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| Homelessness Flood Recovery Program Guidelines V4 |
| 8 September 2023 |
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| To receive this document in another format, email [Homes Victoria](mailto:enquiries@homes.vic.gov.au) <enquiries@homes.vic.gov.au>.  Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.  © State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, January 2023.  In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.  **ISBN** 978-1-76130-075-2 **(pdf/online/MS word)**  Available at <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/homelessness-flood-recovery-program> |
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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waters on which we rely. We celebrate that Australia is rich in living Aboriginal culture, based on the values of reciprocity and respect for Elders and Country.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in creating services and supports to ensure that all Aboriginal children are raised in safe, healthy, and culturally rich families and communities, and have every opportunity for a bright future.

We pay our respects to ancestors of this Country, Elders, knowledge holders and leaders – past and present.

# Glossary

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Aboriginal | Describes First Nations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge the term ‘Aboriginal’ does not capture the entire diversity and complexity of Victoria’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. Our intent is always to use terms that are respectful, inclusive, and accurate. |
| Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) | An organisation that functions under the principle of self-determination, is initiated by and for a local Aboriginal community and is based in a local Aboriginal community. |
| Activity Descriptor | A schedule to the Service Agreement, which contains detailed information of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)-funded services activity. For more information [visit the DFFH and DH activity search](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-fairness-housing-health-activity-search) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-human-services-activity-search>. |
| APSS | Agency Performance System and Support teams located in DFFH local areas. |
| Children | Children in this document include infants (including the unborn child), children and young people under 18 years of age. |
| Client | The recipient of services as described in the Service Agreement. May also be referred to as household. |
| Contracting Party | The party/parties contracted to deliver Services under the Service Agreement, a Registered Housing Agency, or a Consortium. |
| Contractual Close | The date on which relevant agreements between the service provider and DFFH are ended. |
| Community Service Organisation | An accredited and registered organisation that has a Service Agreement with DFFH and is funded to deliver programs. |
| DFFH | Department of Families, Fairness and Housing |
| Dwelling | A suitable form of housing provided as part of the Homelessness Flood Recovery Program. |
| Family | A family may include biological relations, such as children, stepchildren, parents, intimate partners, domestic relationships, grandparents, siblings, cousins, kinship relations and others who may or may not be living together. |
| From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) Program | A program that provides up to 1,845 households with medium and long-term housing and wrap around support for people experiencing homelessness who were residing in emergency accommodation due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. |
| Funding and Service Agreement | Legal contract between a government department and a funded organisation for delivery of services in the community. |
| Head leased dwellings or properties | Dwellings owned by private residential rental providers that are made available to the service provider for up to 12 months. |
| HEF | Housing Establishment Funds that assist eligible clients to access emergency overnight accommodation or private rental accommodation. |
| HiiP | Housing Integrated Information Program – a platform used by DFFH to manage social housing. |
| Homelessness Entry Points | Access points into the homelessness service system, providing assistance, initial assessment planning and pathways out of homelessness. |
| Homes For Families (H4F) | A program that provides up to 170 families with children who were residing in emergency accommodation due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as at or on 25 October 2021 with access to stable medium- and long-term housing and integrated service packages. |
| Homes Victoria | Homes Victoria is the new government agency that manages Victoria’s social housing system. Homes Victoria is a subsidiary of DFFH. |
| Service provider | Registered Housing Agency funded to provide support during the funded program period. |
| Key Output Performance Measures (KOPMs) | The volume and performance of services required to be delivered monthly as outlined in FASA |
| PHAP | Personal Hardship Assistance Program that provides emergency hardship payments |
| Policies | The applicable Victorian Government Policies as outlined in the Service Agreement. |
| SAMS2 | Service Agreement Management System |
| Services | The service provider provides the collective property services and case management support, as set out or described in the Service Agreement(s), including the relevant Activity Description(s). |
| Service Agreement | The contractual arrangement(s) between DFFH and each service provider for the delivery of services. |
| Service Package | The package of property and support services allocated to each household. |
| Service Partnerships | A partnership that HFRP will seek to use to meet household needs. |
| Six-monthly funding reconciliation report | A template completed by service providers and submitted on a six-monthly basis to the Secure Data Exchange platform as part of the reconciliation process described in Appendix 1. |
| Subcontractor | A service provider that has an agreement with a service provider and not the department. The service provider is responsible for the delivery of the services. |
| Service Commencement | Service commences on 1 December 2022 for a period of 12 months |
| Transitional Housing Management (THM) | Properties owned by Homes Victoria and managed by Community Housing providers offering temporary housing for clients experiencing homelessness while longer term housing options are secured. |
| Victorian Housing Register (VHR) | A single-entry point for eligible applicants to apply for long term social housing in Victoria. The register applies to both public and community housing. |

# Overview

In mid-October 2022, Victoria experienced a significant flooding event. Heavy rainfall across much of the state led to major riverine and flash flooding, particularly for communities in proximity to the Campaspe, Murray, Loddon and Goulburn rivers. Several communities experienced major flooding, resulting in a process of recovery and clean-up.

On 31 October 2022, the Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet approved two streams of funding totalling $11.281 million in 2022-23 (over six to 12 months) to boost support for Victoria’s most vulnerable individuals and families and to enable property repairs.

