

# Social Housing Program Specifications

**For funded providers delivering crisis accommodation and/or community housing services**

**Effective Date: 11 September 2020**

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# 1 Background

The Social Housing Program Specifications ('Program Specifications') provide a single reference point for providers delivering crisis accommodation and/or community housing services with funding provided under the *Housing Act 2003* ('the Act'). These Program Specifications identify the common requirements for all crisis accommodation and community housing services delivered with funding provided under the Act.

These Program Specifications are administered by Housing and Homelessness Services, Department of Housing and Public Works (the department) and are available on the department's website at [www.hpw.qld.gov.au](http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au).

## 1.1 Scope

These Program Specifications apply to the delivery of crisis accommodation and community housing services funded under the Act. This includes funding provided under the following programs:

- Affordable Housing Program
- Community-managed Housing - Studio Units Program
- Community Rent Scheme Program
- Crisis Accommodation Program
- Long Term Community Housing Program
- Same House Different Landlord Program
- Supportive Housing Program.

For existing funding agreements, these Program Specifications supersede previously published program specifications for the above programs, and form part of the funding agreement.

Providers delivering services under other programs not listed above may also be required under the terms of their funding agreement to apply relevant sections of these Program Specifications.

In addition, exemptions to specific requirements under these Program Specifications may exist under a provider's funding agreement with the department.

When implementing and applying these Program Specifications, the Provider must act and make decisions fairly and transparently, using principles compatible with human rights, as described in the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

# 2 Interpretation

Key words which have particular meanings in these Program Specifications are defined in [Attachment 2](#).

Unless the context otherwise requires:

- Expressions not defined in the Program Specifications, but which have a defined meaning in the Act or *Housing Regulation 2015* ('the Regulation') have, when used in these specifications, the same meaning as in the Act or Regulation.

- Subject to the above, expressions not defined in these Program Specifications, but which have a defined meaning in the funding agreement have, when used in these Program Specifications, the same meaning as in the funding agreement.
- The rules of interpretation of the funding agreement apply to the interpretation of these Program Specifications.
- These Program Specifications shall be read as if they were part of the funding agreement.
- In the event of any inconsistency or ambiguity between the Program Specifications and the funding agreement, the funding agreement will prevail.

### 3 Objective of crisis accommodation and community housing services

Community housing is a form of social housing service. Crisis accommodation and community housing is delivered by non-government organisations, local governments, churches and other community organisations. The Queensland Government funds crisis accommodation and community housing from the Housing Fund, administered in accordance with the *Act*.

The objective of crisis accommodation and community housing services is to provide appropriate housing for residential use, to eligible customers in greatest need.

## 4 Funding Requirements

### 4.1 Funded outcomes

Providers in receipt of funding under the *Act* to deliver crisis accommodation and/or community housing services are required to deliver specified outputs through two funded outcomes:

- Tenancy Management
- Asset Management.

Providers who receive, or have received, funding to deliver crisis accommodation or community housing service (including, but not limited to, funding provided under the programs listed in Section 1.1) are required to deliver both outcomes – Tenancy Management and Asset Management. Each outcome is described in more detail in the following sections.

### 4.2 Tenancy Management

The Provider must deliver the following outputs in managing crisis accommodation or community housing services:

- The Provider identifies and assists tenants able to access and sustain housing in the private market to do so.
- Only eligible customers in greatest need are provided with and continue to receive a crisis accommodation or community housing service.
- The Provider identifies and refers tenants in need of support to appropriate services.

- Tenants have increased capacity to meet tenant responsibilities, independently manage and sustain a tenancy.
- Disruptive behaviour is addressed with clear and consistent action.
- Neighbourhood disputes and other tenancy-related problems are prevented or addressed early before they escalate.
- Tenants continue to be appropriately matched to a property based on housing need and bedroom entitlement.
- Vacant properties are tenanted in a timely manner.
- Tenants do not return to community housing after a period of service.

