

Social housing progress



Implementation of recommendations from the Ordinary Report *Social Housing: Systemic issues for tenants with complex needs*.

Background

The Commission recognises that stable, safe, secure housing is required to support good mental health and wellbeing. Social housing has a vital role in providing affordable home for people experiencing mental illness, mental health difficulties or problematic alcohol and other drug use. Access to social housing supports a person's recovery and reduces demand on hospital and health services, and helps reduce homelessness.

In 2015 the Commission prepared an Ordinary Report¹ under the *Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013* (the Act). The report, *Social Housing: Systemic issues for tenants with complex needs*, considered the impact of the then Queensland Government's Anti-social Behaviour Policy (ASB policy) on people living with complex needs².

The Ordinary Report

The Ordinary Report was informed by research undertaken by the Institute of Social Science Research (ISSR), University of Queensland, on behalf of the Commission. The ISSR research report, *Review of systemic issues for social housing clients with complex needs*, was based on policy analysis including examining policies in other Australian jurisdictions; 12 case studies based on the experiences of social housing tenants with complex needs, their families and people working to support them in their housing; and a literature analysis.

¹ Under s29 of the *Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013* the Commission may prepare an Ordinary Report on a systemic issue affecting people who have mental health or substance misuse issues.

² For simplicity and ease of reading the phrase 'complex needs' has been used throughout the report and refers to social housing tenants who are living with mental illness, mental health difficulties and problems with substance use.

The Commission prepared the Ordinary Report following consideration of the ISSR report and, pursuant to section 29 of the Act, consultation with the Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council and agencies that may be significantly affected by the report's recommendations. The 'affected agencies'—the Department of Housing and Public Works, Queensland Health and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services—were consulted throughout the development of the Ordinary Report. Although not an 'affected agency' the Commission also consulted the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Partnerships.

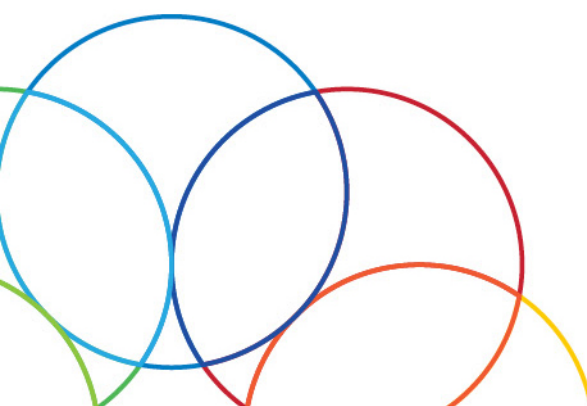
Our recommendations

The Ordinary Report made 12 recommendations regarding systemic issues associated with social housing and the ASB policy (see Appendix 1). The recommendations were based on four policy principles:

- social housing supports recovery and reduces demand on acute mental health services
- social housing supports other government priorities such as reducing homelessness
- social housing tenants have a responsibility not to engage in disruptive or 'anti-social' behaviour but may need support to meet their tenancy obligations
- policies need to take into account stigma and discrimination which may be experienced by people with complex needs.

Response to recommendations

As required by the Act, the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services tabled the Commission's first Ordinary Report in the Queensland Parliament on 30 June 2015. As also required by the Act, the affected agencies responded to the report's recommendations, with the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) as lead agency. All 12 recommendations were either accepted or supported by the affected agencies. Agency responses were



published in the Commission's *Annual Report 2014–2015* (see Appendix 2).

Implementation of the recommendations

In September 2016, the DHPW provided the Commission with an update on the progress of actions taken to address the recommendations (see Appendix 3). The detailed update is provided in six Activity Areas with each area contributing to multiple recommendations in the Ordinary Report.

The DHPW's Activity Areas are:

1. Fairness review and Anti-social Behaviour Policy
2. Mental Health Demonstration Project
3. Staff Capability building to improve service delivery for tenants with complex needs
4. Specialised Indigenous and general integrated support approaches
5. Data collection and analysis
6. Affordable housing supply

The DHPW has advised that the Ordinary Report has influenced changes in practice across the Housing Service Centres and provided robust information to assist the Minister for Housing and Public Works' Fairness review of the ASB policy.

