

High Needs funding Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This is a working document to collate responses to frequently asked questions relating to High Needs (HN) funding administered by Homelessness NSW. Please contact highneedspackage@homelessnessnsw.org.au to discuss questions, seek specific guidance, or request targeted information sessions with your service.

1. Terminology and processes

1.1 What is the difference between 'OOFG' and 'HNP'?

In late 2020, High Needs Packages (HNP) were introduced to provide \$78,000 of flexible funding to support Together Home individuals with complex service needs over two-years. These allocations for full HNP's were exhausted over the following year. Given many people closed their packages without utilising the full \$78,000, these unspent funds were pooled and reallocated into one-off funding grants (OOFG). This means individuals in Together Home can now access funds for additional and essential supports as a one-off, without a full HNP.

Full High Needs Package (HNP)

- \$78,000 package for use over 2-years
- 6-month review points to request additional funding and monitor appropriateness of HN funding in meeting support needs, out-of-cycle reviews can be considered for urgent circumstances

One-Off Funding Grants (OOFG)

- Pool of funding created from unused funding in HNPs
- Can return for additional requests or to reallocate previously approved funding as needs change
- Referrers can apply for a specific service item or a collection of services without a minimum or maximum expenditure amount

1.2 When do I send referrals or hear back after a referral?

- The High Needs panel meet on the first Thursday & Friday of the month to consider referral requests for High Needs funding.
- Current referral forms are attached to a monthly email sent by Homelessness NSW when referral rounds are open.
- Please update mailing list contacts by emailing Homelessness NSW so we can ensure your team is able to access current resources.
- Homelessness NSW will contact you prior to the panel meeting if further information may be required to support your funding request.
- Panel decisions and invoice requests will be sent via email from Homelessness NSW within one week of the panel meeting and the decision being finalised.

Referrals opened
by HNSW via email

HNSW request
additional info

Panel meeting

Panel decision
emailed by HNSW

CHP invoice HNSW
for approved funds

1.3 What form do I use?

New referral form
All funding requests when a person is being referred to the panel for the first time.

OR

Review form
Any additional requests for further funding, to reallocate funding, or to close a full HNP.

AND

Supporting documents
Relevant and necessary information to support request (e.g. treatment plan, quote)

1.4 What happens to High Needs funding when a person leaves Together Home support?

High Needs (HN) funding is available while a person is in Together Home program. If a person has approved HN funds, CHPs and support providers should apply best endeavours to keep the person in the program; to allow them to receive the full benefit of approved HN funding. When a person leaves Together Home program, their HN funding ceases. Receiving HN funding is considered a form of Together Home support as there are administrative and reporting functions associated with the management and expenditure of these funds. When the end-point of the program does not align with funding exhaustion, you can contact togetherhome@dcj.nsw.gov.au to discuss the person's circumstances and seek specific guidance.

2. Panel decisions

2.1 What do conditional or in-principle decisions mean?

Most panel decisions are 'approved' or 'not approved', and in the latter decision the panel will provide an explanation which may include details of what information would be needed to reconsider this request at another panel meeting.

Some decisions note that funding has been approved 'conditionally' or 'in-principle'. The panel recommendation will provide context on the specifics of this decision and invoicing implications. This might occur where the panel commit to approving the requested funding but would like the referrer to provide an exact invoice before Homelessness NSW release the funds, or where the panel recommend the referrer consider initial services / supports prior to using High Needs funding.

2.2 What is the panel looking for in the referral and review form?

There is no simple answer to this question, as the panel consider each request on an individual basis. Guidance is outlined within the [What to apply for with High Needs funding](#) resource.

2.3 Who is the panel, and what is Homelessness NSW's role in the panel?

Homelessness NSW are contracted to administer High Needs funding for the Together Home program on behalf of the Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ). Responsibilities include supporting the panel's work, and liaising with the Community Housing Provider who will receive the funds and the TH support provider delivering support funding.

- Receive and screen referrals for funding
- Facilitate panel meetings and decision making processes
- Communicate funding decisions to referrers
- Reporting to DCJ on funding use and analyse trends and sector learnings from funding expenditure

The High Needs Panel 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 funding. Decisions are made after considering the needs, circumstances and best interests of the individuals referred. The Panel comprises a senior health clinician, a disability expert from the NDIA, Aboriginal representatives with expertise in homelessness, representatives with lived expertise in homelessness and a representative from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

- Assess funding requests and provide funding decision
- Provide relevant recommendations for services and supports

3. Budget and funding management

3.1 Do I need to have exact dollar amounts for the items I am requesting High Needs funding for?

For reporting and accountability purposes, exact amounts are preferred so that correct funding amounts can be provided. If you are unable to obtain an exact amount, please indicate this and the reasoning why in the referral so an appropriate panel decision or invoicing arrangement can be determined.

3.2 What happens if the cost is less than anticipated, or I am no longer able to use the funding for the support that was approved?

If the funded support(s) cost less than anticipated, and there are remaining unused funds for an approved service item, you can request a review so the panel can approve a reallocation of these funds. If there are no additional support needs for the approved person where the unspent funding could be reallocated, please notify DCJ via togetherhome@dcj.nsw.gov.au - you may be directed to return the funds to Homelessness NSW so the funding can return to the pool available for other people in Together Home who require HN funding.

DCJ and Homelessness NSW can provide instructions on these processes as appropriate to your circumstances.

3.3 What is the process if a High Needs funded service involves a Medicare rebate?

Some health services accessed through High Needs funding are Medicare-subsidised, and a person may receive a rebate into the bank account linked to their Medicare services. This is an unavoidable byproduct of our health and legal systems, and any rebate received by an individual becomes their money; Homelessness NSW / DCJ / Together Home providers are unable to dictate or enforce how these funds are spent. However, the spirit of High Needs funding is to empower people to achieve their goals and sustain their tenancies so there is an expectation that support providers will take reasonable steps to inform people of this rebate, provide information and structured support to positively use or save these funds, and utilise this opportunity to build financial management skills.

3.4 Can a subcontracted support provider invoice Homelessness NSW and manage approved High Needs funding?

Community Housing Providers (CHPs) are responsible for funding administration, monitoring and reporting expenditure to DCJ as part of the contractual obligations within Together Home program, outlined in Letter of Variations (LoVs). There are contractual program changes needed to ensure accountability in a revised process to enable subcontracted support providers to administer and report on High Needs funding independent of their CHP, which are not able to occur at this point in time.

Some CHPs and their subcontracted support providers have agreed on funding management processes that better align with what has been funded and facilitate use. Together Home support providers are able to invoice their CHP to distribute High Needs funding, where this is in agreement of both parties, however the CHP retains responsibility with DCJ for monitoring and reporting of these funds as outlined in the LoV.

3.5 Can High Needs funding be used towards tenancy arrears or debt?

Tenancy-related costs are not aligned with the intent of High Needs funding. Services are best placed to first discuss these matters with their Community Housing Provider or with DCJ.

High Needs funding can be used towards property maintenance and domestic services. However detailed evidence of the need for these services is required, including evidence of all options previously explored. These



services are intended to be capacity-building supports provided to an individual to develop their property care and maintenance skills. Tenancy-specific interventions can be considered only where the referral has clearly evidenced a direct correlation with a person's significant unmet support needs.

The rough sleeper loading includes \$6,600 within each Together Home package which can be used towards tenancy costs such as damages and arrears, and the CHP and DCJ are best placed to advise on the availability and suitability of this funding.

Have a question that is not here yet? Please email highneedspackage@homelessnessnsw.org.au

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