

Supportive housing policy

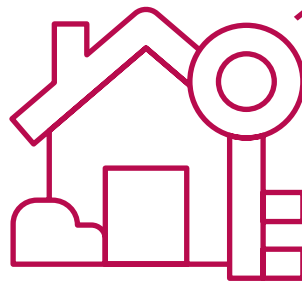
Guiding best practice and
future investment



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Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and Elders of the lands and seas on which we meet, live, learn and work. We recognise it is our collective efforts, and responsibility as individuals, communities and governments, to ensure equality, recognition and advancement of First Nations peoples across all aspects of society and everyday life. This document acknowledges Queensland is home to many unique and distinct First Nations cultures – Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples – and uses the term First Nations peoples to reflect the diversity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples residing in Queensland. Use of ‘peoples’ recognises individual and collective dimensions as affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and also the diverse cultural identities within these collective terms.

Acknowledging the sector’s contribution to developing the supportive housing policy

The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works gratefully acknowledges the valuable contribution of the housing and homelessness sector and services on the frontline to co-designing the supportive housing policy via workshops, meetings, submissions and feedback on the draft policy.



Introduction

Homes for Queenslanders, the long-term whole of system plan to ensure Queensland has an agile and sustainable housing system where all Queenslanders can access safe, secure and affordable housing. This is underpinned by a \$3.1 billion commitment over five years as a downpayment to deliver 1 million new homes, including 53,500 new social homes, across the State by 2046.

Homes for Queenslanders also committed to the delivery of a supportive housing policy and framework, developed in consultation with services on the frontline, to guide investment into the future. This commitment was made in the context that safe and secure housing is not just about the physical roof over your head, it is also about providing holistic, wrap-around support that addresses the complex reasons people become homeless.

Definition

Supportive housing is a type of housing funded by the Queensland Government that provides security of tenure, underpinned by a tenancy agreement, as a foundation for the delivery of coordinated, wrap-around supports for vulnerable people with complex needs who would otherwise be unable to sustain a tenancy and community connection.

Defining features

Intensity and coordination

Supportive housing is one response as part of a spectrum of responses that combine housing and support, and is typified by being a highly intensive model, including higher intensity tenancy management. The housing and supports in supportive housing are separate but effectively coordinated, with both housing and support providers working together to sustain tenancies and achieve positive outcomes for tenants.

Tenancy duration

Supportive housing tenancies should generally be available for as long as needed and it is recognised that need will often be long term. Secure housing is achieved through a tenancy or similar agreement and is the foundation to which the supports are linked. While support services are paired with housing, accessing support is not a condition of tenancy. Supportive housing tenancies remain subject to continuing to meet any associated eligibility criteria.

Supports

Supports should be holistic and wrap-around. These may entail and are not limited to: psychosocial supports; domestic and family violence supports; case management/case conferencing; advocacy, education and cultural supports; health services, including supports for those who experience severe or complex mental ill-health; parenting support; and/or employment services, training services and volunteering opportunities.

Delivery of support

Support should be offered in line with a housing first approach. The approach should be person-centred, respectful of privacy and confidentiality, culturally safe and responsive, trauma-informed and have a focus on self-determination to provide opportunities to thrive, improve health and wellbeing, and make community connection. Support may be provided directly or through a case management approach that enables access to relevant providers.

Separation of housing and support

A separation between housing and support and a mix of tenancies within a development, such as social and affordable tenancies, is fundamental to ensuring that supportive housing is not an institutional setting that segregates people from the wider community, and ensures that rights, choice and control are preserved with regard to the support services that tenants are able to access.