To deliver the above outputs, the Provider must meet the following performance indicators and any other performance indicators identified in the performance reporting tool as provided by the department:

- 100 per cent of allocations are made from the Housing Register.
- At least 75 per cent of allocations are from customers on the Housing Register who are in greatest need. At least 90 per cent of all customers on the Housing Register who are in need and have been referred to the Provider, have received a person-centred response to solve their housing need.
- All tenancies are reviewed annually to assess their ongoing:
  - eligibility for community housing
  - need for community housing
  - match to the community housing property in which they reside
- 100 percent of ineligible tenants are exited within four months of being deemed ineligible.
- No more than 4 per cent of tenancies in rent arrears of more than four weeks.
- The average time to complete vacant maintenance is 11 days.
- The average time for tenanting a vacant tenantable property is 14 days.
- 90 per cent of tenants identified as able to access and sustain housing in the private market are assisted to do so.
- Zero known exits to homelessness.
- 100 per cent of consenting tenants in need of support are referred to an appropriate service.

Crisis Accommodation Program providers are not required to meet all the outputs and performance indicators set out in section 4.2. Crisis Accommodation Program providers should refer to the [Performance Reporting Tool](#) for required outputs and performance indicators.

### 4.3 Asset management

- The Provider must deliver the following outputs for all funded properties used to deliver a crisis accommodation and/or community housing service:
  - Properties are maintained in good condition operationally and aesthetically, benchmarked against industry standards for the class of asset.
  - Health and safety issues with properties are rectified as soon as practicable to ensure the safety of the tenant/s and are compliant with the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.
  - When delivering asset management on funded properties, the Provider should have an awareness of the asset management lifecycle.

- Program funding is used to head lease at least the minimum number of properties provided by the contract.
- To deliver the above, the Provider must meet the following performance indicators:
  - 95 per cent of funded department owned properties inspected meet the S4 rating as specified within the Queensland Government’s Maintenance Management Framework unless otherwise exempted by the department.
  - 100 per cent of immediate faults are responded to within one hour.
  - 100 per cent of urgent faults are responded to within four hours.
  - 100 per cent of changes to properties are advised to the department.
  - 100 per cent of the minimum head-lease quota range is achieved.

## 4.4 Policy requirements

The Provider must comply with its obligations to keep and implement policies as set out in the Regulation.

Each of the respective policy requirement detailed below must be read in conjunction with the Provider’s funding agreement and any regulatory requirements.

In addition to complying with the Regulation, the Provider must comply with the following policies published by the department from time to time:

- Community Housing Rent Policy for funded community housing providers
  - All providers, including providers delivering crisis accommodation, must implement the Community Housing Rent Policy for funded community housing providers, or other rent policy as published by the department from time to time, as its rent policy required under the Regulation.
- Community Housing Tenancy Management Policy
  - The Provider must implement the Community Housing Tenancy Management Policy as published by the Department from time to time.
  - Providers delivering crisis accommodation are *not required* to implement the Community Housing Tenancy Management Policy or similar policy as published by the Department from time to time, unless otherwise directed to do so in the Provider’s funding agreement.
  - Where the provider delivers multiple programs, the provider must implement the policy in all community housing program properties except for those properties funded under the Crisis Accommodation Program.
- Allowable Expenditure Policy
  - The Provider must only use receipts in accordance with the Allowable Expenditure Policy or similar policy as published by the Department from time to time, and the Provider’s funding agreement, which meets the objective of the community housing service.

The following are requirements for all crisis accommodation or community housing services:

- Providers must not lease or purchase a property from:
  - any of the Provider’s employees, officers, board or committee members or agents (“Members”).
  - any associate of a Member, which includes:
    - the relatives of each Member;

- the business partners of each Member:
  - any spouse or child of those business partners, any company a Member or their associates' control or influence and any trust the Member or their associates' control; or
    - an entity of which the Provider has either whole or majority control.
- A relative of a Member means any of the following:
  - a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child of the Member or their spouse; and
  - a spouse of any individual specified above.
- The Provider must not use funding to outsource property or tenancy management without prior written approval by the department.
- The Provider must not commit itself to contracts or other financial obligations that extend beyond the period of funding or the term stated in the funding agreement if the Provider is reliant upon funding or receipts in order to meet its obligations under such contracts or financial obligations, without first obtaining the consent of the department.
- The Provider must make provision to ensure that customers are safe and secure in accommodation, for example, by implementing a protocol to notify the Queensland Police Service of violence underway in the funded crisis accommodation or community housing service.