The Homes Victoria Homelessness Flood Recovery Program (HFRP) is funded through Stream 2, with $5.86 million available for intensive case management and housing establishment funding support over 12 months. Of this funding, $4.37 million has been agreed to be cost shared under Category C of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) in addition to a further $206,000 allocated for surge capacity for housing and homelessness providers.

In July 2023, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) provided additional funding of $1.26 million to the Homeless Flood Recovery Program (HFRP) to increase Intensive Support Packages and Establishment packages.

The program is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Although funding for this product has been provided by both the Australian and Victorian Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.

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## Objectives

The Victorian Government’s key objectives for this program are to:

* provide intensive case management for individuals who have experienced long-term homelessness before the flood events
* establish medium- to long-term housing for those who have experienced long-term homelessness before the flood events
* return displaced social housing tenants to their property.

Stream 2 will achieve these objectives by working with clients to:

1. secure safe and stable medium - to long-term housing
2. assertively address identified risks and needs
3. build motivation and capacity to make and sustain positive change.

# Eligibility

The Homelessness Flood Recovery Program will support:

* households with complex needs who have experienced homelessness prior to the floods
* social housing tenants with complex needs who have been displaced by the floods
* households who are currently not receiving intensive support through homeless, child and family, or family violence programs, including the H2H and H4F programs
* households receiving NDIS support where housing is not a component of their funded NDIS package.

For clients to be housed, service providers must confirm VHR eligibility requirements have been met in consultation with Homelessness Entry Points and that an Emergency Management status application has been approved. Refer to Appendix 3 – HFRP VHR eligibility and process for further information.

## Service package allocation

Referrals may be received from homelessness entry points, Emergency Recovery Victoria, Aboriginal Housing Victoria, Community Housing Providers and local housing office or the Orange Door in the relevant areas.

The HFRP-approved Community Housing providers are Beyond Housing, Haven; Home, Safe, Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative and Mallee District Aboriginal Services.

### Prioritisation and allocation of eligible clients

Households will be prioritised for service packages based on their individual needs, including the risk of experiencing a prolonged period of homelessness, returning to experiencing homelessness or living in an unsafe environment without dedicated assistance to access housing with support.

Prioritisation criteria include clients:

* with complex needs
* with no fixed address
* with other complex needs who require prioritisation.

### Definition of complex needs

People defined as having complex needs have two or more presenting support needs, for example a mental health condition and substance misuse or addiction.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Note that people with complex needs can be stable and maintain ‘good health and wellbeing’ needing intensive support only episodically.

### Allocations process

Weekly meetings comprising nominated representatives from each area service provider and APSS team have been established to ensure collaborative and transparent allocation of service packages.

The area service provider is responsible for evaluating households presented for support, allocating service packages, establishment costs and HEF to eligible households, and prioritising the commencement of service packages in line with the agreed prioritisation criteria.

Individual area spreadsheets based on the daily ERV Flood Accommodation spreadsheet distributed by Windermere have been uploaded to secure Teams channels to allow real-time allocation and reporting.

1. Each business day: HFRP team updates the individual area spreadsheets with new households from the daily ERV Flood Accommodation spreadsheet.
2. As required: service providers and APSS teams add new households referred directly to them to their respective area spreadsheet.
3. Ongoing: service providers assess and prioritise households then update their area spreadsheet to indicate which households have been allocated service packages, establishment costs and HEF.
4. Weekly: service providers, APSS teams and HFRP team meet to discuss and finalise allocations, with HFRP team documenting outcomes.
5. As required: service providers update their area spreadsheet to indicate if a household has disengaged from the program and any remaining package funding has been allocated to another household.

## Types of support

The Homelessness Flood Recovery Program incorporates:

* Intensive support packages: 142 packages are available, with each package worth $25,000.
* Establishment costs: 142 packages are available, with each package worth $4,400.
* Housing Establishment Funding (HEF) in a flexible brokerage model: 33 packages are available, with each package worth $49,000.

Service providers can work with households prior to the commencement of their tenancy. Households may receive up to 12 months’ support if they are returning to their properties or housing support to establish a new tenancy. All supports delivered must be managed within the funding allocation.

Service providers must ensure support delivered under this program is culturally appropriate and delivered in partnership with local Aboriginal services where possible. [The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework - *Mana-na Woorn-tyeen Maar-takoort*](https://www.vahhf.org.au/)<https://www.vahhf.org.au/> sets out an approach to ensure all Aboriginal Victorians have safe, secure and stable housing. The framework is a guiding document for delivering the HFRP program to clients and households who identify as Aboriginal.

Any flood-affected Aboriginal community members who live and move within traditional country boundaries that straddle the Victorian and New South Wales borders can receive uninterrupted support. Providing social housing within Victoria is dependent on these clients meeting the VHR eligibility requirements.

## Monitoring and reporting

The program and performance monitoring of services will follow processes set out in the section of this document titled Performance Monitoring and Reporting. This includes:

* weekly household data reporting
* Six-monthly funding reconciliation report to Homes Victoria on the dates outlined in Appendix 1 for the duration of the program
* existing homelessness data reporting against funded activities every quarter, which will be further expanded to include reporting on household service package outcomes. ￼

# Package funding

The allocation of packages is based on data received from Emergency Recovery Victoria, homelessness and housing providers and public housing offices.