Highlights of the update:

- Significant policy changes including the replacement of the former Anti-social Behaviour Policy ('three strikes' policy) with the Fair Expectations of Behaviour Policy following the DHPW's Fairness Review of Housing policies. The new policy will ensure that DHPW tenancy managers work with tenants to resolve any issues, complaints or behavioural problems that may be placing tenancies at risk, at an early stage, and engage with support services where needed.
- Implementation of the two-year Mental Health Demonstration Project in the Fortitude Valley and Chermside Housing Service Centres and health catchments. The innovative pilot project is being implemented by the DHPW in partnership with Queensland Health, and in collaboration with Footprints Inc. It aims to provide an integrated clinical health and non-clinical psycho-social response with tailored support to individuals who are currently experiencing, or have the potential to experience, difficulty maintaining or sustaining their

social housing tenancy, due to behaviours related to mental illness or related complex needs.

- Building and delivering a tailored on-line learning and development portal to facilitate enhanced capability for front line service delivery staff who work with social housing tenants experiencing mental illness, mental health and wellbeing issues or related complex needs. The learning tool provides resources to assist key partner agencies to more effectively understand and navigate the mental health, and the housing and homelessness systems.

Supporting implementation

The Commission has and will continue to support the DHPW to implement the recommendations from the Ordinary Report.

During 2015–2016 the Commission provided \$50,000 and in-kind support to assist in the development of inter-agency e-learning capability building resources to enhance the knowledge and capacity of partners involved with the Demonstration Project (Housing Service Centre staff, mental health services staff and service providers). The Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning was commissioned to develop an online e-learning portal with training modules that aimed to:

- enhance understanding of the needs of clients with mental illness/mental health problems, or related complex needs (including problematic substance use issues); and
- skill Housing Service Centre workers and other service providers to effectively navigate the mental health system in working with clients through an integrated case management approach, focussing on prevention and early intervention across participating organisations.

The e-learning portal contains six modules focused on mental health training (understanding the mental health system; suicide awareness; and alcohol and other drugs) and housing and homelessness system training (understanding the housing and homelessness system; the applicant processes; and tenant processes). While the portal was developed as part of the Demonstration Project it has been promoted and has had strong interest from stakeholders statewide.

The Commission's financial contribution also supported the development of local service delivery network collaboration protocols through a series of partner agency focused workshops in the early stages of the Demonstration Project.

Our next steps

During 2016–17 the Commission will continue to work with the DHPW and the affected agencies to drive and implement system reform in social housing for people living with complex needs. The Commission will continue to participate in the governance mechanisms that support the Demonstration Project and its evaluation.

In response to recommendations by the Public Service Commission in its review of the Mental Health Commission's effectiveness, a further evaluation of the key drivers of successful reform in policy and practice arising from the Social Housing Ordinary Report will be undertaken to share with other agencies, and inform the Commission's future agenda and approach.

The Commission commends the DHPW, Queensland Health and their partner agencies for advancing significant reforms in social housing that will support individuals to sustain their tenancies and assist government to deliver fair, secure and affordable housing for vulnerable Queenslanders.

Appendix 1

Ordinary Report recommendations

The Queensland Mental Health Commission makes the following recommendations to address the systemic issues affecting the social housing needs of people living with mental illness, those experiencing mental health difficulties and problematic substance use.

Recommendation 1

The Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) reviews data collection mechanisms to identify the number of current social housing tenants, including those on the State Housing Register, with complex needs, to support future planning and current service delivery.

Recommendation 2

The DHPW examines how social housing stock may be adjusted to meet the needs of tenants with complex needs, including earmarking social housing stock for people experiencing mental illness.

Recommendation 3

The DHPW develops and implements, in collaboration with relevant agencies, a system to monitor and report on strikes issued and tenancies terminated under the Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) policy. The system should:

- record the end outcome for social housing tenants
- enable an assessment of supports being provided for social housing tenants with complex needs
- monitor the impact on other government priorities including reducing homelessness, reducing demand for acute mental health care inpatient services and reducing child protection issues.

Recommendation 4

The DHPW examines and analyses the impact of the ASB policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and sole parent family households, including whether these groups are subject to systemic discrimination and require additional supports to sustain their social housing tenancies.

