

Final Report

A sustaining tenancies approach to managing demanding behaviour in public housing: a good practice guide Appendix

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Support Needs of Staff

The Challenge for Staff

Sometimes it is hard to know where to start and how to respond to the diverse range of needs and problems a client with complex service needs may present. It can also be hard to maintain a clear focus on the purpose of the service being provided.

Service providers often hear sad and difficult stories from clients and can feel overwhelmed by some situations and limited in their capacity to assist. It is not uncommon to do a plan for the client, organise care and treatment activities, then return to find the situation has reached another crisis and the plan cannot be implemented. And so it goes on.

Complex situations can seem chaotic: at times it is possible only to hold or contain a situation, not fix it conclusively. Sometimes it is enough to provide a client or carer with something quite tangible in the here and now, rather than a grand future scenario that is way out of their reach. Service providers can help the client or carer be clear about the next step they need to take and provide basic help for this. This can be enough to reduce the immediate pressure, provide them with time and space to think and work through problems and issues themselves, and to feel some control over their situation.

Support Strategies for Staff

1. Develop a good sense of own boundaries.
2. Develop confidence in abilities, and seek out training that might be helpful.
3. Think about what support might be helpful from managers and other colleagues.
4. Use the analogy of a ladder when working with clients, taking one step at a time, rather than focusing on getting straight to the top.
5. Focus on one achievable outcome that will build confidence between you and the client.

Strategies for Managers in Supporting Their Staff

1. Try and find out what support staff members find helpful during the planning phase, rather than when the stress levels are high.
2. Be a "What do you think?" person to staff: someone they can talk things through for either problem solving or debriefing. Help staff get clear about what they need in each instance.
3. After significant client contacts, help staff talk through the situation in a structured way, working to a point of clarity about the next step. This can provide a degree of relinquishment and relief for staff.

Excerpt from: *The Agency Collaboration Strategy for Improvement to Services for People with Complex and Exceptional Needs* Department of Health and Human Services, Government of Tasmania, Hobart

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Good practice in maintenance

Response maintenance

This maintenance work as and when it is incurred. The minimum response times should be as follows:

- ▶ Emergency – 24 hours, e.g. burst pipe, no heating
- ▶ Urgent – 5 working days
- ▶ Routine – at the social landlord's discretion

Fast-track maintenance

Fast-track procedures should be agreed for Residential Care Homes, and for vulnerable tenants in other supported housing schemes.

Planned maintenance

Social landlords should have planned maintenance programmes which include long-term plans to upgrade and replace components. Planned maintenance involves:

- ▶ cyclical – undertaken every few years (e.g. 5 years), such as external painting
- ▶ internal decorations – inside a tenant's living area
- ▶ major repairs – major works undertaken at longer intervals through the life of the property

Service maintenance

Social landlords should have written policies on the following:

- ▶ maintenance of equipment – such as cookers, fridges, washing machines, electrical appliances and their replacement. Landlords are required by law to inspect gas appliances annually
- ▶ maintenance of furniture – such as beds, tables, carpets and their replacement. Landlords should ensure furnishings comply with fire regulations.

Where a social landlord works in partnership with a voluntary organisation, the responsibility for maintenance is often split between the two agencies. Managing agents usually take responsibility for internal decorations, maintenance and replacement of equipment and furniture. It is essential that, where managing agents take responsibility for these items, that they set aside funding from the service to tenants to enable these responsibilities to be carried out. Lack of clarity in these arrangements can lead to a supported housing scheme becoming run down.

Tenants should be provided with clear information about maintenance and for social landlord schemes the Tenants' Guarantee requires that information is provided about:

- ▶ who is responsible for which repairs (association/agent)
- ▶ methods for reporting repairs
- ▶ how long it should take for defined categories of repairs to be carried out
- ▶ their policy for planned maintenance including cycles of decoration
- ▶ what residents can do if the association fails to meet its repairing obligations

L. Warner, S. Bennett, R. Ford and K. Thomson, (1997) *Home from Home* The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, London

Standards for the Physical Environment

Example: Threshold Tennant Trust

Threshold Tennant Trust operates a 'fast-track' repairs service for vulnerable tenants.

This scheme grew out of a wish to provide a rapid emergency response to heating or hot water failures in registered care homes. The Trust's gas servicing contractor is expected to respond within four hours to a central heating breakdown or emergency call-out in such instances, compared to a 24-hour expectation elsewhere. This approach has been extended beyond registered care homes to include vulnerable tenants generally (e.g. people with HIV/AIDS, mental health problems, sickle cell disease and those registered disabled), as communicated to maintenance staff by the Trust's special needs and general needs section managers.

Threshold has been moving towards expanding this approach to cover all types of repair. The 4 hour target is being applied to all forms of emergency repair (where the standard expectation is 24 hours), and the Trust has been prepared to work to 'emergency' as defined by the care home staff or individual tenants: inappropriate emergency orders have been discussed with whoever placed the order after the repairs have been attended to, and, in this way, any problems have been ironed out over time and a more accurate assessment of true emergencies achieved.

This general approach to 'fast-track' repairs will be formalised from 1998/99 with the help of an upgraded maintenance computer system. Vulnerable tenants will then not only receive a 4 hour maximum emergency response, but will also have repairs classified as 'urgent' or 'routine' tackled within tighter timescales than the Trust's standard expectation periods of 48 hours and 3 weeks.



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INTEGRATED SERVICE MODEL AND PRINCIPLES

Service Model

Citizenship/Lifestyle

"Citizenship", for the purposes of this model, is the term used to describe every individual's right to live with minimum restriction as well as maximum satisfaction, both to themselves and the community. The model's underpinning foundation is the premise that everyone wants citizenship within his or her community and the respect and dignity which citizenship brings.

