

Operating Guidelines



**TINY
HOMES
FOUNDATION**

May 2015

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1 Introduction

This guideline is for the xxxx property. This property is managed by xxx (e.g. estate agency) with xxxx (e.g. lead welfare agency) having nomination rights in association with Tiny Homes Foundation Limited.

These guidelines set out the processes for the operation of the THF project, which aims to provide accommodation and support to people experiencing homelessness.

1.1 Concept

The THF project aims to work within a collaborative supported service model that seeks to address the needs of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness within the Central Coast area.

Refer to tinyhomesfoundation.org.au for further information

1.2 Parties to the Operational Guidelines

The following parties are signatories to the Operating guidelines and will have nomination rights to the THF property.

For example:

- Samaritans Foundation
- Baptist Services
- Mercy Care
- xxxx

1.3 Purpose of the Operational Guidelines

These operational guidelines provide the guidelines by which clients are referred to, assessed for eligibility, supported by and exit the project.

1.4 Term of the Operational Guidelines

These operational guidelines are ongoing, subject to annual review between partner services or as required by the parties. This project will be evaluated for sustainability and client outcomes.

2 Overview of Tiny Homes Foundation project

2.1 Objectives

The key objectives of the THF project include:

- Work within a model that provides a supported housing option for people experiencing homelessness.
- Provide another accommodation option that requires no additional funding for staff.
- Provide a collaborative approach to ensure client centred support.
- To utilise the already established resources within the Government and Non-Government sectors.

2.2 Project Model

The project model has two distinct components, accommodation and support, with accommodation being provided by THF and the support coordinated by xxx welfare agency and provided by the partner agencies.

2.2.2 The accommodation

The project provides 4 single units of accommodation.

2.2.3 Support to maintain tenancies

Members of the THF Project Partners Group will provide the necessary support to clients to assist them to sustain their accommodation, avoiding returns to homelessness. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Basic living skills
- Assisting tenants to meet the obligations of their tenancy agreement.
- Assisting tenants to gain the required knowledge and skills to maintain a successful tenancy.
- Links and referrals to appropriate services and assisting tenants to access these
- Assisting tenants to develop personal skills so they can be as independent as possible.

- Improving tenant's ability to manage their health and improve health outcomes.
- Increasing access to educational and vocational services and help tenants to increase their incomes.
- Assisting tenants to move on to other accommodation such as public or community housing as well as the private rental or home ownership markets as desired and appropriate.

The THF project will provide the following range of services for clients:

- Accommodation linked with appropriate support;
- Assessment of needs and appropriate referral;
- Case management by the most appropriate support service;
- Support for transition to long-term housing if desired and appropriate;
- Support for the client to live independently through providing basic living skills;
- Assist and support the client to link into additional services

2.3 Service Access

xxx (e.g. lead welfare agency) will take referrals for the accommodation from partner services for consideration by the THF Project Partners Group.

All clients accessing services through the THF project will be registered through Housing Pathways (Centrelink).

2.3.1 Tenancy and Property Management

xxxxx will have responsibility for the day to day management of the property. xxxxx will have responsibility for the tenancy management including maintenance services.

Clients who are accepted into the THF project will be subject to theAct

Tenants will be expected to pay for any damages they or their visitors cause.

2.3.2 Support Services

All tenants will be supported by the nominating services.

Support Services will be coordinated by the Service Provider in accordance with the agreed Case Plan.

2.4 THF project support staff - xxxx (e.g. lead welfare agency)

A dedicated worker from xxx will be the key contact for the project. This worker will not be responsible for case management, but will ensure the project is operating within the guidelines and any on site issues are dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner. In addition to this she/he will be responsible for facilitating partner meetings and allocations.

3 Eligibility Criteria & Referral Process

The THF project will provide accommodation and appropriate supports for single people over 18, who are eligible for social housing, currently experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness.

All clients accepted into the THF project will be registered with Housing Pathways. Support partners referring clients to the program will assist clients with Housing Pathways application processes and ensure that applications are lodged with Housing NSW or Compass Housing Services.

For clients to be referred to the THF project they will need to be engaged with one of the partner agencies who will provide support to assist the client to maintain their accommodation.

It is the intention of the project that in determining eligibility that consideration is given to the tenant mix on the site.

3.1.1 Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness

Clients are eligible for THF if they are single people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Homelessness includes:

- People living in the streets, parks, squats, or in cars.
- People moving frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another, including:
 - Emergency and transitional accommodation provided under Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS)
 - People staying with other people because they have no accommodation of their own.
 - People staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis.

- People living in boarding house accommodation on a medium to long-term basis.

These target groups are based on the definitions of homelessness, commonly used in the literature and policy:

- **Primary homelessness** refers to those without conventional accommodation, e.g. people living on the streets or sleeping in parks.
- **Secondary homelessness** refers to those in temporary accommodation, including those staying in emergency or transitional accommodation and temporarily living with other households because they have no accommodation of their own and people staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis.
- **Tertiary homelessness** refers to those living in boarding houses on a medium- to long-term basis.