The Community Organisation Practice Leadership in the affected areas have been consulted to confirm capacity and capability of currently funded housing, homelessness providers and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver the programs in a timely manner.

Funding will be distributed to service providers via direct allocation through the SAMS2 system.

Table 1: Package allocation by area, service provider and package type

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Service Provider** | **Intensive Case Management Packages ($25,000 each)** | | **Establishment Cost Packages**  **($4,400 each)** | | **Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) Packages**  **($49,000 each)** | | **Total** |
| **Initial Allocation**  **(Dec 2022)** | **Additional Allocation**  **(Nov 2023)** | **Initial Allocation**  **(Dec 2022)** | **Additional Allocation**  **(Nov 2023)** | **Initial Allocation**  **(Dec 2022)** | **Additional Allocation**  **(Nov 2023)** |
| **Goulburn** | **Beyond Housing** | 46 | 20 | 46 | 20 | 15 | N/A |  |
| **Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative** | 10 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 4 | N/A |
| **Loddon** | **Haven; Home, Safe** | 33 | 7 | 33 | 7 | 11 | N/A |
| **Mallee** | **Haven; Home, Safe** | 10 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 2 | N/A |
| **Mallee District Aboriginal Services** | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | N/A |
| **Total Packages** | | **100** | **42** | **100** | **42** | **33** | N/A |
| **Total Package Cost** | | **$2,500,000** | **$1,050,000** | **$440,000** | **$184,800** | **$1,617,000** | N/A | **$5,791,800** |

# Key Activities

The three key activities under the HFRP program are Intensive Service Packages, Establishment Costs and Housing Establishment Fund (HEF).

## Activity 1: Intensive service packages

**Intensive service package: 1 December 2022 – 30 November 2023**

Up to 142 households will receive intensive support from a service provider support team. This includes practical, personalised, and targeted assistance to address the multiple and complex needs the client/household may have. 100 packages were allocated in December 2022 and a further 42 packages were allocated in October 2023.

Package costs will be paid to service providers commencing in January 2023. This funding is not subject to indexation.

The activity code is 94842.

### Service response

Service delivery is led by a Housing service provider. Each client receives 12 months of intensive support.

Supports are funded to:

* respond to the client’s individual needs and risks across a range of health and wellbeing needs
* work collaboratively with existing services supporting the client, complementing conventional interventions, and supporting client to navigate service systems
* assist households to establish and maintain pathways to long-term housing and personal stability with active support.

Service providers should ensure staff in these roles are provided training to deliver culturally safe support that is reflective of the diversity of their communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

## Activity 2: Establishment costs

**Establishment costs: 1 December 2022 – 30 November 2023**

### Tenancy establishment

Up to 142 households are eligible for a once-off establishment fund of an average of $4,400 per client funded to Housing Support Providers to cover tenancy establishment costs. 100 packages were allocated in December 2022 and a further 42 packages were allocated in October 2023.

Establishment costs will be paid in even monthly payments, commencing January 2023. This funding is not subject to indexation.

The activity code is 94844.

Establishment funds may be used to purchase household items to establish the client in their home. Homes Victoria recognises that some clients may require more funding and others less to establish their tenancies depending on the size of their household. Service providers can flexibly manage the needs of the households within the funding envelope allocated to their service, using the average allocation value as a guide. For example, a large household may require $8,500 for Establishment costs, whereas another household may only require $600.

The list below provides a guide to standard tenancy establishment items. Other funding sources such as family violence packages, NDIS funding and Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP) funding should be accessed to meet the client’s needs.

#### Standard items

Standard items include:

* refrigerator
* beds and mattresses to be determined by property type and available facilities
* washing machine to be determined by property type and available facilities
* wardrobes (if not built in)
* microwave oven
* chest of drawers for each bedroom (optional)
* lounge suite
* small household items for example, an appropriate amount of crockery, cutlery, cooking, and cleaning utensils
* dining table and chairs
* vacuum cleaner where a property is carpeted
* lawn mower and tools for gardening where property grounds require maintenance
* linen and appropriate bedding

The client will own the household items once purchased and delivered to the client.

Flexible brokerage cannot be used for:

* staff-related activities reasonably expected to be undertaken. This includes program administration, service delivery and professional development associated with and carried out by any staff
* support services that are already available to the household through other funding sources such as NDIS
* illegal purchases - products or services.

### Acquittal

All forms of funding delivered via flexible brokerage are subject to acquittal. Housing Service providers will be required to record flexible brokerage expenditure in the Client Management System (SHIP/SRS/SAMS2) and will be required to submit six-monthly payment reports to Homes Victoria as outlined in the flexible brokerage activity descriptor (Activity 94844 as per standard homelessness reporting).

## Activity 3: Housing Establishment Fund (HEF)

**Housing Establishment Fund: 1 December 2022 – 30 November 2023**

HEF for the purpose of the HFRP has been extended to secure medium-to long-term accommodation. This activity is to provide housing and tenancy support for up to 33 households within the existing cohort of at least 142 households that will receive intensive support packages. 33 packages were allocated in December 2022. Properties head leased as part of the HFRP will be designated as "transitional housing" within the VHR.

This funding is paid in an upfront lump sum and is not subject to indexation.

The activity code is 94843.