Recommendation 5

The DHPW:

- Reviews the ASB Policy's communication requirements to ensure social housing tenants receive the right type of information, at the right time and in the right way, based on their unique circumstances and needs.
- Considers additional steps that could be taken to reduce confusion between strike and breach processes.
- Provides information regarding a strike or warning to support agencies and/or local mental health services, where a social housing tenant with complex needs is involved with those agencies and agrees to information being shared.

Recommendation 6

The DHPW reconsiders the name of the ASB policy to reflect that it includes a range of behaviours that would not ordinarily be described as 'anti-social'.

Recommendation 7

The DHPW works in partnership with the Department of Health and other relevant agencies to:

- ensure Housing Service Centre (HSC) staff are provided with support and training to identify relevant support services and negotiate supports for social housing tenants where needed
- provide training and workforce development opportunities to housing HSC to enable them to identify and better work with people living with mental illness, mental health difficulties and substance use problems.

Recommendation 8

The DHPW considers the creation of a specialist unit or specialist positions to provide expert advice to HSC staff on dealing with complex anti-social behaviour.

Recommendation 9

The DHPW works in partnership with the Department of Health and other relevant agencies to implement an integrated approach at the local level to provide support to tenants to maintain their social housing tenancy, which may include developing an interagency protocol.

Recommendation 10

The DHPW considers complementing the ASB policy with preventative, supportive and rehabilitative strategies at critical points of a person's engagement with social housing services. For example:

- preventative measures that may include mediation between social housing tenants and those making complaints, and incentive schemes
- support strategies that may include working with other agencies, staff training and expanding current supportive housing options such as the Housing and Support Program (HASP)
- rehabilitation strategies that may include post-eviction support.

Recommendation 11

The DHPW considers amending the ASB policy to require that:

- warnings are issued prior to the first strike for social housing tenants with complex needs
- social housing tenants are engaged in developing Acceptable Behaviour Agreements.

Recommendation 12

The DHPW considers including provisions in the ASB policy that:

- acknowledge that tenants with complex needs may be more likely than the general population to be victims of anti-social behaviour
- provide a mechanism to identify where complaints have been made against social housing tenants on the basis of discrimination and when complaints may be considered vexatious.

Appendix 2

DHPW response to Ordinary Report recommendations

The information below was published in the in the Commission's *Annual Report 2014–2015*.

Planning to meet social housing needs

Recommendation 1

The Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) reviews data collection mechanisms to identify the number of current social housing tenants, including those on the State Housing Register, with complex needs, to support future planning and current service delivery.

Position: **Accepted**

Current activities

Current DHPW practice is to consider people with complex needs in future planning and current service delivery activities at local, regional and whole-of-state levels. Reliability of data collected and held by DHPW on social housing tenants and people on the State Housing Register relating to their complex needs is dependent on accuracy of self-disclosure.

Processes to improve data collection and management to improve service delivery are being considered as part of the development of a new IT platform (Reside) currently underway.

Future activities

DHPW is considering opportunities for developing a case management approach for supporting social housing tenants, including the development of a new Housing Strategy.

Access to suitable affordable housing

Recommendation 2

The DHPW examines how social housing stock may be adjusted to meet the needs of tenants with complex needs, including earmarking social housing stock for people experiencing mental illness.

Position: **Supported**

Current activities

DHPW currently modifies social housing stock to meet the reasonable needs of people with a disability.

Under the National Partnership Agreement Supporting National Mental Health Reform (NPA), \$26.226 million has been allocated to DHPW over five years (2011–12 to 2015–16) to expand the overall capacity of the social housing portfolio to provide housing options for clients of two mental health programs; the Housing and Support Program (HASP) and Transitional Recovery (TR) services. This enables the department to prioritise access to available social housing stock for eligible Queenslanders with mental illness under these initiatives.

Strategies will be considered around improving social housing stock allocation processes to more appropriately take into account the needs of people with mental illness or related complex needs, where possible, as part of the two-year Mental Health Demonstration Project.

The Demonstration Project is testing a new integrated housing, health and social welfare support model to improve housing stability outcomes for people living in social housing who are experiencing mental illness or related complex needs.