Eligibility

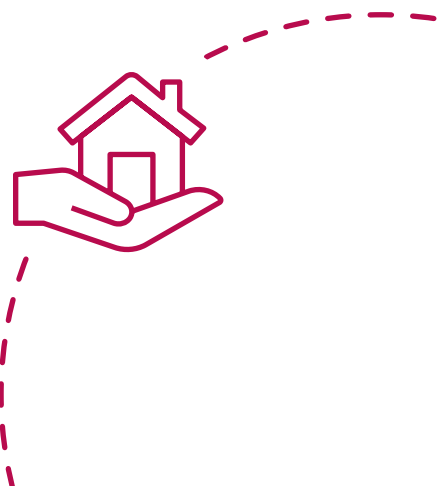
For supportive housing tenancies in social housing, the tenants must be social housing eligible individuals, households, or family groups that have vulnerability and complex needs, while affordable supportive housing tenancies should conform with income and other eligibility criteria as appropriate.

Targeted

Supportive housing may be targeted at those who have experienced chronic homelessness, insecure housing and/or failed tenancies, social isolation, poverty, trauma, disability, mental ill health, chronic health conditions, problematic substance use, and/or domestic and family violence, and those likely to have connection to service systems such as child safety, justice systems or forensic mental health, and face challenges in navigating these service systems.

Sustainable

A suitable allocations policy to achieve a sustainable mix of tenancies for the overall development will be required at a place-based level to ensure optimal outcomes for residents, staff and the community.



Service delivery design and implementation framework

Principles	Approach
Housing First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing is the foundation for delivery of support. • Support is integrated with housing, generally onsite.
Person-centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy is not conditional on acceptance of support. • People can exercise their rights, choice and control over their housing and supports. • Holistic, wrap-around supports are tailored to meet tenant's needs, and connections are made to specialist supports.
Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place-appropriate, typically purpose-built setting. • Onsite security and concierge if appropriate to the mix of tenancies. • Processes in place for 24/7 crisis support.
Secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy for as long as required. • Intensive, coordinated tenancy and supports to assist individuals with complex needs to sustain tenancies. • Seamless support to transfer into other housing options if this is desired by the tenant, including at the end of a tenancy.
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidised rent to make supportive housing affordable, through alignment with existing departmental rent policies.
Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding measures, including separation between tenancy management and provision of support, including for complaints management. • Culturally appropriate, contemporary service delivery, with facilitation of community connection. • Home environment. • Diverse and sustainable tenancy mix. • Does not duplicate other services.
Partnership-driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-government coordination and connection aimed at tenant outcomes and seamless support. • Underpinned by partnerships and coordination amongst providers and government agencies.
Aligned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department's <i>Housing principles for inclusive communities</i> – Rights, Control, Choice, Inclusion • <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> • United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities • Closing the Gap
Evidence-based and innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed by evidence and/or contributing to an evidence base. • Innovative and evolving service models.

Outcomes framework

This high-level outcomes framework for supportive housing is intended to apply at a global level, with more specific outcomes and indicators to be developed and embedded into contractual and funding arrangements as appropriate.

Sustaining tenancies and enhancing community connection

Enabling vulnerable people with complex needs who would not otherwise be able to sustain a tenancy to engage with supports, forge community connections, and improve whole-of-life outcomes.

Preventing exit or re entry to homelessness

Preventing people exiting to or re-entering homelessness, including from other government services and settings.

Prevention and early intervention approach

Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that supportive housing effectively reduces cost impact across service systems, by reducing the call on health, hospital and emergency services, criminal justice and correctional services.



Detailed requirements

These detailed requirements must be considered and addressed in the design of supportive housing developments and programs.

Co-design

- Co-design should underpin the development of supportive housing, including tenant voice, people with lived-living experience, frontline service delivery providers and housing and homelessness sector representatives.
- This will also be complemented with relevant best practice evidence and demographic analysis to ensure a robust evidence base to guide supportive housing models.

Culturally appropriate and accessible service delivery

- It is essential that both tenancy management and support are culturally safe, respond to the unique cultural needs of First Nations peoples, and acknowledge the impacts of past government practices on the wellbeing of First Nations peoples.
- Ensuring culturally appropriate services and support for culturally and linguistically diverse residents is essential. This should include access to interpreters as well as information provided in language reflective of the tenancy mix.
- Accessibility should be considered, including providing materials in Easy Read and Auslan as required.