### Rent paid in advance

Homes Victoria will assist providers to secure head leased properties by funding *up to* 12-months' rent in advance. Funding is limited to the actual cost of rent as reflected in the leasing agreements. This allows unexhausted funds to be redirected to other households who have been allocated intensive support packages.

When paying rent in advance to a landlord or real estate agent, housing providers will need to submit a copy of the successful lease. The lease must show the advance payment terms for the properties and confirm which clients will be supported in the property. The property can only be used to house HFRP clients.

Properties secured in this manner are subject to the same allowances for early termination, vacancy, and funding recoupment as those procured with rent paid on a month-to-month basis.

### Tenancy management

Service providers are responsible for delivering tenancy management in accordance with the existing regulatory and policy requirements including, but not limited to, the following:

* service providers enter a sub-lease with the adult household member/s and determine and manage (receive) the maximum rent payable by the client in accordance with the Maximum Rent Formula
* determining and managing eligibility, allocation, and termination of housing assistance
* negotiation of tenancy agreements
* monitoring of occupancy arrangements and tenancies
* collection of rent
* proactively managing neighbour issues, including community engagement activities where appropriate (for example, if the service provider is managing several dwellings within the one building)
* setting and meeting relevant housing service standards in line with the [*Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018*](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/residential-tenancies-amendment-act-2018) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/residential-tenancies-amendment-act-2018>
* manage and address complaints and appeals relating to the provision of housing services
* maintain client satisfaction with the overall quality of housing assistance

A full description of the department’s policy requirements can be found [in section 4 of the *Homelessness Services Guidelines and Conditions of Funding*](https://www.vic.gov.au/new-guidelines-funded-homelessness-service-providers-related-covid-19) <https://www.vic.gov.au/new-guidelines-funded-homelessness-service-providers-related-covid-19>.

# Housing and Homelessness Services uplift for organisations affected by floods

$206,000 has been allocated to community housing providers, homelessness services and ACCO/Aboriginal services to financially support their homelessness and housing efforts in response to a surge in demand during the flood emergency. This funding is to ensure agencies that have supported the community and renters with housing needs outside of the scope of current support packages or business-as-usual activities are not adversely affected.

## Eligibility

Organisations eligible to apply for surge capacity funding include flood-affected community housing providers, homelessness agencies and ACCOs/Aboriginal organisations that require/d organisational uplift from October 2022.

## Scope

Impacted agencies may apply for out-of-pocket business expenses that:

* cannot be recovered by PHAP payments, such as relocation costs
* supported renters or the community and are not the principal responsibility of other agencies, such as Centrelink, NDIS and other social support services
* have been incurred as a result of supporting individuals, families or the community during the response and recovery phase of the flood event, for example, staff overtime costs, however standard salary costs should not be claimed
* are not covered by insurance, including inspection and minor remediation of uninsured properties (to a limit of $5,000) per property
* are essential to the continuing provision of support throughout flood recovery, such as new business equipment/resources
* are not covered by current support packages

## Process

To apply for these funds, please:

1. Complete the reimbursement claim details table, including detailed line items for each claim (see examples in the table). The claim form can be found at <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/homelessness-flood-recovery-program>.
2. Send the completed form, scanned copies of vendor invoices and other evidence as required to substantiate claim to [HHS@homes.vic.gov.au](mailto:HHS@homes.vic.gov.au)
3. Wait for approval before issuing an invoice to Homes Victoria.

For any questions regarding this fund, please email [HHS@homes.vic.gov.au](mailto:HHS@homes.vic.gov.au)

# Identification and securing of properties

HFRP is predominantly funded as a client-support program. Two main types of housing stock are being used in this program:

* privately head leased or service provider-owned properties with tenancy and property management services delivered by the service provider.
* public and community housing properties that will be offered to clients in accordance with the VHR order of prioritisation. Service providers will need to work closely with area managers to jointly manage the tenancy during the funded period.

Properties supported by the HFR program should meet the Victorian Housing Register’s standards for appropriate residence sized based on the number of occupants and gender distribution of dependants within a household. A quick reference guide for housing providers can be seen in the reasonable offers section of the guide.

## Head leased properties

Head leased properties refers to private rental properties that are head leased by the service provider.

Head leasing is used as a rapid housing solution while clients await long term social housing or, where appropriate, enables clients to take over the lease at the end of the program.

Leased properties must comply with standards as outlined in the *Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018.* Service providers are required to undertake asset management services on leased properties.

The service provider will be responsible for any additional asset damage that is not fair wear and tear (for example, renter damage).

A full description of the asset management regulatory and policy requirements can be found at <http://www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au/How-we-regulate/Guidelines-for-agencies>

Service providers must provide Homes Victoria with details of each head leased property so it can be uploaded into Housing integration information Platform (HiiP) and assigned a Property Identification Number (PIN).

A copy of the rental agreement signed by the service provider and the real estate agent/landlord or, in the case of a service-provider-owned property, a signed rental agreement between the service provider and the client must be sent via email to [HHS@homes.vic.gov.au](mailto:HHS@homes.vic.gov.au)

## Public housing properties

Public housing may be offered to clients at the commencement of the program or throughout their tenancy.

The service provider is expected to work collaboratively with local area housing staff to support clients to manage their tenancies successfully.