In working with the person, emphasis must be placed on understanding the individual, their life goals and desires, identifying the significant others in their life, assisting them to reach their goals and reconnect (where possible) with family. Culture and identity are central to these points and will shape the approach taken.

There is a clear understanding that with citizenship comes rights and responsibilities, participation, choice, connectedness, being valued and belonging. The focus is on maintaining, gaining or re-gaining of citizenship.

Partnership and Collaboration

The model requires a spirit of goodwill for the establishment and development of formal and informal partnerships and collaborative work practices. Partnership includes participation in decision making and the sharing of responsibility for managing risk.

Lead Agency

The role of the lead agency is to ensure the program is accepted as a service-wide program and to develop the necessary partnerships with other relevant agencies to gain collaboration across all sectors. In agencies where Aboriginal staff are not employed, appropriate consultation and guidance will need to be sourced from an Aboriginal partnership service, family or community member.

The role also is to provide leadership in the development of a comprehensive management plan, which includes the risk management for the program, evaluation and review processes as well as providing the training program.

The Lead Agency role is to ensure DHS is kept informed of the program including the level of risk involved. A community-based lead agency is considered imperative in order to ensure the ultimate relocation of an individual to a community setting from hospital or institutional care, as well as continued progression towards the least restrictive environment within the community.

Service Delivery

It is considered crucial to separate roles clearly within the lead agency to ensure that all appropriate levels are engaged and able to support the program, even though the program is situated within a team structure.

Service Director / Manager

The Service Director / Manager needs to be fully aware and supportive of the program and plays an important role in allocating and supporting a Coordinator. It is also the Service Director / Manager's role to ensure any concerns or problems with partner agencies or the community are dealt with at a senior level and so do not interfere with the focus and integrity of the client program.

Coordinator

The Coordinator is responsible for the development of the individualised program. This position will work with the parties involved to establish guiding principles and values that reflect the goals held for that individual. Also, an evaluation process needs to be developed and articulated by the Coordinator within the Lead Agency for everyone involved with the program including the client.

The role of the coordinator is to maintain the program focus for each client, provide support for the workers and to keep the team informed. The coordinator ensures there is a consistent approach for all members of the partnership.

Case Management

Intensive client / family centred case management that is culturally sensitive must be provided and includes responsibility for the management of:

- Individually tailored plans and responses
- Packages of support (and funding of packages)
- Both an ongoing service plan and a crisis plan
- Goal setting for the short, medium and longer term
- Monthly reviews with relevant partners

It is vital that clear after-hours support, including contact names and responses, are available to the partnership.

Staff support

It is important that the coordinator and the team are very well supported in the management of individuals with exceptional needs. A team approach is essential. The coordinator should meet regularly with the Service Director and/or their delegate. If there are issues of community concern or problems with the partner agencies, this should be addressed by the Service Director. This ensures the focus and the integrity of the program remains intact.

Support staff, usually employed through NGO's, must be adequately trained and it is particularly useful when the mainstream agencies involved deliver this training. Further support through regular staff meetings and debriefing is also critical and this can occur

either face to face or by telephone. There is a benefit to all if support workers are able to achieve some variety in their work.

Holistic focus

In keeping with a lifestyle approach, the focus is holistic, considering all relevant life domains. There are a number of core areas such as support within an appropriate cultural context, housing, family, health and activities of daily living. Commonly addressed life domains, each with individual short, medium and long-term goals, include the following:

Culture / Identity	Physical health
Family involvement	Mental health
Community access	Residence
Leisure / Recreation	Education
Spiritual / Religious Connections	Day Activities / Employment
Legal Issues	Finances

In addition to Life Domains, planning needs to encompass an assessment of the individual's strengths as well as risk / need areas. This would include an understanding of the individual's behaviour patterns, positive and negative; and for people with multiple, complex needs, should include independent advocacy to assist the person to represent their strengths and help ensure a positive focus is part of the planning process.

Shared Values

It is imperative that the Lead Agency, in consultation with supporting agencies, develops a set of Principles and Values for each individual program that reflect the individual's cultural context, needs and goals. There must be a shared, client-focused commitment that over-rides individual service philosophies. The consequences of this process may be that agencies have to work under alternative practice philosophies in order to provide a consistent service for the client.

Personal Growth Approach

Service delivery is based on assisting people to develop, rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community by living their life with them, not for them or around them. Thus a positive behaviour focus, rather than one of containment and control, is achieved. However, it is recognized that not all individuals will have the capacity to fully achieve reintegration into the community, but they should be supported to work towards that goal as far as is possible. Similarly it is also acknowledged that periods of containment may be necessary for the safety of the individual and / or the community, though the style of containment at those times should reflect a positive, behavioural approach.

Flexible Funding

The program needs to be fully costed with some contingency capacity. Progress will not always be smooth and there is likely to be some disruption to the program, which will require increased support or changes to be made. Provision for flexibility is critical.

Cost Effectiveness/Cost Efficiencies

Programs should be developed in the most cost-effective way, building on the client's strengths, always focussing on integration into their community, and responding quickly to changes through either decreased or increased support when required. The success

of the program hinges on the ability to respond quickly when increases of support or other changes are required. Informal and family supports are in keeping with the lifestyle approach and also assist to reduce costs; however, these people in turn need to be supported and linked to the partnership approach.

