

## Client Factsheet

### The NSW Department of Communities and Justice

#### Housing Practice Standards



The NSW Department of Communities and Justice has introduced Housing Practice Standards.

These standards are designed to help us deliver our core values of Service, Trust, Accountability, Integrity and Respect.

The Housing Practice Standards clearly set out how our staff are expected to do their job – and what you can expect when interacting with our people.

There are six standards, with accompanying behaviours, and they are listed below for your information.

#### **1. Respectful service, we put people at the centre of everything we do**

Housing staff will listen and do their job based on the voice of the client, without judgment. Housing staff will follow through with what they say they will do.

#### **We will:**

- Make sure clients completely understand the information given to them and their options
- Ask clients what they want to do, rather than assuming, prioritising and assessing their needs for them
- Return phone calls and follow up with clients
- Give clients space to absorb information and what is being offered to them

- Explain to clients what informs our decision making, and what our boundaries and limits are
- Develop policies and initiatives that are focused on a better client experience and outcome.

## 2. Culture is ever present

Housing staff will deliver a respectful cultural practice by building knowledge, understanding and competence. Housing staff build cultural awareness and embrace the diversity of clients and staff. Our staff build a supportive and co-operative team environment that is welcoming and encourages staff to contribute and ask questions.

### We will:

- Address disrespect within the team, and recognise those who are supportive of clients and staff
- Share responsibility to create a safe space where people are encouraged to contribute
- Ensure that culture is ever present in team discussions
- Be respectful and recognise the impact of racism and trauma
- Role model the behaviours we expect of others
- Create a team culture that is open, inclusive and supportive.

## 3. Language impacts on practice

Housing staff communicate with compassion, respect and empathy. Housing staff listen to clients and respond clearly, ensuring they are understood.

### We will:

- Always talk about clients and other staff with respect, like they are in the room
- Use plain English to explain policy to clients and continually check they understand
- Correct any staff who use poor language towards, and about clients
- Be professional when dealing with clients and show genuine interest
- Communicate with clients using professional and compassionate words, body language and tone
- Encourage and allow everyone to have a voice.

## 4. Continual learning and critique leads to improved practice

Housing staff seek feedback to improve practice and learn new skills to be better at their job. Housing staff give feedback kindly, offering constructive advice, support and critique. Housing staff contribute to safe workplaces where people are valued, welcomed and feel comfortable to challenge each other.

### We will:

- Value learning and education, to better meet the needs of clients and improve our practice
- Develop new skills and attend training to learn better ways to communicate and listen

- Reflect on our practice and be genuinely curious about what could be done better
- Focus on, and encourage, continual learning, positive mentoring, coaching and professional case discussions
- Invite clients and other agencies to provide feedback about how staff do their job
- Encourage and allow everyone to have a voice
- Value a collaborative approach to identifying learning needs and seek training and opportunities to improve.

### 5. Trusting relationships create positive change

Housing staff are positive and attentive to clients; staff make decisions based on policy to support clients. Housing staff are respectful to each other, always. They collaborate, share information and look out for colleagues.

#### **We will:**

- Thank clients for their time and create a relaxed and safe environment where clients feel comfortable to ask questions
- Collaborate across work areas to improve outcomes for clients
- Recognise and respond to the effects of vicarious trauma, focus on wellbeing and practice self-care
- Put client's needs first, using ethical decision making
- During a home visit, thank clients for their time, be mindful that staff presence may be uncomfortable and daunting for clients
- Collaborate with other services and partner agencies and look for opportunities to improve.

### 6. Integrity and accountability are essential in every aspect of our work

Staff create transparent records. Housing staff are honest and take responsibility when mistakes are made. They will provide clear advice and reasons for decisions.

#### **We will:**

- Not promise an outcome, we will promise our commitment
- Follow through with processes, and follow up with clients
- Stay committed to the process as long as the client wishes
- Do what we tell clients we will do
- Test staff thinking, and consult with others, before making an important or difficult decision that significantly impacts a client
- Make sure note taking is purposeful, factual and neutral. All important events will be documented so clients don't have to re-tell their story
- Take responsibility for our decisions and actions
- Take ownership of following through the processes we are responsible for.