

Aspirations Housing

Operations Management Plan

December 2023

1. Introduction

This Operations Management Plan provides logistical detail relating to the day-to-day operation of Uniting WA's proposed Aspirations Housing Service (**Service**), to be delivered out of 65 Salcott Road, Girrawheen (**Property**), including the following key components:

- The Service Model
- Target Cohort
- Staffing Arrangements
- Hours of Operation
- Safety and Security
- Property Management
- Uniting Contact Information

2. Background

Uniting WA (**Uniting**) is a leading Western Australian community services organisation. Uniting is part of the UnitingCare Australia network, the country's largest community service provider network, which employs over 50,000 staff, supported by more than 30,000 volunteers. Uniting is registered with the Department of Communities as a Tier 2 Community Housing Provider and manage housing assets in accordance with the Community Housing Regulatory Framework obligations.

Uniting has identified a gap in the housing continuum where people exiting Uniting's transitional housing facilities have limited opportunities to access permanent, safe, secure, affordable, and sustainable housing that facilitate their long-term independence. As a result, these individuals are at high risk of returning to homelessness and are more likely to become trapped in an ongoing cycle of disadvantage – at significant and economic cost to the individual, the Government and the broader community.

Uniting's Aspirations Housing project seeks to address this gap in the housing continuum, with provision of long-term supportive housing for people who face challenges maintaining traditional tenancies.

Uniting's Aspirations Housing project stands as a proactive response to bridging gaps in the housing continuum. This initiative is dedicated to providing long-term supportive housing solutions for individuals facing challenges in maintaining traditional tenancies. Recognising the diverse needs of its residents, Aspirations Housing goes beyond merely offering shelter, aiming to create a nurturing environment that fosters stability and empowerment. By addressing the specific hurdles faced by individuals in sustaining conventional housing arrangements, Uniting contributes to enhancing the overall well-being and resilience of the community. Through a commitment to long-term support, the Aspirations Housing project aligns with Uniting's mission to create inclusive and sustainable solutions that positively impact the lives of those in need.

3. The Service Model

The purpose of the Aspirations Housing Service (**Service**) is to provide long term, safe, secure, and stable accommodation for 10 adults (**residents**) who have experienced homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, with individualised supports to be provided by Uniting to ensure the residents can maintain their tenancies and live more independently. The Service is designed to support people exiting transitional housing facilities who have demonstrated their potential to live independently and sustain a long-term tenancy with access to minimal support. Aspirations Housing sits between Transitional Accommodation placements and Community and Public Housing (refer to **Figure 1** below).

The Service model is based on 'Housing First' principles, whereby people who have experienced homelessness or are at risk of homelessness are offered an affordable, appropriate, and safe home permanently. By integrating housing and support services, tenants are supported and helped to sustain their tenancies. The Service will offer efficient and coordinated support for people with complex needs and assists low-income households by preventing housing stress.

Uniting's flexible and tailored two-part Aspirations service structure combines a supportive landlord approach (the landlord being Uniting WA) with 'light touch' supports, which are flexible and tailored to the unique needs of each individual accessing the service. These supports are recovery and strengths focused to restore dignity and hope and could include assistance with sustaining the independent living skills acquired during their stay in transitional housing facilities, including budget management, support to attend appointments, gain access to learning and employment opportunities, and build social connections with other residents and the surrounding community.

The 'light touch' supports within Aspirations Housing are intentionally designed as a seamless extension of existing programs like Uniting's Homeless Accommodation Support Services (HASS), recognising that certain individuals may

require persistent assistance to maintain a tenancy and prevent a return to homelessness. The overarching goal is to offer stable accommodation for a duration sufficient for individuals to recover and achieve independence, with the anticipation that some residents will transition to fully independent living. While acknowledging that specific tenants may continue to benefit from ongoing Aspirations support, the service program remains adaptable. This flexibility enables residents to age in place, treating their Aspirations residence as a permanent home that caters to their evolving needs. By accommodating varying levels of support, the program seeks to strike a balance that empowers individuals to thrive independently while ensuring ongoing assistance for those who require it to sustain lasting stability.

It is intended the Service accepts referrals from other relevant services operated by Uniting WA and other community services organisations.

