

NSW Assisted Boarding Houses Screening Tool Assessment Factsheet

Background

Assisted Boarding Houses (ABHs) are regulated under the *Boarding Houses (BH) Act 2012* and the *Boarding Houses (BH) Regulation 2013*, by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

An ABH licence authorises the licensee to use the premises specified in the licence as an ABH in accordance with the BH legislation. Before a licence is issued, the licensee must undertake an extensive application process.

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

How does the BH 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.

General information

ABHs are staffed to provide the person with a specialised shared accommodation option, which is tailored to support each person’s needs. ABH premises are unique and individualised in their appearance and location, however they all provide meals, general cleaning, laundry, medication assistance (where required) and general personal assistance (where required).

Supporting the person

Licensees, managers and staff of an ABH work to ensure the person is well connected to support services and engaged with the community. This includes, however is not limited to personal care, domestic assistance, transport, social and community access, as well as, access to primary and secondary health and medical care.

The Boarding Houses Act 2012 and the Boarding Houses Regulations 2013

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

The Screening Tool assessment

The Screening Tool assessment for entry to an ABH was introduced in 1999 to prevent inappropriate placement of residents with high and complex needs into an ABH, which do not have the capacity to provide for those needs.

Each Screening Tool assessment 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 an ABH, the resident can enter the ABH six months from the date of screening.

Note: A person can move between ABHs without having to be re-screened, however, a further screening will be required if the resident is absent from an ABH for more than six months, or if there have been a significant deterioration in their functional needs, and they wish to return to the ABH or move to another ABH.

How the Screening Tool works

The Screening Tool asks a series of straightforward questions about whether a person's needs can be met in an ABH or not. Depending on the outcome of the Screening Tool assessment, two conclusions are possible:

- Yes, the person's needs can be met in an ABH setting and a referral to an ABH is an appropriate option or;
- No, the person's needs cannot be met in an ABH setting, and it would be inappropriate for them to reside in an ABH.

The role of Life Without Barriers

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

Life Without Barriers staff are not expected to fill vacancies in an ABH or to take on the responsibility of finding accommodation for a person who has been screened and found not eligible for entry into an ABH. Their role is to assess the person's needs and then make appropriate decisions.

How to arrange a Screening Tool assessment

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.

Note: When phoning, callers will be given a few options, please select the appropriate number for the Assisted Boarding House Screening Tool assessment option.

Alternatively, an email to arrange a Screening Tool assessment, can be sent to abh@LWB.org.au

Initial Information required when requesting a Screening Tool assessment

When contacting Life Without Barriers to book a Screening Tool assessment, the referrer will be asked to provide the following information:

- Confirmation that consent has been given by the person being screened for the referral to be made.
- Referrer's information:
 - name
 - contact details (phone and email)
 - role/relationship to the person, and
 - organisation they work for (if applicable).
- Information of the person being screened:
 - name
 - M (Male), F (Female) or X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified)
 - DOB/Age
 - country of birth
 - primary language spoken
 - citizenship
 - does the person identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or CALD?
 - contact details of the person (phone)
 - current residential location (full address) of the person and whether the location is a hospital, gaol or other facility
 - the person's situation that results in the need for accommodation
 - whether the person has additional needs (i.e. age related frailty, mental illness or disability)
 - is the person an NDIS participant? If so, obtain Support Coordinators details
 - is the person a My Age Care participant? If so obtain Service providers details
 - does the person have a Disability Support Pension (DSP)? If not, how will they pay for their accommodation?
 - Has the person engaged with an Assisted Boarding House already? If so;
 - What is the name of the ABH?
 - What was (or is) the engagement?

Screening Tool assessment feedback or complaints

You may wish to provide comments, enquiries, complaints or feedback, regarding the Screening Tool assessment process. This can be done by contacting DCJ's **Assisted Boarding Houses team** at AssistedBoardingHouses@facns.nsw.gov.au