

Enhanced Outreach and After-Hours Outreach Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements

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1 Associated Policy

All SHS must operate in accordance with the *Homelessness Programs Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements*: [Homelessness Program Guidelines](#).

The *Enhanced Outreach Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements* are in addition to these guidelines. Should there be any conflict between these two sets of Guidelines, the *Enhanced Outreach Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements* take precedence.

Additionally, SHS are encouraged to become familiar with the [Immediate Housing Response \(IHR\) Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements](#), noting the linkage between Outreach initiatives and the IHR.

2 Guideline

2.1 Introduction

Enhanced Outreach (EO) is a Queensland Government initiative to be delivered in accordance with the Queensland Government Homelessness Program Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements.

Under EO, funding is provided for support workers alongside brokerage funds to Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) to deliver assertive outreach, which works alongside the Department of Housing and Public Works' (the department's) Critical Response Teams (CRTs) via a co-responder model.

These guidelines outline the purpose, scope, principles, and operational procedures for the use of EO funds made available under the Homelessness Program.

2.2 About Enhanced Outreach

EO is time-limited funding to 30 June 2026 and is intended to temporarily increase the capacity of existing SHS to respond to all people experiencing homelessness in public spaces. The purpose of EO is to provide assertive face to face outreach, to engage with people experiencing homelessness and to provide access, assessment and appropriate referral.

EO provides funding for SHS to undertake face to face contact with people living in unsafe situations, such as sleeping rough, sleeping in cars, tents, and improvised dwellings and support them to engage with the broader service system and to refer to and offer immediate short-term temporary accommodation. This includes assisting people experiencing chronic homelessness where they are residing (i.e., parks, shelters, squats) including where identified through conversions, customers disclose they are couch surfing.

EO complements the department's CRTs operating across Queensland, with the services intended to operate as a co-responder model. SHS delivering EO must work collaboratively with CRTs by providing a dedicated response of suitable support workers to assist people experiencing homelessness through undertaking assertive outreach. This collaborative approach requires SHS to work with CRT to develop and utilise a 'Know by Name' list. This

is a comprehensive list of households experiencing homelessness in a location, updated in real time and shared with collaborating co-responders with appropriate client consent.

EO can provide immediate short-term temporary accommodation (for example, in hotels and motels) for singles, couples and families experiencing homelessness in Queensland, for up to three nights only. Where this occurs, EO support workers are to provide immediate, proactive support to engage with SHS funded to deliver the Immediate Housing Response (IHR) and other appropriate services including, for example, temporary supported accommodation. The IHR provider may provide further short-term temporary accommodation assistance and then facilitate transition to safe and secure housing through the private rental market, or the social housing system.

2.3 About After-Hours Outreach

These guidelines also apply to After-hours Outreach (AHO), which is an extension of EO. In addition, AHO funding provides a two-worker model, 24 hours per day, seven days per week service, including public holidays.

AHO must deliver the same level of support and assistance after hours and be available to support SHS operating in the location, including:

- Delivering proactive EO after-hours
- Being an after-hours contact for the Homeless Hotline and providing outreach to clients being referred through the Homeless Hotline where a person requires support.

Supporting people who are in active homelessness which may include attending locations after hours where people are known to be rough sleeping when safe to do so. Ensuring the smooth transition of individuals to SHSs funded for appropriate support that may include IHR.

Should a client accommodated under the IHR require assistance outside of normal working hours, SHS delivering AHO may be contacted via the Homeless Hotline and requested to attend the temporary accommodation to provide the necessary support. Where appropriate, a referral to QPS may be required.

Where operationally convenient, the CRTs may work outside their normal hours of operation and accompany SHS funded to deliver AHO as part of a co-responder model.

2.4 Enhanced Outreach Outcomes

EO is specifically designed to support the initial engagement and triage of individuals experiencing homelessness. The program focuses on building trusting relationships with clients to help facilitate their engagement with the broader service system as part of an overall longer-term goal to end their experience of homelessness.

Once a client has established trust with the SHS support worker delivering EO, a warm referral is made to the appropriate SHS that can best meet the client's needs. This may include services such as Temporary Supported Accommodation (TSA), or IHR. Upon acceptance of the referral, the SHS responsible for delivering TSA, IHR takes on the overall responsibility for conducting assessments, offering ongoing case management, and supporting the client's transition into long-term housing solutions, including private rental market, social housing and supportive housing.