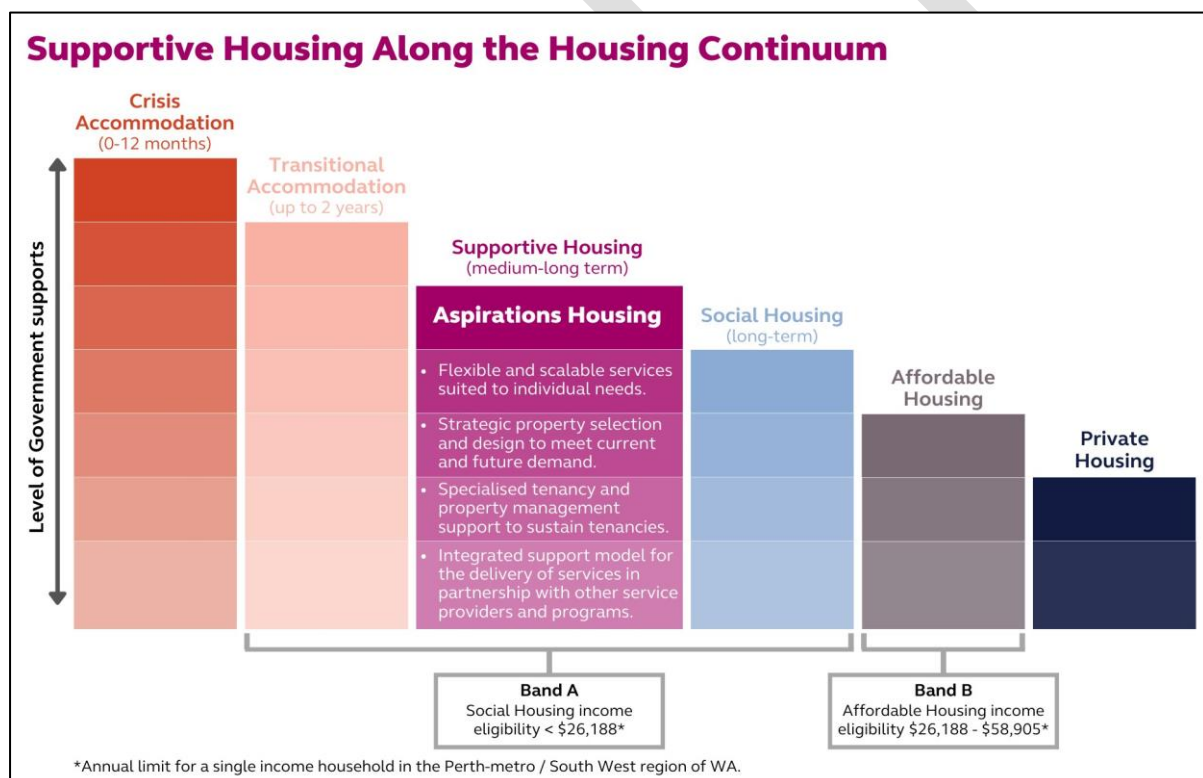


Figure 1: Supportive housing along the housing continuum with WA Government's income limits

4. Target Cohort

Aspirations Housing will support:

- Individuals over the age of 18 who have experienced homelessness or at risk of homelessness, and are exiting a transitional housing facility;
- Require support to maintain long term tenancies; and
- Eligible for Band A Social Housing and on a very low income.

5. Staffing Arrangements

The Aspirations Housing operational team includes the following roles:

Senior Manager is responsible for the implementation of Uniting's service strategies. The Senior Manager ensures the services delivered across the support service pathways, including those delivered by the Aspirations Housing Program, are of high quality, and align to contemporary best practice.

Operations Lead provide management support to both Uniting's Transitioning from homelessness and reintegration services. The Operations Lead provides clear vision and direction on service delivery, creates and manages a work plan that enables high performance, and defines and measures key performance outcomes in partnership with the team to improve service outcomes.

Case Workers serve as a crucial link between residents and the resources available to them. Beyond merely securing stable housing, the case worker's responsibilities extend to understanding the unique needs and challenges of each individual, fostering a trusting relationship, and collaboratively developing tailored plans which promote long-term, sustained success. This can include connecting residents to other community services, mental health resources, employment opportunities and educational programs. The Case Worker's ability to provide empathetic guidance, encouragement, and advocacy plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals to rebuild their lives. This 'light touch' approach ensures that residents receive the necessary support level that matches their current circumstances while fostering a sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency.

Tenant Support Worker provides a supportive landlord approach to tenancy management, ensuring the social impact is at the forefront of decision making while managing tenancy debt, damages, and neighbour complaints. The one point of contact for all housing related needs via the Tenant Support Worker ensures a holistic approach and helps foster meaningful relationships with tenants and services.

6. Hours of Operation

Case Workers will be rostered to visit each resident on site for up to three hours per week (per resident), between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

On-call staff are available after hours, weekends and public holidays. The primary contacts for after hours are Uniting Senior Manager and Operations Lead (refer to contact details below).

7. Parking

Off-street parking is provided on-site for staff and visitors. Demand for parking remains very low, with residents unlikely to own a vehicle due to low-income status, being subject to Band A Social Housing income restrictions. Visitor numbers are also anticipated to be low based on the prevalence of social isolation of the people anticipated to benefit from this service.

8. Intake and Case Management

It is intended residents will be referred from Uniting's transitional housing programs and other service providers. Referrals are discussed with the Case Workers at the Aspirations Housing Property to ascertain if they are suitable. A comprehensive assessment is conducted by the Case Worker to ensure the person's individual needs, risks, and complexities are discussed.

Once the intake assessment has been completed, and the person is considered a good fit for the Aspirations Housing Property, the Case worker will work alongside the resident to transition them into the Property.

