South Australian Housing Trust

Integrated Housing Exits Program guidelines

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1   Referring customers to the program

The Department for Correctional Services (DCS) refer suitable people who are sentenced or in remand to Housing SA for the Housing Outreach Program, in line with the Housing Outreach Memorandum of administrative agreement.

The Housing Outreach Program provides an outreach service to people in custody. When a customer is referred, Housing SA:

- provides information about their accommodation options
- registers them for both public and community housing, or updates an existing registration of interest, in line with the Register guidelines
- completes a housing needs assessment to determine if they're eligible for Category 1
- considers any special circumstances if they're not eligible for Category 1
- refers registered customers to the DCS Integrated Housing Exits Program (IHEP) Housing Coordinator on DCSIHEPReferrals@sa.gov.au.

The DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator assesses referred customers through a social assessment, and:

- determines if they're eligible for the program in line with the Integrated Housing Exits Program policy
- identifies any risks they may have in maintaining a tenancy - eg special needs, previous tenancy issues.

Previous IHEP customers may be reconsidered for the program. The DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator, Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services (OARS), and the housing provider can carry out additional assessments to determine suitability for the program.

2   Nominating a customer for an IHEP property

The housing provider tells the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator about an available property within two weeks from the date it becomes vacant.

The DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator nominates eligible customers for the property. When selecting a customer, consider:

- the type of property, its size and location - eg distance to supports
- the customer's support requirements - eg support workers
- if placing the customer in the property would contravene an intervention, court or parole order
- if the customer has a history of not engaging with supports
- if the customer is likely to have tenancy issues - eg history of rent arrears
- what the customer needs to reduce their likelihood of reoffending - eg support for substance abuse issues, lack of employable skills
- if the customer has any special needs or requirements - eg needs property modifications because of a disability

- if the customer is excluded from services by the housing provider - eg previous tenancy ended due to antisocial behaviour.

If the housing provider has concerns about the customer's nomination - eg they've previously threatened staff, they discuss it with the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator. The DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator decides whether to nominate another customer for the property instead.

Once a customer is nominated, OARS:

- contacts the customer before they're released
- gets proof of income and identity, if needed
- sends all documents to Housing SA.

If there's no suitable IHEP customer, nominate an Integrated Housing Exits Alternative Accommodation and Support Program customer. The housing provider and the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator approve the allocation.

3 Recording an allocation

The DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator:

- offers the property to the customer
- tells the housing provider if the offer's accepted or not within one working day, or as negotiated with the housing provider
- sends all relevant documents to the housing provider - eg proof of identity
- arranges for the customer to view the property, if possible.

If the customer rejects the offer, the housing provider and the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator jointly select another eligible customer.

If the offer is accepted the tenancy should begin within two weeks, except if otherwise negotiated by all parties.

Before the tenancy begins, the details of the tenancy arrangement - eg lease agreement, supports required, are confirmed by phone or email between:

- the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator
- OARS
- the housing provider.

3.1 Allocating to community housing

When the customer accepts a community housing property, the Community Housing Provider emails the Housing SA Contact Centre on DCSIHousingCHCRContactCentre@sa.gov.au to upgrade the customer's registration to Category 1+ in the Community Housing Customer Register.

Include all the below information in the email:

- the customer's name and registration number
- the Community Housing Provider staff member who assessed and approved the supported housing outcome
- the property's address and area number
- name DCS as the referring agency
- the support agency's contact details
- the case management in place indicator is 'yes'
- details of the Tenant need profile - eg ex-institutional adult.

The Contact Centre checks the customer's details and tells the Community Housing Provider when the category has been updated, using the override reason 'referral by DCS'.

The Community Housing Provider shortlists the Community Housing Customer Register using the following filters:

- shortlisting type as 'supported'
- support package type selected as 'ex-institutional adult'
- 'homeless' status filter not applied.

Allocate the customer under 'limited tenure' and contact the Contact Centre to update Mainframe after the shortlist's finalised.

3.2   Allocating to public housing

When the customer accepts a Housing SA property, allocate the customer under a short term lease in line with the Allocation guidelines, including:

- offering a short term lease agreement, in line with the Short Term Housing Program policy
- completing an allocation and property inspection
- deferring any active public housing registration, using deferral code 'SA'.

The Housing Officer emails the Contact Centre when the customer has been allocated. The Contact Centre updates the customer's community housing registration details to match Mainframe.

3.3   Physical allocation to the property

The customer's allocated to the property in line with the housing provider's own policies.

Once they're allocated, arrange for the Contact Centre to:

- update the Community Housing Customer Register to 'housed'
- make a notation in Mainframe using event heading 'SHPOUTC' and 'housed via the Integrated Housing Exits Program (adult). Housed with CHP name at property address'
- update the customer's details - eg address
- defer the customer's registration of interest in public and community housing.

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If the customer's release date changes after they've accepted an offer of housing, the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator and OARS discuss with the housing provider the possibility of either:

- keeping the property available for up 21 days
- making the customer another offer of housing at a later date.

OARS provide support for the customer to meet the rent payments if the allocation is delayed.

If the customer doesn't attend the physical allocation within 48 hours of their release, contact the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator to discuss the situation. The DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator nominates another eligible customer for the property, if appropriate.

4   Case management plans and support

OARS provides support, and develop and review case management plans. They organise any other supports or resources the customer needs - eg connecting utilities, household goods, referrals to other support agencies.