EO includes supporting individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, including those residing in public spaces (e.g., parks, shelters, squats) and those who are couch surfing (traditional outreach), ensuring they receive the support they need to work toward breaking the cycle of homelessness.

The Queensland Government, through the Homelessness Program, provides funding to SHS to deliver EO via two components:

- **Brokerage** to purchase short-term temporary accommodation assistance for up to three nights, e.g. hotel or motel accommodation, where an IHR provider is unable to arrange intake, assessment and short-term temporary accommodation assistance on the same day as the referrals is completed. Transportation costs are included to assist singles, couples, and families to return to an area where they have a locational need to be, or where they have informal support, such as through family connections. To provide brokerage in accordance with the [Guidelines for the use of Brokerage Funds in Specialist Homelessness Services](#) while a client is being supported by the Enhanced Outreach service.
- **Support worker funding** enables SHS to employ professional workers to engage clients through culturally sensitive assertive outreach, including outreach with the department's CRT to deliver the co-responder model and to record housing outcomes.

2.5 Underpinning approaches to service delivery

In addition to the approaches described in the Homelessness Program Guidelines, it is expected that the delivery of SHS funded under the EO will be underpinned by the following approaches:

- Assertive outreach
- Co-responder model
- All other options first, including reasonable travel costs
- No exits to homelessness where possible
- Accommodation with support
- Referrals and linkages with the broader housing service system
- Cultural capability
- Capturing outcomes data to inform an understanding of homelessness in Queensland

2.5.1 Assertive outreach

SHS funded to deliver EO must complete assertive outreach with clients who are sleeping rough. They must engage with the clients where they are sleeping rough. This could include, but is not limited to, streets, parks, beaches, vacant lots or buildings, bus shelters, or in bushland. Sleeping arrangements can also include in cars or improvised dwellings.

Standard service responses are not appropriate for all clients. EO is specifically designed to assist customers that may be isolated, alienated, unwell, unable or unwilling to attend a service for assistance. EO should aim to remove all barriers to a client receiving assistance, by looking to establish a trusting relationship where the goal is to engage the client in the broader service system and ultimately end the client's experience of homelessness.

When completing reporting for EO, clients are only considered as having received assistance under this funding where a service is supporting a client where they are, including where they are sleeping rough, or while they are in a hotel for example. This is not a centre-based service, and clients should not have to attend the services location for support.

2.5.2 Transition to Short-Term Temporary Accommodation

EO providers must ensure that any person in need of immediate short-term temporary accommodation assistance, with no other housing options available, are connected to the local housing and homelessness system whenever possible. In most cases, this will involve making a direct warm referral to a TSA or IHR provider to secure accommodation assistance and ensure ongoing case management support for the client.

If a warm referral cannot be made immediately, EO brokerage funds should be used to address the immediate accommodation need by providing short-term temporary accommodation assistance for up to a maximum of three nights, provided the individual has no other options (such as staying with family, friends, or self-funding). During the three nights period, households may be supported to apply for social housing, noting that IHR accommodation may be a temporary accommodation pathway, and that this is an eligibility criterion to access this service.

Similar to the IHR, EO is not intended to assist households in relocating to Queensland or within the State. If a household has moved to Queensland without secure accommodation and does not have the means to return to a location where they have housing, brokerage funds can be used to support the household in returning to their original location or to an alternative location where they can access informal support, such as through family or community connections.

2.5.3 Co-responder model

SHSs funded to deliver EO must collaborate to provide a co-response for clients sleeping rough, working closely with the department, local networks and the broader service system. EO providers are required to engage regularly with the department's CRTs, meeting at least once a week and conducting joint visits to identified rough sleeping locations.

EO providers must also work in close partnership with SHS delivering IHR and other local support services. Appropriate information sharing is critical to ensure that risks are assessed when placing individuals in motel or hotel accommodation and that the process is as effective and efficient as possible.

Through information sharing, a 'Know by Name' list will be developed for the local area, helping to ensure the most appropriate and sustainable responses to assist people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, SHS providers delivering EO are required to participate in Local Housing and Homelessness Networks, as well as engage in Place-

Based Response Teams and Care Coordination Groups, where these exist in their local areas.

2.5.4 All other options first

EO brokerage funds must not be used to assist clients into hotel accommodation who can **immediately** access any other reasonable accommodation or housing options.

Singles, couples, and families experiencing homelessness must be assisted through the existing housing and homelessness system wherever possible. Singles, couples, and families who can access safe accommodation and housing **immediately** through other means should be supported to access this accommodation.

