

Together Home program

Questions and Answers

July 2020

1. Length of program support

1.1. Question: This is a two-year program. Does the two years commence from the time we engage the program participant or from 1 July 2020. The program may not end on 30 June 2022 for every client.

Answer

The program commencement date is 1 July 2020 and it will run for two years, ending 30 June 2022.

Program funding covers this two-year period as per the contract. However, it is acknowledged that CHPs will not be able to allocate all housing and support packages immediately and that clients will be entering the program over the coming months.

There is sufficient funding to support each program client for 24 months from their entry into the program, assuming they are not replacing an existing client (i.e. due to a negative exit from the program).

The CHP and support provider will need to consider the support needs for each program participant for the duration of their engagement in the program. The client's support plan must also consider the client's exit from the program into long-term housing and what supports they will need at this point.

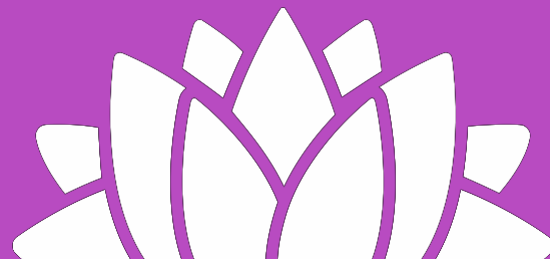
A decision about ending client intake will be taken in consultation with CHPs and districts in 2021.

More information is provided in the Program Guidelines under 'Exits from the program'.

1.2. Question: Can the long-term stable housing option for the client be an independently head leased property at the end of the two years? Under this scenario the client would take on the existing lease directly with the private landlord.

Answer

A key component of each person's support plan will be identifying a long-term, sustainable housing pathway following participation in the program. For most clients this will involve a pathway into social housing. However, based on an assessment of their capacity some clients may receive support to rent independently in the private market. Eligibility for other private rental assistance such as Rent Start and Rent Choice could also be considered for these clients.



1.3. Question: Is DCJ supportive of tenants/clients remaining in the properties for the full two-year leasehold term?

Answer

DCJ is supportive of the client remaining in the leasehold property for the full two years of the program. However, the client must be made a reasonable offer of long-term accommodation either during or at the end of this period. The offer of accommodation may include the client remaining in the leasehold property, and for this property to be absorbed into the CHP's Community Housing Leasing Program portfolio. Planning for long-term housing options should commence early in the support period.

2. Implementation period

2.1. Question: Will DCJ allow CHPs ramp up time from 1 July 2020 to commence the program? For example, one month to ensure support provisions, the Client Referral Assessment Group (CRAG) and governance is in place?

Answer

DCJ will be providing one month for a transitional period or 'ramp up' time for the program for the CHP to establish the Client Referral Assessment Groups, make subcontracting arrangements with support providers, and establishing program governance. Other activities that should also take place in the first four weeks from program go-live include:

- understanding reporting requirements
- communicating with your local DCJ District to discuss program implementation from a local context
- scoping leasehold options in the private rental market
- establishing relationships with other key program partners, if not already in place. For example, other CHPs where there is a cross over in delivery locations.

DCJ anticipates that the program will be established by 1 August 2020. In some cases, some CHPs may be ready for implementation sooner than 1 August.

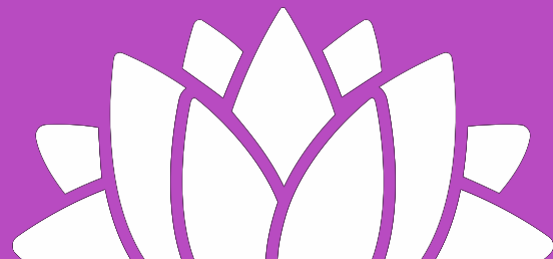
An implementation checklist will be issued to CHPs to ensure progress against key implementation milestones is being achieved.

2.2. Question: Will CIMS be used in the delivery of the support component? This would improve the capability to share data between partners (DCJ/CHP/Support). This will improve CHP's governance capability and ensure outcomes are delivered quicker.

Answer

The Client Information Management System (CIMS) is the platform for DCJ-funded homelessness support providers to use. Together Homes Work Groups will be established in CIMS to enable data capture for the program and allow for monitoring, reporting and data-driven continuous improvement.

The CHP will capture their program data in CHIMES.



3. Funding

3.1. Question: Can CHPs continue to use properties to house people who have been street sleeping during the period of funding as program participants are housed in capital supply? Will the funding continue or reduce?

