

1.1. Responsibilities under the Program

1.1.1. Department of Family and Community Services Responsibilities

FaCS is, amongst other things, responsible for:

- providing support and assistance to approved community service providers under the Program so as to contribute to the provision of effective, efficient, quality services to the community;
- involving Centrelink and community organisations in the development and planning of the HOME Advice Program;
- meeting the terms and conditions of the Business Alliance Agreement established with Centrelink and the Funding Agreement established with community service providers;
- ensuring that services provided under the Program are accountable to the Australian Government in the terms agreed in the Funding Agreement; and
- administering the operations of the Program in a timely, accountable and efficient manner.

1.1.2. Centrelink Responsibilities

Centrelink is, amongst other things, responsible for:

- providing quality services which are effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted;
- working cooperatively with FaCS and the community service providers to achieve program outcomes, including participating in the development of a collaborative service partnership model;
- meeting the terms and conditions of the Business Alliance Agreement established with FaCS; and
- contributing to the overall development of the Program.

1.1.3. Community Service Providers Responsibilities

The community service provider is, amongst other things, responsible for:

- providing quality services which are effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted;
- working cooperatively with FaCS and Centrelink to achieve the Program outcomes, including participating in the development of a collaborative service partnership model;
- improving the quality of services through participatory action research;

- meeting the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement established with the Australian Government; and
- contributing to the overall development of the Program.

1.2. Service Partnership Model

A key part of the HOME Advice Program will be strengthening the existing Service Partnership Model to ensure a collaborative relationship between the participating Centrelink offices and community service providers.

Under this model participating Centrelink offices and community service providers will utilise innovative ways of identifying families at risk and preventing family homelessness. They will also progress a way of working together particular to the location and needs of their client community.

1.2.1. Centrelink Role

FaCS has provided funds for an Average Staffing Level of 0.8 for each of the participating Centrelink Customer Service Centres over the four years of the HOME Advice program. This funding purchases dedicated Social Work services. This will translate into a range of between 22:15 and 29:40 hours per week of Centrelink Social Work service (depending on selected Social Worker's pay point and level of experience).

The Centrelink Social Worker role is one that will be responsible for:

- Working closely and collaboratively with their Community Service Provider and supporting them in their role as lead service delivery agency (e.g. joint assessments of families, case conferences and development of case plans, Home Visits / Outreach work, joint promotion of the program in local communities etc);
- Improving the awareness and involvement of non-Social Work Centrelink staff in the HOME Advice Program; and
- Delivering Social Work services and coordinate delivery of other Centrelink services to families at risk of homelessness including:
- Ensuring families are receiving the Australian Government payments, services and concessions that they are entitled to;
- Reviewing family members circumstances that have a Centrelink debt, and utilizing Centrelink's discretion available through the 'special consideration' criteria;
- Reviewing family members circumstances who are jobseekers to ensure that Preparing for Work Agreements (PFWA) are appropriate and that they have not had any incorrectly applied breach penalty imposed;
- Ensure that family members are aware of the CENTREPAY service;
- Provide family members with information about the HOME Advice Program;
- Recording outcomes of their intervention with families at risk of homelessness on Centrelink systems (mainframe and SWIS), enabling the future progress of these families to be monitored; and
- Where appropriate, refer families to the HOME Advice Program community service provider in their local area for ongoing assistance.

1.2.2. Community Service Provider Role

Community service providers are the lead agency for the HOME Advice Program and are responsible for delivering and coordinating a range of services to families at risk of homelessness.

Over the life of the HOME Advice program it is expected that community service providers will assist approximately 1,600 families. Each HOME Advice community service provider will therefore be responsible for assisting an average of 50 families per year. FaCS recognises that there will be a complex range of factors influencing the actual number of families assisted across the various pilot services. This may result in more or less families being assisted in each location.

HOME Advice community service provider staff will be responsible for using their professional judgement to gauge the level and duration of support that each client family requires. The duration of support provided to client families has not been limited as it is recognised that both the level and duration of support that may be needed will vary greatly from family to family.

Community service providers will receive referrals of families at risk of homelessness from Centrelink. They will also be expected to facilitate referrals from other points of contact using locally developed strategies.

There will be four key service delivery elements to the provision of services by community service providers under the HOME Advice Program:

1.2.2.1. *Direct Service Delivery*

Community service providers will deliver a range of services directly to families. For example they may provide counselling, mediation, family and child focused therapy and conflict resolution. These services will be delivered in ways that are flexible and accessible to families including outreach support, on-site service delivery and telephone support.

HOME Advice community service providers will not be expected to work with families who have reached the crisis situation of being homeless. These families should be referred to a crisis service for assistance.

1.2.2.2. *Information, Advocacy and Referral*

Community service providers will provide information, advocacy and referral support to HOME Advice client families and refer them to other resources that are available in the community. As part of this service delivery element Community service providers will take an active interest in the progress of referred clients and will monitor their progress.

1.2.2.3. *Purchased Services (Brokerage Funds)*

Community service providers will have the capacity to use flexible brokerage funds to provide additional generalist and specialist support to meet individual family needs. Brokerage funds are to be used where there is no reasonable alternative source of support available for families.

Community service providers may, for example choose to purchase counselling, health or occasional care services for their client families. They may also choose to use brokerage funds to provide additional support such as financial assistance or material aid. It is up to HOME Advice community service providers to determine an approach that best works for their client families.

1.2.2.4. *Working Collaboratively*

Community service providers will be expected to network and develop effective working relationships with a range of core services, including crisis services. For example housing services, schools, drug and alcohol services, mental health services, family support services, emergency relief services and social and community support services. Importantly as part of this service delivery element community service providers will work closely and collaboratively with Centrelink to facilitate the referral of families to their service and to ensure families are able to access income support and other relevant Centrelink services.

The development of effective working relationships will be particularly important where an integrated case management approach is needed as multiple service providers are involved in providing services to a family and/or individual family member.