Where it can be ascertained that a person is a NDIS participant, the EO agency should attempt to check in with their Support Coordinator to investigate if there is any STA funding in their package which could be used for short term accommodation.

2.5.4 No exits to homelessness

The *Homelessness Program Guidelines, Specifications, and Requirements* state that services must, "where possible, not exit any client into homelessness" and must "provide support that is proactive, persistent, reliable, practical, and comprehensive."

2.5.5 No wrong door

If clients are not suitable for the service — e.g., where they fall outside the SHS's geographical catchment area — the minimum required action is to provide a warm referral to an appropriate SHS that can meet their need.

2.5.6 Accommodation with support

SHS may arrange short-term temporary accommodation for singles, couples, and families, where the IHR funded service cannot provide a same day response.

As part of referral planning SHS's must consider suitability under any applicable criteria, as prescribed under that program's guidelines. This may include consideration of IHR eligibility in line with IHR Guidelines set out in the [IHR Operational Guidelines](#).

In accordance with the *Homelessness Program Guidelines, Specifications, and Requirements*, case management is a mandatory service approach for all services that puts identifying and responding to the client's expressed needs at the centre of all aspects of service delivery. The main elements of case management, relevant to EO, are:

- entry assessment, with a focus on a culturally sensitive and comprehensive process to determine households' existing housing options and establish the suitability for an appropriate referral for other assistance under the IHR prior to referral. For example, a referral to QLD Health for health concerns. .
- co-ordination, including warm referral to suitable SHS funded to deliver the IHR within the location, or other suitable SHS including SHS providing TSA; and
- appropriate follow-up with clients during any stay in EO funded accommodation assistance to ensure that engagement has occurred with the SHS who will provide

short-term accommodation assistance beyond the three nights, ongoing case management and assistance to transition to longer term housing options.

- Collating a Know By Name list, reporting the data for each households' pathway through the system and transition to longer term housing options.

Under no circumstances is a client aged under the age of 16 years to be assisted by an EO to access short-term, temporary accommodation assistance. SHS assistance to young people aged under 16 years must be delivered in line with the *Supporting Young People Under 16 Years of Age: Guidelines for Good Practice for Specialist Homelessness Services*.

Customers experiencing DFV should be referred to DVConnect or other suitable funded DFV specialist services. Any IHR provider should only accommodate a household experiencing DFV if all efforts to accommodate the household by a DFV service have failed. An IHR provider must make all efforts to ensure a specialist DFV service is engaged, and safety plans are in place. Services are required to proactively seek to engage clients in brief intervention case management; however, clients are not required to formally agree to case management in order to receive assistance, including referrals to the SHS delivering the IHR, or short-term temporary accommodation assistance (for up to a maximum of three nights) where assistance under the IHR is not available on the same day as the referral.

It should be noted that depending on the length of time support is required by the client, the brief intervention case management may intensify in response to need.

Where short-term temporary accommodation assistance is provided under EO and the client disengages, SHS to attempt all avenues of reengagement to ensure the safety of the client, continuity of the relationship with the accommodation provider. If the client continues to not engage, accommodation is to cease and SHS is to attempt a referral to a more suitable service offering, where consent has been provided. IHR would not be an appropriate referral pathway noting the eligibility requirements for engagement.

Additionally, where short-term temporary accommodation assistance is provided under EO, the SHS is responsible for responding to any instances of disruptive behaviour of clients while in the accommodation, including taking responsibility for rectifying damage which may occur.

2.5.7 Referral and linkages with the broader housing service system

Where necessary, a SHS funded to deliver EO must ensure appropriate referrals and connections with the broader housing service system and support organisations to provide effective brief intervention case management. While the majority of this support will be provided through other initiatives, it is the responsibility of the SHS delivering EO to engage with clients who are reluctant to participate and implement additional interventions as needed.

An SHS should ensure that, where appropriate, clients are referred into the Care Coordination Group for further assistance under the Coordinated Housing and Homelessness Response.

2.5.8 Customer Contributions

Ensuring clients make a financial contribution to the cost of the temporary accommodation assistance provided via EO has many benefits including preparing households for paying rent in longer term housing and providing a rental payment history.

However, it is noted that clients supported under EO are experiencing homelessness, are without shelter and are in crisis, and as such, if accommodation assistance is provided under EO, client contributions are not required for the three-night period.

