



Disability SA

Supported Accommodation Strategy

© Government of South Australia, December 2006
ISBN1920983376

The Strategy is available online at: www.dfc.sa.gov.au/supportaccomodation

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Message from the Minister

One of the State Government's highest priorities is to increase the supply of community-based accommodation for people with disabilities.

That's why it is one of the targets in the *South Australian Strategic Plan*. And while we have already met that target, we know there is much more work to do to cater for the growing demand in this area.

The demand for disability services continues to grow each year across Australia – faster than any government can meet it. The State Government has responded with a 34% increase in the State disability budget during the past four years.

It's important to recognise that most people with a disability live successfully in the community, with some government assistance and the support of their families, carers and friends. But there is a smaller proportion of people, those with more profound disabilities, who need a more specialised service.

This *Supported Accommodation Strategy* is about improving supported accommodation options for those South Australians and their families.

We also recognise there are some groups of people with disabilities who are even more alienated and at risk because of their Aboriginality, their particular type of disability or their tenuous living arrangements.

The State Government is spending \$115.5m this financial year on this sector – including a \$2m increase to fund 40 new group home places – but we know that services must be better coordinated and made easier for families to navigate.

There is still more work to do to improve services. We believe that better planning will improve the provision of supported accommodation across the whole sector and will lead to more certainty for people with a disability and their families.

We must be clear, though, about what the government and service providers can realistically provide and what we can't. We must be clear that those with the most urgent priority will get services before others. This Strategy will not be a magic cure to the demand in the sector.

But we hope it will lead to greater clarity about what services people can expect and when their situation will be reviewed. We hope this will enable families to plan for the future with more certainty.

As promised, this *Strategy* outlines a more streamlined system of planning, organising and managing supported accommodation for people with disabilities.

This Strategy will deliver:

- a single waiting list
- a single system of service coordination through Disability SA to help people navigate services
- a requirement for all service providers to meet service standards
- services based on people's support needs, not diagnosis
- a new Accommodation Act to better ensure that all service providers meet acceptable standards (buildings, food services and support)

While there is much more to do, I hope this *Supported Accommodation Strategy* charts the way for a more certain future for families living with disability.

I would like to thank the members of the Supported Accommodation Task Group for their commitment to improving services. This *Strategy* stems from their considered recommendations.

At the heart of this *Strategy* are South Australians with disabilities, their families and carers. I would like to thank them for the honesty with which they have told me their stories and their frustrations.

This *Strategy* is another step forward on the path we take together to improve services for all South Australians with a disability.

Hon Jay Weatherill MP
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY

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The *Supported Accommodation Strategy*

Our goal

To improve the management, coordination, assessment and provision of supported accommodation to South Australians with a disability by creating:

- a single waiting list
- a single system of service coordination through Disability SA to help people navigate services
- a requirement for all service providers to meet service standards
- services based on people's support needs, not diagnosis
- a new Accommodation Act to better ensure that all service providers meet acceptable standards (buildings, food services and support)

Why we need a *Supported Accommodation Strategy*

We know the current system is confusing and complex. There are multiple entry points, inconsistent and numerous assessment processes, a lack of accurate and relevant data, an under-supply of housing and community support options, and a lack of integration between health, housing and support services, even between the various parts of the disability services sector.

Many families put their sons and daughters names on multiple lists across many agencies, for fear they will not be able to find a group home place when they really need one. There is a perception of a lack of equity and transparency in the allocation of places, and ageing parents and carers are rightfully concerned about who will look after their sons and daughters when they are no longer able to.

There is also concern that many people with significant chronic functional impairment are homeless, living in sub-standard or marginal living arrangements. The Social Inclusion Board has identified that the lack of long term supported housing for these people is a major factor leading to homelessness.

By comparison, there is a reasonably robust system of supported accommodation for people with intellectual, physical, neurological disability and brain injury, which is provided in various care arrangements – institutions, group homes and individuals' own homes.

But demand for new places continues to grow and South Australia lags behind most other states in moving people from institutional care to community living arrangements.

The Supported Accommodation Task Group

The Supported Accommodation Task Group was formed in December 2005 to provide advice to the State Government on improving supported accommodation in South Australia.

It was made up of representatives from:

- the State Government (Disability SA, the Office for Disability and Client Services, Housing SA and Mental Health Services)
- ACROD (Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled)
- ANGOSA (Association of Non Government Organisations of South Australia)
- the Disability Advisory Council
- the Mental Health Coalition
- and the union representing staff, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union (LHMU)

The Task Group conducted an extensive consultation process, with public meetings around the State, and received more than 170 submissions. A consultation paper was produced which outlined proposals for an accommodation and personal support policy and new legislation to provide greater protection for vulnerable people in group living arrangements. Research was undertaken to provide more accurate information on the needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.