Risk Management

Dealing with risk is part of the day-to-day business of service providers. Risk minimisation for service requires:

- Clearly articulated philosophy for service development and delivery based on international, national and state policies regarding human rights and responsibilities
- Government and funder support and commitment to high-risk ventures through policy, funding and loyalty to service providers who are attempting best practice in this area
- Provision of adequate legal frameworks to support practice
- Service management commitment to high-risk client situations and strong support for staff working in this area
- Transparent internal policies and protocols, including complaint resolution processes
- Workable inter-service agreements, protocols and mutual support
- Appropriate clinical/service/financial/opportunity risk assessment
- Education and information strategies for staff, client, families and relevant communities
- Critical incident debriefing and adverse event documentation and evaluation
- Evaluation and review mechanisms focussing on quality improvement
- Comprehensive documentation

Service Principles

General

- The ultimate vision is service provision that is democratic, fair and accountable which accommodates and values diversity and addresses the particular needs of vulnerable and marginalised people
- The cultural diversity of the target population is acknowledged and reflected within all aspects of partnership, planning, evaluation and review
- Agencies will work within the confidentiality parameters as determined by relevant legislation and organisational policies and protocols, while ensuring that all relevant information is shared with appropriate partners (preferably) with client consent

Participation

- The model must transcend organisational boundaries and is strongly client focused

- Active participation of all partners (including carers where appropriate) in the development and evaluation of services will be central to the model
- Support providers will engage the participant in the process of planning their support services program and work in partnership with the participant as well as family and other key service agencies to achieve desired outcomes

Program / Support

- The individual's wishes need to be taken into account and incorporated into the program. The key to success is innovation and creativity. The program needs to address the challenges in managing the client, or more importantly, identify strategies to achieve the goals.
- Program support will place an emphasis on the individual's positive attributes and health, which ensures that support planning will focus on enhancing strengths and skills
- Support will concentrate on all key life domains and will include most activities of daily living
- Support will be tailored to individual needs and goals and will be responsive and flexible to changing need and circumstance through regular review and adjustment by the lead agency
- Services will promote independence and choice by providing flexible types and levels of support within a holistic framework
- Evaluation or review of the program, the workers and progress needs to be graduated from daily to weekly in the short term as the risk to the community decreases, then from weekly to fortnightly in the medium term as risk to the client and others decreases further.

Housing

- People should be housed in the community in the least restrictive environment possible
- Housing for people with exceptional needs must be accompanied by realistic levels of support
- People with exceptional needs often require individual housing, as they are usually ill equipped to manage group environments.
- A network approach with housing would be beneficial for the clients and staff to allow for flexibility and variety for staffing.
- Housing should be located near support (natural support networks and/or services). Easy access to shops, GP and leisure activities are necessary.

This model has been developed by a DHS Supported Accommodation Working Party for Exceptional Needs Clients, and further adapted for use by the Exceptional Needs Unit.

Developing Partnerships

Part 1: Initial Considerations

	Yes	No
1. Do you think that both/all potential partners are likely to share a compelling objective?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is it likely that they cannot achieve the objective as well working alone as they could working together (<i>i.e. can each partner add unique value</i>)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is there likely to be support from key people for a partnership approach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If a partnership were to be established, would it be for the medium to long term?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you think that a willingness to give and take can be developed, with the objective that, over the long-term, the wins for each partner will balance out?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is there a need or desire for flexible and innovative solutions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do you think that both partners would feel that they are exposed to about the same level of risk, even though the risks may be different?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do you think that both partners have fairly compatible 'ways of working', or would be willing to make allowances for the other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Do you think the relationship could be based on collaboration, trust and openness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Is the current operating environment for the partners typified by rapid change where decision-making for action lacks clarity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered 'yes' to at least six of the above criteria, including Criterion 1 and Criterion 2, then it is worth considering a partnership approach.

Excerpt from: *The Agency Collaboration Strategy for Improvement to Services for People with Complex and Exceptional Needs* Department of Health and Human Services, Government of Tasmania, Hobart

PART 2: The Potential of the Strategic Partnership (pros and cons)

In considering the nature of the proposed partnership each party is encouraged to consider the following individually and then explore in depth in joint discussions.

1. What is the other party's value to us? Why are we considering them as a partner?
2. What is our value to them? Why do we think they are considering us as a partner?
3. Why are we interested in a partnership?
4. What are our expectations for how we would like to work together?
5. What risks are there to the partnership? And what risks or obstacles are there from the partnership to our organisation?
6. Is there anything significant in our history together that could impact on this project?
7. Are there any non-negotiables?
8. Shall we proceed?

Adapted from *Partnership Framework*, Organisation Development Unit, DHHS, 1998

Section One: Communities and self-help

1.1 Action that tenants and residents can take themselves

1.1.1a Being a good neighbour: some tips for *Living in Harmony*

Below are some tips identified by participants in the *Living in Harmony* project that have been found to be helpful in avoiding disputes between neighbours. Some of the tips may sound obvious, but, if followed, can result in significant reduction in incidences of neighbour dispute.

Helpful

- Keeping TVs and music noise to a reasonable level, especially when windows or doors are left open, or late at night
- Placing TVs and music systems away from shared walls and avoiding direct contact with the floor by placing equipment on a table or shelf
- Warning neighbours if you're having a party, and maybe inviting them too
- Asking your children not to play in other people's gardens or play ball against people's walls
- Putting rubbish out on the morning of collection to avoid damage by dogs, etc.
- Warning your neighbours before you have a bonfire and checking which way the wind is blowing

Not helpful

- Playing TVs and music systems too loudly or late at night
- Doing vacuuming, using washing machines or doing DIY late at night
- Letting dogs bark outside or leaving them alone in the house all day
- Letting dogs mess in gardens and on the pavements
- Parking your car in someone else's space or gateway
- Banging car doors, revving up or playing car radios in the street late at night
- Leaving rubbish in your garden or outside the house on days when it's not bin day
- Shouting at other people's children or at your neighbours

Section One: Communities and self-help

1.1 Action that tenants and residents can take themselves

1.1.1b What to do when you have a problem with a neighbour

Most people try and be good neighbours, and don't set out to cause disputes. However, if problems do arise, there are a range of the options set out below that people may find helpful.