2.6 Service Delivery Framework

The EO service delivery framework comprises two service categories:

- Brokerage; and
- Support worker funding, including a component for on-costs including administration.

2.6.1 Use of brokerage funds

Brokerage can be used flexibly under EO, however, its primary purpose is to fund short-term temporary accommodation assistance for up to three nights in most cases, or to assist a client or household to secure other immediate accommodation options – Emergency Brokerage.

2.6.1.1 Eligible Expenditure

SHS can utilise emergency brokerage funding flexibly to secure immediate short-term temporary accommodation assistance for individuals, couples, and families experiencing homelessness. A key category of eligible expenditure includes, but is not limited to, the purchase of short-term temporary accommodation assistance such as hotel and motel stays, as well as transport costs and pet boarding.

Emergency brokerage can also cover costs for damages to short-term accommodation when these cannot be reasonably recouped from the client or are not the client's responsibility. To clarify client expectations during their stay in short-term temporary accommodation arranged by an EO, a SHS may implement a behavioural expectations agreement, which might incorporate rules established by the hotelier.

Additionally, emergency brokerage funding may be used to purchase goods and services that are necessary to support clients during their stay in short-term temporary accommodation.

The following is a non-exclusive list of eligible emergency brokerage expenditure items, where this secures a short-term temporary accommodation response or assists the customer or household when they enter accommodation (that are not offered by the agency or available from a free service) including, but not limited to:

- pre-paid phones to support engagement.
- travel costs for households to relocate to an area where there is a locational need to reside

- travel costs to access alternative, safe, and sustainable housing options, including interstate and overseas
- health and allied health, including medications
- hygiene
- mental health and alcohol and other drug services
- childcare services for up to three days
- pet boarding for up to three days
- groceries required to ensure the customer/household can eat well when they enter accommodation, for the duration accommodation is provided

2.6.1.2 Limitations

Organisations should refrain from using emergency brokerage funds for short-term temporary accommodation assistance if an IHR provider can conduct an intake assessment with the client or household experiencing homelessness on the same day. Additionally, emergency brokerage funds should not be used for items that can be covered by other emergency response initiatives, such as Community Recovery assistance packages or Emergency Relief.

Emergency brokerage funds cannot be used to purchase temporary structures, including tents and swags, or for any improvised dwelling.

Emergency brokerage funds will not be directed toward administrative/overhead costs. Some provision for these costs is made through the support worker funding component – see below.

2.6.1.3 Supporting clients in temporary accommodation

When households are provided with short-term temporary accommodation assistance as an IHR provider is unable to offer immediate assistance, the SHS funded to deliver EO must support the household within the accommodation for the three nights. Additionally, the SHS should facilitate their transition to ongoing support, either through the IHR or another SHS provider. The service must deliver a flexible and tailored response, in alignment with the funding's purpose, while working proactively and collaboratively with local CRTs.

The duration of stay in short-term temporary accommodation assistance must be closely managed, recognising that hotel or motel stays are not an ideal option for households, nor is it the primary responsibility of the service delivering EO. Services must ensure that a referral to an IHR or other appropriate SHS is made either on the day of engagement or by the first working day following engagement.

2.6.1.4 Sustainable services

Organisations have responsibility for managing the demand for emergency brokerage within their allocated funding to ensure sustainability. This includes providing households with appropriate and timely case management support while ensuring that emergency brokerage remains available throughout the entire term of the funding agreement.

2.6.1.5 Tracking and monitoring

Organisations in receipt of EO funds are required to complete the EO and AHO reporting template for all expenditure.

Each organisation is required to submit the completed Outreach Brokerage Report template or templates to their Contract and Partnership Officer within ten business days after the end of each quarter, to enable the department to have oversight of expenditure and the outcomes being delivered in each region, with new and exiting service users identified in the outputs.

Each organisation is also required to submit the Outreach Financial Acquittal (**Attachment Three**), in line with their funding schedule, demonstrating the expenditure of all or a portion of the brokerage funds provided.

SHS must continue to capture all client data for clients supported in their reporting to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare for the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC).

If an Organisation determines it has reached its capacity to continue to deliver services, due to demand for the response, the Organisation should contact both their Contract and Partnership Officer, and the CRT so that assistance can be gained in prioritisation.

Organisations are required to maintain a Know by Name list of the households they have identified as requiring assistance and to share this information with CRT with appropriate client consent. This list will support the organisation to report on a household's pathway through the housing and homelessness service system and record their transition into alternative accommodation or housing options.

