

HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES ACCORD

Shared Access Trials

Mid-term Review Report

Brief Summary July 2007

Background

The Shared Access trials have been initiated to test the Trial Shared Access Schedule ([hyperlink to Schedule on internet](#)), a key part of the Housing and Human Services Accord ([hyperlink to Accord on internet](#))

The Trials are testing out new approaches between NSW Department of Housing and NSW human service agencies to assist mutual clients with complex housing needs¹. In summary, the trials aim to:

- Improve pathways for clients into the social housing and support systems
- Better link interagency co-ordination of social housing and support services
- Build shared responsibilities for determining eligibility, provision of support, and client reviews to meet changing needs
- Enhance the quality of life and community participation of clients.

Shared Access is the first model to be trialled under the Accord. The trials were jointly initiated by human service agencies who nominated client groups made up of individuals with complex housing needs and who were willing, motivated and demonstrated a capacity to live independently and sustain a tenancy with support. The first trials commenced in July 2006. Trials will be evaluated during 2008.

Current trials

Young People Leaving Out-of-Home Care in the Hunter

The Young People Leaving Out-of-Home Care trial was initiated as a result of concerns by participating agencies that young people were not easily accessing stable housing when leaving out-of-home care, such as foster care. Young people aged under 25 years make up approximately 35% of clients in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program" (source: NDCA SAAP Annual National Performance Report 2004-05), and NSW Department of Housing data shows that many young people do not sustain tenancies successfully.

Agencies involved: NSW Department of Housing, Department of Community Services, funded NGOs

¹In this context of the Accord, the term 'complex housing needs' refers to people who require assistance with their housing. They include individuals and households who may experience mental illness, physical or intellectual disability, acquired brain injury, cognitive impairment, behavioural difficulties, social isolation, family dysfunction and alcohol or other drug misuse, or combinations of these conditions.

Tenancy outcomes

- To date, the seven clients housed have successfully sustained their tenancies. One tenant who had some difficulties early on was quickly assisted to address their concerns
- No tenancies have been in arrears, or been subject to eviction action
- The first two clients have had their original six-month leases extended for another 18 months, while subsequent clients have been given a two year lease (as per policy).

Dillwynia Female Ex-Prisoners Trial

In the Greater Western Sydney Division there are several correctional centres where the Department of Housing has received numerous applications from released offenders who have no support and as a result are often unable to sustain their tenancies and/or re-offend. The need for support linked to housing as been identified to address these issues.

Agencies involved: NSW Department of Housing (Greater Western Sydney Division), Department of Corrective Services (Dillwynia Correctional Centre), Wesley Uniting Employment (part of Wesley Mission).

Tenancy outcomes

- Of the four clients housed, the first client has had her tenancy for eight months and maintained a job following her release. The second client (housed for three months) has enrolled in TAFE. Both have so far sustained their tenancies successfully. Both clients have completed their parole. This is the first time the second client has ever been compliant during parole. The other two tenants have been housed just recently.
- There have been no issues with any of the tenancies in regards to arrears, property condition or nuisance and annoyance.

Trials under development

There are currently 12 other trials in various stages of development and several of them are expected to start over the following months. They focus on the following client groups:

- Young people with a disability leaving out-of-home care
- Adults with an intellectual disability
- Ex-prisoners with intellectual disability and/or mental illness and/or substance use issues
- Families affected by domestic violence
- Vulnerable youth including offenders
- Chronically homeless

Evaluation

Although it is too early in the trial period to draw significant conclusions, early indications show that the Shared Access approach has strong potential to enable clients with complex needs to sustain a tenancy successfully. Feedback from an online survey indicates that participating agencies are positive about the benefits of working in partnership and agree that clients are benefiting from the collaboration. Staff report improved working knowledge and understanding of other participating agencies. In-depth interviews are to be conducted with participating staff as part of the end-of-trials evaluation to gain more detailed insights.