



The NSW Department of Housing is providing a service for homeless people who need Temporary Accommodation outside business hours.

AFTER HOURS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION LINE 1800 152 152

Monday to Friday 4:30pm – 10:00pm; Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays 10:00am – 10:00pm

Currently, people who need immediate housing assistance can receive help from Department of Housing local offices during business hours. A dedicated Temporary Accommodation Line takes telephone referrals in the evenings and at weekends from agencies that assist people seeking shelter for the night. Accommodation is booked until the next working day when the client is able to make arrangements for more suitable longer-term accommodation. The service is available for single people, couples, and families with children.

AFTER HOURS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION LINE

About Temporary Accommodation

The Department of Housing provides Temporary Accommodation in low-cost hotels, motels, caravan parks and similar accommodation for people who are in housing crisis, or homeless while they make longer-term arrangements.

Accommodation is provided for one, or a small number of nights. To be eligible clients must be able to manage themselves independently, as no support is provided. This service is suitable for people whose main or only problem is accommodation. Clients are expected to find more permanent housing while they are in Temporary Accommodation. Clients who need support are not generally appropriate for Temporary Accommodation and should be referred to supported crisis accommodation.

The After Hours Service – hours of operation

Temporary Accommodation is currently available during normal office hours from the Department's 70 local offices around the State. These daytime arrangements will not change. **The new service is a telephone service available from 4.30pm to 10pm on weekdays and 10am to 10pm at weekends and public holidays.**

Where does the service operate?

The new service has been available in the Sydney metropolitan and the Central Coast areas since December 2001, in the Hunter area since April 2002 and Wollongong and Nowra areas since December 2002. The service is being expanded to cover the key areas of NSW by the end of 2004.

How to make a referral

The referring organisation should ask clients a few simple questions to find out if Temporary Accommodation will be suitable. These are listed on page 4. In many cases, clients in housing crisis will need supported accommodation provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). In this case, the organisation should refer the client to supported crisis accommodation in the normal way.

If the client's primary or only need is shelter for the night, Temporary Accommodation may be appropriate (see eligibility criteria on page 3). The organisation should ring the Temporary Accommodation Line on **1800 152 152**.

If members of the public call they will be assisted where appropriate or referred where possible to an appropriate service provider.

Trained staff will discuss the client's circumstances with the referring agency and confirm whether Temporary Accommodation is appropriate. If so, they will make a booking for the client in the nearest appropriate and available location. The accommodation will be provided until the next working day at no charge to the client.

The operator will give the referring organisation information for the client. This will include information about the temporary accommodation address and phone number. Where possible a confirmation slip will be faxed to the referring agency that will pass the details onto the client.

Follow-up

To help clients make longer-term arrangements, they will be asked to visit the local Department of Housing office on the next working day. The operator on the Temporary Accommodation Line will provide details of the location of the nearest office and of documents clients should bring with them. It is a condition of the service that the client should attend the Department of Housing office on the next working day. The local office will be expecting the client.

The local Department of Housing office, based on each individual case and current Departmental policy, will make any extension of Temporary Accommodation, or decision regarding further housing assistance. This decision will usually be made after an interview with the client.

If a client does not attend or make contact with the local office on the day they were expected, unless exceptional circumstances have prevented them from doing so, the Temporary Accommodation Line will not offer them a further night's accommodation.

Who may refer clients?

Any organisation which comes into contact with homeless people or people in housing crisis may refer a client. This includes non-government, government, charitable and voluntary organisations.

Links with other telephone services

The Temporary Accommodation Line works with the Domestic Violence Line (DV Line) and other specialist services. In cases of domestic violence or for young

STEP BY STEP

people, the client should be referred to the specialist services first.

In most cases, supported crisis accommodation will be appropriate for these clients, but if Temporary Accommodation is appropriate, then the specialist service will contact the Temporary Accommodation Line.

