

NSW Housing and Human Services Accord

**Trial Shared
Access Schedule**

June 2006

Housing and Human Services Accord

2006-2007 Trial Shared Access Schedule

1. Parties to the Trial Shared Access Schedule

The Trial Shared Access Schedule is an attachment to the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord.

The Trial Shared Access Schedule is made between the 10 signatory agencies of the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord ('the Accord') listed below.

1. *Aboriginal Housing Office,*
2. *Attorney Generals,*
3. *Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care,*
4. *Department of Community Services,*
5. *Department of Corrective Services,*
6. *Department of Education and Training,*
7. *NSW Health,*
8. *NSW Housing Corporation (including the Office of Community Housing),*
9. *Department of Juvenile Justice, and*
10. *NSW Police.*

The Trial Shared Access Schedule was endorsed by the Accord Senior Officers Group on 14 June 2006 for use in trialing the shared access system.

2. Introduction to the Trial Shared Access Schedule

The **Trial Shared Access Schedule** sets out the objectives of the shared access service system, the roles and responsibilities of signatory agencies during the trial and defines broadly how housing and support services will be provided during the trial period.

Each project for inclusion in the trial will set out the detail in negotiated agreements. These agreements will be developed and negotiated at the regional/area level using templates and guidelines developed for the trial. These agreements will be consistent with the universal principles set out in the Trial Shared Access Schedule and reflected in the Accord

Evaluation and review processes will be developed for both the Trial Shared Access Schedule and the agreed trial projects that test the shared access system. These evaluation processes will involve the participation of signatory agencies and key stakeholders including non-government organisations. The Trial Shared Access Schedule and the trial projects will be reviewed at 6 and 12 months after commencement.

Progress and issues management reports will be submitted to the Housing and Human Services Accord Senior Officers Group (Accord Senior Officers Group) at each meeting on the development and better alignment of cross agency processes under shared access. Trial projects will report quarterly, at a mid-term review and through a final report on the project with particular emphasis on outcomes for clients.

3. Statement of Intent

The purpose of the Trial Shared Access Schedule is to develop, trial and implement agreed systems that assist mutual clients with complex housing needs. During the development, implementation and review of the trials, feedback and input from key participants and stakeholders will inform the development of the final Shared Access Schedule in July 2007.

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Agencies that are parties to the Trial Shared Access Schedule will work together to develop a system that utilises an agreed joint assessment process for the trial. This will include nominating clients for participation in the trial, allocating appropriate housing, supporting these clients for the agreed period, responding to the changing needs of these clients during the trial, reviewing the needs of trial clients at the end of the tenure period and developing exit strategies to other forms of housing assistance.

Agencies that are parties to the Trial Shared Access Schedule and trial projects will provide housing and support services during the trial that align with each agency's legislative obligations, corporate priorities and resource capabilities.

4. Principles

The Principles set out on page 4 of the Accord govern this schedule.

5. Shared Access System

The Shared Access System aims to improve pathways for clients with complex housing needs into the social housing and support systems and pathways to other appropriate housing and support systems as indicated. The Shared Access System will increase the number of pathways for these clients and better link interagency co-ordination of social housing and support services. The Shared Access System will build shared responsibilities for:

- **Eligibility** – developing an agreed approach, whereby the Department of Housing and signatory agencies share the role of assessing and supporting clients with complex needs. The housing and support agencies will jointly determine the eligibility of clients with complex housing needs (consistent with each agency's eligibility criteria) for the allocation of social housing and support services, leading to better accessibility to social housing for clients with complex needs
- **Support** – develop agreed processes that facilitate coordinated responses for the provision of ongoing support, where necessary, to assist nominated clients in sustaining a tenancy, leading to more sustained tenancies for clients with complex needs
- **Client reviews** - developing an agreed documented process that includes a mechanism to review the changing needs of shared access clients. This may result in increased or decreased levels of support, extensions of tenure periods or transition to other types of housing assistance, leading over time to an increased client capacity to move from social housing to other forms of affordable housing.

6. Trial Shared Access Approach

Shared access arrangements during the trial aim to enhance the quality of life and community participation of clients with complex needs. The achievement of this result is closely linked to the shared areas of responsibility identified in section 5.

The trial period for individual projects is limited to a period of up to 12 months. During this period an action learning approach will be utilised, with stakeholder participation through a formalised advisory and communication framework (see section 10).