Future activities

Work will continue at Australian and State Government levels to resolve policy issues relating to impacts of the NDIS on social housing tenants with a disability, including those experiencing mental illness.

Monitoring outcomes for social housing tenants with complex needs

Recommendation 3

The DHPW develops and implements, in collaboration with relevant agencies, a system to monitor and report on strikes issued and tenancies terminated under the Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) policy. The system should:

record the end outcome for social housing tenants; enable an assessment of supports being provided for social housing tenants with complex needs; monitor the impact on other government priorities including reducing homelessness, reducing demand for acute mental health care inpatient services and reducing child protection issues.

Position: **Supported**

Current activities

DHPW is currently undertaking a number of initiatives which will contribute to addressing this recommendation, including: the two year Mental Health Demonstration Project which is testing a new integrated housing, health and social welfare support model which aims to improve housing stability outcomes for people living in social housing who are experiencing mental illness or related complex needs. Evaluation of this Project will consider the supports provided to social housing tenants with mental illness or related complex needs, as well as consideration of impacts of tenancy terminations on other government priorities and systems.

DHPW is currently undertaking a review of all of its housing policies, including the ASB Policy, to ensure that they are fair. Policies will be tested against a set of fairness principles with a focus on natural justice and ensuring a human element is a key priority in how policies are implemented. The objective is to ensure vulnerable social housing tenants are better able to sustain stable housing. The current ASB policy will be reframed to focus on early intervention, referral and support; and mutual obligation of tenants and the Department to develop the skills and capacity to sustain tenancies.

The Project's evaluation will provide valuable information to inform future policies around systems for improving supports for people with mental illness or related complex needs to better enable them to sustain stable housing.

Cross-agency collaboration will be necessary to identify possibilities for further addressing this recommendation, including information privacy and technology issues related to tracking tenants' housing status.

Future activities

DHPW is exploring opportunities for developing a case management approach for assessing the supports needed and provided to social housing tenants and people seeking housing assistance, which would also include partnerships with relevant agencies and services across the system.

Impacts on at risk groups

Recommendation 4

The DHPW examines and analyses the impact of the ASB policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and sole parent family households, including whether these groups are subject to systemic discrimination and require additional supports to sustain their social housing tenancies.

Position: **Supported**

Current activities

DHPW continues to monitor all of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households whose tenancy is at risk due anti-social behaviour. The Indigenous Support Team assists housing service centres (HSCs) by developing and implementing best practice approaches, including resources, to improve housing service responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

A two-year Mental Health Demonstration Project currently being implemented is testing a new integrated housing, health and social welfare support model to improve housing stability outcomes for people living in social housing who are experiencing mental illness or related complex needs. This Project will be culturally capable and include consideration of specific supports that may be needed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to sustain their social housing tenancies. Evaluation of the Project will provide valuable information to inform future policies around systems for improving supports for people with mental illness or related complex needs, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to better enable them to sustain stable housing.

Future activities

DHPW will continue to explore options for new initiatives to improve the capability of vulnerable social housing tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Recommendation 5

The DHPW:

- Reviews the ASB Policy's communication requirements to ensure social housing tenants receive the right type of information, at the right time and in the right way, based on their unique circumstances and needs.
- Considers additional steps that could be taken to reduce confusion between strike and breach processes.
- Provides information regarding a strike or warning to support agencies and/or local mental health services, where a social housing tenant with complex needs is involved with those agencies and agrees to information being shared.

Position: Accepted

Current activities

DHPW is currently undertaking a review of all of its housing policies, including the ASB Policy, to ensure that they are fair. As part of this project, strategies will be identified to improve communication with tenants and the community about DHPW policies, to ensure messages are clear, able to be understood and are transparent, to promote fairness. This work will include consideration of the issues raised by the QMHC.

Options are being considered for improving cross-agency sharing of information of participants in order to achieve more effective collaborative service delivery outcomes, as part of the two year Mental Health Demonstration Project currently underway.

The Demonstration Project is testing a new integrated housing, health and social welfare support model to improve housing stability outcomes for people living in social housing who are experiencing mental illness or related complex needs.

Impacts on at risk groups

Recommendation 6

The DHPW reconsiders the name of the ASB policy to reflect that it includes a range of behaviours that would not ordinarily be described as 'anti-social'.