Option 1 - Don't rush in!

For example: Some people may have problems with their neighbour that have not occurred before. Examples of this may be noise problems from DIY or from a party, visitors parking their cars in the wrong place, children kicking a football into your garden.

There was a general feeling among tenants and residents taking part in the *Living in Harmony* project that people are less tolerant towards their neighbours nowadays than they used to be, and more likely to complain.

If this is the first time you've experienced a problem with your neighbour, the right thing to do to start with may be nothing! It may be a one-off problem that will not happen regularly. Maybe your neighbour is putting up a shelf, or having a birthday party. A bit of tolerance and patience might be all that is needed to sort things out. If you are too quick to complain, it might make things worse between you and your neighbour.

Option 2 - Try and sort things out yourself

For example: You may be having a continuing problem such as persistent noise from TV, music or dogs which is disturbing you and needs to be sorted out.

Try talking to your neighbour and explaining what the problem is. They may not realise they are causing you any disturbance. It is important to try and sort things out yourself first. If you get someone else involved at this stage it may make things a lot worse.

It is often difficult to approach people to make a complaint. Below are some hints you might find useful.

Section One: Communities and self-help

1.1 Action that tenants and residents can take themselves

Approaching people

- **Don't** let things build up. Don't leave it until things get out of hand, before you make your complaint.
- **Don't** approach the person at the time you are angry or upset. Wait until you are calm.
- **Do** talk to the person face to face, rather than sending a letter, banging on the wall, or talking to everyone but them.
- **Do** work out beforehand what you want to say. Talking it over with someone who is not involved may help you to do this.
- **Do** approach the person when they are likely to have time to talk (for example, not just when they are off to work, or late in the evening)
- **Do** talk to the person when they are on their own, without other friends, neighbours or family present
- **Do** leave straightaway if people are aggressive or threatening when you approach them. If this happens you will need help from an organisation to resolve the situation. See Section 1.3 (page 22) for more information about organisations that can help.

Speaking to people

- **Don't** lose your temper. This will only make things worse and harder to sort out.
- **Don't** use aggressive body language (eg hands on hips, pointing, staring, etc.)
- **Do** speak quietly and slowly; this helps keep the other person calm
- **Do** explain the problem clearly. Try not to use any emotional or bad language or exaggerate the complaint.
- **Do** make your request politely but firmly
- **Do** be prepared to hear their side of the story. Listen to their reply/explanation without interrupting, and think about what they have said.
- **Do** keep calm and polite and talk things through

Ending the conversation

- **Do** thank them for their time and try and leave on a friendly note
THEN wait a few days to see if the problem sorts itself out

Section One: Communities and self-help

1.1 Action that tenants and residents can take themselves

Option 3 - Continuing problems

For example: Sometimes people are not reasonable and are not willing to listen or compromise. If the problem continues or gets worse you will need to seek help from other organisations to resolve the situation.

- If this happens, it may be helpful to start to keep a diary, recording any more incidents of the problem, with times, dates and details of what happens, in case you need to take things further.

If you are a tenant, and the problem concerns a tenant of the same landlord as you

- Approach your landlord and ask them to help you. Explain what the problem is, how long it has been going on, and that you have tried to sort things out yourself but this hasn't worked.
- Your landlord may offer to help directly, or may suggest you get in touch with another organisation, such as mediation service, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), environmental health or the police.
- If you would like help and support to do this, ask your landlord to help.

If you are not a tenant, or if the problem concerns a tenant of a different landlord or an owner occupier

- Seek advice from an organisation that can help you, eg mediation, CAB, environmental health or the police. See Section 1.3 (page 22) for more details.

Section One: Communities and self-help

1.1 Action that tenants and residents can take themselves

Option 4 – Problems involving threats or violence

For example: If the problem is very serious, eg you have been attacked or threatened with violence or your property has been damaged, you should contact the police

- The police will be able to advise you about obtaining a restraining order or an injunction to protect you, your family and your property. They will also be able to take any necessary court action following an incident.
- If you are a tenant, and the problem is being caused by a tenant who has the same landlord as you, you should also get in touch with your landlord and ask them to take appropriate action under the terms of the tenancy agreement.

This section draws on:

Living in Harmony project tenant and resident discussion workshops

Living in Harmony information leaflet – ***What to do about neighbour disputes***

Cardiff City County Council - ***Solving Neighbour Problems, guide for tenants***

Neath Port Talbot CBC - ***Neighbour Nuisance, tenants information leaflet***

Neighbour Nuisance: New Initiatives Good practice Briefing published by CIH

Renfrewshire Council - ***Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour – a guide for council tenants***

Analysing Problems, Finding Solutions

Part 1: Analyse the Problems

1. What is the specific problem?
2. Who is it a problem for and why?
3. How significant is the problem i.e. how often does it occur and what impact does it have when it does occur?
4. What is/are the underlying cause/s of the problem?

Part 2: Find Solutions

For each problem

Keep in mind your analysis of the underlying causes. If there are a number of causes, look for common themes and cluster them accordingly. Then consider the following:

5. What are the possible fixes? *Prompts:* How would people like it to be different and better? Has anyone come up with a solution that works well elsewhere?
6. In thinking further about possible solutions, consider developing criteria to help weigh up various options. Some examples are listed below.

Some Suggested Criteria for Determining Best Solutions

- Is it practical and achievable?
Is it likely to be beneficial, or at least not a negative, for all the interested parties?
Is it likely to bring a lasting solution or is it just a quick fix that might cause more problems later?
- Have we got the resources (or access to them) to do it e.g. staff, skills, \$s?
- Will it be acceptable or potentially acceptable to funding and legislative bodies?