Answer

The lease hold property or its associated leasing subsidy should be available for the entirety of the two-year program. This may include people with lower needs, where the CHP places a program participant straight into capital supply. Where a client is supported out of the lease hold property and into longer-term housing, there may be an opportunity for another Together Home client to benefit from this support, but this may vary depending on the time left in the program. The CHP will also need to decide if the client will require further support once moved into the capital supply. Ultimately, these decisions should be made collectively through the CRAG or its equivalent.

4. Property

4.1. Question: Some clients referred to the Client Referral Assessment Group may be offered long-term housing with DCJ or CHP through standard application processes. If it is identified that they require wrap around support to sustain their tenancy, can funding from this program be used for support?

Can the CHP use its capital portfolio for this program if one is identified as being more suitable for the client?

Answer

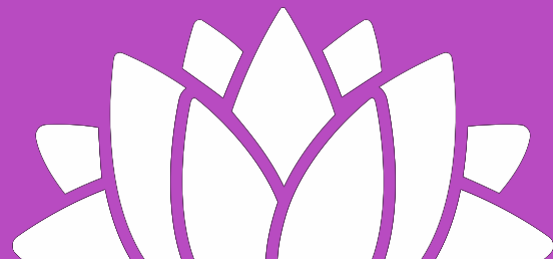
There may be instances where the most suitable immediate housing option for a program participant is in a CHP or DCJ capital supply, rather than in the private market.

In these instances, a property must still be leased from the private market, however it may be let to another Together Home client or a person on the priority housing list off the NSW Housing Register. In these circumstances, allocation decisions will be made in consultation via the CRAG or its equivalent. For people housed in capital supply, they are still considered a participant of the Together Home program and need to be treated as such for support planning, as well as monitoring and reporting purposes. The CHP will still need to report on the leasehold property for financial purposes.

4.2. Question: There is a risk the tenant will damage the property and vacate without notice. The CHP is responsible for the leasehold and there is no funding to cover this.

Answer

The CHLP funding methodology provides for a small component for repairs. As per any tenancy, tenant damage costs need to be recovered from tenants and general maintenance needs to be carried out by the owner of the property. There is also an additional loading built into the funding allocation in recognition of the complexity of the target cohort.



4.3. Question: Would places in a New Generation Board House style of accommodation be permitted? There is a need to avoid concentrating too many tenants in one location, but peer support can be advantageous, and some rough sleepers will be unable to immediate transition to completely self-sufficient, independent living.

Answer

The use of New Generation Boarding Housing style accommodation is permitted as part of the program as DCJ recognises that immediate allocation to long term housing may take some time. The rent for this accommodation would need to be subsidised as all accommodation is under the Community Housing Leasing Program. A clear pathway into long-term housing, either social or private rental, will need to be identified as part of client case planning.

5. Referrals

5.1. Question: Is there consideration for a combined Client Referral Assessment Group (CRAG) where CHP boundaries overlap? Where there are two CHPs in the same location - do they work out between them who will take the lead role or how is that determined?

Answer

Wherever possible, CHPs have been allocated primary delivery locations where the boundaries do not overlap. However, in some it may be necessary to have a combined CRAG.

It is essential that where there is a boundary overlap between providers that there is no competition between them for rental accommodation. This will ensure that the program has no adverse effects on driving up rental costs. It will be necessary to discuss this matter with other providers where this overlap exists.

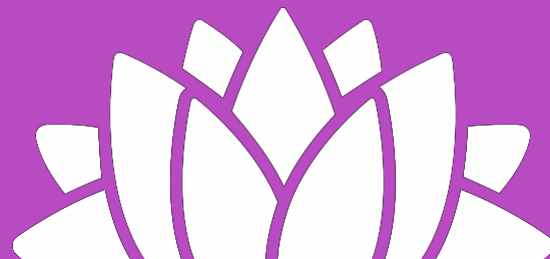
Please work with your DCJ District representative to discuss how this could work.