Extensive consultations were held in both metropolitan and regional South Australia. A website was established to allow people to access relevant documents and lodge submissions. More than 400 people attended the 26 regional and metropolitan consultations.

What people want

The public submissions revealed a very clear picture of what is important to people with disabilities and those who care for them. This included:

- An increase in the supply of accommodation and support, including new housing models to meet the wide range of housing needs of people with a disability
- Services that are accessible and user friendly
- A wider range of services that allow flexibility and choice
- Accessible, clear and consistent information
- A greater focus on prevention, and early intervention approaches, to help people with disabilities to reach their full potential
- Services that support skill development and independence
- Training and support for professionals working with people with disabilities to ensure quality of services
- A consistent approach to assessment based on functional not diagnostic criteria
- Improved access to mainstream services such as housing and transport
- Improved integration with education, health and mental health services
- Services for parents to help them plan for their child's future
- An independent, transparent complaints process

What the Supported Accommodation Task Group recommended

The Task Group recommended that any new strategy should focus on three critical areas:

- Policies and guidelines, including the creation of a single point of entry, for accommodation and personal support services which are consistent, equitable and transparent
- Improved planning processes for the increased supply of community based accommodation and personal support services
- Better legislation to protect people with disabilities who are living in supported accommodation to afford them appropriate standards of accommodation and support

The Task Group also identified the following principles which should underpin the strategy:

- A strong and sustained commitment to service
- The voice of people with a disability, their carers and advocates is reflected in the service system
- Improved coordination and delivery of accommodation and personal support services
- Improved use of public, community and private housing
- Stronger partnerships
- Reform of the sector (efficiency, quality and accountability)
- Retention of a skilled and experienced workforce

Features of a better system of supported accommodation

For clients, families and carers:

- Clients, families and carers are the primary focus of this strategy and will be informed and supported throughout their contact with disability services
- Clients, families and carers will work with staff with a specific knowledge of different kinds of disability to help them navigate the services they need
- Clients, families and carers will be actively involved in decisions affecting them and their families
- Clients, families and carers will have the right to information about the services they are eligible for, where they sit in terms of priority for service and the options that are open to them
- Clients, families and carers will be provided with written information about rights and responsibilities, consumer advocacy, the process for providing feedback and relevant contact details to obtain information about their situation

For government and non-government service providers:

- Government and non-government disability agencies will work in partnership to promote equitable access to supported accommodation in the community
- Systems will be in place to collect comprehensive and current data regarding need, vacancies, service provision and costs across the accommodation and personal support system services will be provided within the Service Excellence Framework
- Services will be provided taking into account *Rapid Response* – Whole of Government Services for Children and Young People under the Guardianship of the Minister
- A new Accommodation Act, will be introduced into Parliament in 2007, will propose that standards are applied to all community based accommodation settings for people with disabilities, which will replace the *Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992*
- Service planning will be based on sound evidence of need and resource requirements
- Workforce skills will match those required to support the independence and development of people with a disability in the provision of accommodation and personal support
- Housing stock/accommodation models will match the needs of people with a disability
- Data systems will provide sufficient capacity to enable effective forward planning

Making every dollar count

By streamlining the way people connect with our supported accommodation services, we can better manage the demand for new places and plan new ones.

The allocation of places from the waiting list will be prioritised according to the needs of the clients, their families and carers and the most appropriate and cost-effective accommodation and support options.

We also need to consider a greater range of options for people, their families and carers, by looking at new and innovative accommodation options.

Definition of Supported Accommodation

Supported accommodation service provides accommodation and services to support people with a disability and needed to enable a person with a disability to remain in their existing accommodation or to move to more suitable or appropriate accommodation. This includes group homes, in-home care and other models. There are two sub-categories of supported accommodation: firstly, those that are fully supported, such as group homes providing support on a 24 hour/seven days a week basis; secondly, those that provide partial support, such as in-home care.

Categorisation of supported accommodation

Clear eligibility criteria will be put in place which are aimed at making sure everyone needing a service is treated fairly. These criteria will be applied consistently across Disability SA.