Clients may be allocated a public housing property with an extra bedroom if there is a lack of available properties. The client however should not be disadvantaged through the allocation of a larger property.

## Privately rented properties

Clients may choose to source private rentals. Refer to the Financial Assistance section below for funding information.

# Financial assistance in establishing and maintaining a HFRP tenancy

## Housing Establishment Funding related to emergency accommodation

Housing Establishment Funding (HEF) will support families with a confirmed service package allocation to remain in emergency accommodation until a suitable property is procured. The cost of the emergency accommodation will be covered by ERV and not HFRP.

## Rental assistance for head leased properties

For clients seeking assistance in payment of rental arrears to sustain their head lease tenancy, Private Rental Assistance Package (PRAP) funding can be accessed. It is expected that clients will share the responsibility of repaying their debts by contributing to the repayment.

Further information on PRAP can be found here: [Private rental assistance program guidelines (dffh.vic.gov.au)](https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/private-rental-assistance-program-guidelines) <<https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/private-rental-assistance-program-guidelines>>

Standard HEF (Housing Establishment Fund) is jointly funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth governments under the National Affordable Housing Agreement and cannot be used for head leased properties. However, Activity 3: Housing Establishment Fund that has been funded at $49,000 per package as part of HFRP can be used to secure medium to long term housing.

## Rental assistance for privately leased properties

Due to the reluctance of some property owners/leasing agents to head lease to service providers, allowances may be made for service providers to fund private rentals where the client is directly named as the renter. In these circumstances, funding of rent in advance for a maximum of six months may be approved to establish the tenancy.

These will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Director, Service Design and Delivery with service provider assessment and assurance that the client will be able to sustain the private rental tenancy.

## Maintaining tenancies and rental arrears

Support workers should be aware that some clients may exhibit behaviours of concern in their transition to their homes and use discretion in the use of tenancy breaches, particularly during the transition period of a new tenancy.

In the event of rental arrears, support workers should work closely with clients to ensure that a repayment plan is put into place as soon as possible to minimise financial burden.

## Housing service engagement

Engagement may fluctuate throughout the support period. A level of flexibility may be required to ensure every opportunity is provided for clients to engage safely and successfully. Where a tenancy is at risk, the support worker is expected to undertake assertive outreach.

Where the client has abandoned a property and is still accepting support, the service provider will work with the client to determine why they have left the property. Service providers should encourage and support the client to move back into the property unless there are psychological, environmental and or physical safety concerns.

When a client remains engaged in support but cannot return to their property, support does not cease. Service providers should provide alternative accommodation where appropriate. If a client is evicted due to severe damage or violent behaviour, service providers can offer clients emergency accommodation. For public housing, the service provider will work closely with the local housing office to assess whether a priority transfer is an option.

Payment to providers will not cease.

## Reasonable offers

### Social housing

A reasonable offer for social housing needs to consider:

* The number of bedrooms is matched in accordance with the housing size guidelines in the <https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agency-channel/Clients-special-accommodation-requirements> <<https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agency-channel/Clients-special-accommodation-requirements>>;
* The area requested is in the household’s preferred area, meets the household’s safety and access needs and is within the service provider’s area of operations;
* The property meets the household's assessed need, for example, ongoing medical need or disability modification; and
* The household's circumstances that affect their housing outcome remains the same.

If an applicant declines two reasonable offers of housing, their application will be removed from the Priority Access Category and they will be placed on the Register of Interest. Applicants will be eligible for a further two ROI offers. If these are refused the application will be removed from the VHR.

If a client refuses two valid offers of Priority Housing and their Priority status is removed, they will move to a support-only package.

# Disengagement

Clients may disengage from housing and/or support services throughout their time in the program. Where a client has chosen not to accept support or housing or has been uncontactable for a continuous period of eight weeks, the support period may be ended in consultation with Homes Victoria.

Where a household/client has disengaged, service providers must notify agencies and support organisations connected with the client that the HFRP supports have been withdrawn due to disengagement.

Once a client/household has been confirmed as disengaged, service providers may choose to allocate any remaining funds from that household’s packages (support, establishment costs, and HEF) to another household. Service providers must deliver these supports within the remaining funding allocation.

## Disengagement at the request of the household

Participation in the HFR program is voluntary and clients may choose to disengage from the program as their circumstances change. When this occurs, service providers must confirm that a client understands:

* the full scope of supports HFRP can provide, including the benefits in addition to intensive support, and
* that the service package can be reallocated to another client at the provider’s discretion.

Where a client relocates to another state, the service package can be closed.Where a client has found their own private rental property or transitioned into a public housing property, the client will be given the option to continue their support package.

Where a client has abandoned their property, support should continue. If it safe to do so, the support worker should work with the client to determine why the client has left the property. Service providers should support the client to secure alternative accommodation.

Where the household wants to remain in the property but disengages from support, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 laws apply to the tenancy.

# Incident Reporting

Identification, response, reporting and management of incidents is the sole responsibility of the service provider.

Reporting of all incidents involving clients supported through the HFR program, including serious and major incidents, damage, or complaints within head leased properties **is the responsibility of the service provider**. Where incidents occur within Public Housing, it is expected that the service provider notify the local housing office manager and work closely with them.