Position: **Accepted**

Current activities

DHPW will implement this recommendation under the current review of all housing policies for fairness.

Recommendation 7

The DHPW works in partnership with the Department of Health and other relevant agencies to:

- ensure HSC staff are provided with support and training to identify relevant support services and negotiate supports for social housing tenants where needed
- provide training and workforce development opportunities to housing HSC to enable them to identify and better work with people living with mental illness, mental health difficulties and substance use problems.

Position: **Accepted**

Current activities

A two-year Mental Health Demonstration Project currently being implemented by DHPW in partnership with Queensland Health and in collaboration with a range of other government and non-government agencies, is testing a new integrated housing, health and social welfare support model to improve housing stability outcomes for people living in social housing who are experiencing mental illness or related complex needs.

Key deliverables from this Project which will be available for broader application across the state, include:

- the development of local support network collaboration protocols and professional development to improve HSC staff capability in identifying and coordinating relevant support services

the development of training and workforce development opportunities to enable HSC staff to identify and better work with people living with mental illness, mental health difficulties and substance use problems.

Recommendation 8

The DHPW considers the creation of a specialist unit or specialist positions to provide expert advice to HSC staff on dealing with complex anti-social behaviour.

Position: **Supported**

Current activities

DHPW currently provides a range of practice improvement, procedural, and professional development supports to HSC staff to assist them in responding to clients with complex needs and/or challenging behaviour, delivered by a specialised service delivery support training team.

The two-year Mental Health Demonstration Project currently underway is trialling various additional strategies for better enabling HSC staff to deal with complex behaviours of people with mental illness or related complex needs. The Project evaluation will be available to inform improved practices in HSCs across the state in effectively dealing with complex behaviours.

Impacts on at risk groups

Recommendation 9

The DHPW works in partnership with Queensland Health and other relevant agencies to implement an integrated approach at the local level to provide support to tenants to maintain their social housing tenancy, which may include developing an interagency protocol.

Position: **Accepted**

Current activities

As part of its everyday business operations, DHPW regional offices utilise individual consent authorities and actively engage with clients to ensure appropriate links and referrals are developed and maintained to support successful tenancies. Regular information exchanges occur at a local level between agencies to share and learn from each other's processes and protocols, and these complement regular more formal interactions at the client level.

The development of interagency protocols to facilitate effective collaboration of local housing, health and welfare service delivery agencies will be undertaken as part of a two-year Mental Health Demonstration Project currently being led by DHPW in partnership with Queensland Health and in collaboration with a range of government and non-government agencies.

The Demonstration Project is testing a new integrated housing, health and social welfare support model to improve housing stability outcomes for people living in social housing who are experiencing mental illness or related complex needs.

Part of the Project will involve establishing joint processes and protocols for sharing client information between agencies, where we have the appropriate client consent, so people do not have to tell their story multiple times and services have a holistic understanding of a person's needs.

The Project's evaluation will provide valuable information to inform future government policy around most effective approaches at the local level for supporting people with mental illness or related complex needs to sustain stable housing.

Future activities

DHPW will continue to explore options for new initiatives to improve the capability of vulnerable social housing tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Impacts on at risk groups

Recommendation 10

The DHPW considers complementing the ASB policy with preventative, supportive and rehabilitative strategies at critical points of a person's engagement with social housing services. For example:

- preventative measures that may include mediation between social housing tenants and those making complaints, and incentive schemes
- support strategies that may include working with other agencies, staff training and expanding current supportive housing options such as HASP
- rehabilitation strategies that may include post-eviction support.

Position: **Accepted**

Current activities

DHPW is currently undertaking a review of all of its housing policies, including policies related to anti-social behaviour, to ensure that they are fair. Policies will be tested against a set of fairness principles with a focus on natural justice and ensuring a human element is a key priority in how policies dealing with anti-social behaviour are implemented. The objective is to ensure vulnerable social housing tenants are better able to sustain stable housing.

DHPW is currently rolling out a new training and development program for HSC staff to improve their capability in early intervention complaints management responses to tenants displaying disruptive behaviour, to achieve improved sustaining tenancy outcomes.

DHPW is currently developing a tenancy management plan to better assist people living in social housing through the life of their tenancy. This will include strategies to build people's capability to achieve greater independence.

