



Housing for Special Needs

Special Needs Housing Forum

SNHF 

The South African Constitution's Bill of Rights seeks to preserve and enhance human dignity, and substantive equality, by encompassing all three generation of rights. First generation rights are political and civil, second generation rights involve the government's socio-economic obligations and third generation rights involve the "green rights". Socio-economic rights protected by the South African constitution include rights to housing, health care, food, water, social security, and education, among others.

Specifically in terms of housing, Chapter 2, Section 26, of the South African Constitution states:

Housing

26. (1) Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing.
 (2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of this right.

The socio-economic right to housing was tested in the *Government of South Africa v. Grootboom* where the ruling highlighted "those whose needs are the most urgent and whose ability to enjoy all the rights therefore is most in peril, must not be ignored by the measures aimed at achieving realization of the right".

THE HOUSING LADDER



TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING



Background

The Social Housing Foundation (SHF) is a Section 21 Company, established in 1997 by the National Department of Housing. The organisation was established as a national institution and formally mandated by the National Department of Housing to develop and build capacity for social housing institutions and to develop a policy framework for the social housing sector through the Housing Amendment Act, 1999 (Act. 20 of 1999).

One of the strategic objectives of the SHF is sector development and this clearly embraces other types of housing such as special needs and transitional housing.

On the 25 October 2005 the SHF invited a number of delegates from various institutions and government organisations to participate in its first Special Needs Housing exploratory meeting. The aim and purpose of the meeting was to establish what the needs and issues were in the Special Needs Housing Sector, and to see if there was enough commonality to launch a Special Needs Housing Forum. There was huge consensus at this meeting and members agreed that there was a need to launch a Special Needs Housing Forum.

The SHF agreed to assist by providing the venue and secretariat for the forum as well as all other logistics. The forum is now almost two years in existence and members meet at the SHF every quarter to discuss issues of importance and also to share experiences and best practice within the Special Needs Housing Sector.

Purpose of the Forum

Due to the huge growth in membership a task team was established to look at the purpose of the forum and to look at the long term sustainability of the forum.

The task team determined that purpose of the forum is three fold:

1. The primary purpose of the forum was for sector role players to have a united view in order to forward policy, legislation and position papers on pertinent issues. Specifically, the forum was established to recommend a National Special Needs Framework and the introduction of special subsidies to Government.
2. Studies and research to be carried out in key areas agreed by forum and undertaken through existing resources or through funds motivated by the support agencies / partners.
3. It is to provide a structure to facilitate exchange between special needs housing organizations and related key sector role players on best practices. Furthermore, it is to provide clarity on the role of special needs housing organisation's in housing and support an integrated approach to projects, and an exchange of technical resources to strengthen work in the sector.

One of the key areas of work of the Special Needs Forum has been the development of a position paper which explains why Special Needs Housing is needed in South Africa, who the beneficiaries of special needs housing are, what project types / care options exist to accommodate people with special needs, lists what subsidies are available and have been used to establish projects and who have made these kinds of projects possible.

Special Needs Housing Forum: Definitions for Special Needs Housing

Introduction

In compiling these definitions, the task team is mindful of the following important principles relating to special needs housing projects:

- The high level of special needs (including HIV AIDS) within South African Society;
- Limited available capacity in addressing these needs;
- The need for inclusive definitions;
- The need to create a more enabling environment for civil society organisations (eg: NPO's) to assist in addressing these needs;
- The need for partnership and co-operation, both between organs of government and between government and civil society organisations;
- A recognition of the key role that government funding (eg: special needs housing subsidies and social grants) can play in creating a more enabling environment for civil society organisations to assist in addressing the challenge.

It is also recognised that special needs housing needs to be defined against several parameters. These parameters have been translated into the following questions which constitute the four main sections of this report:

- Who are the beneficiaries?
- What are the project types that assist them?
- What are the subsidy mechanism(s) that are used?
- Who are the recipients of the subsidies (ie: who contracts with the Department of Housing)?