Case Management will utilise the 'Outcomes Star' framework, specifically the Tenancy Star, which serves as a comprehensive tool for case management within a housing support program, especially for individuals transitioning from homelessness. The Tenancy Star focuses specifically on the key aspects related to tenancy sustainment. It provides a structured framework to assess and measure an individual's progress in areas such as maintaining a safe and stable living environment, managing finances, building positive relationships with neighbours, and accessing community resources. In the context of case management, the Tenancy Star becomes an invaluable guide for both case workers and clients. Through regular assessments and goal-setting sessions, case workers can identify specific challenges clients may face in maintaining their tenancy and develop targeted interventions accordingly. The visual nature of the star chart makes it accessible and engaging for clients, fostering a collaborative and transparent relationship. By utilising the Tenancy Star in case management, Aspirations Housing can not only track the progress of individuals but also tailor interventions to address specific needs, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustained housing stability for those who have experienced homelessness.

An important focus of the Service is building the capacity of residents to secure and maintain independent and stable long term accommodation and build positive connections within the community.

During their residency, residents are expected to actively contribute to the upkeep of the property/gardens. Residents are also expected to allocate a percentage of their income toward rent. These expectations align with the assumption that individuals may have already honed such skills during previous stays in transitional housing, and these practices are further encouraged and sustained through their tenure at Aspirations Housing. The emphasis is on fostering a collaborative community where residents willingly engage in the maintenance of their living environment and contribute to the financial aspects of their housing, contributing to the overall well-being of the community.

Ensuring the safety and delivering high-quality services is crucial for the success of the program. Every resident is expected to sign and adhere to a Residential Tenancy Agreement underscoring the commitment to maintaining a secure and effective service delivery environment.

9. Safety and Security

Staff will utilise Uniting's security company's mobile service if there are issues or incidents relatively close to the property, noting that Uniting's staff and security are only able to assist with matters directly relating to the Aspirations Housing residents and property. The local authority and neighbours will be provided with Uniting's staff and security contact details if requested.

10. Incidents

Uniting investigates all serious incidences occurring at our properties, or as requested by external stakeholders. As per the *Uniting Practice Guideline to Incident Management, Reporting and Investigation*, Uniting shall:

- Investigate the incident
- Implement risk mitigation strategies to prevent recurrence
- Debrief staff and encourage the utilisation of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services
- Communicate the outcomes of an investigation to an external stakeholder as necessary and within privacy requirements

11. Property and Facility Management

The Uniting housing team manages all maintenance tasks relating to the Property. Maintenance tasks include preventive, reactive and life-cycle maintenance, cyclical testing, and certification to Local Government and Australian Standards.

Uniting maintains records relating to maintenance tasks.

The Uniting housing team plays a pivotal role in overseeing the comprehensive spectrum of maintenance tasks associated with the property. This encompasses a proactive approach with preventive maintenance, addressing issues before they escalate, as well as reactive maintenance to promptly respond to unexpected challenges. Additionally, life-cycle maintenance is systematically managed, ensuring that all components and systems within the property are sustained over the long term. The team conducts cyclical testing and certification processes in alignment with both Local Government regulations and Australian Standards to uphold the highest safety and quality standards. In this meticulous approach, Uniting not only addresses immediate needs but also ensures the sustained functionality and compliance of the property. Furthermore, the team diligently maintains detailed records documenting all maintenance tasks, contributing to transparency, accountability, and a thorough historical perspective for future planning and decision-making processes.

12. Waste Management

Property waste management is via bin waste services offered by the local authority, with general waste and recycling bins to be collected weekly / fortnightly as per the scheduled waste collection services for the area.

All bins to be stored in the bin store area on the Property, which is located along the street front boundary to allow for accessible waste collection.

13. We are Uniting – About Us

Uniting WA provide community services including children, family and foster care services, NDIS disability, advocacy, and mental health services, as well as financial wellbeing, homelessness, and housing support.

The Uniting team supports people experiencing complex challenges throughout the Perth metro area and in the Great Southern.

You can find out more about us on our website – www.unitingwa.org.au

14. Key Contacts

Please contact us if you have any questions, or concerns arising during business hours, to the key contacts below:

Name	Position	Email / Mobile Phone
Emma White	Senior Manager, Transitioning from Homelessness	Email: emma.white@unitingwa.org.au Mobile: 0420 433 175
Danni Evans	Operations Lead, Transitioning from Homelessness	Email: danni.evans@unitingwa.org.au Mobile: 0427 615 025

15. Variations

This Operations Management Plan is scheduled for annual review by Uniting WA. Uniting WA reserves the right to vary or change this plan from time to time.

16. Authorisation

Approver's Signature

Date

17. Version Control

Version No.	Review Date	Reviewers	Comments
0	20.12.2023	Jennifer Snell, General Manager - Service & Quality Michael Chester, Co-CEO	Approved for DA submission. Recommend review prior to occupation.
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