

# SCREENING TOOL FOR ENTRY TO ASSISTED BOARDING HOUSES

**Note: All new entrants to Assisted Boarding Houses must be screened to avoid inappropriate entry. There are no exceptions.**

## Background

The purpose of this information sheet is to explain the background to and operation of the Screening Tool for Entry to Assisted Boarding Houses (ABHs)<sup>1</sup>. This information is primarily intended for the main referrers of potential residents of ABHs, such as social workers or discharge planners from psychiatric and general health facilities. However, it will also benefit others especially managers of ABHs and community workers.

ABHs are privately operated accommodation services that provide supported accommodation to people with a disability with additional needs. ABHs are regulated under the *Boarding Houses Act 2012* (BH Act) and the *Boarding Houses Regulation 2013* (BH Regulation) by the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS).

## The Boarding Houses Act 2012 and the Boarding Houses Regulation 2013

Provisions relating to ABHs under the BH Act and BH Regulation commenced on 1 July 2013. The BH Regulation sets out requirements for the authorisation of ABHs and standards for their operation. One of these is the requirement that all new intending entrants to ABHs be assessed using the Screening Tool (Regulation 14).

## The Screening Tool

The Screening Tool for entry to ABHs was introduced in 1999 to prevent inappropriate placement of residents with high and complex needs in ABHs which do not have the capacity to provide for those needs. The Screening Tool is reviewed as appropriate.

Each screening is conducted by an Australian Unity Customer Care Assessment Centre and is valid for a period of up to six months. This means that if a resident is assessed as eligible to reside in the ABH, the resident can enter the ABH six

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<sup>1</sup> Assisted Boarding Houses were previously known as Licensed Residential Centres

months from the date of screening. A person is able to move between ABHs without having to be re-screened.

A further screening will be required if the resident is absent from an ABH for six months or more, and they want to return to the ABH or move to another ABH. Other circumstances where a further screening is required are discussed later in this document.

## How the Tool works

The Screening Tool asks a series of straightforward questions about whether a person with a disability could manage in an ABH or not. Depending on the answers to the questions in the Tool, two conclusions are possible:

- Yes, the resident is sufficiently independent that referral to an ABH is appropriate or;
- No, the person's needs are such that it would be inappropriate for them to reside in an ABH and a referral or transfer to other more suitable accommodation is required.

People considered not suitable to reside in an ABH will receive a letter with information and FACS contact details for further information.

## The Role of Australian Unity Customer Care

For consistency, efficiency and simplicity, it is useful to have a single “gate keeping” agency. From 1 April 2010 to February 2016 all screenings were conducted by Home Care Referral and Assessment Centre (RAC). In February 2016 the Home Care Service of NSW was transferred to Australian Unity who have been conducting the Screening Tool since that time.

Australian Unity Assessment Customer Care Centre are not expected to fill vacancies in ABHs or to take on the responsibility of finding accommodation for a person who has been screened and found not suitable for entry. Their role is to screen people and then make appropriate recommendations.

## Do current residents of Assisted Boarding Houses need to be screened?

A current resident will need to be screened if:

- their physical health or psychiatric condition significantly deteriorates. Any of the following people may request a further screening: the Licensee or Manager of the ABH; a service provider such as a caseworker, or other service provider funded under the Boarding House Reform Program; the person's doctor; and/or "person responsible" or legal guardian;

- the resident is admitted to hospital and the admission is a result of a deterioration in the resident's physical health or psychiatric condition, and the admission is for a period of six months or more. Where the admission is less than six months, and the resident is likely to return to the same level of independence as before the admission, a further screening is not required;
- a resident is absent from an ABH, for any reason, for six months or more.

### **Do all new intending entrants to Assisted Boarding Houses need to be screened?**

Yes, there are no exceptions.

### **Enforcement**

FACS is responsible for enforcing the use of the Screening Tool. ABH operators are not permitted to admit new clients without a screening confirming that the person is eligible. Operators may be asked to show a copy of the screening tool assessment to FACS Boarding House Compliance Officers to ensure compliance with the BH Act.

### **Review of Decisions**

If you would like further information or have any concerns regarding the outcome of an assessment please call 1300 160 170 and ask to speak with a Team Leader

Arrangements to have a Screening Assessment can be arranged by ringing 1300 160 170 Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. The answering service gives a series of options; please ensure you press option 2 to speak to a Customer Care representative who will refer you to the Assessment Team.