3.1.3 General Eligibility

In addition to being homeless or at risk of homelessness the client must meet general eligibility criterion.

The general eligibility criteria include:

- Be a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia, and
- Be resident in New South Wales (NSW), and
- Establish their identity, and
- Have a household income within the social housing income eligibility limits, and
- Not own any assets or property which could reasonably be expected to resolve their housing need, and
- Be able to sustain a successful placement in accommodation, with support, and
- Be over 18 years of age, and
- Have a desire and the ability to live within a supportive housing complex.

3.1.4 Support Services

For a client to be accepted into the THF project, they must be engaged with a support service. The primary support service must complete the THF Referral Form outlining the client's support needs and housing status, and be committed to providing support to the client during the occupancy, according to the agreed case plan.

3.1.5 Case Plans

The support service completing the THF Referral Form must provide a case plan for the client. The THF project must be confident that the support offered to the client will address issues identified and assist in sustaining the tenancy.

The case plan must cover:

- Details about the client's support needs and issues they are facing, and
- Other support services involved or current referrals to other agencies, and
- Information about the nature of the support being provided and the frequency of contact with clients, and
- The agency/person responsible for providing support, and
- A timeframe for involvement/intervention, and
- A commitment by the support worker to continue working with the client to address the issues that may impact the client's ability to pay rent and meet the conditions of the lease.
- Identification of Risk factors

3.2 Referral Processes

Clients wanting to access the THF Project will need to be referred by one of the partners to the project.

The partner agency will complete the Referral form, for their client to be considered by the Project Partners Group. The Project Partners group will consider all referrals for the site and determine which client is to be offered the vacancy, based on the need.

4 Assessment

Tenants will be selected to ensure there is an appropriate mix of tenants on the site at all times. Where possible TFH will house applicants in order of the date they applied and then by date assessed, however the priority of needs of the client will be the main consideration.

4.1 Urgent housing need

4.1.1 Unstable housing circumstances

A client has an urgent housing need if they are experiencing unstable housing circumstances. This includes:

- Homelessness.
- Imminent homelessness.
- Living in crisis or emergency accommodation.
- Living with family or friends who are unable to provide longer-term accommodation.
- Living apart from immediate family members because of a lack of appropriate housing alternatives.

4.1.2 At risk factors

A client has an urgent housing need if they, or a member of their household, is at risk of harm. There are many situations in which the personal safety or the mental health of a client or another member of their household may be at risk, including:

- Domestic violence.
- Sexual assault.
- Child abuse or neglect.
- Threatening behaviour by one or more household members against another occupant.
- Torture or trauma.

5 Service Delivery Model

The THF project will have a functional separation of housing management and support services. xxxx will be responsible for issuing leases, collecting rent, managing property maintenance, managing breaches of the tenancy agreement and security.

5.1 Site management

The THF project aims to have a staff member from xxxx and/or a partner service on site during the day. This will assist with:

- Liaising with support providers for access to site including the office.
- Escalation of any issues arising with clients on site to the appropriate support provider as identified in the support plan.

5.3 Assessment and Service Planning

Assessment of Referrals will be undertaken by the Project Partners Group. Partners Group agencies will make referrals on the attached Referral Form (Appendix A) and will include a signed Client Consent Form (Appendix B).

5.4 Frequency of Contact

Frequency of contact by Service Providers will be determined on a case by case basis and will be included in the Case Plan. A minimum of weekly face to face contact is expected in the initial stage of the tenancy.

5.5 Responsibility of Support Providers

Clients residing in the accommodation units will have ongoing and appropriate contact with their support worker. This will be outlined in the case plan and the level and frequency of contact may vary (see above 5.4)

The method of contact will vary according to the client's needs and progression.

Where support providers are deemed not to be supporting their clients, the THF project coordinator – on behalf of the project partners will:

- Contact the support partner to rectify the situation and follow up in writing;
- If support is not restored, a report will be prepared by the Project Partners Group to the xxxx CEO recommending that the support provider have their referral rights to the site revoked for a designated period.

The CEO will consider this report and if agreed, will write to the partner agency advising their referral right to the site have been revoked.

5.6 Responsibilities of xxxx (lead welfare agency)

- Innovative leadership, direction and proficient management of the project.
- The effective management of resources within a safe working environment and within the context of SHS requirements and GHSH reforms.
- The management of people, facilities, assets, equipment and information to deliver appropriate outcomes under the project.
- Development of formal and informal networking with internal and external stakeholders that support the project.
- Timely and accurate data collection and reporting.
- Maintaining a focus on improving the well being and participation of tenants.

- Coordinating with agencies to provide services for clients.