Any incidents involving clients supported through the HFR program, including serious incidents and deaths, must be logged via the Client Incident Management System (CIMS) or the Victorian Health Incident Management System (VHIMS). Serious incidents or deaths that occur outside business hours should be reported by the service provider via email to [HHS@homes.vic.gov.au](mailto:HHS@homes.vic.gov.au) with information on the circumstances and all potential risks.

## Reporting incidents and complaints

### Low to minor incidents

These incidents do not require notification to Homes Victoria. These incidents relate to minor to moderate behaviours of concern towards tenant(s), employee(s), client(s), contractors(s) or visitor(s) and property. Costs to resolve these incidents should not be greater than $500 and no police or emergency services called.

Low to minor incidents include:

* not taking bins out/putting them back
* spitting in common areas
* spilling food or drink in common area
* leaving common areas unsecured
* noise complaints
* misuse of balcony
* odour coming from apartment
* littering or dumping rubbish in common areas
* pets toileting in common areas or causing property damage
* clients inviting friends who engage in anti-social behaviours
* not abiding by any COVID-19 safety measures
* drug/alcohol use in common areas
* friends sleeping rough in common areas
* minor damage to property – costs to repair under $500.

### Moderate incidents

These incidents require notification to Homes Victoria. These incidents relate to behaviors of concern towards tenant(s), employee(s), client(s), contractors(s) or visitor(s) and property. Costs to resolve these incidents may be between $500 and $2000 and police or emergency services may have been called.

Moderate incidents include:

* hoarding behaviours
* inviting people to live in the apartment who are not on the lease
* pets attacking others
* criminal offence – theft of mail/belongings/food boxes/packages
* repeated challenging behaviour
* moderate property damage – costs to repair between $500 and $2000.

### High to extreme incidents

These incidents require notification to Homes Victoria. These incidents relate to serious behaviors of concern towards tenant(s), employee(s), client(s), contractors(s) or visitor(s) and property. Costs to resolve these incidents may be greater than $2000 and police or emergency services may have been called.

High to extreme incidents include:

* repeated reports of the low to moderate incidents listed above more than 3 times
* threatening others with a weapon
* offering/selling drugs
* physical violence
* family violence
* risk of self-harm or harm to others
* major property damage – costs to repair over $2000.

[The CIMS Incident Management Guide](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/client-incident-management-guide-cims-word) can be viewed at <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/client-incident-management-guide-cims-word>.

[More information on VHIMS](https://vahi.vic.gov.au/ourwork/safety-and-surveillance-reporting) can be found at <<https://vahi.vic.gov.au/ourwork/safety-and-surveillance-reporting>>.

Service providers must advise Homes Victoria of any incident logged through the CIMS or VHIMS within 24 hours of submission by sending a copy of the incident report via email to [HHS@homes.vic.gov.au](mailto:HHS@homes.vic.gov.au) with the subject line ‘Notification of Incident - HFRP - DD/MM/YYYY’.

At its sole discretion, Homes Victoria may elect to lead a response to a Major Impact incident, as defined in the Client Incident Management Guide 2020. If this occurs, the service provider will be advised of this transfer of responsibility in writing.

Service providers are strongly encouraged to promote and offer opportunities for client engagement with Fire Services Victoria community fire safety initiatives to mitigate the risk of preventable fire incidents in HFRP-supported residences. Information on this initiative can be requested via email to [HHS@homes.vic.gov.au](mailto:HHS@homes.vic.gov.au)

# Program Administration

The program is administered by the Homelessness Flood Recovery program team in the Homes Victoria Homelessness and Housing Support branch.

# Performance monitoring and reporting

## Key features

The program monitoring and reporting framework has the following key features:

* reporting the progress and performance of the HFRP which involves documenting how well the program objectives have been met
* ensuring data quality checks are in place to provide an accurate picture of the program’s performance.
* when performance measurements are not met, acting on opportunities to improve to ensure continuous improvement.

### **Privacy and security considerations**

* Service providers need to provide an opt-out collection notice to each adult household member, in such a manner to ensure there is a reasonable understanding that HFRP client data will be disclosed to Homes Victoria and associated agencies.
* Please ensure client data is only stored on organisational devices (computers), network servers and cloud drives.
* No client data should be on any personal device or cloud service.
* All access to client data must be password protected at some level (this can be to the device, the file, or the server/cloud drive).
* While it is understood that some data sharing will be required between service providers, this must always be secure through authenticated means. Private Teams channels have been established by the HFRP Homes Vic team for reporting purposes.
* No shared files may have a URL link that does not require authentication.

## Data reporting

Data will continue to be collected from service providers on activity-based targets through existing centralised mechanisms including Service Delivery Tracking (SDT) to provide key evidence of program implementation and outcomes to households and the sector more broadly. Data will be reported by funded agencies, as per specifications in their service agreement.

Service providers will report program monitoring data according to the requirements, platforms, and cycles in their service agreements.

Service providers must also complete and submit two Six-monthly funding reconciliation report – a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet template – during the term of this program. Instructions on how to populate the Six-monthly funding reconciliation report are provided in the template. Refer to Appendix 1 – HFRP Payment Mechanism and Six-monthly funding reconciliation reporting for more information.

