

OUTSOURCED MAINTENANCE

Changes in the way maintenance services will be delivered in the future.

Housing NSW has a long history of funding community housing providers to carry out a range of asset services and their capacity to deliver these services has been successfully demonstrated and recognised. These include upgrading, maintenance, disability modification and some new construction. Last year, Housing NSW funded 13 community housing providers to carry out planned maintenance on 180 properties used for crisis accommodation across New South Wales on a fee for service basis.

The outsourcing of maintenance will result in the 700 crisis properties being grouped into a number of location-based packages offered either directly or via an Expression of Interest process to community housing providers to manage on a fee-for-service basis. The provider selection process will be based on a number of factors and the successful providers will be required to deliver the maintenance and repair services in accordance with certain mandatory standards.

No major impacts are envisaged for the Specialist Homelessness Services sector in terms of this new delivery model. The sector will continue to receive a comparable level of service as Housing NSW will ensure that all contractual obligations are met and sector feedback is taken into account to improve service delivery outcomes. Housing NSW will work closely with the homelessness peaks to ensure a smooth transition of the maintenance arrangements. Periodic feedback/ information sessions will be organised as required. As contract manager, the Community Housing Division will ensure that selected community housing providers are meeting all contractual obligations around providing a quality maintenance service to the Specialist Homelessness Service. The Community Housing Division will also play an active role in resolving any maintenance disputes or grievances.

It is anticipated that outsourcing crisis maintenance will:

- Deliver efficiencies and quality improvement
- Improve services to the SHS sector
- Strengthen local working relationships
- Build capacity
- Take advantage of local and responsive service provision

FAQ – Specialist Homelessness Services Outsourcing maintenance

Question 1:

Can Specialist Homelessness Service providers choose which community housing provider delivers the maintenance? What if the Specialist Homelessness Services already has a partnership with a community housing provider?

The maintenance outsourcing will be based on a select tender process in metropolitan areas. The winning tenderers will be awarded the contract. In Regional areas direct allocation methods will be followed to build on existing local inter-organisation relationships and contractor networks.

Question 2:

What assurance can the Community Housing Division give to the Specialist Homelessness Services that the community housing providers have the capabilities to deliver on service/quality/standards & timeframes?

The assurance around community housing provider capacity is primarily provided by the community housing provider's registration status. Class 1 and 2 community housing providers will be engaged to deliver maintenance services across SHS portfolio. Providers go through a rigorous process of providing evidence to the Registrar for Community Housing on all aspect of their business including asset management which is a key area of assessment.

As part of the select tender and direct allocation processes the Community Housing Division will outline minimum service levels that all providers will have to meet. These will closely align with the level of service Specialist Homelessness Services are currently receiving from Housing NSW.

The Community Housing Division is also putting in place a quality control process for maintenance comprising of periodic post work inspections ensuring standard.

Question 3:

When will Specialist Homelessness Service providers know who the community housing provider is that will provide the maintenance?

This information will be communicated after the completion of the select tender and direct allocation process. It is expected that the new maintenance arrangement will be in place from October 2012.

Question 4:

What are the funding implications for the Specialist Homelessness Service provider?

There are no funding implications for the Specialist Homelessness Service provider. Maintenance will still be funded by the Land & Housing Corporation. Only the mode of delivery will change. At the Specialist Homelessness Service level this will mean only a change in its maintenance contact number. Instead of calling the Housing NSW Contact Centre, Specialist Homelessness Services will call the 24 hour service provided by the relevant community housing provider.

Question 5:

Will the community housing provider be asked for authorisation before spending or will the provider be requesting reimbursement of monies spent on maintenance?

Contracted community housing maintenance providers require Housing NSW approval to proceed with work orders over \$2,500. The providers will be contracted on a cost-recovery basis

Question 6:

What will the maintenance dispute/grievance mechanisms be for the Specialist Homelessness Service provider if;

- a) the relationship with the community housing provider breaks down?**
- b) if the Specialist Homelessness Services aren't happy with the service provided by the community housing provider?**

Specialist Homelessness Services will be able to raise issues directly with the Community Housing Division Asset Team. As the contract manager, the Community Housing Division will ensure that selected community housing providers meet all contractual obligations by providing a quality maintenance service to the Specialist Homelessness Services. The Community Housing Division will also play an active role in resolving any maintenance disputes or grievances.