DHPW is currently undertaking development of a new IT platform (Reside) which has the potential to incorporate a client case management tool to assist in improving interactions at critical points of a person's engagement with social housing services.

Future activities

DHPW is exploring opportunities for developing a case management approach for supporting social housing tenants and people seeking housing assistance, which would also include partnerships with relevant agencies and services across the system.

DHPW will continue to explore options for new initiatives to improve the capability of vulnerable social housing tenants to sustain their tenancies.

DHPW will review the operational procedures relating to the HASP program for people living in social housing with mental illness to ensure stronger relationships between applicants/tenants, DHPW, support agencies and Queensland Health.

Impacts on at risk groups

Recommendation 11

The DHPW considers amending the ASB policy to require that:

- warnings are issued prior to the first strike for social housing tenants with complex needs
- social housing tenants are engaged in developing Acceptable Behaviour Agreements.

Position: **Accepted**

Current activities

DHPW is currently undertaking a review of all of its housing policies, including the ASB Policy, to ensure that they are fair. Policies will be tested against a set of fairness principles with a focus on natural justice and ensuring a human element is a key priority in how policies are implemented. The objective is to ensure vulnerable social housing tenants are better able to sustain stable housing.

A part of the review, it is proposed to withdraw strike provisions in policy and retain the escalation of breach provisions so that termination of tenancies can occur when tenants or the household and guests persistently demonstrate poor behaviour. Any new policy development resulting from this review will incorporate earlier provision of support to stabilise the tenancy, including how Acceptable Behaviour Agreements will be used.

As part of this project, strategies will also be identified to improve communication with tenants and the community about DHPW policies to ensure messages are clear, able to be understood, and transparent, to promote fairness.

Future activities

DHPW is exploring opportunities for developing a case management approach for supporting social housing tenants and people seeking housing assistance, which would also include partnerships with relevant agencies and services across the system.

Recommendation 12

The DHPW considers including provisions in the ASB policy that:

- acknowledge that tenants with complex needs may be more likely than the general population to be victims of anti-social behaviour
- provide a mechanism to identify where complaints have been made against social housing tenants on the basis of discrimination and when complaints may be considered vexatious.

Position: **Accepted**

Current activities

DHPW is currently undertaking a review of all of its housing policies, including the ASB Policy, to ensure that they are fair. Policies will be tested against a set of fairness principles with a focus on natural justice and ensuring a human element is a key priority in how policies are implemented. The objective is to ensure vulnerable social housing tenants are better able to sustain stable housing.

A new policy for managing disruptive behaviour in social housing sets out the expectations of reasonable behaviours and establishes a framework for managing breaches, including focus on early intervention, referral and support; and mutual obligation of tenants and the department to develop the skills and capacity to sustain tenancies.

A guide to supportive tenancy management called 'Living in Social Housing' will clearly establish tenants and clearly explains tenancy rights and responsibilities and will help support successful tenancies.

This review will include examination of complaints management practice processes undertaken by HSCs relating to complaints of anti-social behaviour of tenants.

Future activities

DHPW will consider options around housing allocations and tenancy management of people with high and complex needs, especially where behavioural issues are putting tenancies at risk.

Appendix 3

DHPW report on progress 2015–16

Activity Area 1

Fairness Review and ASB Policy

Actions respond to Ordinary Report recommendations: 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12

DHPW has undertaken the Fairness Review of Housing policies. The Fairness Review signals a return to human services delivery and a focus on putting people first.

To ensure consistency in the review, DHPW developed a set of 12 principles to define fairness in a policy context. The 12 principles are now underpinned by a new Fairness Charter. The Fairness Charter demonstrates this Government's commitment to being proactive and taking action before tenancies fail. It was developed in consultation with peak bodies and other agencies to ensure it accurately reflects the diverse needs of people who access social housing assistance. Both the principles and charter were endorsed by the Queensland Government in December 2015.

This 'fairness test' was applied to the former Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy ('three strikes' policy) to determine if it was fair. On 1 February 2016, the Fair Expectations of Behaviour Policy replaced the former ASB Policy. This revised policy and approach ensures that DHPW tenancy managers work with tenants to resolve any issues, complaints or behavioural problems that may be placing tenancies at risk, at an early stage, and engage with support services where needed. It supports all concerned parties to achieve a fair outcome. This may include involving other social services to support tenants and their neighbours.

