

What can Support at Home
Program staff do to
make their services
inclusive for people who
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Key Messages

As a direct care worker supporting a person who is at risk of homelessness

- I know the signs of risk and the many forms of homelessness, the impacts, the benefits of prevention and can support the person at risk of homelessness
- I know how to ask questions about homelessness and identify risk factors. More information ([here](#)).
- I am mindful that homelessness issues can be addressed at any point in the client journey
- I'm aware that unconscious bias and stigma about homelessness may prevent me from seeing other important parts of the whole person
- I understand the prevalence of trauma amongst people who are homeless, the impact of trauma and what trauma informed care and practice look like ([see more here](#)).
- I am aware of international human rights, legislative requirements, and Aged Care Quality Standards, that underpin this work exist
- I know that people who are homeless or at risk can age prematurely and are eligible for Aged Care Services (such as CHSP and ACH program) from 50 years and older, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 45 years and older (*currently, as of 2021; yet this may change when ACH services will transition into the new care finder program from January 2023*)
- I am aware that older and prematurely aged people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness may not have complex needs; the only service they need may be access to affordable, appropriate and secure housing
- I will actively involve the consumer in all decision-making about their services and will provide services at a place where the consumer wants the service to be delivered

- I will provide practical support if needed, such as assistance with completing paperwork and accompanying people who are dealing with housing agencies
- I know how to access homeless and housing support locally, know what they can offer and importantly what they can't
- I understand what unconscious bias is and how it might impact on the services I provide to clients (unconscious bias is explained [here](#))
- I am aware of my organisation's policies, for instance how our appointment policies accommodate people who are difficult to contact and/or struggle to maintain a schedule
- I know how our service works with individuals, who at times exhibit challenging behaviours or display other forms of distress, to support them and where possible maintain services
- I am aware that I am in a position of power when interacting with consumers and that this can affect the perceptions of the consumer. My interactions, even seemingly straightforward actions may result in consumers feeling judged
- I will spend sufficient time with consumers to ensure I understand them, that they feel heard and will return to follow-up in ensuring their needs are met
- I will explain information clearly and simply and check for understanding to ensure consumers understand the information I provide ⁵⁵
- I accept the limitations of the system in the support it can provide (and advocate for improvement). "You may not be able to assist with immediate housing need. Be kind to yourself".

Raising the Issue of Homelessness with older persons

- Build trust and rapport before tackling issues related to homelessness
- Don't be afraid to initiate the conversation about a person's housing situation after you have built trust with the consumer
- Have a casual discussion of their current housing situation and any concerns at a time and place the consumer feels comfortable, safe, and secure- ask them
- Never assume that an older person will raise concerns about their housing needs with you
- Recognise they might not feel comfortable asking for help or even realise they need help
- Older people living with friends, in unsuitable housing, in their car or caravan may not see themselves as homeless
- Encourage consumers to involve someone they trust in their assessment and other decision-making processes
- Report identified risks and concerns to your supervisor when you don't feel comfortable discussing them with the consumer directly.