# Additional program reporting requirements

The program’s monitoring and reporting framework includes Homelessness Data Collection (HDC) reporting. Further instructions and program specific advice will be provided at a later date.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) is responsible for several performance measures outlined in Budget Paper 3. The ‘Total social housing dwellings acquired during the year’ measure is relevant to the program. Service providers will need to provide Homes Victoria with details of each head leased property so it can be uploaded into the Housing integration information Platform (HiiP). This includes a copy of the lease that has been signed between the service provider and the real estate agent/landlord. These electronic copies should be provided to the HFRP team as soon as they are received.

The HFRP team will also provide monthly input to the Whole of Government reporting. The reporting includes package allocation numbers and financial spend.

## **Activity-based targets**

The service providers must acquit against three activity-based targets as established in the variation to their Service Agreement.

Service providers are to acquit against:

* Intensive client support (activity 94842); and
* Establishment costs (activity 94844); and
* Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) (activity 94843).

Service providers must follow the target requirements as stated in the service agreement, activity descriptors and program guidelines. These targets form the service delivery objectives for the service providers, which must be met for a successfully delivery of the Program.

# Appendix 1 – HFRP payment mechanism and six-monthly funding reconciliation reporting

The funding model for the HFRP is aligned with the standard DFFH funding model using existing Activity Descriptions 94842, 94843 and 94844, in conjunction with the total number of targets per annum.

For HFRP service providers:

* Activity 94842 (Homelessness Client Support) funds intensive support provided by the HFRP support worker.
* Activity 94843 (Homelessness Housing and Tenancy Administration) funds support and approved property services including:
  + net rent
  + bond
  + tenancy management services
  + rental broker services
* Activity 94844 (flexible funding) funds tenancy establishment.

The process results in monthly payments through the SAMS2 payment system. This approach allows service providers to fulfil service agreement contractual arrangements flexibly, resulting in agile service delivery to meet client demand and manage human resources appropriately.

Organisations can view a history of all the variations made to their service agreement on the [Service Agreement Module of My Agency](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/my-agency) <[https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/my-agency>.](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/my-agency%3E.)

**Table 2: Standard DFFH Payment schedule**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| First Tuesday of each month | **Monthly payments**  Regular monthly payment is made. |
| 1st of each month | **Monthly variations open**  Changes that have been negotiated with an organisation are entered into the Service Agreement Management System (SAMS2). Organisations can view and check changes when finance approval is completed by the department. Variations are not normally made in June or July and a shorter window is available in December due to the Equal Renumeration Order processing. |
| 18th of each month | **Monthly variations published**  Organisations can view proposed changes on [My Agency](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/my-agency) <[https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/my-agency>.](https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/my-agency%3E.) Email advice is sent to department and organisation signatories to undertake final check of changes.  If the 18th of the month falls on a weekend, variations will be published on the next business day. The organisation should contact their service plan leads it there is something they do not understand or agree to in the proposed variation. |
| 23rd of each month | **Monthly variation becomes effective**  Variations become effective once they have been approved by the departments’ signatory. Where funding increases are backdated, any applicable funding arrears payments are processed. |

## Six-monthly reconciliation funding reporting requirements

Service providers will be required to submit six-monthly acquittals on all HFRP-funded Activity Descriptors.

This template will be shared with service providers and is being used to ensure consistency in reporting, noting that these reports will not inform funding allocation. Reporting period and due date information will be circulated with this template.

Reports should be submitted via the HFRP SDE unless otherwise advised by the department.

### Reporting periods

* Bi-Annual Report 1 (1 December 2022 – 30 June 2023): report due 15 July 2023
* Bi-Annual Report 2 (1 July 2023 to 30 November 2023): report due 15 December 2023

# Appendix 2 – measuring program performance through activity-based targets

Homes Victoria will monitor HFRP service providers’ performance based on DFFH’s Agency Monitoring Framework[[2]](#footnote-3).

**How is the HFR Program performance measured?**

The service agreement between HFRP service providers and Homes Victoria incorporates activity-based targets for each expected performance measure used for the program’s monitoring. Below is a summary table with the performance measures, target and data source and access for each funded HFRP activity.

**Table 3: measuring HFRP’s performance via activity-based targets**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity number | Activity name | Performance measure | Target | Data source | Data access |
| 94842 | Homelessness client support | Number of clients supported | Number of clients as stated in the Service Agreement (non-cumulative) | Homelessness Data Collection | SHIP |
| 94842 | Homelessness client support | Proportion of services provided or referred | 70 per cent (non-cumulative) | Six-monthly funding reconciliation report | Secure MS Teams channel |
| 94843 | Homelessness housing and tenancy administration | Number of tenancies | The performance measure target is provided in the Service Agreement. (non-cumulative) | Service delivery tracking system (SDT) | SDT |
| 94844 | Homelessness flexible funding | Number of households assisted | The performance measure target is provided in the service agreement. (cumulative) Number of households assisted as stated in the Service Agreement (cumulative) | Six-monthly funding reconciliation report | Secure MS Teams channel |

**How is performance assessed?**

Performance is assessed on an activity basis at a service provider level. Therefore, any action taken in relation to under-performance also occurs on an activity basis at a service provider level.

**When is performance measured?**

Performance is measured every 6-months.