5.2 Question: Is the 'Governance Group' the CRAG? Or does this sit outside with CHP/DCJ and C&P?

Answer

The CRAG sits outside of the Governance Groups that are outlined in the governance section of the Program Guidelines. The CRAG will be led by the CHP in SHMT location and by DCJ in non-SHMT locations. This group will collaboratively decide whether the person is suitable for the program, if they also need to be referred to the Mental Health Panel for more intensive support or if a referral to another DCJ product is needed. The CRAG will include:

- CHP
- DCJ or SHMT CHPs
- Support provider/s
- Local Aboriginal representation



5.3. Question: Who will have the ultimate decision on client acceptance into the program?

Answer

Referrals into the program will come from CHPs in SHMT locations and from the CRAG in non-SHMT locations

There may be instances where a referral is more appropriate to come from a SHS provider, but this will need to be undertaken in consultation with the CHP or DCJ.

The CRAG or its equivalent will collaboratively determine a person's acceptance into the program.

5.4. Question: Can we put more than our allocated number of individuals through the program, if some progress through the program faster? Is there a list of targeted clients that can be provided to CHPs at the beginning of the program?

Answer

DCJ encourages CHPs to support more clients through Together Home wherever this is possible. Where a client is supported out of the lease hold property and into longer term housing before the end of the two years, there may be an opportunity for another person who is or was sleeping rough to benefit from this support, but this may vary depending on the time left in the program. These discussions can be had with the program governance group as the program progresses.

Providers should contact their local DCJ or SMHT CHP to discuss referrals into the program.

6. Support

6.1. Question: Is DCJ supportive of tenants/clients remaining in the properties for the full two-year leasehold term?

Answer

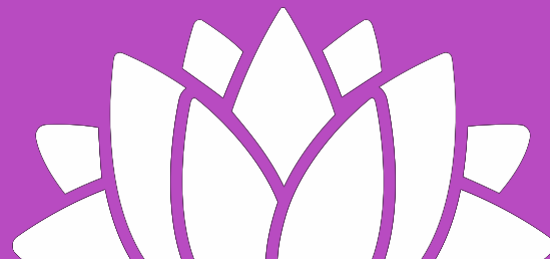
DCJ is supportive of the client remaining in the lease hold property for the full two years. However, the client must be made a reasonable offer of permanent accommodation either during or at the end of this period.

This offer of accommodation may include the client remaining in the leasehold property, and this property being absorbed into the CHPs Community Housing Leasing Program supply.

6.2. Question: The CHP will engage a support service [for the mental health support package]. Where more than one existing provider of HASI exists, how would this be determined? Does the support provider need to be an existing HASI service?

Answer

The CHP will need to engage with a provider for the mental health support package. This could be a provider funded through the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) or a similar



mental health support provider. This will be a subcontracting arrangement. The requirements for the provider are outlined in the Program Guidelines. Further detail on the allocation of mental health support funding is being developed by DCJ in partnership with Homelessness NSW and will be appended to the Program Guidelines in the coming weeks.

6.3. Question: In locations that have also just received mental health funding for a support and homelessness service to people sleeping rough, can the CRAG and the governance group for the mental health project be combined into one steering committee for both projects to be co-chaired by the LHD and the CHP?

Answer

Yes – providing the key aim of the CRAG can be fulfilled through this group. The CRAG has a specific purpose, please refer to Question 4.2. If there is benefit locally to aligning this group with an existing governance group then this should be discussed and agreed locally.

CHPs can use existing governance structures within their organisation to include Together Home.

6.4 Question: Can DCJ share the SHS fee structure?

Answer

DCJ is unable to provide a specific fee structure for SHS to support the CHP in making subcontracting decisions. DCJ encourages CHPs to understand their own costs of program delivery in the first instances and then to engage with SHS to negotiate the sub-contracting arrangement.

DCJ will develop a case study to demonstrate how this might look.

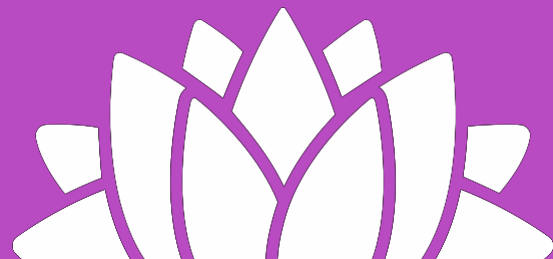
7. Assessment Tools

7.1. Question: Can we please get more information on the VI-SPDAT. For example, why and when to use it. Should be used as tool to select most vulnerable, such as before the CHP has the referral.

Answer

The Program Guidelines outline that the VI-SPDAT is to be completed by the CHP, if it has not already been completed while the person was in Temporary Accommodation.

DCJ will make training available on the tool. The tool can help the CHP understand a person's level of vulnerability and can support decision making about the program participant's prioritisation at the CRAG.