## 4.5 Insurance

The Provider must hold public liability insurance for a minimum amount of \$20,000,000 (twenty million dollars), or a greater amount if specified in the Provider's funding agreement.

## 4.6 Program specific requirements

The Provider must provide crisis accommodation and/or community housing services in accordance with the objectives of the relevant program set out below.

### 4.6.1 Longer term housing assistance

This section applies to Providers who are funded under the following programs:

- Affordable Housing Program (AHP)
- Community-managed Housing – Studio Units Program (CMSU)
- Long Term Community Housing Program (LTCHP)

The department, through the above-mentioned programs, gives funding assistance to Providers to provide secure, appropriate and affordable rental housing to eligible customers whose needs are not adequately met by other housing options.

The objective of community housing programs delivering longer-term housing assistance is to provide appropriate and affordable housing for eligible customers in the greatest need for the duration of that need.

### 4.6.2 Transitional housing assistance

This section applies to Providers who are funded under the following programs:

- Community-managed Housing – Studio Units Program (CMSU)
- Community Rent Scheme Program (CRS)
- Same House Different Landlord Program (SHDL)

The objectives of transitional housing are to:

- complement and support the effective delivery of crisis and longer-term housing assistance by helping to connect and improve the pathways from homelessness into longer-term housing
- assist eligible persons to stabilise their circumstances and build their capacity to achieve their optimal level of independence, in private or community housing.

Transitional housing does this by providing a tailored, supportive tenancy management approach to customers based on their level of assessed need.

Transitional housing providers must deliver a tenancy planning and review outcome, where households are assisted for the duration of their need. This tenancy planning and review process should:

- ensure the prospective tenant has a clear understanding of the type of housing assistance on offer
- review the tenant's barriers to accessing and sustaining long-term housing
- work with the tenant to identify an appropriate pathway for the tenant to build their capacity and achieve their level of independence
- build the tenant's capacity to access and sustain a long-term tenancy
- monitor and review progress made in working towards an agreed appropriate exit outcome
- support the tenant to make a smooth transition to their identified longer-term housing goals.

#### 4.6.3 Supportive Housing

The objective of supportive housing programs is to provide stable and affordable housing to individuals who have difficulty sustaining tenancies or are at risk of homelessness. Providers must supply low barrier housing, with tenancy and property management services that prioritise sustaining tenancies, and providing access to flexible and individualised support services, focussed on stabilising the housing or on other issues such as employment or health.

Affordable long-term housing is integrated with support services and part of the regular provision of housing. Long-term housing is provided as a priority, with support services provided to sustain the tenancy. Supportive Housing is consistent with the Housing First approach. The core objectives of Supportive Housing are:

- long-term tenure and affordability
- safety and comfort of tenants
- provision of support services which:
  - are accessible and flexible
  - target housing stability
  - promote tenant opportunity to interact with neighbours from diverse backgrounds
- promotion of tenant empowerment and independence
- co-ordination and integration of tenancy management and support services
- tenancy management must be carried out through:



- having an integrated system with the Support Provider through a formal instrument of co-operation / partnership, which has a shared vision and purpose
- jointly developed policies, protocols and procedures and a shared client interface through a ‘tenancy sustainment plan’, at the same time delineating roles and responsibilities within and between functions

providing opportunities for tenants to interact with neighbours

- respecting tenants’ choices in the support services they access without this impacting negatively on the terms of their tenancy agreement
- providing a safe and secure environment with appropriate service partners
- service co-ordination must occur through the Provider and Support Provider:
  - engaging with tenants in identifying services in accordance with their individual needs
  - establishing processes and tools for assisting tenants to meet their obligations under the tenancy agreement
  - educating tenants on the culture, procedures and maintenance of the housing including emergency plans and security

The Provider must implement the *Allocations Policy for funded social housing providers - Supportive Housing Program*, or other relevant policy as published by the Department from time to time.