**How are the six-monthly funding reconciliation reporting periods defined?**

Six-monthly funding reconciliation reporting periods are defined as:

* Bi-Annual Report 1 (1 December 2022 – 30 June 2023): report due 15 July 2023
* Bi-Annual Report 2 (1 July 2023 to 30 November 2023): report due 15 December 2023

**What is under-performance?**

HFRP service providers are expected to fully deliver against the total funded activity-based targets. Under-performance will be managed as per the funding and service agreement.

# Appendix 3 – HFRP VHR eligibility and process

The VHR (Victorian Housing Register) is a platform on which people can register for social housing in Victoria. It brings together applications for public and community housing so that only one application needs to be submitted to access a broad range of social housing options.

The VHR has two categories:

* **Register of Interest** for people to register their interest in social housing, and
* **Priority Access** for people most in need.

For any client to be placed in social housing or community housing properties, they must meet the eligibility criteria for the priority access category and have their application approved to Emergency Housing category before they can move into the property. VHR Policy and Operational Guidelines can be found at <<https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-housing-register>>

Effective 10 October 2022, the CEO Homes Victoria approved the priority access for clients impacted by major state flood as Emergency Management Housing (EMC). This applies to new applications and transfers (eligibility criteria must be met). Further information can be found in Public Housing Allocations Operational Guideline Chapter 2: Offers of Housing: <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/allocations-manual>>

HFRP households may present in one of three scenarios:

* households that do not have a VHR application: the Designated Service Provider (entry point or service provider) must determine if the client is eligible and then submit a VHR priority application with the Emergency Housing priority access category (EMC).
* households that have an existing Register of Interest: The Designated Service Provider must first determine if the client is still eligible and then complete and submit a VHR priority application with the Emergency Housing priority access category (EMC).
* Households that have existing approved priority access: the Homes Victoria HFRP team will liaise with the VHR team to reclassify the priority reason to Emergency Housing priority access category (EMC).
* Additional information:
* Transition Plans for Temporary Accommodation: Case managers should develop transition plans for all residents in temporary accommodation.
* Consideration of Public Housing: If public housing is being considered as a potential option, a triage conversation must take place between the case manager and the relevant local area housing team *before* making any commitments to a client.
* Eligibility Confirmation and Indicative Timeframe: The public housing area team will verify the client's eligibility and inform the case manager if public housing is a viable option. The public housing area team will strive to provide an approximate timeframe to the case manager regarding when a property offer could be made. This timeframe will depend on stock availability and individual circumstances. We recognise the unique circumstances of those who were previously living in challenging conditions, such as tents or other inadequate housing arrangements. In line with our commitment to addressing diverse needs, we ensure that people who were, for example, living in a tent beforehand and are still in such circumstances, can be offered Emergency Management Housing (EMC) as part of our priority approach. This ensures that urgent housing needs are met for those who continue to face exceptional challenges even after the flood event.
* Public Housing Allocation Policy: The public housing allocation policy remains unchanged, with 100 percent of properties offered to those on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR) with priority status. HFRP (Homelessness Flood and Recovery Program) clients, as defined in Appendix 3, will be considered a priority status group on the VHR under the EMC category.
* Head Leased Properties as Transitional Housing: Properties head leased as part of the HFRP will be designated as "transitional housing" within the VHR. These properties act as a pathway towards sustained long-term housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.
* Maintenance of Priority Status: HFRP clients housed in head leased properties will retain their existing EMC priority status on the VHR. They will also be offered long-term social housing properties as they become available

## Special dispensations

VHR applicants must meet the five core eligibility criteria for social housing to be approved to the register. Citizenship and permanent residency are included among these.

There are exceptions for Participating Registered Agencies (PRAs) with a mission that includes housing people who are not permanent residents of Australia. These organisations can request an application be added to the VHR, which in turn enables them to allocate community housing to that client.

Participating Registered Agencies (PRAs) may use discretion under section 9(c) Homes Victoria Determinations (Determinations) on a case-by-case basis. Homes Victoria may use discretion under the Director Determinations (Determinations) to allocate housing to persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria where exceptional circumstances apply (Section 9(f)), including clients who become homeless due to fleeing family violence.

In the case of HFRP clients who are determined to be non-permanent residents, service providers are required to advise the Homes Victoria HFRP team of the residency status and request a special dispensation be applied **prior to housing the client**. These will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Executive Director, Homelessness and Housing Support.

## RentAssist bond loans

The RentAssist bond loan is a Victorian Government initiative to assist people moving into private rentals with their upfront bond payment. The client must meet the department’s eligibility criteria to be approved for the loan. Further information may be [found on the Housing Victoria website](https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/rentassist-bond-loan) <https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/rentassist-bond-loan>.

HFRP families moving from unsustainable private rental properties into a head-lease property and who have been approved for a RentAssist bond loan will retain their current priority status on the VHR. The VHR team will enter the following script into the “Decision Comments” field of the Priority tab in HiiP: *Application approved as validated by IHR team in Homes Vic. Priority status must not be removed where a RentAssist Bond Loan is issued for a head leased property.*

## Public housing

For families who exit crisis accommodation or HFRP-supported properties into public housing and who wish to remain in the HFR program, the program and service providers will continue to support families for the full service package period.

1. The definition aligns with the Victorian Human Services (Complex Needs) Act 2009 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Department of Health and Human Services (2019); “*Agency Monitoring Framework*”, Victorian Government, July 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)