For a person to be considered the highest priority for supported accommodation, there must be in immediate need, for example:

- they are homeless or in **immediate** danger of becoming homeless
- or they are subject to abuse or are in danger of being abused (in the case of children and young people, Families SA would also be involved)
- they are a young person under Guardianship of the Minister, or a person under 50 who qualifies for the joint State-Commonwealth Young People in Residential Aged Care Program

Categorisation of supported accommodation

DETERMINATION OF CATEGORIES FOR LEVEL OF UNMET NEED		
SERVICE TYPE DEFINITIONS/CSTDA	CATEGORY CRITERIA	FOR EXAMPLE
<p>1.0 Supported accommodation Services that provide accommodation to people with a disability and services that provide support needed to enable a person with a disability to remain in their existing accommodation or to move to more suitable or appropriate accommodation</p>	<p>CATEGORY 1. Critical: Homeless or in IMMEDIATE danger of being rendered homeless Actual harm to self or others Priority for Under 50's in Nursing Home and children/young people under Guardianship of the Minister</p> <p>CATEGORY 2. Evident: Risk of harm to self or others Risk of homelessness</p> <p>CATEGORY 3. Potential: Deteriorating health and/or ability of consumer/carer</p> <p>CATEGORY 4. Desirable: Enhancement of quality of life</p>	<p>Category 1. Critical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A situation that is causing IMMEDIATE harm • Carer or consumer in immediate danger due to abuse/violence • Death of carer or life threatening illness <p>Category 2. Evident</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown of support due to health of carer • Escalation of behaviour leading to risk of harm or violence to self or others <p>Category 3. Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of consumers health and/or ability that will result in harm if not provided with supported accommodation <p>Category 4. Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate placement that is not supporting development of client

Registration on the supported accommodation waiting list

The single point of entry will be managed by Disability SA.

A person will be registered on the waiting list for supported accommodation once the following requirements have been met:

- they have been assessed by a Service Coordinator as eligible for placement into supported accommodation
- the necessary documentation has been completed, for instance, a supported accommodation booking form

Every person assessed as eligible will be prioritised on the waiting list according to the needs of that person, their family and carers, available resources and access to alternatives services. Because of this, eligibility does not mean a guarantee of immediate help.

If person is not eligible for supported accommodation, there is a whole range of other help he or she may qualify for. Service Coordinators can help people find out what other kinds of services are available.

Vacancy matching

When there is a suitable vacancy, Disability SA will coordinate between the client, their families and carers and the service provider to help organise the move into their new home.

Information for clients, families and carers

There will be a regular communication with people on the list, their families or carers.

Complaints/decision review

If a person is not happy with a decision and want it reviewed, he or she can contact the Senior Service Coordinator at the local Disability SA office.

A person can also contact the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner on:

Ph: 8226 8666

Toll free in SA: 1800 232 007

Website: www.hcsscc.sa.gov.au

How do we put our new system in place?

The successful implementation of this new Strategy relies on new systems and procedures, including:

- Introducing a standardised method across Disability SA of assessing people's needs.
- Putting in place clear, transparent guidelines for the registration and review of people's needs.
- Reviewing everyone who is already on a waiting list for supported accommodation
- Introducing a single allocation system which identifies and connects people with vacancies across the supported accommodation sector
- Developing guidelines to review and maintain the Waiting List

- Developing a process for projecting future planning in the sector.

It will take some time to standardise assessments. The new assessment process will commence in January 2007.

Recent progress in improving supported accommodation

The *Supported Accommodation Strategy* sits alongside the *Housing Plan for South Australia*, which is aimed at increasing the supply of housing and accommodation opportunities for people in South Australia, including those with a disability.

Housing SA is taking on an increased responsibility for supplying houses for people with a disability.

The *Housing Plan for South Australia* includes the following:

- A target for public housing of 75% of all newly built houses to meet accessible and flexible housing design criteria that comply with disability access principles.
- An additional \$4.7m to new group homes for people with disabilities.
- A commitment to public housing work with disability service providers on models of shared equity home ownership programs.
- Support for the on-going planned de-institutionalisation of large institutions and residential facilities providing residential care for people with disability or mental illness.

Housing SA is a high need housing provider which is responsible for ensuring housing integrates with personal support services and for establishing a Disability Housing (Housing Supply) Program.

The State Government has invested millions of extra dollars during the past five years to create more supported accommodation places, packages of in-home support and respite to meet the Strategic Plan target 6.5.

Between 2003-2006, 101 new supported accommodation places were created in group homes.

The 2006/07 Budget included a \$20m investment over four years in new supported accommodation places, and new packages of in-home support.