#### 4.6.4 Crisis Accommodation

This section applies to Providers who are funded under the Crisis Accommodation Program.

The objective of crisis accommodation is to provide short-term accommodation to customers who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or in crisis to assist them to move towards independent living.

The Provider receiving funding under the Crisis Accommodation Program must not, without prior written approval from the department, use any funded dwellings to supply services:

- with a specialist clinical, treatment or rehabilitation focus
- that exclusively target veterans, people leaving prisons, students, people with disabilities, children under 16 years, the frail, aged or other groups as notified by the department
- replace or duplicate assistance already provided by, or which is the responsibility of, other government programs or services.

## 5 Reporting requirements

The Provider is responsible for reporting on the crisis accommodation and/or community housing services it delivers, or is required to deliver, with funding received under the Act. The department monitors the delivery of these crisis accommodation and/or community housing services through a variety of mechanisms including reporting, Housing Register reports and advice on service performance from within different areas of the department.

Where the department holds or already has access to key information about the service, the Provider will not be asked to supply that information again, except where updated information or clarification is required.

The reporting requirements in this section are not an exhaustive list of all information required to be supplied by the Provider under these Program Specifications. Providers should also review any reporting requirements in their contracts.

## 5.1 Funded outcome, property and financial reporting

The Provider must provide the following information and reports to the department:

- Information on funded properties and maintenance as requested by the department. The department must be notified about changes to funded properties including any new properties head-leased from the private market, or any substantial changes to property details such as acquisitions or disposals, within two days after the change has occurred using the form or system provided by the department from time to time
- Completed performance reports in the timeframes specified in the performance reporting tool provided by the department from time to time, within 21 days after the end of the reporting period
- A Community Housing Annual Financial Return (CHAFR) or other funding acquittal, on a date specified by the department, in the form or system provided by the department from time to time
- Annual Community Housing National Data Collection Survey produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, providing all the requested unit level data in the form or system provided by the department from time to time. The survey is administered by the department in June of each year and survey responses are required to be returned on a date specified by the department
- The National Social Housing Survey produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare providing all the requested data in the form or system provided by the department from time to time on a date specified by the department. The sector is surveyed biennially
- For department-owned properties managed by the Provider, details of planned maintenance undertaken, within five days after the end of each month in the form or system provided by the department from time to time. The Provider must report on the following building components:
  - Fencing
  - Paving
  - Ramps
  - Patio/Balcony
  - Roofing
  - Painting
  - Bathroom
  - Laundry
  - Kitchen
  - Hot water system
  - Ensuite
  - Floor coverings.

## 5.2 Additional reporting requirements

The Provider must provide the following information and reports in writing to the department within 21 days of being requested to do so:

- a copy of requested insurance policies, the receipts for the last premiums and certificates of currency of all such insurance policies
- such other information related to the Provider's operations as the department may reasonably request.

**Attachment 1:** Contacts

**Attachment 2:** Definitions

**Attachment 3:** References

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## Attachment 1: Contacts

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## Attachment 2: Definitions