2.6.2 Support worker funding

Support worker funding is provided to enable SHS to temporarily increase support worker capacity to undertake assertive outreach and provide brief intervention case management support to clients.

It is also provided, in a limited manner, to enable organisations to administer Enhanced Outreach funding.

2.6.2.1 Eligible Expenditure

SHS' should primarily use this funding to employ additional support workers or increase the hours of existing support workers. It is reasonable for these support workers to be engaged in the following work:

- EO, working out in the field, engaging with customers who are sleeping rough and who may be isolated, alienated, unwell, unable or unwilling to attend a service for assistance;
- Intake and assessment;
- Connection and referral to DVConnect, SHS delivering TSA, SHS delivering supportive housing and SHS funded to deliver the IHR;

- Arranging immediate short-term temporary accommodation assistance if an IHR provider cannot assist on the same day as the initial engagement and the customer wants/will accept short-term temporary accommodation assistance;
- If accommodation assistance is arranged, supporting households to sustain the emergency accommodation until they transition over suitable provider or housing option, i.e., for three nights;
- Maintaining records and reporting on outcomes;

Actively participating in the homelessness service network, including regional integration and case management meetings, while collaborating with stakeholders such as SHS delivering TSA and/or IHR, other SHS, the department's CRTs and HSCs, local government, sectoral providers, and community support services to secure additional client and transitional support.

2.6.2.2 Limitations

Support worker capacity allocated under EO should not be responsible for the delivery of services funded under other SHS.

2.6.2.3 Reporting

Activity delivered by support workers is reported in accordance with *SHS Data and Performance Data* in section **6.7. Data, statements and reports You are to submit** within the *Homelessness Program Funding Schedule*.

See additional reporting requirements for 'Know by Name' list

2.7 Payments and Contracting

EO funding is provided to SHS.

The department is responsible for determining the allocation of funding to SHS across Queensland. Determinations regarding allocations of funding are based on experienced demand and more general considerations of demand for homelessness services across Queensland, alongside the capacity of the broader housing and homelessness service system in relevant locations.

The department will contract with organisations delivering SHS for the provision of EO, including AHO funding, through the most appropriate method, which the department will determine on a case-by-case basis.

Funding allocation and contractual processes will take into consideration surplus Outreach funds from prior years where practicable.

Attachment 1: Definitions

Term	Description
Single	<p>A 'single' person is a person who engages with the EO provided and is sleeping rough on their own and requires to be accommodated alone for the duration of the accommodation.</p> <p>'Single' status is independent of whether the person presenting is married, in a registered relationship, or in a de-facto relationship.</p> <p>For the purposes of this initiative, expectant mothers are considered to be presenting as a family.</p>
Couple	<p>A 'couple' refers to two people seeking to be accommodated together for a portion of, or the duration of, their accommodation.</p> <p>'Couple' status is independent of whether the person presenting is married, in a registered relationship, or in a de-facto relationship.</p> <p>A 'couple' cannot be comprised of siblings or a parent/guardian with a dependent.</p>
Family	<p>A family is defined as a single parent/guardian or couple with at least one dependent, or an expectant mother, or a family unit – e.g., parents with adult children or sibling families.</p>
Homelessness	<p>For the purposes of Enhanced Outreach, and not with respect to the broader Homelessness Program, a person is considered to be experiencing homelessness if they are living in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvised dwellings; or • 'sleeping rough', noting that this includes people sleeping in cars
Couch surfing	<p>Refers to temporarily staying with friends, family, or acquaintances, often sleeping on a couch or makeshift bed, due to a lack of stable housing. It involves moving between different hosts' homes for short periods, relying on personal networks for shelter, and is often a precarious, informal arrangement without long-term security.</p>
Assertive Outreach	<p>A persistent and purposeful approach used with people who do not present to, or have difficulties engaging with, housing, homelessness and other related support services.</p> <p>An enforcement approach is not to be taken, instead, this should be a combination of persistent engagement with client choice.</p>
Co-response	<p>Co-response models are programs in which there are partnerships between agencies, where the responders work together/jointly.</p> <p>In these EO Program Guidelines, Specifications and Requirements, a co-response approach is required between SHS funded to deliver EO and the department's CRTs.</p>
CRT	<p>Critical Response Teams conduct assertive outreach across Queensland to engage with people experiencing homelessness. Often this outreach occurs alongside other government agencies and Specialist Homelessness Services including Local Council representatives, the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health and other funded support organisations.</p>