Duration of tenancy and seamless support

- Tenancy duration should be for as long as needed and is not conditional on acceptance of supports. Given the complex needs that supportive housing seeks to address, tenancies will often be long term.
- Support should be available to transition out of supportive housing into the private market or other social housing to live independently in the community if this is desired by the tenant.
- The tenant's experience of support to meet their needs should be ongoing, such as in a seamless transition from a Youth Foyer into suitable secure housing.

Safe, connected home environments

- Supportive housing should be a home environment, be well located, accessible, and invite positive connections to community and culture.
- Design of the built environment and operational policies and procedures, should be trauma-informed and have a focus on preventing violence, gendered violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as ensuring privacy and safe spaces for social relations and child-safe environments as appropriate to the tenants.
- Design should consider the needs of tenants in its safety features, such as offering enhanced fire safety, personal security and emergency response enablers.
- Well-located supportive housing should consider access to or co-location with transport, retail, leisure, health and other services.

Safeguarding measures

- Recognising the vulnerability of supportive housing tenants, supportive housing must include staff screening, clear complaints management policies, facilitation of access to advocacy and external services, and Community Visitor Programs, as appropriate.

Separation of housing and support

- A separation between the providers of housing and support acts as a protective measure to ensure no single organisation has an undue level of influence over a person's life and eliminates the possibility of retribution if a person needs to engage in a complaints process with providers.
- Coordination between housing and supports is formalised with a key focus of enabling tenants to sustain their tenancy and ensure their dignity and equity.
- Residents have a tenancy agreement or similar, giving them legal rights and responsibilities as tenants.

Rent settings

- To achieve affordability of supportive housing, the rent charged should align with relevant departmental rent policies.

Enabling partnerships

- We recognise that fostering partnerships on the ground is a critical enabler of successful supportive housing and that this should be reflected in governance, as well as in engagement approaches to build place-based partnerships and support innovation at the community level.

Diverse tenant mix

- Tenant mix is recognised as a critical enabler of successful supportive housing. This should be reflected in intake policies as appropriate.
- While supportive housing may be targeted at a particular cohort, it should operate in an environment of mixed tenancies, such as other social or affordable housing tenancies, to avoid institutionalism and segregating people with complex needs from the wider community.

Trauma-informed tenancy management

- Tenancy management should be trauma-informed. Supports such as concierge and security will typically be provided onsite where required, with the hours of availability of these supports as appropriate to the mix of tenancies. However, there must be clear processes for accessing crisis support 24/7 if this is not available onsite.



Application of the policy

This policy will inform investment under *Homes for Queenslanders*, including the commitment to progress a detailed investigation of a supportive housing development at Ivory Street, as well as the planned social and affordable housing development in Southport.

The Supportive Housing Policy will apply to other identified supportive housing developments going forward.

While the Queensland Government has been connecting housing and support for many years, including the delivery of various service offerings that have been described as supportive housing, this has not been underpinned by policy. As such, a range of service delivery models and approaches currently use the term interchangeably.

This policy does not automatically apply to all services that may currently use the descriptor of ‘supportive housing’ and it is intended to progressively evolve the department’s use of language to achieve consistency and clarity of the use of this term over time. This will be coupled with articulation of the various other effective housing and support models on the spectrum of responses.





Embodied design created by First Nations design agency Iscariot Media.

'Our Place' maps the landscape both physically and conceptually demonstrating the paths forward for communities in Queensland. Through various symbols this design is inspired by the diverse physical environments of our communities, from densely populated urban environments to smaller remote settings where communities gather.

From the Torres Strait Islands to the North, the Eastern Coastal regions, the western communities and the built-up areas of southeast Queensland, themes of connection, strength, movement and communication thread across the whole design and become the link between all communities. When we come together to create a stronger and more vibrant environment for our communities, we not only improve the wellbeing of all Queenslanders, but we also inspire positive change that can have far-reaching implications for generations to come.

www.qld.gov.au/homesforqueenslanders