5.7 Responsibilities of Support Partner Agencies

- Provide high quality case management and support services to clients as identified by program criteria.
- Provide high quality assessment to all clients accessing the service.
- Develop, implement, monitor and review client assessments and case plans in conjunction with clients.
- To assist in the development of effective practice within the THF Project.
- Pursue and develop linkages with appropriate services including participating in meetings.
- Develop exit strategies with clients and assist them in leaving the THF Project.
- Assist clients in gaining appropriate, safe, long term housing.
- Maintain accurate files and case notes on all individual clients.
- Present cases for Intake in a professional manner.
- Implement and document clients assessed needs, develop and implement goal orientated case plans in conjunction with the client.
- Provide well-integrated case coordination with both internal and external staff, community and government agencies.
- Participate in the development, implementation and review of the THF Project.
- Participate in training and development activities for clients.
- Ongoing review of agency links in relation to clients,

5.8 Tenure

Each tenant will first sign a lease for a period of 6 months. Provided tenants comply with the lease agreement, are still actively engaged with the case management and support provider they will then receive a lease of a further 12 months.

However, if tenants decide that they wish to relocate, they will be assisted to ensure they are moving into affordable and appropriate stable accommodation.

5.9 Exiting from THF

Clients may exit from THF at any time.

Partners will make the best endeavours to assist clients exit from THF project into long term secure and affordable housing either within the social housing sector or within the private market.

Tenancies created under this project with xxxxx may be terminated by either the tenant or the landlord in accordance with the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.

Where the tenancy is ended by the landlord, the matter will need to be reported to the xxx CEO detailing the reasons for the termination of the tenancy and what, if any arrangements have been made with the tenant to assist in securing alternative accommodation.

5.10 Report and Monitoring

A quarterly report will be provided to the CEO and partners group. The report will be written by THF project coordinator. The content and type of the report to be determined by the CEO in consultation with the project partners but will include details of:

- Number of clients assisted.
- Number of clients exiting to more secure accommodation.
- Number of clients to which further assistance is not able to be provided.
- Any significant issues on the site.

6 Governance Structures

The THF project will be managed by xxxx (e.g. Nova for Women) there will be a Project Partners Group consisting of officers of the partner agencies who are responsible for day to day management and implementation of the project within their respective organisations.

6.1 The THF Project Partners Group

The Project Partners Group will consist of those agencies who have agreed to these Operating Guidelines and who wish to participate in the THF Project as referral and/or support agencies.

The purpose of the group will be to:

- Assess applications for the THF project.
- Review client progress to determine where support/interventions are required.
- Determine when a client may be exited from the project.
- Determine client mix on the site.
- Monitor the project.
- Make recommendations to the xxx CEO (e.g Nova CEO) in relation to the operation of the project and any changes to the operating guidelines.

6.3.1 Meeting arrangements:

- The Project Partners Group will meet monthly from May 2015. The frequency of meetings may be reviewed at any time. Specific meetings for case conferencing/planning may take place between Project Partners Group meetings as required.
- Meetings shall take place at a suitable venue determined by the group.
- The meetings will be chaired by a nominee of xxxx (e.g. lead welfare agency).
- The Chair may call out of session meetings to deal with critical issues if required. Critical issues involve high-risk matters that require urgent attention in relation to clients supported and housed under this trial.
- A timetable of scheduled meetings is to be agreed upon at the first meeting of the Partners Group.
- xxxx (e.g. lead welfare agency) will be responsible for:

- o Taking minutes of Project Partners Group meetings and distributing these within one week of the meeting
 - o Distribute an agenda to all members one week prior to meetings.
 - o Remind members of the date and venue of the Project Partners meeting at least one week prior to meetings.
 - o Co-ordinate any written reports which will be tabled at meetings to inform the decision making process.
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- Project Partners Group members may nominate agenda items prior to the meetings.
 - A quorum shall consist of at least one representative from at least half of the participating agencies and should include the Chair or their nominated delegate.
 - Minutes of meetings shall include an issues log, and an Action Plan Summary outlining the actions to be taken from the meetings, the date for completion and the responsible member.
 - Progress against actions shall be reviewed at every meeting.

6.4 Dispute Resolution

Any dispute arising from this agreement that cannot be resolved by the Project Partners Group will be resolved by reference to the xxx CEO (e.g. CEO of lead welfare agency) and if the matter is not able to be resolved will then be referred to xxx.

7 Privacy and Confidentiality

The rights of clients will be protected in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

Clients will be required to complete and sign an *Authority to Disclose Personal Information Form* that will specify the information to be disclosed, to whom that information is disclosed and the purpose for its disclosure. Agencies referring clients will ensure that the purpose and function of the Authority is fully explained to the client and that the client gives informed consent.

All parties agree to ensure that records of clients containing personal information are appropriately and securely stored and access to such information is restricted to those who have a legitimate reason to access that information in accordance with the provisions of the act.

8 Evaluation

The development of an appropriate Evaluation process will be undertaken by the xxx (e.g. lead welfare agency).

9 Appendices

The following appendices are support documents that form part of this agreement

Appendix 1 Client Referral Form

Appendix 2 THF Client Consent Form

Signatures

The following signatories, as delegated by their respective agencies agree to this Operating Agreement, will participate in the Partners Group and have nomination rights to the site.

AGENCY	NAME	SIGNATURE

The xxx CEO (e.g. CEO of lead welfare agency) agrees to the terms of these Operating Guidelines.

NAME	TITLE	SIGNATURE
	CEO xxx	