Clients participating in the trial should have tenure and support periods matched to their needs rather than the period of the trial. It is possible that a client's tenure and support periods will

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be longer than the trial period. These clients will continue as social housing tenants for the remainder of the tenure period, receiving support services for the period of support agreed in the trial project's negotiated agreement.

Assessing client eligibility:

As part of the trial each agency will use its existing policies and procedures to identify and verify clients with the greatest need for social housing and support, in line with each agency's agreed eligibility criteria.

Through the agreed pilot projects the trial will test and build a shared access system whereby clients with complex housing needs can be 'nominated' by signatory agencies for social housing.

The Department of Housing will be responsible for decisions on general housing eligibility regarding financial and housing need including the selection and allocation of appropriate housing for eligible clients. The allocation process will be in partnership with the signatory agencies in each trial project and will be described in more detail in the trial project's negotiated agreement - information about the trial project's negotiated agreement is in section 2.

The signatory support agency and/or its agreed non-government support provider will be responsible for assessing client eligibility and the support requirements of nominated clients for the trial. This assessment should include the any specific level of non-housing related need in relation to support requirements of the client, which may impact on establishing or maintaining stable housing. The process for nominating and assessing clients for eligibility and support will be described in more detail in the trial project's negotiated agreement.

NOTE: *The development of both the agreed joint assessment process and definitions of Complex Housing Need will be developed throughout the trial and informed by the trial outcomes.*

Tenure and Support Periods

During the trial, signatory agencies for each project will agree to the allocation of appropriate periods of tenure and support for each client in the trial.

The support agency's assessment of and plan for the provision of support to each trial client informs the agreed support period. In allocating a tenure period for trial clients the Department of Housing will consider the client's tenure eligibility, agreed support period and the client's capacity to sustain a tenancy once the support period is concluded.

The process for negotiating these tenure and support periods will be determined by the signatory agencies for each trial project and will be described in detail in each trial project's negotiated agreement. Support and tenure periods will be discussed and agreed with the client prior to the client signing a tenancy agreement.

Support and tenancy periods will be tailored to individual trial clients. Both within the context of the trial and beyond the trial period signatory agencies may agree that;

- The support and housing periods are matched.

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- ❑ The support period ceases prior to the conclusion of the tenure period. Prior to conclusion of the support period all signatory agencies to the project agree that the client can sustain a tenancy without support.
- ❑ The tenure period concludes and support period continues. Prior to a trial client exiting social housing and transitioning to a new accommodation option signatory agencies to the project agree whether continuing support is still required by the client to maintain stability.

NOTE: *The purpose of the trial is to test the shared access system and its operational processes. Clients participating in the trial should have tenure and support periods matched to their needs rather than the period of the trial.*

Supporting tenancies over the lease period:

Signatory support agencies participating in trial projects will provide ongoing support as *required* to trial clients to enable them to sustain a tenancy. During the trial housing and support services provided by signatory agencies will align with each agency's legislative obligations, corporate priorities and resource capabilities.

The criteria for determining a client's support or housing needs will be agreed between relevant signatory agencies as part of the trial project's negotiated agreement. To the extent possible, information about client's property requirements/ will be included in the trial project's negotiated agreements (or attachments such as Service Level Agreements) to inform appropriate allocation strategies.

Client characteristics and behaviours that impact on property selection should be identified at the time of property identification to ensure appropriate properties are identified. This should include risk behaviours that impact on property selection.

During the trial the Department of Housing will provide specialist supported housing services for trial clients that maximise opportunities for collaboration with other signatory agencies and/ or their funded non-government organisation partners

Specifics of the support and housing management services to be provided by signatory agencies and/or their nominated non-government providers in the trial project will be described in more detail in the trial project's negotiated agreement and its attachments.

NOTE: *The scope, priorities, length and intensity of support, negotiated tenure period for clients, case management responsibilities and support plans, role of non-government agencies in the trial and trial project governance arrangements will be negotiated at the operational level of the projects and the details contained in the trial project's negotiated agreement and its attachments. Support providers and the client will also play an active role in determining property suitability.*

During the trial, the signatory agencies for each project will determine the case management responsibilities for each client. Usually the primary support requirement of the client will determine the lead support agency. Where the primary support requirement will evolve (eg young person leaving care) a transition plan for case management should be included in the trial project's negotiated agreement.