It is noted that the information contained in this short report is based on the practical experience of a wide range of organisations involved in the Special Needs Housing Forum.

The task team consists of the following people:

- Mr Mark Misselhorn (CEO of Project Preparation Trust)
- Prof Lone Poulsen (Wits University)
- Ms June Van Der Nat (Operation Job Creation)
- Ms Karuna Singh (Central Gauteng Mental Health Society)

Who are those in special need (ie: Who are the beneficiaries of special needs subsidies)?

- Infected or affected by HIV/AIDS;
- Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC's);
- Seriously ill;
- Old and infirm (including frail care);
- Physical disabilities;
- Intellectual and psychiatric disability;
- Homeless / on the street (including street children, refugees, trafficked people)
- Victims of domestic abuse and violence;
- Under substance rehabilitation;
- Parolees, ex-offenders and juvenile offenders.



What are the project types / care options that assist them?

- A wide range of project types which address the needs of the above beneficiaries is possible. It is not possible to list all possible project types, but examples of typical projects include the following:
 - Foster care (either via home care, community care homes, or children's homes).
 - Hospices.
 - Palliative care.
 - Places of safety / shelters (including move-on accommodation / second stage housing and emergency accommodation).
 - Homes for the elderly
 - Transitional housing.

- Multi-purpose projects which combine different functions or special needs into one project are quite common and are to be encouraged where capacity and funding permit (eg: cluster foster care combined with palliative care for HIV AIDS and community outreach).

- The integration of special needs housing into project based housing projects (eg: PLS, Rural, Social Housing) also occurs and is to be encouraged. In this case the project based and special needs housing are undertaken in parallel (eg: provision of community foster care homes as part of an in-situ upgrade housing project).

- It is recommended that the following also be considered for inclusion in the above list of eligible project types, which although they don't have 'beds', nonetheless address important special needs issues: a) day care centres; b) educational and outreach centres.

- Projects can be divided into three broad categories / models in respect of the degree to which the care is 'institutional'. Whilst it is recognised that non-institutional forms of care are preferred, it is also recognised that in some cases institutional care is unavoidable and its impacts can be mitigated in a number of ways:
 - Conventional institutional / residential model (eg: children's home; hospice).
 - Community care home (6 people in a home-like environment – eg: 6 children under a foster mother).
 - Home care (care within existing family or extended family – eg: extension provided to existing houses).

- Projects can be divided into three broad categories in respect of the level of management input required:
 - Accommodation with limited management required (eg: community foster care home – 6 children in the care of a foster mother).
 - Accommodation with management but limited care / special services (eg: place of safety).
 - Accommodation with high level of management and special care services (eg: hospice).

What housing subsidy mechanisms are utilised?