The new Fair Expectations of Behaviour Policy clearly articulates what behaviour is expected of social housing tenants and what is considered to be unreasonable behaviour. It also outlines a process for managing complaints and breaches resulting from disruptive behaviour.

In summary, the policy changes are:

- an increased focus on putting people first, and treating people as individuals
- an increased focus on proactive management, early intervention and linking tenants with support to remedy disruptive behaviour
- improved collaboration with partner agencies, including requiring tenancy managers to work proactively with other government and support agencies in relation to mutual clients
- improved communication with new and existing tenants regarding tenancy responsibilities, taking into account tenant diversity and cultural considerations
- continuing to encourage tenants to contact their tenancy manager if they are having difficulty meeting their tenancy obligations
- continuing to ensure fair, transparent and timely responses to complaints of disruptive behaviour and ensuring a right of reply (natural justice)
- removal of the use of 'strikes' and replacing this with the issuing of formal notices (covering letters) to accompany Notices to Remedy Breach, with the first substantiated incident of disruptive behaviour continuing to act as a trigger for intervention
- greater use of Tenancy Management Plans (TMPs) and Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs) for managing disruptive behaviours and sustaining tenancies, and continuing to allow tenancy managers to utilise their discretion to manage specific cases
- taking action to end tenancies where there are repeated unacceptable or disruptive behaviour related breaches by a tenant

- continuing to utilise provisions in the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (RT&RAA 2008) to issue an immediate notice to leave after serious, dangerous and/or illegal (criminal) activity, and pursuing tenancy terminations in cases of repeated breaches due to disruptive behaviour.

Activity Area 2

Mental Health Demonstration Project

Actions respond to Ordinary Report recommendations: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10

DHPW, in partnership with Queensland Health, and a range of other government and non-government agencies, is currently implementing the two-year Mental Health Demonstration Project (MHDP) in the Fortitude Valley and Chermside Housing Service Centre (HSC) and health catchments.

This Project is contributing to government's understanding of the housing, health and other support needs of social housing tenants with mental illness or related complex needs to support them to successfully sustain their tenancies. The Project will include consideration of specific supports that may be needed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to sustain their social housing tenancies.

Key elements of the model being tested through the MHDP include:

- a new dedicated DHPW Housing Service Integration Coordinator (HSIC) role to lead and support interagency collaboration and assist with building the capability of HSC staff to support clients with mental illness or related complex needs
- training and collaborative protocols to strengthen local networks
- additional clinical mental support service capacity provided by Queensland Health's local Hospital and Health Service mental health Community Care Team
- broad-based non-clinical psycho-social support services provided by Footprints in Brisbane Inc
- a brokerage funding pool to enable the purchase of additional supports and specialist services required by individual Tenancy Support Plans.

Central to this approach is a single integrated Tenancy Support Plan, through which a tenant's holistic health, housing and social welfare support needs are identified and coordinated by an individual-focussed local collaborative support group. Protocols have been developed to enable the sharing of participants' relevant information with other government and non-government service delivery organisations, with a tenant's informed consent.

To further foster an integrated service approach to supporting shared clients, DHPW together with Queensland Health through the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning, has launched a new online Learning Management System (LMS) web portal to provide training for frontline service delivery staff to better understand social housing tenants with mental illness, mental health and wellbeing issues or related complex needs, and to better navigate the housing service system.

To date, six eLearning modules have been developed by DHPW, in partnership with Queensland Health and the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning, comprising:

- Understanding the Mental Health System
- Suicide Awareness
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- The Housing and Homelessness System
- Applicant Processes
- Tenant Processes.

These eLearning modules have been made available to all interested government and non-government organisations through a new web-based Learning Management System. The LMS www.tenancysupporttraining.qld.edu.au has been live since April 2016, with 506 registered users (as at 31 January 2017).

The service delivery phase of the MHDP will continue through to 30 June 2017.

