In 2006, the Queensland Government began a series of reforms to improve the delivery of housing services through the one social housing system. The aim of one social housing system is to provide assistance that responds to people’s housing need for the duration of their need.

In May 2008, the Department released a discussion paper on the realignment of transitional housing within one social housing system. Following extensive community, provider and interagency consultation, the Executive Director, Housing Programs approved an operational framework for transitional housing. The operational framework guided the development and implementation of new service delivery and program arrangements that began in May 2010.

Role and purpose

The operational framework for transitional housing guides the implementation of policy and procedural changes from May 2010.

The role of transitional housing within one social housing system is to provide timely housing assistance for clients with very high or high housing needs.

Transitional housing complements and supports the effective delivery of crisis and longer-term housing assistance by helping to connect and improve the pathways between the homelessness and social housing systems, including private housing assistance.

The purpose of transitional housing is to help eligible households to stabilise their circumstances and build their capacity to progress to longer-term living arrangements, in the private housing sectors. Transitional housing does this by providing intensively managed and closely monitored housing assistance based on assessed need.

Key operational features

To deliver on this role and purpose, the key service delivery components that are required include.

- identifying and matching clients from the housing register using the client intake and assessment and applicant referral processes;
- responding to clients needs in a flexible way through supportive tenancy management and the effective use of a range of privately head leased property and portfolio stock;
- maintaining and building on existing local level partnerships between housing providers and other agencies to ensure clients are appropriately supported; and
- strengthening the capacity of providers to successfully help clients move from transitional housing to longer-term housing options.
Applicant Matching and Allocation

Applicants are matched to transitional housing based on an assessment of their housing needs. Matching is undertaken through the client intake and assessment and applicant referral processes.

Transitional housing providers make a final allocation decision when matching applicants to a vacant property.

Transitional housing is an appropriate response to clients assessed as having the following needs:

- **Applicants transitioning from crisis and/or supported accommodation**
  
  Transitional housing may be the appropriate housing pathway for applicants in crisis and/or supported accommodation with one or more barriers to accessing or sustaining housing.
  
  As a stepping stone from crisis accommodations, a hospital, an institution or another supported living arrangement, transitional housing can prepare the tenant to manage longer-term housing in social housing or the private market.

  This approach is underpinned by the partnerships and coordination between service providers at the local level. Providers with local partnerships or other agreements should consider nominating applicants for specific vacancies.

- **Applicants experiencing homelessness**
  
  Transitional housing is an appropriate and timely option for applicants experiencing homelessness, where:
  
  - the applicant is assessed as having some capacity to sustain a social housing tenancy
  - the applicant is assessed as having limited capacity to sustain a tenancy but has a support arrangement in place (for example ‘Street to Home’) that will help them establish and sustain a tenancy.

  An applicant is assessed as not having the capacity to establish a social housing tenancy, or who requires support to establish a tenancy and that support is not in place, should be helped to access a more appropriate service. The applicant’s housing options should be re-assessed when they have the appropriate supports in place.

- **Applicants with a short duration of need**
  
  Transitional housing is suitable for people with very high or high housing needs who, after assistance of a short duration, are likely to improve their circumstances and re-establish independent housing in the private market.

  Applicants with a short duration of need who barriers to the private rental market are likely to be resolved through Tenancy Planning and Review practices should be referred to transitional housing.

- **Specific solution referral**
  
  Transitional housing may be suitable for applicants requiring a particular type of property that is not readily available in the long-term social housing portfolio, or when a support arrangement is in place to help them sustain a tenancy and housing is required before a long-term solution will be available. Providers should consider using the nominations process for applicants receiving support.
Housing Service Centres and providers should consider sourcing a Community Rent Scheme property for applicants with high housing need and specific property requirements, such as a large number of bedrooms or disability modifications, who are unlikely to get a timely allocation from the housing register.

Applicants who are clients of support agencies may also be referred to transitional housing where the support agency, applicant, provider and department agree on the match to the property and program.

Applicants housed under these arrangements may remain in transitional housing until an appropriate long-term housing option becomes available. Exit options will depend on ongoing assessment of their housing needs, including requirements for ongoing support as identified through the Tenancy Planning and Review process. An appropriate exit option may involve:

- remaining in the same property, with the type of assistance (program) changing to long-term social housing (for example, becoming a long-term tenant with the provider or becoming a public housing tenant with the department);
- moving into another property managed by the provider or another provider to receive long-term social housing assistance appropriate to their need; or
- being helped to access another appropriate housing option, for example in the private market or with the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).

Applicants with a need for long-term social housing may be appropriately matched to transitional housing when a support arrangement is in place and the applicant would benefit from Tenancy Planning and Review, to develop skills in managing a tenancy.

### Transfers

Current tenants of longer term social housing may be suitable for a transfer into transitional housing if their tenancy is at risk if failure due to rent arrears, failure to maintain the property or other tenancy issues. This includes applicants living in:

- Public housing or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing
- Indigenous Council Community Housing
- Long-term Community Housing
- Affordable Housing

Tenants of longer term social housing transferring into transitional housing may be moved back into long-term social housing when they have demonstrated that they are able to manage a social housing tenancy. Tenants may also be helped to move into the private market where they have demonstrated the capacity and willingness to do this through the Tenancy Planning and Review process.

When a tenancy is at risk if failure, appropriate supports should be put in place to prevent or break the cycle of homelessness. Providers and Housing Services officers should consider whether accommodation and support provided by specialist homelessness or other services may be more appropriate for the tenant.

### Tenancy planning and review

To ensure a client’s needs continue to be met appropriately, new service delivery arrangements will help tenants to move through and out of transitional housing based on assessed need.

Clients in transitional housing stay on the housing register and their circumstances are reviewed regularly to ensure they are receiving the right type of assistance for the duration of their need.
The housing provider will work with the client and any relevant support agencies to identify exit pathways from transitional housing.

Transitional housing providers play an important role in their local service system. They need to be well connected and have strong referral relationships with support, crisis services and other housing providers.

For more information

More information about the operational framework for transitional housing is available on the Department of Housing and Public Works website at www.hpw.qld.gov.au or by contacting us at:

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