Excerpt from: The Agency Collaboration Strategy for Improvement to Services for People with Complex and Exceptional Needs Department of Health and Human Services, Government of Tasmania, Hobart

Summary developed by Lea McInerney, various sources, 2005

Conflict Resolution Skills

The Conflict Resolution Network (CRN) provides excellent web-based resources (see details below). At the heart of these resources are *12 Skills*, summarised here. The CRN suggests that if you can gain mastery in even just one or two of the 12 you will notice improvements in how you deal with conflict.

1. The win/win approach

Identify attitude shifts to respect all parties' needs.

2. Creative response

Transform problems into creative opportunities.

3. Empathy

Develop communication tools to build rapport. Use listening to clarify understanding.

4. Appropriate assertiveness

Apply strategies to attack the problem not the person.

5. Co-operative power

Eliminate "power over" to build "power with" others

6. Managing emotions

Express fear, anger, hurt and frustration wisely to effect change.

7. Willingness to Resolve

Name personal issues that cloud the picture.

8. Mapping the conflict

Define the issues needed to chart common needs and concerns.

9. Development of options

Design creative solutions together.

10. Introduction to negotiation

Plan and apply effective strategies to reach agreement.

11. Introduction to mediation

Help conflicting parties to move towards solutions.

12. Broadening perspectives

Evaluate the problem in its broader context.

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Working with client/tenants with complex needs: Developing a Support and Referral Plan

Background

**Look out for
complexity –
now or in
the future**

State Housing Authorities (SHAs) have become increasingly targeted towards client/tenants with highest and complex needs. Similarly, Housing Tasmania through the *Affordable Housing Strategy* (AHS) has also acknowledged the critical role that public housing plays as a 'safety net' for those people who experience greatest need. These changes in service delivery are not limited to our experience either. It has also been recognised that the business of our Agency is changing and that the needs of client/tenants are becoming increasingly complex across the board.

For Housing Tasmania, these are the client/tenants that experience problems with both affordability and a range of other psycho-social and health related needs which make their access to, and maintenance of, housing more difficult.

People who have complex needs sometimes require specialised support or case management to assist them in accessing and maintaining their tenancy. This is outside the role and responsibility of Housing Tasmania staff to provide.

The Agency Collaboration Strategy asks us to work together to achieve the best outcomes for client/tenants. It provides a tiered response which starts with 'Look out for complexity – now or in the future'. This might occur through a formal assessment process. But it doesn't have to be a formal process either. This is what we:

SEE

HEAR

SMELL

FEEL

**It's all about
working
together for
good client/
tenant
outcomes**

It also asks us to work together to develop an action plan that engages relevant service providers whose role is to provide a range of support to meet the client/tenant's need.

The Agency Progress Chart identifies five supporting areas. Supporting areas are exactly that. They are things that support or help us deliver the services that we are meant to provide for the community. One supporting area is COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION. This is about working well together for good client/tenant outcomes. It means that if we work well together then we can deliver better services that better meet needs. It also recognises that we work in a big Agency and that we need to consciously work together to achieve our shared goals that is, the best outcomes possible for the client/tenant.

Support and Referral Plan

It's the tool for Customer Service Officers to use with clients/tenants with complex needs

This package outlines how to go about developing a **Support and Referral Plan** for client/tenants with complex needs. The Support and Referral Plan is to be used by Customer Service Officers working in either **assessment or tenancy**.

Plans can be established during an *assessment to support early intervention* or it might be that you *become aware of complex issues during a tenancy* and a Plan may be developed at some other stage. To demonstrate this throughout the package, the terms **client/tenant** will be used.

It is the Customer Service Officer's role to identify a client/tenant with complex needs and develop a Support and Referral Plan for them. This package gives you information about how to do this and provides a template to complete.

There are also other tools that are available to help you do this work. These can be found in the Complex and Specific Needs package which is located on Microsoft Outlook/ public folders/ Housing Tasmania/ South East Area/ projects/. One of the key tools from this package is the Client/tenant Contract. Whilst, the Support and Referral Plan gives you the framework, the Client/tenant Contract is the tool to engage the client/tenant in making changes that will support their tenancies.

After you've drafted your Plan, confirm it with your Senior who will endorse it for implementation.

The Support and Referral Plan is a crucial tool because:

- ! It helps people who need housing, get and keep housing.
- ! It helps to intervene earlier and attempts to avoid problems before they become entrenched.
- ! It helps other Housing Tasmania officers understand the issues for a client/tenant when they pick up their file.
- ! It helps provide evidence for briefings and when proceeding with eviction.

Who are client/tenants with complex needs?

Definition:	The DHHS Agency Collaboration Strategy has defined client/tenants with complex needs as being most likely to be characterised with some or all of the following factors:
Public housing applicants or tenants who have	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>multiplicity of needs across two or more program areas* where a service model and/or service solution exists;</i>• <i>challenging behaviours which place themselves, the staff and the community at risk;</i>
<u>two or more social and/or physical health problems</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>extreme difficulty in finding long term, stable and appropriate accommodation;</i>• <i>a level of resourcing that requires close monitoring and it is difficult to sustain;</i>• <i>a high degree of intensity about the problems;</i>• <i>the likelihood of a need for involvement outside of DHHS.¹</i>
that effect their ability to access or maintain a tenancy.	<p>*Program areas can draw on services from the government and/or non-government sectors. The term 'program' has been used to reflect the nature of complex needs which is defined by a multiplicity of need. For example, this could include a non-government counselling service for family violence and the government Mental Health Services as these are different programs. Similarly, it would not include a non-government counselling service for family violence and the government Family Violence Counselling Service as both services relate to the same client/tenant need and program area, family violence.</p>

¹ Tasmania DHHS (2004), *The Agency Collaboration Strategy for improvement to services for people with complex and exceptional needs*. P.7-8

Our role with client/tenants with complex needs can be thought about in three main ways.