7.2. Question: Will the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) be incorporated into CIMS to improve data integrity/efficiency?

Answer

Yes, the PWI has been incorporated into CIMS. The SHS Outcomes Pilot took place during 2018-19 and tested the PWI for SHS providers. Further information on this will be provided at the upcoming monitoring and reporting workshop.

8. Brokerage

8.1. Question: Can the brokerage funds be managed in partnership with the CHP?

Answer

The support provider manages the brokerage funds to assist with the set-up of the home and other needs associated with improved wellbeing and sustaining a tenancy and supporting the goals outlined in the person's support plan.

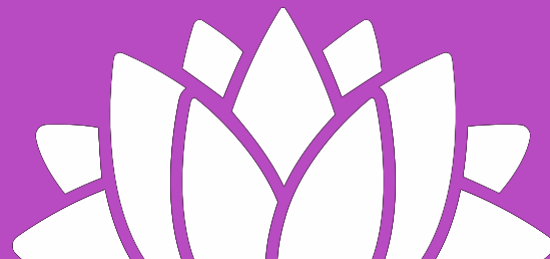
The CHP that has subcontracted the support component to a support provider is not involved in the management of brokerage funds. It would also add unnecessary time and administrative processes for the CHP.

The support provider must keep records of all brokerage approvals, expenditure and funds recoveries. This can be where the CHP works in partnership with the support provider in having oversight of expenditure. More information is provided in the Brokerage Policy in the Program Guidelines.

8.2. Question: Is it possible to spend program support funding on furnishing the dwellings? These tenants will not have access to furniture or electrical items and setting up the properties will assist in the tenant's wellbeing and sustaining their tenancies.

Answer

Flexible brokerage funding can be provided to assist with home set up and furnishings. The Program Guidelines provide more information on brokerage use.



9. Subcontracting

9.1. Question: Subcontracting – is this at a program level or individual level? In line with the person’s self-determination, would the funding ‘package’ refer to an individual person’s preferred service provider?

Answer

Ultimately, this is a decision for the CHP. DCJ is supportive of sub-contracting arrangements that provide stability and certainty for the support provider, and sub-contracting at the individual level (i.e. fee for service arrangements) do not always provide this as there often no economies of scale. That said, there are often benefits to the clients with these type of arrangements as support can be personally tailored in markets where there are multiple support providers. Such arrangements can also support client self-determination. Decisions should be made based on an assessment of the support provider market and how this align with the CHP’s service model.

9.2. Question: Are there any examples of subcontract templates?

Answer

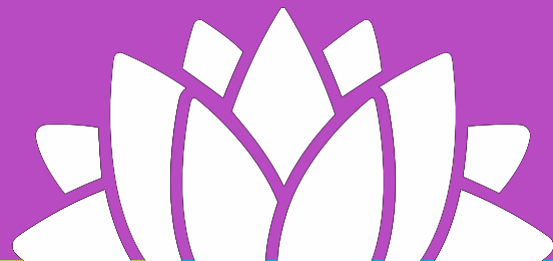
There are no examples that DCJ can provide as they are attached to other programs, however there are some guiding materials on the DCJ website including a form called the ‘Subcontracting Application form’, which provides insight into the details and information the CHP will be aiming to collect from a support provider.

The Program Guidelines provides information about the capabilities and activities that a support provider will be required to have.

The priority for DCJ is that the support components are being delivered and the CHP will be held accountable for the contract being fully executed.

DCJ experience shows that the stronger the collaborative governance arrangements are at the local level, the more effective sub-contracting arrangements are. As such, we strongly encourage CHPs to actively participate in local governance with both DCJ and SHS.

Please also see Question 8.3 for more details on the CHPs responsibilities.



9.3 Question: Is it possible to use language to ensure the CHP has increased governing and control responsibility in relation to the delivery of these expectations to ensure the program is governed well and outcomes achieved? E.g. some expectations held by CHP and agreed with supports.

Answer

The Program Guidelines provide an overview of the program and expectations for the support provider and support the information in the contract between DCJ and the CHP.

The CHP is responsible for managing the subcontracted support provider. In the subcontracting agreement, the CHP will be required to articulate to the support provider the expectations as outlined in the Program Guidelines, such as reporting requirements and the delivery expectations.

The CHP and support provider can work out how performance will be monitored as part of the agreement, however it will have to align with DCJ's expectations as outlined in the contract and Program Guidelines.