There is a \$9.2m investment over five years in the \$18.4m joint State Federal Young People in Residential Aged Care Program, which involves planning and service coordination to prevent people under the age of 50 being admitted to nursing homes because of their high care needs.

The State Government has invested \$5m in the Bedford Homes for 100 Project, which is creating 100 supported accommodation places in the community for people with intellectual disability.

The State Government has made a major investment of \$21m into the new Julia Farr Housing Association, a non-government organisation which will provide housing for people with disabilities leaving the Julia Farr Campus at Fullarton and other people on the waiting list.

The Strathmont Centre Redevelopment and Community Living Project is a \$23.5m program to move 150 residents from that institution into homes in the community, and the first six homes are already complete.

\$17m has been provided to the Minda and Orana organisations so they can create extra accommodation places, and the services that go with them, for people to move into the community.

Over the next four years, \$18.3 million is being spent on in-home care for people with disabilities, including psychiatric disabilities. This was announced in the 2005-06 State Budget.

In April 2006, major changes were announced to government disability and housing services, aimed at streamlining and improving services provided to the community.

At the heart of the changes is the new co-ordinated service delivery system which will provide support for carers and family members to connect with the services they need.

To ensure that people don't get lost in the system a dedicated Service Co-ordinator will work with them and their family to develop a co-ordinated plan of services.

The *Supported Accommodation Strategy* will build on this streamlined system by establishing a *single Government disability housing program* that is well connected to the personal support system

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of all those involved in providing and using supported accommodation should be clear.

Clients, families and carers

The role of clients, families and carers, is to express their views about what services they require, and how, where and when these should be delivered. This may mean speaking up about their own individual situation or speaking on behalf of others and also to be involved in planning the provision of services that complement and support existing family and informal care networks.

Clients, families and carers also have a responsibility to inform Disability SA of changes in their circumstances, and identify the support they receive through family and community networks

State Government

The Minister has responsibility to meet his commitments to service for all South Australians with a disability, and so needs the right resources and controls at his disposal to achieve this. This means determining policy direction, directing resources, and monitoring outputs and outcomes through the Chief Executive of the Department for Families and Communities. It is essential for Government to manage the collection and analysis of data to inform plans and funding decisions whilst protecting the confidentiality of that data.

In some instances, Government will be the provider of services, particularly where it needs to make sure that people with the most complex and multiple needs are being supported and where government agencies are best equipped to provide services.

Non-Government Organisations

Non-government organisations will continue to play a major role as service providers of housing services and personal support services. The role of service provider carries responsibilities for the delivery of quality, accredited and accountable services to people with disabilities and their carers.

Service providers must be accountable to Government for the services they provide to people with disabilities. This includes working with the Government to monitor how well the system is meeting the need for accommodation and personal support services. It is important that service providers see themselves as contributing to one system, and not as being separate.

Systems advocacy (speaking out about how the system can be improved) is a key role for non-government organisations and community groups and has an important and legitimate place in the new arrangements. The contribution of non-government agencies in relation to training, sector development, and service provider representation is essential to ensuring consistent standards and quality across service providers.

Private providers

Private or for-profit service providers should abide by the same standards and requirements as not-for-profit providers. There will be a 'level playing field' in terms of funding arrangements where private providers can demonstrate the same (or better) outcomes for consumers and standards of service provision. Where this is currently not the case, the Department for Families and Communities will establish mechanisms to review and improve practice.

Commonwealth Government

The Commonwealth Government provides funding through the Commonwealth State Territory Disability agreement and Home and Community Care, funding of employment services and aged care.

Local Government

Local Government licenses and inspects Supported Residential Facilities and takes part in sector planning undertaken by the State Government. In accordance with the State-Local Government Relations Agreement, both parties will consult each other in relation to any proposed changes in this area.

Measuring our achievements

As part of measuring our success, the State Government will publish action plans for supported accommodation. Achievement against the objectives of this *Strategy* will be will form part of the Annual Report of the Department for Families and Communities.

This *Strategy* will be delivered strategy through an annual planning process, on-going consultation and regular assessment of the changing needs of people with disabilities.

The proposed new Accommodation Act is aimed at ensuring that these standards are applied to all community based accommodation settings for people with disabilities.

Timeframe for implementation

- December 2006, release of the Supported Accommodation Strategy
- December 2006, letter and information will be sent to people on the existing waiting list for supported accommodation
- January 2007, commencement of assessment of people on the current waiting lists to create a single waiting list
- June 2007, first annual action plan will be produced

Further information can be obtained from Disability SA Offices or online via <http://www.familiesandcommunities.sa.gov.au/disability>