

# 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). 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.

An ABH licence authorises the licensee to use the premises specified in the licence as an assisted boarding house in accordance with the boarding houses legislation and the conditions of the licence. Before a licence is issued the licensee must undertake an extensive application process. ABHs are regulated under the *Boarding Houses Act 2012* (BH Act) and the *Boarding Houses Regulation 2013* (BH Regulation) by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

The authorisation of a licence under the *Boarding Houses Act 2012*, grants the licensee to privately operate an accommodation service that provides supported accommodation to a “person with additional needs”.

## **The *Boarding Houses Act 2012* and the *Boarding Houses Regulations 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).

## **How does the Act define a “person with additional needs”?**

A “person with additional needs” is defined as a person:

- with a permanent disability, mental illness or aged related frailty, and,

- who requires support with their daily care and living tasks, such as showering, preparing meals, or managing their medication.

These conditions are permanent or likely to be permanent.

## 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.

Each screening is conducted by an Assessor from Life Without Barriers 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 months from the date of screening. A person can 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 additional needs or 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.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their Screening Tool assessment via written communication.

## The role of Life Without Barriers

Life Without Barriers is funded by the DCJ to conduct assessments using the Screening Tool for a person's entry into an Assisted Boarding House.

Life Without Barriers staff 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 into an ABH. Their role is to screen people and then make appropriate recommendations.

Arrangements to have a Screening Tool assessment completed by Life Without Barriers, can be organised by phoning 1800 444 125 Monday to Friday 9:00am to

5:00pm. When phoning, callers will be given a few options, please select the appropriate number for the Assisted Boarding House Assessment option.

Alternatively, an email to arrange a Screening Tool assessment can be sent to [disabilityintake@lwb.org.au](mailto:disabilityintake@lwb.org.au)

## 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, 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

DCJ is responsible for enforcing the use of the Screening Tool. ABH operators are not permitted to admit new residents without a Screening Tool assessment confirming that the person is eligible. Operators may be asked to show a copy of the Screening Tool assessment to DCJ Assisted 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 1800 444 125 and ask to speak with the Life Without Barriers Manager overseeing the Screening Tool assessments. If your matter is not resolved the Life Without Barriers Manager will refer your concerns to DCJ's Manager, Assisted Boarding Houses Team, [AssistedBoardingHouses@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:AssistedBoardingHouses@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)