

Criteria	Signposts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise to deliver trauma-informed practice and to work with clients impacted by mental health, drug and alcohol, domestic and family violence and other issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relevant staff training and resources to ensure staff are equipped to manage a range of challenging behaviours and complex situations ✓ Specific collaborative arrangements and policies and procedures to ensure needs are identified and appropriate referrals are made.

3 Streamlined access

SHS providers are expected to provide a coordinated and consistent response to clients to ensure they can access the services most appropriate to their needs. In practice, this means that people will receive consistent information, assessment and referral, regardless of where or how they come into contact with the service system.

The streamlined access system will be supported by clear and consistent tools, guidelines and systems that make it easy for clients to get information. This includes using technology to share information to prevent clients from having to re-tell their story as well as systems that provide up-to-date, real-time information about service options and capacity.

The streamlined access system also aims to divert demand away from SHS where a mainstream response is more appropriate. This will be done through consistent assessment, referral, and information sharing practices and continuing to build stronger links with other human services.

SHS providers are required to comply with the following principles and practices of the streamlined access system:

- operate as part of a 'no wrong door' access system
- undertake consistent assessment and referral practices
- connect clients to mainstream services where appropriate
- share client information (with client consent and within legislative requirements)
- provide accurate and up-to-date service information including information on vacancy/ capacity management
- use the SHS Client Information Management System.

3.1 No wrong door

Operating within a 'no wrong door' approach means that when a person or family presents or contacts an SHS provider they will at a minimum be provided with a range of access options, including provision of information, advice and referral to either an SHS provider or a mainstream provider. They will also receive an initial assessment from the service at which they present or be linked with a service that can provide the assessment.

The main aims of 'no wrong door' are that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness:

- have easy access and a clear pathway to SHS and other mainstream services
- receive consistent and accurate information or advice
- receive an initial risk and needs assessment to determine their immediate needs
- do not have to visit multiple services before receiving assistance.

All SHS providers have primary responsibility for coordinating a client's initial response, which may include referring them to a mainstream service. In some cases, certain SHS providers may have limited participation in the 'no wrong door'. For example it is not appropriate for men to seek assistance by going to a women's refuge.

3.2 Consistent information, assessment and referral

Information, assessment and referrals start a process that can lead to long-term, sustainable client outcomes. Consistent assessment and referral tools are being developed as part of GHSH reforms.

The initial assessment will seek to understand a person's or family's immediate situation, resolve immediate safety issues, identify support needs and match these to the most appropriate response. This is either an SHS provider or a mainstream provider response.

Referral practices require the SHS provider to contact relevant service(s) and help the client to smoothly transition from one service to another. SHS providers are required to use the electronic referral systems currently being developed, to make and receive referrals.

SHS providers are expected to actively work with service networks to improve referral arrangements. This includes working closely with the homelessness State-wide Information and Referral Service (SIRS), which is under development through the GHSH reforms, and other relevant access points such as the DV Line, local FACS or human services agency offices. The SIRS will provide over the phone information and advice, assessment and referral and will be available to clients and service providers.

3.3 Client information

New tools are being developed to support SHS providers to share client information in line with legislative requirements and client approvals through client consent/referral forms. SHS providers are required to take reasonable steps to ensure clients understand why the information will be shared and with whom, and to seek their consent.

The tools will also outline clear parameters for disclosing client information beyond the scope of client consent. SHS providers will be expected to comply with these in circumstances such as unlawful activity or where it is suspected a young person or child is at risk of significant harm under Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (*Care and Protection*) Act 1998.

3.4 Accurate and up-to-date service information

A comprehensive service directory and linked vacancy management system that provides real-time information about service options and capacity is being developed. SHS providers are required to maintain their service information and regularly update vacancy / capacity management information as relevant information changes or becomes available.

3.5 Client Information Management System

The streamlined access system will be supported by a new Client Information Management System (CIMS). The CIMS will capture the functionality of all client records including initial assessments, client consent as well as case management and referral arrangements. It will incorporate protocols and business rules to enable these processes to occur. The CIMS will also support reporting requirements as part of the national Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection.

Implementation of the CIMS is likely to occur beyond July 2014.

4. Quality Assurance System

4.1 Overview

The Quality Assurance System provides a way for SHS in NSW to identify, achieve and demonstrate quality service provision. The system provides a basis for continuous quality improvement within the service, guiding a service provider through review against a set of quality requirements (standards, client charter and complaints handling) and identifying where improvements can be made.

The Quality Assurance System is also part of FACS processes for monitoring and ensuring the quality of the services it funds. It incorporates the requirements of the National Quality Framework for Homelessness Services (NQF) and is part of a nationally consistent approach to quality management in the SHS sector.

The contents of this section are subject to further change and consultation, in particular through the Sector Reference Group and Panel of Experts. This version provides organisations considering applying to the SHS prequalification scheme with information on the key components of the Quality Assurance System and associated requirements for providers. A more detailed version of the Quality Assurance System will be finalised and made public before any funding is awarded.