1. Facilitate good housing outcomes

1. Facilitate good housing outcomes

Our job is to provide housing for eligible people. This means our role is to facilitate access and maintenance of a tenancy. The National Social Housing Survey shows us that sustainable tenancies make a huge difference to the health and wellbeing of our tenants. We are in the business of helping people get housing that they can sustain.

2. Duty of care

Duty of care is basically our responsibility to do the right thing by our client/tenants. We see people's lives and we go into people's houses and spend time with them. We see, hear, smell and feel a whole lot of things about them. As a result, we are responsible for acting to ensure that our client/tenants are safe and that we are also safe. Duty of care is our obligation to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which one can reasonably foresee would be likely to cause harm or injury to another. This duty is breached if a person fails to act in accordance with standards of care appropriate to their role or situation.

2. Duty of care

Duty of care has two dimensions. The first is mandatory. This is what legislation says we are responsible for. Some examples of this come under the following Acts:

mandatory

- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*
- *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997*
- *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*
- *Family Violence Act 2004*

ethical

Duty of care also has an ethical dimension. This is about what is right or wrong from a professional perspective. An example of this is that we are not legally required to report people who have threatened suicide. We do however, have an ethical duty of care to report these people. If we are aware that they have made threats to hurt themselves then we are responsible for acting to prevent them from doing so. This doesn't mean we are responsible for physically preventing them from hurting themselves but it does mean we need to call the Police and/or Mental Health Services, make a referral and document our intervention on the client/tenant file.

3. Social housing managers in a legislative context

3. Social housing managers in a legislative context

As social housing managers we work a bit differently than property managers in the private sector. The most obvious example is that we don't immediately evict our tenants, in fact, eviction is the action of last resort. This is because we understand the multitude of issues and barriers that impact on our client/tenant and because we work in a broader Agency context that seeks to support people with problems so they can live a fulfilling and healthy life.

Even though we're social housing managers, we still work within the context of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*. Some client/tenants will choose not to comply with the requirements of their Lease even after we've tried a number of things to assist them. So that we can enforce our responsibilities under the lease, we need to demonstrate that we have tried to assist the client/tenant sustain their tenancy.

What our role is not?

This does **not** mean that we are:

Counsellors – our job is not to provide emotional support and therapy to our client/tenants.

Case managers – case management is a specific role which identifies a key worker who is responsible for decision making and achieving agreed psycho-social and health outcomes.

What do we actually have to do?

1. Observe

What do you?

SEE

HEAR

SMELL

FEEL

There are two aspects to what you observe.

1. Compliance with the Lease

2. Social and health problems

The first is about how the client seems to be coping or how well the tenancy is going. During an assessment, it might include considering previous tenancies. In a previous tenancy (during an assessment) or in the current tenancy, are there/have there been issues with:

Observe

Trust
your
senses

- **Anti-social behaviours?**
- **Rent arrears?**
- **Condition of property?**

What else do you notice about the client/tenant?

Remember they may give you an insight by things they tell you about themselves. Use this as an opportunity to ask if they need help.

It might involve asking some extra questions like:

- *How was your last tenancy/ how did your last tenancy end? Is there any support we can organise for you that might help this time?*
- *Sometimes things in our personal life can effect how we cope with a tenancy. Do you think there is anything like that for you that we might be able to assist you with?*
- *Do you/ have you ever got support from a service? Do you think they might be able to help you get started in a new tenancy?*
- *I'm concerned about your rent arrears/ allegations of anti-social behaviours/ condition of property. Is there anything going on in your personal life that is making it difficult for you to meet your obligations under your lease and that we might be able to help you get support for?*

Or it might just be things you see like:

- *Children appear neglected*
- *Drug paraphernalia*
- *Smelling of alcohol*
- *Evidence of self-harm*
- *Confused, paranoid, depressed*

2. Refer and monitor

Be informed!

- Refer**
- If you're not sure:**
- Refer** There are many services out there that can provide assistance to our client/tenants. We don't have to know all of them but it's good to be aware of some key services. Each Service Centre has a resource guide that provides a number of useful referrals. Make yourself familiar with these and how they may be able to assist your client/tenants.
- Ask the client**
- Ring a service you know for advice**
- Ask your colleagues**
- If you're not sure what type of service you need you can:**
- *Ask the client/tenant, what/who's helped you before? Have you heard of a service that might be able to help that we can refer you to?*
 - *Ring a service you are familiar with or think may be able to help, explain the problem and ask them who they suggest.*
 - *Ask you Senior Customer Service Officer for advice.*
 - *Ask you Service or Area Manager for advice.*

Be active!

Giving a client/tenant a piece of paper with a phone number on it is one thing. But we all know that picking up the phone to ask for help is **HARD**. So, actively refer client/tenants to services.

This means:

- Make it an active referral**
- Don't wait until the client/tenant asks, you can make the suggestion!
 - Making sure they're okay with the referral i.e. client/tenant consent.
 - Giving the client/tenant the space to make contact with the service personally *eg You've mentioned that budgeting is hard for you, Anglicare has a financial counselling service who can work with you to help you budget. If you want you can ring them now and make an appointment.*
 - Explaining why you're making the referral *eg You've mentioned that budgeting is hard for you, Anglicare has a financial counselling service who can work with you to help you budget. If it's okay with you, I can ring them now and make an appointment.*

**Monitor
your
referrals**

Be watchful!