Responding to the changing needs of existing tenants:

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During the trial signatory agencies for each project will ensure that cooperative arrangements are in place to undertake need assessments, referrals and support interventions where client needs change or additional needs emerge during the agreed support and tenure periods. Governance arrangements to ensure that agencies review and respond to the changing needs of trial clients will be set out in the trial project's negotiated agreement.

Reviewing client needs at the end of the support or tenure period:

During the trial, signatory agencies for each project will participate in reviews prior to the end of both the support and tenure periods.

As with the agreed joint assessment process at intake, the Department of Housing assesses the ongoing financial eligibility and housing needs and the other signatory agencies assess the relevant care or support needs for trial clients.

- Where a support period concludes, a joint assessment of the client's capacity to sustain a tenancy without support will be undertaken.
- Where tenure concludes prior to support, the exit process from social housing and transition to new accommodation will be monitored by the relevant signatory agencies to the trial project's negotiated agreement to ensure support links are effective in the new location.

Client review processes for the trial will be set out in the trial project's negotiated agreement.

Department of Housing client referral during the trial:

In line with current practice, Department of Housing applicants entering and being assessed for social housing eligibility, who are identified as having an unmet support requirement, will be referred by the Department of Housing to government and non-government support services. This referral pathway currently exists between the Department of Housing and other signatory agencies to the Accord and will not be affected by the trial.

The trial will also not affect the individual determination by government and non-government support services as to whether clients referred by the Department of Housing for assistance meet that agency's legislative obligations, corporate priorities or available resources.

7. Term of the Trial Shared Access Schedule

The schedule shall continue for a period of up to 12 months commencing on 1 July 2006. The trial schedule only applies to projects that are endorsed for inclusion in the shared access trial.

The trial Schedule may be extended by agreement. The schedule may also be terminated in writing by mutual agreement of each of the agencies. Any agency to the schedule may also choose to withdraw from the schedule by giving three months written notice to each and every other agency in the schedule.

Until the schedule is terminated in accordance with any one of the above provisions, it shall continue unless superseded by the development and commencement of a replacement Shared Access Schedule at any time.

8. Commitments by Signatory Agencies during the Trial

All signatory agencies to the Trial Shared Access Schedule agree to continue to participate in the trial process and provide feedback and input to the review and evaluation processes through both the Accord Senior Officers Group and the Human Services CEOs.

Signatory agencies for each trial project also agree to participate in the development and implementation of the trial at an operational level and to meet the resource commitments agreed in the Operational Agreements for each project.

9. Issues Management and Problem Solving During the Trial

During the trial period issues relating both to the development of the shared access system and the development and implementation of the individual trial projects will be reported. These reports will include strategies and actions to resolve and will be considered by the Accord Senior Officers Group

The trial has been established with an 'action learning' focus. The management of emerging issues will be approached as an opportunity to solve problems/remove barriers to making the trial process for shared access work more effectively.

Issues management of the Trial Shared Access System

The Accord Senior Officers Group will take the lead on managing issues identified through the trial. The Department of Housing's Housing Partnerships Team will resource the Accord Senior Officers Group by:

- ❑ Reporting on critical issues to the Accord Senior Officers Group through a standing agenda item once the trials have commenced.
- ❑ Providing an issues log, including actions and resolutions as part of a standing agenda item.
- ❑ Working with relevant signatory agencies to co-ordinate the resolution of emerging issues at both central and local levels.
- ❑ Recommending actions, as required, to the SOG, both within and outside meetings, if required.

Issues management of the Trial Projects

The approach to problem solving issues that emerge through each of the trials should emphasise the identification of barriers that are impeding project's progress. Issues management and problem solving processes should be developed at the agency level for each of the trial projects and will be detailed within the trial project's negotiated agreement.

While the focus should be on co-operative problem solving, the issues management will include an agreed escalation process through the local operational partners and their managers, with the Housing Partnerships Team co-ordinating assistance for problem solving and reporting issues management approaches to the Accord Senior Officers Group, as required.

In developing processes at the project level some of the following steps could assist in co-operative problem solving:

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- ✓ Defining and describing the issue or barrier
- ✓ Identifying benefits from removing the issue or barrier
- ✓ Generating possible solutions for overcoming the issue or barrier
- ✓ Offering practical and immediate assistance with a particular problem that contributes to removing the issue or barrier
- ✓ Seeking advice or resources that could assist in removing the issue or barrier
- ✓ Agreeing how to move forward and making the changes necessary to resolve the issue.

