that any details relevant to the tenancy are considered e.g., location of the property, neighbours, support services nearby, disability modifications that may be required, noting that:
 - Customers with an NDIS plan which includes SDA will be prioritised during the allocation process
 - The home is best suited to the needs of the person (to minimise the need for tailored housing modifications).

➤ Allocation

- As soon as Mental Health Services and the community housing provider are satisfied that the property meets the identified needs of the customer the property can be allocated.
- Mental Health Services and the community housing provider will work with the customer to ensure a smooth transition into the property and the delivery of coordinated tenancy and mental health support services.

Dispute Resolution

Disputes can include but are not limited to:

- Customer selection for program vacancies
- Delays in customer selection 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 Mental Health Services on a best for client outcomes basis. If a dispute about a specific case arises, the relevant community housing provider Manager and the Mental Health Services Lead will attempt to resolve the dispute in the first instance. Where a decision cannot be reached, the Manager/Lead 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 times.

Community housing providers or Mental Health Services can raise systemic issues within their own organisation leadership structures, and with the SA Housing Authority, Housing Partnerships team.

Rent Setting – Community Housing Provider

Rent will be charged by the Authority to the community housing provider consistent with the Specialised Housing Program policy and procedures, or as approved by appropriate delegates.

Rent Setting – Consumers/tenants

The community housing provider will assess and charge customer (tenant) rents according to the [Community Housing Rent Policy](#), specifically:

- the [Addendum 4 – Community Housing Rent Procedure for NDIS-SDA Tenancies](#) applies for customers with approved Specialist Disability Accommodation funding from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS);
- the [Addendum 2 – Rent Procedure for Supported Tenancies](#) applies for all other customers housed in the Mental Health Housing Program.

National Disability Insurance Scheme, Specialised Disability Accommodation (SDA)

Where applicable, the community housing provider is responsible for

- requesting permission from the Authority to enrol the properties
- enrolling all eligible properties for SDA and costs relating to enrolment of property
- maintaining their registration under the NDIS as an SDA provider
- separately accounting for any SDA funding received
- only utilising SDA funding in accordance with the lease terms and any applicable SAHT Policies and Procedures

Maintenance

Maintenance responsibilities are articulated in the lease terms and conditions, and supported by the Authority's public housing [Maintenance Accommodation Standards](#) and the [Specialised Housing Program Maintenance Guideline](#).

Customer Damage

Community housing providers are responsible for maintaining and repairing the property where damage is caused by the customer (tenant). Community housing providers may recover costs from their customer where this is in line with their policy.

When customer damage occurs frequently due to the customer's mental health condition or disability, community housing providers work with them, their families or guardians and the Mental Health Services care coordinator to consider the best approaches to be taken to mitigate further damage.

Careful nomination of customers and appropriate placement should ensure the suitability of the built form for the selected customer, and therefore this situation should rarely occur. Where SDA is received, SDA funding should be considered as a funding source if the customer damage is assessed as caused by the customer's functional disability.

In very rare cases, it may be appropriate to consider modifications to the property to provide a more robust environment for the customer. See Property Modifications section overpage.

Customers pay for damage they cause to the property in line with the [Specialised Housing Maintenance Guidelines](#) and the [SA Housing Authority Maintenance Policy](#). The community housing provider pays and may recover the money from the customer.

Property Modifications

Property modifications under this program are likely to fall into two categories:

- Tenant Alterations - Modifications to be funded by the customer or by the community housing provider which are tailored to the needs of the consumer group (or a specific customer). These are normally undertaken by the community housing provider, with the approval for the Authority. For example, use of SDA to make a property more robust, where that meets the NDIS-SDA guidelines for the use of SDA funds and has been made available to the community housing provider for this purpose.
- Modifications to the property which are proposed by the community housing provider (including on behalf of the customer) but for which no funding is available. If approved, these modifications would normally be undertaken by the Authority.

Community housing providers are expected to take a lead role in liaising with families/guardians, Mental Health Services and the NDIA to explore funding and concept options for consideration by the Authority. Community housing providers and customer families/guardians are responsible for the relocation of customers if it is required to undertake repairs.

➤ Customer Alterations

All customer (tenant) alterations to leased properties must be approved by the Authority, in writing, and in advance of works. Where a community housing provider wishes to facilitate or undertake customer alteration works, they must complete a customer (tenant) alteration form and demonstrate:

- that the works are necessary
- that they comply with relevant planning and building codes
- that the works are carried out by licensed and qualified persons
- that plans are provided to the Authority

Community housing providers are responsible for maintenance on customer alterations. Providers must agree to return the property to its original condition at the Authority's discretion and note that they will not be compensated for the value of any improvement when properties are returned to the Authority.

➤ Authority-funded Modifications

In exceptional circumstances, the Authority may consider requests for modifications consistent with the Authority's [Housing modifications for people with a disability policy](#).

Related Information

Controlling Documents

This policy is based on and complies with:

- [Specialised Housing Program Policy](#)
- [SA Housing Authority Maintenance policy](#)
- [SA Housing Authority Housing modifications for people with a disability policy](#)

Supporting Documents

- [Specialised Housing Program Procedure](#)
- [Specialised Housing Program Maintenance Guideline](#)
- [SA Housing Authority Maintenance Accommodation Standards](#)
- [Community Housing Eligibility Policy](#)
- [Community Housing Rent Policy](#)
 - [Addendum 2 – Rent Procedure for Supported Tenancies](#)
 - [Addendum 4 – Rent Procedure for NDIS-SDA Tenancies](#)