Share case management plans, and other personal information, with the customer's written consent in line with the organisation's own policies and the Information Sharing Guidelines.

4.1   Developing case management plans

Before the customer's released, OARS develops a case management plan with them, in collaboration with the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator, which:

- identifies their issues, needs and goals and the actions needed to address them
- builds their capacity to live independently
- helps them maintain a successful tenancy
- reduces their risk of re-offending or becoming homeless.

4.2   Reviewing case management plans

OARS continuously reviews and updates the case management plan with the customer, taking into consideration:

- their progress towards their goals
- their need for ongoing support and level of engagement
- any tenancy concerns the housing provider has
- discussing options for exiting the program.

4.3   Refusing to engage

OARS take an assertive, proactive approach with customers who refuse to engage or participate in support or case management planning.

If the customer still refuses to engage, OARS discuss the customer leaving the program when their current lease agreement ends with the housing provider and the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator.

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A customer refusing to engage in a case management plan isn't grounds to end a tenancy before the end date on their lease agreement.

5   Managing the tenancy

The housing provider manages the tenancy in line with their organisation's own policies. This includes:

- setting, charging and reviewing rent
- arranging and managing debt repayments
- managing anti-social behaviour
- carrying out maintenance and repairs.

Requests for caretakers, other occupants and pets are considered in line with the Integrated Housing Exits Program policy.

The housing provider and OARS work together to help the customer successfully maintain their tenancy. This includes:

- managing progression of the tenancy in line with the lease agreement
- discussing goals outlined in the case management plan
- managing issues that put the tenancy at risk
- discussing appropriate exit strategies and courses of action.

The housing provider:

- takes the lead on addressing tenancy issues with the tenant
- invites OARS to all meetings with the tenant
- tells OARS about any arrangements made - eg debt repayments.

5.1   Ending the tenancy

Ending a tenancy before the lease agreements ends is a last resort if the customer either:

- breaks the conditions of their lease agreement - eg rent arrears, antisocial behaviour
- abandons the property - eg returns into custody.

Refusing to engage in support or case management planning isn't grounds to end the tenancy.

The housing provider may take steps to end the tenancy, in line with their organisation's policies, if all the below conditions are met:

- they've consulted with OARS about their intention to end the tenancy
- all reasonable attempts - eg joint case conferences, have been made to help the customer resolve the issues and maintain their tenancy
- OARS agrees the customer has been given all reasonable opportunities to resolve the issues.

6 At the end of the tenancy

At least three months before the end of the tenancy, OARS and the customer complete a tenancy review and develop an exit strategy. The tenancy review should include assessing ongoing support and housing needs through the case management plan.

Give the exit strategy and tenancy review outcome to the housing provider, along with a recommendation that the customer either:

- stays in the program
- stays in the program but transfers to another property
- leaves the program
- leaves the program but stays in the property.

Work with the housing provider to prevent the customer exiting the program into homelessness.

6.1 Staying in the program

If the customer still needs support at the end of their lease agreement, it may be appropriate to offer a second lease agreement of up to 12 months. OARS, the DCS IHEP Housing Coordinator and the housing provider all need to agree to offer a second lease agreement.

If the customer still needs support, but it's appropriate to transfer them to another property, the housing provider transfers them to another property in line with their organisation's own policies.

The housing provider completes the appropriate documentation, and:

- transfers a property to the program, if required
- extends the lease agreement
- arranges to defer any registrations of interest in public and community housing.

6.2 Leaving the program

The customer may leave the program if either:

- they don't need support anymore
- they've refused to engage in support or case management planning.

The housing provider can offer three-month short term lease agreements until alternative accommodation is found.

OARS supports the customer to leave the property, including:

- preparing and submitting registrations and applications, when required
- reactivating registrations of interest in public and community housing
- reviewing their housing needs assessment
- applying for private rental assistance, including the Private Rental Liaison Program
- considering the Affordable Homes Program and home ownership.

If it's appropriate for the customer to the leave the program but stay in the property:

- OARS stops providing support to the customer
- the tenancy becomes an ordinary tenancy in line with the housing provider's own policies
- the property is no longer assigned to the program
- another property in the housing provider's portfolio is assigned to the program to replace it.

The Community Housing Provider allocates the customer under Category 1, and contacts the Contact Centre on DCSIHousingCHCRContactCentre@sa.gov.au to cancel the customer's registration of interest in public housing.

6.3 Registering interest for public and community housing

When a customer leaves the property, the housing provider reactivates any existing registration of interest in public and community housing, or OARS helps the customer make a new registration of interest.

OARS completes a Housing needs report form, and gives it to the housing provider along with all necessary documentation - eg proof of income, change of circumstances form. The housing provider supports the customer to update their registration of interest in public and community housing.

7   Transferring properties in and out of the program

If Housing SA manages the property, the relevant Regional Manager is responsible for ensuring the overall number of housing outcomes for this program remains constant in their area.

A Community Housing Provider can use any suitable property from their portfolio for the program.

8   Related information

8.1 Controlling documents

- Integrated Housing Exits Program policy v1
- Housing Outreach Program Memorandum of Administrative Arrangement

8.2 Other documents and resources

- Registration of interest for public and community housing form
- Proof of income, identity and rent - www.sa.gov.au
- Information Sharing Guidelines
- Affordable Homes Program
- Short Term Housing Program policy
- Allocation guidelines
- Register guidelines
- Public housing needs report form
- Community housing needs report form

8.3 Date this guideline applies from

7 May 2019

8.4 Version number

2

8.5 Disclaimer

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