- **Transitional subsidy:** This is the primary mechanism. It is a variation of the institutional subsidy mechanism with the key difference being that subsidy are allocated to a 'bed' and the name of beneficiaries are not registered on the national housing database. The mechanism is utilised in both KZN and Gauteng. The subsidy is held by a suitable welfare/health sector organisation that ensures that the accommodation / shelter is utilised for the intended purposes. Beneficiaries might be resident for a very short period of time (eg: a day or two in the case of a shelter) to a period of several years (as in the case of foster care). When beneficiaries leave, replacement beneficiaries are identified by the organisation to occupy the vacated 'bed'.
 - **KZN Transitional Subsidy Mechanism:** The full subsidy is provided per 'bed' to a registered NPO which has the support of the either the Department of Social Welfare or the Department of Health (depending on the project type). This mechanism has been extensively utilised in KZN (more than 17 projects funded benefiting over 1474 people in special need and with a combined subsidy value of over R19.6million).
 - **Gauteng Transitional Subsidy Mechanism:** This subsidy targeted individuals earning less than R1 250 or families with a combined income of less than R2 500.00. The original subsidy in 1998 was R4,000 per bed (R16 000 divide by 4) but this has increased to R9 132.00 (R36 528/4) in 2006/7. This mechanism was extensively used in the late 90's with the establishment of 7 Transitional projects but no more projects have been developed since then.
- **Institutional Subsidy Mechanism:** This subsidy was originally targeted at families with a combined income below R3 500.00. In recent years this income band has been challenged and unofficially stands at R7 500.00. This subsidy has been extensively utilised by established Social Housing Institutions. Although this mechanism is not tailored for special needs, it is nonetheless used in Gauteng . In 2000, the GDOH established a Special Needs Directorate within Institutional Subsidy Directors and 2 projects were developed. However, this Directorate has been discontinued. The subsidy currently stands at R36 528 per unit plus 15% for Inner-City developments.
- **Disabilities provision on conventional housing projects:** It is noted that a range of disability provisions form part of the existing housing code. Ideally, project based housing projects (PLS, rural housing, social housing) should be catering for beneficiaries with special disability needs as part of the project and equipping their housing units with the appropriate special facilities (eg: ramps for wheelchairs). It is also recognised that this does not usually occur to the extent that it should and that more could be done in this area of delivery.
- **KZN home extensions pilot policy:** The KZN Department of Housing has approved a policy framework for home extensions. Three pilot projects are currently being prepared in order to test the policy in practice. The purpose is to provide home improvements or home extensions to de facto care givers in order to ensure that those in special need have sufficient living space within the household and to take the pressure off care givers who do not have adequate shelter but are nonetheless providing care to those in special need (eg: via the extended family).



Who are the recipients of subsidies for special needs (project initiators)?

- The recipients of special needs housing are, in almost all instances, grassroots organisations which have the necessary track record, experience and capacity. Preference should be given to existing organisations with a proven track record of delivery. These organisations should be registered non-profit organisations (NPO's) and can include the following institutional forms:
 - Voluntary associations
 - Registered Trusts
 - Registered Section 21 Companies.
- Municipal entities, closed companies (Pty's), and social housing institutions (SHI's) can also be considered, but in all cases they would need to demonstrate the necessary capacity to address special needs issues. Usually they would need to form a partnership or association with a registered NPO which has the necessary welfare or health sector experience.
- Whilst it is usually the same organisation which both owns and manages the project, there might be cases where a separate organisation (eg: one specialised in owning and maintaining property) owns the asset whilst another (specialised in welfare or healthcare) manages it.
- In the case of the pilot home extensions policy, the home-owner is the beneficiary of the subsidy subject to specific conditions (see above).

Database of Special Needs Housing Projects

Another task team was set up to compile a list of all special needs housing projects in the different provinces led by Alison Wilson. 55 special needs housing projects have been captured in the database. The full database should you want to get details on the different projects is available on the SHF website www.shf.org.za. Also if you would like to add a project to the database please send project information to dannyv@shf.org.za.



SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING PROJECTS

Some of the projects have been written up as good news stories to raise awareness of the special needs housing sector and to demonstrate that projects can be set up and managed effectively. Summaries are included below to give a sense of the scope of special needs projects, with the full stories also being available on the shf website.

DREAM CENTRE

Organization: The Dream Centre

Location: King's Street, Pinetown

Facility: A place of care and convalescence for HIV and AIDS patients who have recently been discharged from any one of 11 government hospitals in Durban.

Staff: Over one hundred professionals, working day and night shifts, including two full-time medical doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, speech therapists, a pastor and a range of volunteers.

Through the Pinetown Municipality, the group was able to secure the right to lease the property at rates-free rebates. The Dream Centre then applied for the R16 500 per bed one-off subsidy and was awarded R4.5 million (410 beds) in 2002 to begin their project. This was the catalyst that initiated a highly beneficial relationship between provincial government, private sector skills and beneficiaries of the added and improved healthcare services. The services offered have extended beyond plain healthcare to also include social welfare support, a chapel, and assistance in arranging pauper burials, funeral services and distribution of donations to other nearby charities.