10. Communication and Feedback on the Trial

A communication and feedback strategy will be developed as part of the trial implementation in July 2006. The communication and feedback approach will include;

- Key participants and stakeholders for each of the trial projects.
- The signatory agencies to the Trial Shared Access Schedule through the Accord Senior Officers.
- Non-government organisation peaks, through the NGO Reference Group.
- Agency specific peak forums.
- Office of Community Housing Resourcing Agencies.
- Non-government support agencies via their funding agency.

The Communication and Feedback Strategy will be endorsed by the Accord Senior Officers Group, prior to implementation.

11. Evaluation

The Results Based Accountability Methodology (adopted by NSW Government human service agencies) will be applied to the shared access trial. This will require a participative approach for signatory agencies in the selection of performance indicators and common agreement on outcome indicators.

The shared access trials will be the first new partnership model developed under the Accord. Measuring its success requires consideration of the quality of housing provision, the mix of support services that will be provided as well as the effectiveness of the collaborative model itself.

No single agency will provide sufficient data to measure and report on these outcomes. *For example; The Department of Housing measures its performance in terms of its ability to house clients. , Its data collection and measuring strategies focus on measuring timeliness in providing housing to clients, bedrooms per dwelling, dwelling standards/maintenance, is housing in areas where demand is highest etc.*

To measure the effectiveness of the collaborative approach, and ultimately the outcomes for trial clients, agencies involved in the trial shared access projects will collect and report on outcomes for their clients.

The process for evaluating shared access during the trial will also allow signatory agencies to report on indicators which relate purely to their own area of responsibility, as well as those which measure the overall outcomes for the program.

The performance measurement strategy will provide a range of input and output indicators that have differing levels of importance for different members of the trial project.

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Each of the trial shared access projects will also develop indicators that are included in the trial project's negotiated agreement. The trial shared access projects can test indicators to inform the development of a final evaluation framework. Some of the indicators these trial projects could negotiate in the negotiated agreements could include:

Inputs:

- Number of agencies involved in development of shared access trial models

Outputs:

- Number of tenants identified as having complex needs (this may be through the trial joint assessment process or individual trial processes)
- Number of individual case plans agreed and case managers identified
- Number of shared access tenancies maintained for the agreed case plan period. (Based on case plan agreements)

Outcomes

- Number and level to which the shared access tenants identify an improvement in his or her quality of life.
- Amenity of surrounding dwellings maintained or improved within the neighbourhood of shared access tenant(s).
- No and level to which Accord partners identify an improved understanding of pathways to access support services for clients.

Development of indicators for trial shared access projects will be through a collaborative approach between signatory agencies for each project at the local level, resourced by the Department of Housing' Housing Partnerships team and endorsed prior to inclusion by the Accord Senior Officers Group.

12. Definitions

Definitions of common terms for each of the trial projects will be developed through each of the trial project's negotiated agreements.

Community Housing

Community housing is for people with low to moderate income, eligible for public housing and often with special needs. It is delivered by non-government organisations, usually with some kind of government capital or operating subsidy.

Social Housing

Is provided through public housing, the Aboriginal Housing Office, and non-government community housing providers, funded by the Office of Community Housing. As appropriate nominated social housing providers will develop agreed processes that facilitate coordinated responses for the provision of housing, tenancy management and supported housing to assist nominated clients sustain a tenancy, leading to more sustained tenancies for clients with complex needs

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Effective Date

The Trial Shared Access Schedule will be effective from xxxxxx to xxxxxx

The Schedule is for a period of up to 12 months and may be terminated in writing by mutual agreement of each signatory agency. Any agency may withdraw from the schedule by giving 3 months written notice to all agencies under the Schedule.

The Schedule will continue until terminated under one of the conditions listed above or superseded by the development and commencement of the Shared Access Schedule.

Attachments to the Trial Shared Access Schedule

Attachments to the Trial Shared Access Schedule can be updated and superseded from time to time with the written endorsement of the co-signatories to the schedule.

1. *Agency specific priorities. (Signatory agency can attach their agreed priorities targets and locations for Shared Access projects during the trial period.*
2. *Trial project's negotiated agreement checklist and guide*
3. *Tools for local implementation of the Trial Shared Access pilots (Service Level agreements/ Service plan templates, Referral templates, partnership) (under development)*
4. *Performance/Evaluation criteria (under development)*
5. *Each of the trial project's final negotiated agreements (under development)*