If you've made referrals, you also need to think about when you also need to see a change in behaviours, particularly those behaviours which are not consistent with the lease. Monitor how things are going by identifying yourself, the client or a service provider to the activity and a timeframe for the activity to be completed by. Check in with the client/tenant and see how they're going. Check arrears, anti-social behaviours and condition of property, are there improvements?

See more about this in the next section.

3. Planning

Observing, referring and monitoring are crucial. And so is taking a planned and coordinated approach. Planning is about bringing it all together and is necessary for client/tenants with complex needs where one simple referral won't be enough to support their tenancy.

- **Planning means thinking about the big picture.**
- **Planning means starting early when you first notice something rather than trying to put services into place when everything goes pear-shaped.**
- **Planning means identifying the key issues impacting on the tenancy and getting the services and activities in place that can help the tenant or at least give them a go.**

Planning involves:

**Identify
existing
support
services**

Is there are a key worker?

Many client/tenants will have support already in place or may have had success with a particular service or worker in the past. Does the client/tenant have an existing support service that can help? They may even be case managing the client/tenant. They might be able to tell you what they are working on and vice versa. You can agree on the issues that might need work to support the tenancy.

What have you observed?

**What is
the
problem?**

This is the – what do you?

SEE

HEAR

SMELL

FEEL

re: Compliance with the Lease

re: Social and health problems

What changes need to happen?

What needs to happen to access/maintain the tenancy?

What are the goals you are trying to achieve? This is most likely to relate to the client/tenant's compliance with the lease for example:

- Reduced rent arrears.
- Good condition of property

Using Condition of property for example, you can take this to the next level by including specific and measurable changes like:

- Tidy house and mow yard regularly.
- Clean the bathroom and exhaust fan.
- Remove car bodies and mow yard.

There will also be other changes to assist the social and health problems the client/ tenant has. For example:

- Children have appeared dirty and not adequately dressed on two occasions.

What steps have to happen to make the change?

How is actually going to happen?

These are the steps from our perspective. There may be only one or many depending on what needs to happen to make the change. This will require that you have a talk to the client/tenant and agree on what needs to happen to make the changes. Using the children as an example:

- Suggest and refer to child care for time out.
- Suggest and refer to Good Beginnings for parenting support.
- Refer to CPAARS regarding potential neglect.

Who is responsible for taking action?

Allocating the tasks

This means agreeing on who is going to do what. It means you need to agree with the client/tenant who will organise each step. The example is further detailed in the attached template (see attachment 1).

When does the action need to be completed?

Timeframes

Even though we're social housing managers, we don't give our tenants an indefinite number of chances to make good. Having said that, there isn't a hard and fast rule about how many chances a tenant should get. However, planning like this will give you a framework that will help work out and justify when enough is enough as demonstrated by referrals and follow up and no changes.

The example in attachment 1 provides concrete timeframes for action.

How will you know that the changes have happened?

Seeing change

The whole point of planning and coordinating is that we can see real changes in people's lives and tenancies.

Thinking about the example above, you would want to see an improvement in the condition of property. Maybe this won't be 100% satisfactory when you first review how things are going. It might be necessary to even think about change in small steps along a required timeframe so the tenant can work towards achieving the goal.

Again, thinking back to the example, this might mean that a further inspection in a month or two would show you that these things have or haven't been done.

It also allows you to put in a contingency plan. This should include – checking that change is sustainable e.g. after one month, three months, six months. Or if change doesn't occur or regresses, think now about what the next steps might be. This means you can be really clear with the client/tenant when making a plan what will happen if change does not occur.

A couple of words about client/tenant consent

Client/tenant consent is not required where we are mandated reporters. So where we suspect that a child is being abused or neglected or at risk of such, we are not required to get consent from the family to report the child.

In any other situation, a client/tenant does have to consent to getting support. HOWEVER, they do need to understand their obligations under their Lease. They need to understand that as social housing managers we will expect to see changes so that they meet their Lease obligations. This means something has to change if they are to continue to have a tenancy with us.

Eg Okay I hear you don't want to go to Anglicare for help with your budget. However, at present you are 4 weeks in arrears, this has happened before and we've issued a Notice to Vacate. We're not going to continue to do that. The next step is that we will seek to evict you for non-payment of rent. Getting help with your budget might be able to assist you pay the rent and stay in your house.

This is called coercive decision making. It means that we give client/tenants a choice from a limited number of options and these options are at the end of the day, linked back to their obligations under their Lease.

The other thing about client/tenant consent is that you might want to ask the client/tenant if it's okay that you get feedback from the referral service about how they are going. This is not because you want to know the details of the intervention, this is not appropriate. The information you are looking for is that:

- They have turned up to the appointment/s
- That things are going okay and the service provider can see change
- Any other advice the service provider might be able to give that can support the client/tenant's tenancy.

If you make an agreement or contract with the client/tenant that they will get support, then it is recommended you get their consent for the release of relevant information from the service provider. However this is not essential because at the end of the day the client/tenant will be able to meet their obligations under their Lease and you will see real change or they won't. It's important to encourage the positive changes you see. The other side of the coin is, if you don't see the changes you need to see, it will be necessary to commence eviction proceedings (refer to *Eviction Policy and Procedures*).

CASE CONFERENCE - SUGGESTED PATHWAY

Step 1 – Set Up

1. Recognise that you have critical client issues or alternatively that the client is presenting with the need for a complex mix of services that would benefit from a case conference.
2. Arrange a facilitator.*
3. Work out who needs to be involved. Consider having the client or advocate/carer there.
4. Develop an agenda and send it out with key information about the client in advance.