10. Reporting

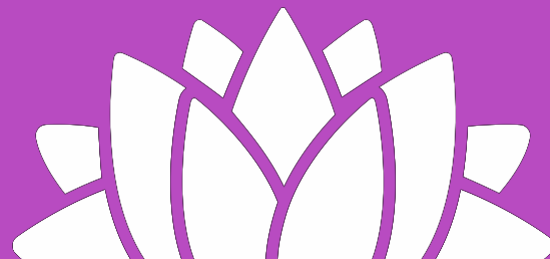
10.1. Question: Is there a commencement date for NSW Treasury Reporting, and will NSW Treasury accept that the first month or so will be an important transitional piece of work to ensure support provision, CRAG are in place, etc? Is fortnightly necessary?

Answer

DCJ is required to report to NSW Treasury as part of the Stimulus funding for this program. Reporting will be on a weekly basis initially until 31 August 2020. As the program matures, we will seek to relax the frequency of this reporting requirement over time.

Reporting will also be required on a quarterly basis. This reporting will include client demographics and outcomes-based data.

DCJ will aim to ensure all reporting has a minimal impact on the housing provider and their support partners.



11. Governance

11.1. Question: Will CHPs be able to participate in Housing and Homelessness Steering Committee and/or will minutes, reports and outcomes be shared widely to CHP participants?

Answer

CHPs will not be able to participate in the Housing and Homelessness Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is internal to DCJ and chaired by DCJ Executives, therefore the minutes, reports and outcomes will not be shared. DCJ representatives in the Program Design and Monitoring Group will report into the Program Management Office (PMO), which will report to the Steering Committee.

Where there is a matter that relates to the Program that requires action or communication to CHPs from the Steering Committee, this will be communicated through other channels, such as through the Program Design and Monitoring Group and Program Implementation and Delivery Group, or through a contracting conversation, or communicate.

Similarly, a matter that needs to be communicated or escalated to the Steering Committee can go through the governance groups.

12. Outcomes

12.1. Question: Are these KPIs similar to what is set and achieved under similar support provider contracts?

Answer

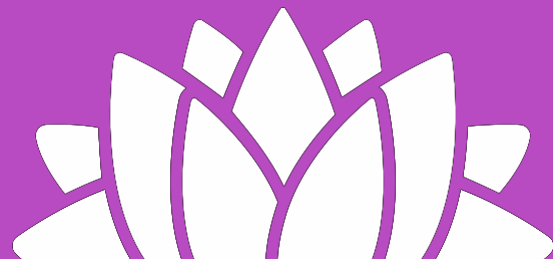
Yes, these KPIs have been based on other programs with similar arrangements and Housing First models. However, the Together Home program KPIs have been set lower than some comparable programs. This is to account for the rapid start up, and narrow implementation window for the program.

Our research and conversations with subject matter experts suggest that these KPIs are appropriate. A point of evaluation for the Together Home Program, will be the KPIs, associated results and providers' experiences in aiming for these results.

12.2. Question: Am I required to report against every KPI?

Answer

Yes, we would like to gather data against each KPI, however only some of the KPIs will be monitored as part of the contract management process. These KPIs are indicated by a red 'R'. The other KPIs



will be used for information gathering, and will support DCJ in its future understanding and development of Housing First programs.

The exception to this reporting rule, is where an output or outcome indicator is not relevant to a program participant. In line with the client-centred approach of the program, case plans and subsequent reporting, should reflect only those supports and activities that the program participant has identified as goals.

Providers should calculate each KPI against the total number of program participants for whom that KPI is relevant. It would be useful to also indicate what that total number is for each KPI.

12.3. Question: How and when do I calculate these KPIs?

Answer

Please note that these KPIs are set across the program, and should not be adjusted by individual providers. This will ensure that that we have comparative data.

The calculation of results should be cumulative from program start, not a separate figure for each quarter. The KPIs trend downwards in most instances, in order to account for early exits from engagement or housing over time.

As stated in 12.2 - providers should also calculate each KPI against the total number of program participants for whom that KPI is relevant.

13. Tenancy and exits

13.1. Question: What if there is a termination notice due to significant tenancy breaches that results in the person being evicted – how does this look? Would they go back into TA? Is the CHP required to rehouse immediately.

Answer

The need to terminate a tenancy should be managed within the CHP's current policy.

Where a client is unable to sustain their tenancy, this will need to be discussed locally with the CRAG or its equivalent to scope options for the person.