

Together Home High Needs Support Packages Fact Sheet

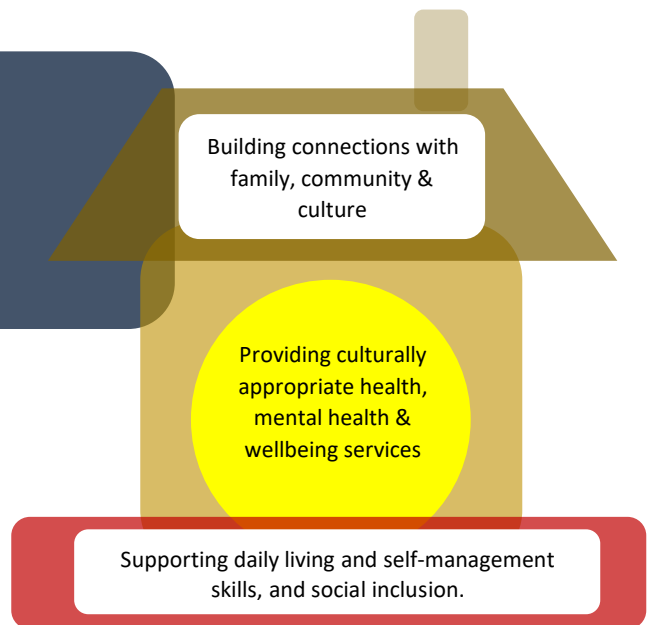
Background

Many people experiencing primary homelessness often face complex, co-occurring issues and frequently encounter barriers that place them at risk of continued homelessness. 40 high needs packages are available to individuals who have been accepted into the Together Home program. Tailored packages aim to promote personal recovery and social inclusion involving a spectrum of help such as access to work and education, learning new skills, participating in activities and accessing other supports such as psychological therapies, relapse prevention and supports to maintain a tenancy.

High Needs Panel

The High Needs Panel (HNP) is an independent group of experts whose role is to assess referrals for intensive support and decide on allocation of funding to support the delivery of high needs packages. Decisions are made after considering the needs, circumstances and best interests of the individuals referred. The HNP comprises a senior health clinician, a disability expert from the NDIA, Aboriginal representatives with expertise in homelessness, a representative with lived expertise in homelessness and a representative from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

Homelessness NSW is responsible for administering the higher needs packages for the Together Home program. This includes supporting the panels work, and liaison with the Community Housing Provider who will receive the funds, and the support provider whose role is to deliver the package.



When to consider making a referral

The purpose of the High Needs Package is to deliver effective recovery and support services to individuals whose needs cannot be met by a less intensive support from the Together Home program.

If it becomes evident that a current support package is not meeting the needs of an individual, and additional support is required, it may be appropriate to consider making a referral to the high needs panel.

The VI-SPDAT is the screening tool that helps to understand a person's level of vulnerability and whether an individual has needs that requires a higher level of support. It is nationally recognised that a VI-SPDAT score of 10+ is expected for eligibility to a general Housing First program. Where an individual has a VI-SPDAT score of 15 + this indicates the existence of multiple and complex factors that suggest an individual may require long-term permanent support and would benefit from a high needs package.

The VI-SPDAT is not designed to determine eligibility for a program. VI-SPDAT scores should be considered as complementary to case coordination and the knowledge that a support worker, housing providers and health services hold. Factors that indicate an individual requires a high needs package may include:

- Long term homelessness, e.g. street sleeping, couch surfing, overcrowding or living in temporary accommodation
- Engagement in risky behaviour
- Being hurt whilst living on the streets
- Chronic illness and other co-morbidities
- Frequent presentation to hospital emergency departments for issues better managed in the community
- Problematic alcohol and drug use; previous incarceration, and/or current legal issues
- Underlying and/or untreated trauma.

Making a referral

The HNP referral process has been aligned to the overall Together Home Program. Referrals, and supporting documentation are made via the HNP single point of access at highneedspackage@homelessnessnsw.org.au

Making a referral involves completing the following forms:

- **The Together Home - Client Engagement and Nomination Form**

This contains key information such as the individual's details and referring persons contact details that are required for acceptance onto the Together Home program

- **High Needs Referral Form**

This builds upon the Client Engagement and nomination form by requesting the additional information that is required to support the need for a package of support that is above what is currently being provided. Such information may include details relating to the individual's physical and mental wellbeing and the support services required. This information will help the panel to understand initial presenting concerns.

The Panel is unable to consider a referral unless a VI-SPDAT has been completed and a score provided

To ensure equity, reliability and consistency in the application of high needs packages completion of a VI-SPDAT is required. The VI-SPDAT is a triage system and is not intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of an individual's needs.

The VI-SPDAT score of 15+ is not a sole deciding factor and referrals can be considered where an individual has a smaller number of acute needs that seriously impact their housing stability, rather than a larger number of complex, co-occurring issues

Referrals for high needs packages may also be considered where an individual is waiting for a HASI or NDIS package.

The HNP referral form provides space for referring agencies to outline what these needs are and provide supplementary information from support and housing providers.

Referring agencies can contact Homelessness NSW to request information and support to complete a referral at:

highneedspackage@homelessnessnsw.org.au

Equal Opportunity

The HNP values equality and diversity within the community. When making decisions the panel will acknowledge the barriers and discrimination faced by individuals as a result of race, age, sexuality and gender and prioritise accordingly.

Individuals who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander will be prioritised for high needs packages and will receive a third of the overall total of packages allocated.

Consent

When identifying someone with additional needs that may be eligible for a Together Home high needs package it is important to talk openly with the individual

and gain their consent to work with them and share information with other agencies. This makes the process clear to the individual, so that they understand how their personal information will be used, which agencies may be supporting them, how data will be shared and their ongoing rights to access this information. The HNP referral form contains a section for the referring agency to indicate that the individual has provided consent .

The Panel is unable to consider a referral if consent has not been provided

Budget

High need support packages of a maximum of \$39,000 can be provided to an individual per year for a period of two years, subject to the panel's assessment of individual need and overall demand for assistance.

When making a referral for a high needs package it is important to recognise that high needs packages are available for a period of two years. Referring agencies will need to consider how a high needs package will enhance/align with existing support packages. As individuals requiring high needs packages will have complex vulnerabilities it is essential that high needs packages include a planned transition into mainstream services that are developed in consultation with the individual.

The HNP budget form provides space to outline the proposed support package, how this aligns with existing wrap around supports, and associated costs. This information is crucial in assisting the panel to assess the proposed costs and reach a funding allocation decision.

The Panel is unable to consider a referral if a proposed support package with budget has not been provided

Panel Meetings

All documentation provided to the panel will be undertaken in a secure and confidential environment.

Homelessness NSW will acknowledge all referrals that are received and may contact the referring person prior to the panel meeting if further information is required.

Panel Decisions

If following a referral, it is determined that the individual does not require a high needs package Homelessness NSW will communicate this decision to the referrer within 5 working days of a panel meeting taking place. The panel will provide recommendations and support around how the needs of client may be met through other services.

Where a package of support is allocated this will be communicated to the Community Housing Provider within 5 working days. Homelessness NSW is responsible for administering funds to the CHP.

Where a Community Housing Provider (CHP) is provided additional funding to support a high needs package the CHP will be required to accept a Letter of Variation to their existing contract with Department of Communities and Justice. This process will be administered by the department.