Step 2 - The Conference

1. Set the Scene – work through the following before starting on specific client business.
 - Introductions.
 - Summarise the client's situation to date.
 - The 5 Principles and 3 Tiers Process and how that can assist us.
 - Roles and contributions – who is here, and what they can offer and who is not here and possibly should be.
 - Potential pressures on this conference and how we might ease them (e.g. language differences, risks and barriers services may be experiencing).
 - How privacy and confidentiality concerns will be addressed.
 - How the conference will be documented.
2. List problems from agenda and add to if necessary.
3. Discuss each problem and identify the main points.
4. For each problem work out: *What* is going to be done, *Who* will do it, and *When*. You may not have all the information you need at the conference to be able to make good decisions. Action then would include what other information you need to bring to the table for more comprehensive consideration.
5. Agree on what will be communicated to the client, if they have not been at the conference.
6. Make arrangements for next meeting as necessary.
7. Finally, discuss any obstacles or barriers to making progress and work out what needs to be done to work through them e.g. there may be systems or structural issues that need senior management attention.

Step 3 ~ Documentation

1. Complete a record of the meeting straight away, documenting details in such a way that everyone can see what has been discussed and agreed upon. Keep notes succinct and specific (what, who, when).
2. Provide a copy of the record of the meeting to participants either at the end of the meeting, e.g. if summary has been done on electronic whiteboard, or as soon as possible after (ideally by next day).

Step 4 – Review of Process

Discuss whether conference has met people's expectations and what has been learned about the process. Reflect on and discuss what worked well and what didn't e.g. as for the Key Phases:

1. Set up well?
2. Good discussion?
3. Action focus?
4. Documented succinctly?
5. Next steps clear to all?

Step 5 - Follow Through

The management of clients, particularly those with complex needs is an ongoing, dynamic process. View plans as flexible and dynamic too, accepting that they will change along the way. It is a continuing cycle of "think, plan, do, review". Things will happen that will mean changing course from time to time.

*** Facilitator Skills**

Needs to have solid skills in meeting facilitation, group work, action planning. Ideally is independent among this group of professionals.

Is able to facilitate groups of disparate professionals where people may be anxious about loss of professional boundaries and autonomy.

Participant Skills

Is prepared to stay and listen when there's a view at the table that is difficult to understand.

Is willing to contribute their professional opinions and personal insights.

Is open to risk taking.

Is open to the notion that they don't have the answer but other people might.

Compiled and developed by Lea McInerney. Grateful thanks to Steve Bayliss, Helen Jessup, Peter Fielding of Community Youth Justice, and Margie Nolan and Martin O'Byrne of Community Support DHHS for some of the ideas for this section

Running a Case Conference

A Suggested Process

Definition

The coming together of people to plan and resolve complex issues.

The purpose of case conferencing

Case conferencing is about building as a comprehensive picture as possible. Remember you are looking for the 'combined truth' in each individual situation. Not just a single assessment but a number of them from different views and angles, pieced together to show a more wholistic picture of the client and their situation.

Remembering why you're there

It may be helpful to hold the picture in your mind of the client being in a glass box, with different professionals looking at them through different panes. What you see depends on which pane you look through. You can take the analogy further, that professionals may not be able to hear what the client is trying to tell them at different times.

Don't get sidetracked

In the case conferencing setting try to stay focused on how to manage the needs and behaviours of the client, rather than arguing about different theories and explanations of those needs and behaviours

Sometimes having these debates, especially across service areas, helps to build understanding. This is best done one-to-one: consider having a coffee and a talk with a colleague from another profession and explore each other's interpretations of situations in a more relaxed and less intense setting.

You can bring back what you learn to the next case conference, with both of you more informed about what might be in the background of the client's situation.

Remember case conferencing is a process of shared work, not a one-off intervention by a series of individual services. You need to allow time for this to happen – while the initial investment is high, the pay-off is likely to be beneficial over time. Excerpt from: *The Agency Collaboration Strategy for Improvement to Services for People with Complex and Exceptional Needs* Department of Health and Human Services, Government of Tasmania, Hobart

Anglicare SA use only:
 FILE NO: _____
 TIER: _____
 SUPPORT WORKER: _____



SUPPORTED TENANCY PROGRAM REFERRAL FORM

Date of Referral: ___ / ___ / ___ Referred by: _____

Housing Manager: _____ Housing SA Office: _____

TENANT DETAILS

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Gender: Male Female DOB: ___ / ___ / ___

Street Address: _____ Suburb: _____

Post Code: _____ Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

SAHT Customer Number: _____ Length of Tenancy: _____

Interpreter required: Yes No Language: _____

EXTRA PERSONS DETAILS

Adults Living in Property (in addition to tenant)

Names of Adults	Date of Birth	Relationship to Tenant

Children Living in Property: (Attach additional sheets if required)

Names of Children	Date of Birth	Relationship to Tenant

TENANCY ISSUES – please tick and provide further details in the space provided below

1	Financial Difficulties		9	Physical Health	
2	Property Hygiene - Inside		10	Intellectual Disability	
3	Property Condition - Outside		11	Domestic Violence	
4	Employment/Education		12	Drug Use	
5	Independent Living Skills		13	Alcohol Use	
6	Personal Hygiene		14	Pets	
7	Challenging/aggressive Behaviour		15	General support	
8	Mental Health		16	Early intervention	

CLIENT HISTORY - refer to the above list

REASON FOR REFERRAL – refer to the above list

Are there Any Significant Family/Social Supports No Yes (if yes, provide details)

Agencies Involved in the last 12 months (Attach additional sheets if required)

Agency	Case Worker	Contact Details

I _____ agree that the information on this form is true
<Print Tenant Name> and correct and agree to participate in the program.

Client Signature: _____ **Date** ___/___/___

Signature Referring (HSA) Worker: _____

Referring Agency (if other than HSA): _____

HOUSING SA SIGNED CONSENT FORM ATTACHED?
