

**Enabling providers to participate in quality improvement initiatives and accreditation**

Policy statement

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**1. Purpose**

To guide the work of jurisdictions on ways to improve opportunities for providers to engage in quality improvement and accreditation processes.

**2. Background**

Quality improvement is a cyclical process, which can include accreditation. The process begins with self-evaluation, leads to the development of a quality improvement plan and implementation, which may lead to accreditation. The process then continues with self-evaluation and other relevant steps. This cycle will be undertaken many times over the organisation's life.

Some community housing organisations are currently impaired from actively implementing initiatives to improve the quality of their services and to seek accreditation due to a number of factors. These may include lack of human and financial resources, lack of understanding of the benefits of quality improvement, structural barriers, lack of appropriate skills and training. These factors limit the opportunities organisations have to engage in a process of quality improvement.

Continuous quality improvement facilitates organisational development and is likely to improve all aspects of service delivery, governance skills and tenants' and applicants' levels of satisfaction.

**3. Key principles**

The National Community Housing Accreditation Council believes that the continuous development of skills and quality improvement of individual services and the sector more broadly will enable the sector to continue to position itself and provide appropriate, efficient and reliable services to tenants and applicants.

One way to ensure continuous improvement is to encourage and enable community housing providers to actively engage in quality improvement initiatives and accreditation.

**A. Resources**

- i. The allocation of financial and training resources to enable providers to participate in quality improvement/accreditation is a vital issue.
- ii. Both Government and non government organisations such as peaks have a contribution to make in identifying where resources can be found.
- iii. Allocating adequate resources to develop and implement activities that will result in improving service quality and sector development is an issue for the whole sector not only for individual organisations. Action should be taken to identify potential funding sources.

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### **B. Planning**

- i. Government as well as peaks have a role to play in facilitating a process of engagement. Identifying short and long term strategies through the development of joint action plans in each jurisdiction -informed by national broad principles- is likely to produce best outcomes.
- ii. To be effective quality improvement initiatives need to be linked to both government and individual organisations' program planning processes.
- iii. Identifying and removing structural barriers limiting providers' ability to engage with quality improvement initiatives is likely to improve access.
- iv. Ongoing evaluation to streamline and eliminate duplication across different accreditation/quality systems and regulatory systems is central to facilitating engagement.

### **C. Education and Promotion**

- i. The value of implementing quality improvement initiatives or seeking accreditation is often not well understood by the sector. Quality improvement is often viewed as an additional level of activity that organisations have to embark on, rather than a way of doing that is integral to the core business of the organisation. This results in efficiencies across a range of operational and service delivery areas. Providing clear information and education to the sector/management/staff to encourage organisations to view quality improvement from a fresh and different perspective is vital.

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