For other clients, where supported accommodation is required, organisations should continue to make the appropriate arrangements or make a referral directly to a local crisis service.

Eligibility

The normal eligibility criteria for Temporary Accommodation applies to the After Hours Temporary Accommodation Line. The main criteria are that clients must:

- Not be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not have any known history of violent or aggressive behaviour
- Be able to abide by the normal standards of behaviour appropriate for a hotel, motel, caravan park or similar accommodation with other people living in close proximity
- Not have high support needs
- Be unable to find alternative accommodation
- Be in housing crisis or homeless, or unable to return to their usual address due to exceptional circumstances
- Be a citizen or permanent resident of Australia; or a temporary resident who has applied for refugee status (asylum seeker)
- If from interstate, demonstrate that they are looking to reside permanently in NSW
- Be 16 years of age or over (clients under 16 years are considered children and should be referred to the Department of Community Services). Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

There are restrictions on the repeat use of Temporary Accommodation. If a client is having repeated episodes of homelessness, it may be more appropriate to place them in supported accommodation. In these cases, the Temporary Accommodation Line will liaise with referring organisations.

How to refer a client

If a homeless person who needs a bed for the night approaches your service in the evening or on the weekend, they may be eligible for Temporary Accommodation from the Department of Housing.

Step one – Ask the person about their situation and compare this with the eligibility criteria. Please make sure you have noted all relevant information before phoning the Temporary Accommodation Line.

Step two – Call 1800 152 152 and speak to the trained operator. The operator will ask some questions about the client.

Step three – If the client is eligible, the operator will book them into suitable temporary accommodation.

Step four – The operator will tell you the address of the nearest Department of Housing office. Please ask the client to go there on the morning of the next working day to discuss what help is available. It is a condition of the service that the client does this. If possible the operator will fax the details to you.

If the client is not eligible – the operator will suggest that you refer the client to crisis accommodation where support is available or assist you to find other suitable support.

Clients' responsibilities

Clients receiving Temporary Accommodation:

- Must maintain normal standards of behaviour appropriate for the accommodation
- Are responsible for any damage caused to property at the temporary accommodation
- Are not permitted to have guests on the premises
- Must go to the local Department of Housing office on the morning of the next working day to discuss longer-term accommodation options.

KEY QUESTIONS

Finding out if Temporary Accommodation is the right answer

Ask the client:

- How old are you?
- Do you need medical or other help immediately?
- Where did you sleep last night?
- Do you have any money or any one you can stay with?
- Are you a citizen of Australia; or permanent resident of Australia; or a temporary resident who has applied for refugee status (asylum seeker)?
- Do you live in NSW or need to move to NSW for special reasons that can't be met where you were living before?
- Do you have a home? Can you sleep there?

Also ask yourself these questions, checking them with the client:

- Does this person appear strongly affected by alcohol or drugs?
- Do they seem aggressive or unable to control their anger?
- Does this person seem able to behave in an appropriate way for a motel, hotel, caravan park or similar accommodation?
- Will this person be safe if they are alone in a hotel over night?
- Will people around them be safe?

If you are unsure about the client's appropriateness for Temporary Accommodation please refer the client to supported crisis accommodation.

Other helpful telephone numbers

Domestic Violence Line (24 hours)	1800 656 463
Youth Accommodation Line Sydney Country NSW	96985833 1800 424 830
Department of Community Services Helpline (24 hours)	132 111
Lifeline (24 hours)	131 114
Rape Crisis Centre (24 hours) TTY	9819 6565 9181 4349
Salvo Crisis Centre (24 hours)	9360 3000

After Hours

Temporary Accommodation Line

1800 152 152

Monday to Friday 4:30pm – 10:00pm

Saturday and Sunday and Public Holidays
10:00am – 10:00pm

Information about NSW Department of Housing services is available on the Department's website at www.housing.nsw.gov.au or telephone 1800 629 212.

Information correct as at June 2004.