The following words have the following meanings unless the context otherwise requires:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Act</b>	means the <i>Housing Act 2003</i> .
<b>Allowable Expenditure Policy</b>	means the document of the same title published by the department from time to time, and available on the department's website at <a href="http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au">www.hpw.qld.gov.au</a>
<b>Asset Management</b>	Asset Management includes all the processes, systems and activities required to manage the life cycle of funded housing assets and the portfolio.
<b>Crisis Accommodation</b>	means housing services funded under the Crisis Accommodation Program.
<b>Disruptive behaviour</b>	means behaviour which may or is likely to disturb the peace, comfort or privacy of other tenants, neighbours or members of the surrounding community. This may include harassment, illegal activities and other inappropriate behaviour and includes actions that cause intentional or reckless damage to property or place the property at risk of damage.
<b>Eligible customers</b>	Means those customers who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the Social Housing Eligibility Criteria; and</li> <li>• are approved persons listed on the department's Housing Register.</li> </ul> This definition excludes customers eligible for crisis accommodation. The eligibility requirements for crisis accommodation is dealt with at <a href="#">section 4.6.4</a> .
<b>Funded property</b>	means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a property that the chief executive leases to the funded provider for the provision of housing services;</li> <li>- a property that the provider leases using, wholly or partly, using funding or receipts for the housing service</li> </ul> and as further defined under the <i>Housing Regulation 2015</i> .
<b>Funding</b>	means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assistance in the form of money or other assistance to a funded provider to assist the provider in providing housing services; and on condition the funded provider is accountable to the chief executive</li> </ul>

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
	for providing the housing services and the use of the money or other assistance  as defined under the <i>Housing Act 2003</i> .
<b>Funding agreement</b>	means:  - an agreement entered into for providing funding to the provider  as defined under the <i>Housing Act 2003</i> .
<b>Housing Register</b>	means the department's register of eligible customers for community housing services.
<b>housing service</b>	has the meaning given in the <i>Act</i> .
<b>planned maintenance</b>	for department-owned properties, has the meaning given in the lease between the department and the Provider.
<b>property</b>	the property or premises described in the funding agreement, or, where the context permits, property or premises in relation to which the Provider receives funding to deliver a crisis accommodation and/or community housing service and includes the funded property.
<b>Provider</b>	the party to the funding agreement other than the department.
<b>published</b>	published on the department's website and made available at the department's offices.
<b>receipts</b>	For a housing service that a funded provider provides means:  - funding paid to a funded provider by the chief executive; or - an amount, other than funding, that the funded provider receives for providing the housing service (like rent and fees); or - the proceeds of sale of a funded property; or - interest on amounts mentioned above  as defined under the <i>Housing Regulation 2015</i> .
<b>Regulation</b>	the <i>Housing Regulation 2015</i> .
<b>S4 rating</b>	means the specified condition standard "building to be in good condition operationally and aesthetically, benchmarked against industry standards for that class of asset" as specified in the Queensland Government's Maintenance Management Framework available on the department's website at <a href="http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au">www.hpw.qld.gov.au</a> .

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Social Housing Eligibility Criteria</b>	the document of the same title published by the department from time to time, and available on the department's website at <a href="http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au">www.hpw.qld.gov.au</a> .
<b>Community Housing Rent Policy</b>	the document of the same title or similar policy published by the department from time to time, and available on the department's website at <a href="http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au">www.hpw.qld.gov.au</a> .
<b>Community Housing Tenancy Management Policy</b>	the document of the same title published by the department from time to time, and available on the department's website at <a href="http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au">www.hpw.qld.gov.au</a> .
<b>Tenancy management</b>	Tenancy managements includes all the processes, systems and activities of housing managers to identify and select tenants, respond to tenant needs and deal with tenancy-related matters. This involves actively managing tenancies and promoting a responsive person-centred approach, including pathways to build a tenant's capacity and optimal level of independence.

## Attachment 3: References

The requirements set out in this document are based on, and are consistent with, relevant Government legislation, regulations, directives, information standards and/or policies at the time of publication.

For example:

### Legislation and regulations

- [Human Rights Act 2019](#)
- [Housing Act 2003](#)
- [Housing Regulation 2015](#)
- [Public Records Act 2002](#)
- [Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008](#)

### Department of Housing and Public Works documents

- [Allocations Policy for funded social housing providers](#)
- [Allocations Policy for Supportive Housing](#)
- [Community Housing Tenancy Management Policy](#)
- [Community Housing Rent Policy](#)
- [Homelessness Program Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements](#)