Activity Area 3

Staff capability building to improve service delivery for tenants with complex needs

Actions respond to Ordinary Report recommendations: 7, 8, 12

DHPW has a dedicated Principal Advisor—Mental Health and Disability position, which supports HSCs, State-wide, to understand and navigate the inter-agency requirements to support people with complex needs.

In 2015, DHPW introduced mandatory training to enhance the capacity of frontline staff to engage with tenants presenting with challenging behaviours. This training—Predict Assess and Respond To Challenging/Aggressive Behaviour (PART)—is designed specifically to support staff safety and wellbeing practices.

The PART training:

- Develops a systematic approach to the management of aggressive and assaultive behaviour
- Outlines a set of theoretical principles and response strategies to complement departmental policies and procedures
- Provides an emergency response process set within a legal framework
- Identifies a hierarchy of responses based on least restrictive principles
- Assists workers to identify the early warning signs and triggers of aggressive and assaultive behaviour
- Enhances a team response to potentially dangerous situations which considers staff and clients rights, responsibilities and safety
- Provides a range of non-punitive physical intervention strategies for all staff to remain safe in the workplace.

DHPW provides other training and workforce development opportunities to HSC staff to better enable them to identify and engage with people living with mental illness, mental health difficulties and substance use problems, including Mental Health First Aid training.

DHPW has also reviewed its Complaints Management training program delivered to frontline service delivery staff to ensure it takes account of issues relating to tenants with complex needs, and ensure it supports DHPW's new Fair Expectations of Behaviour Policy.

DHPW has also revised its training program—Appearing at QCAT: Presentation and Evidence—to further assist frontline staff with improved capabilities to prepare QCAT submissions and present evidence at hearings. Both of these courses include a strong emphasis on “natural justice”.

In addition, DHPW has also developed a new Good Decision-Making course in partnership with the Queensland Ombudsman's Office, which is being delivered to frontline HSC staff.

Activity Area 4

Specialised Indigenous and general integrated support approaches

Actions respond to Ordinary Report recommendations: 4, 10

DHPW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support and Practice Team have reviewed its service delivery model to proactively identify and support at risk tenancies. This specialist team includes staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander who are available to work alongside the tenant, the HSC and other stakeholders to readily mobilise culturally appropriate support services to encourage tenancy sustainment.

The team is currently exploring linkages with Queensland Health's Way Forward: An Indigenous approach to wellbeing Program, a culturally informed, strengths-focussed approach to improving mental health and addiction outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Stronger alignment of the Housing and Support Program (HASP) model has occurred at the state-wide level between DHPW and Queensland Health. This has included a comprehensive review of the operating model and data sharing including the development of a master spreadsheet to monitor all HASP applicants and tenants.

Activity Area 5

Data collection and analysis

Actions respond to Ordinary Report recommendations: 1, 3

DHPW has reviewed its data to consider its capacity to identify issues and needs of vulnerable social housing tenants. In response, DHPW has established a new Research and Analysis Unit, Strategic Policy and Research, within the Housing and Homelessness Services Division, which will consider ways to enhance data collection and research activity to support improved service delivery outcomes.

DHPW is concurrently developing a new IT platform for Tenancy and Property Management.

Action Area 6

Affordable housing supply

Actions respond to Ordinary Report recommendation: 2

As part of its consultation on the new 10-year Queensland Housing Strategy, DHPW partnered with the Queenslanders with Disability Network to consult with people with disability about housing issues important to them. The themes raised will contribute to the development of the new Queensland Housing Strategy.

DHPW has established a cross-agency Committee to support the Queensland NDIS Reform Leaders' Group, to consider how the housing needs and preferences of people with disability can be progressed within the broader national and state housing affordability agenda. It will also investigate opportunities to increase affordable and accessible housing solutions for Queenslanders with disability.

DHPW will continue to deliver social housing that is appropriately designed and located to meet the needs of a wide range of clients with high housing need. In addition to providing accessible housing by aligning DHPW's design standards with Livable Housing Design Guidelines, new social housing dwellings also include features such as good security, screening and private outdoor spaces, which can benefit tenants with non-physical disabilities. DHPW undertakes analysis of a range of factors, such as social housing demand, existing social housing dwelling diversity and supply, social housing concentration, and access to public transport and support services to determine appropriate locations for the acquisition and construction of social housing.