As a manager and/or quality officer supporting my staff

The table below lists what knowledge and information would be important for staff and other stakeholders in your organisation to know, and lists a number of actions you can take to ensure people who are (at risk of) experiencing homelessness are supported and that your services are inclusive and safe for them. The actions are mapped across the **Aged Care Quality Standards** and the **Aged Care Diversity Framework**, to highlight how, in addressing these, you are meeting diversity expectations and requirements for the Aged Care Quality Standards. Planned and undertaken actions can be reflected in your organisations' **continuous improvement plan** and/or **Self-Assessment** for the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Service Provisions	Aged Care Standards	Aged Care Diversity Framework Outcomes
Knowledge for staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff, managers, and board members have received education on homelessness and are aware of the risk factors, which may include: living alone, being in private rental, being on a pension, unsafe/unsuitable living environments. They are furthermore aware of the impacts and what they can do to support consumers experiencing or at risk of homelessness and how to provide inclusive services 	1, 2, 7, 8	1, 3, 5, 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are aware that people who have aged prematurely are eligible for the Support at Home Program and the ACH program from the age of 50 or 45 when Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds (<i>currently, as of 2021; yet this may change when ACH services will transition into the new care finder program from January 2023</i>) 	1, 7	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are aware about international human rights, legislative requirements, and Aged Care Quality Standards, that underpin their work exist 	1, 7	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are aware that older and prematurely aged people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness may not have complex needs; but may need additional support to help them access affordable, appropriate and secure housing in addition to safe and inclusive Support at Home Programs 	1, 2, 7	3, 5, 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are trained to understand how institutionalised bias and stigma about homelessness, may prevent them from seeing the other important parts of the whole person, and are confident to explore this with the older person, and if needed, other services to provide wrap around support 	2, 4, 7	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff learn about and adopt a wellness and an inclusive approach to support consumers to have a person-centred conversation, respond in a holistic way, better understand the persons experiences, history, and what's important to them 	4, 7	1, 2



- Staff are aware that early intervention is crucial when risk of homelessness is identified to prevent crisis
- Staff know local specialist homeless services and appropriate referral pathways to refer and partner with in supporting older and prematurely aged consumers
- Workers know the limits of what services they can offer and those of services they are referring consumers

1, 7

3, 5, 6

1, 2, 4, 7

1, 3, 5, 6

4, 7

Actions

- Involve people with lived experience of homelessness in planning and feedback processes and co-design of services
- Best practice support services for older people should be holistic, trauma informed and cater for the complex needs of older people with disabilities, including physical and psychosocial disabilities and cognitive impairments
- When addressing homelessness it is also particularly important to work towards preventing social isolation for older people
- Referrals are followed up and consumers are supported to receive the services they need: e.g. through working with Access and Support or care navigation services
- The organisation partners with housing support organisations and other specialised agencies where relevant to ensure holistic care
- Innovative models of service provision are developed to support people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness

1, 8

2, 5

1, 2, 3, 4

2, 3, 5, 6

1, 2, 3, 7

3, 4, 6

1, 4, 7

2, 6

2, 4

3, 4

2, 3, 4, 8

3, 4

Policies and procedures

- A process is in place to ensure that all assessments are conducted, and care plans developed by staff with appropriate knowledge on how to ask questions, identify risk factors for homelessness, how to initiate a conversation and what actions to take (e.g. by including this into staff induction processes)
- Initial assessment/screening and appropriate referrals for older and prematurely aged people's housing situation should be included in all contacts with people seeking services and support
- Policies and procedures include links to referral pathways for older and prematurely aged people who are at risk of homelessness

2, 7

3

2, 3, 4

4

2, 3, 4

2



Systemic Advocacy

- Agencies identify and report shortfalls in crisis accommodation to support organisations, Diversity Advisors and Wellness and Reablement Advisors and Alliances
- Agencies work together with support organisations to advocate for policies that reverse the trend of increasing homelessness for older people, particularly women.

2,7

2,3

2,7

2,3

The Department of Health has developed the Aged Care Diversity Framework and a range of action plans to assist providers to create an inclusive environment for older people.

More information can be found [\(here\)](#).

Information and resources on the Aged Care Quality Standards (under review as of September 2021) can be found [\(here\)](#) and of the review [\(here\)](#).

More information on the DRAFT Homelessness Action Plan can be found on this via HAAG [\(here\)](#).

Activity 9

Homelessness and the Aged Care Standards

Watch this Case Study [\(here\)](#)

Questions:

1. How do your organisation policies and practices compare with the case study, what change/improvements could you make?
2. Do you have any actions in your continuous improvement plan that are about homelessness?
3. Do you need to add any (additional) actions, and if so what would these be?

Activity reflections

Ideas for actions can be found in the table [\(here\)](#).



We value your feedback.
Please click the link below for a short
evaluation.

[Evaluation](#)