The patient numbers are increasing in a phased approach. Initially, on opening their doors, The Dream Centre catered for 20 patients. Today the number of beds has increased to 140, with men and women in different wards, and spread over four floors.

ST. ANNES'S HOUSE

Organization: The Anglican Church

Location: Lower Woodstock, Cape Town

Facility: a home for abused and destitute women and their children

Since 1904 St. Anne's Homes has provided dedicated accommodation to abused women and their children, and to destitute women and children living on the street. The organisation offers a crèche and runs a shop selling the wares of the women attending an in-house skills development training programme.

St. Anne's provides first stage accommodation for a period of three-to-six months, during which time they realign their lives before returning home or to other places of safe accommodation. If additional time is required, a limited number of women and their children are accommodated in a second-stage home for a year while supplementary accommodation is sought and the women "bed down" new jobs and careers.



ZAZIWA: “place of hope”

Organization: Metro Evangelical Services (MES)

Location: Jeppestown, Johannesburg

Facility: special needs accommodation for 80 in-house and palliative care patients suffering from HIV and Aids

Staff: 1 professional nurse, 2 interned nurses and 12 care-givers

MES purchased a former old age home in Jeppestown, on the outskirts of Hillbrow and turned it into a hospice unit, mother and child and in-patient treatment facility. Private donations and contributions were relied upon to furnish the building. Most patients are referred to Zaziwa from MES's Impilo out-patient and mobile clinics which caters directly to the homeless and Hillbrow's immigrant population. A partnership with the Aurum Institute for Health Research on the roll out of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) has dramatically decreased the fatality rate at Zaziwa.

SHEPHERD'S KEEP

Organization: Shepherd's Keep Home, a section 21 not for profit organisation

Location: Bluff, Durban

Facility: a home for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

Staff: 15 nurses, house mothers, social workers and cleaners employed on a full-time basis

Shepherd's Keep was established by Colin and Cheryl Pratley and focus on the adoption of the babies in their care. Babies are looked after for only six months and close links with the Department of Social Welfare and reputable adoption agencies ensure the long-term wellbeing of the babies. The Pratley's believe that Shepherd's Keep is each baby's first home. It is essential that it is a stepping stone to their next place of safety - a loving and permanent home. To date every one of the babies that have come through their doors have been successfully adopted. Over half are adopted by foreign families.



The KZN transitional housing subsidy and donations from the corporate sector and private individuals raised enough funds to build a modern home planned for 60 beds. A hi-care unit is available and the house is open from 6am until midnight.



SAARTJIE BAARTMAN CENTRE

Organization: Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children.

Location: Athlone, Cape Town

Facility: A “one stop” centre for abused women and children.

Staff: Shelter: manager, house organiser, social worker, childcare worker, 2 night/weekend supervisors (total 6). Legal: legal advisor, paraegal/administrator (total 2 staff). 1 Job-skills manager. 1 Researcher. 1 Partnership/programme manager. Admin: director, receptionist, administrator, part-time finance administrator, maintenance worker (total 5). TOTAL SBC STAFF: 16.

The Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children was opened in 1999 with a small annual grant from the Western Cape Provincial Department of Social Development and additional funding from private donors and institutions. Uniquely, the Saartjie Baartman Centre established itself as a “one stop” centre where women clients and their children could receive a range of services, such as emergency or short-term accommodation (known as “first stage housing”); legal assistance; counselling; and, job creation skills.

The Saartjie Baartman Centre is one of only three institutions in Cape Town that offers “second stage” housing where abused women can pay nominal rents and stay for longer periods of time – typically up to one year – while realigning their lives and gaining confidence to once again enter society outside of their previous relationship. All three institutions fund their housing through private donations. The Centre is open twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, and currently has the capacity to house up to 22 mothers and 30-40 children.



MADULAMOHO

Organization: Madulamoho

Location: Hillbrow, Johannesburg

Facility: Mixed Housing Initiatives in Hillbrow

Staff: 6 head office, 3 housing supervisors, security and cleaning staff

Hillbrow is a manifestation of South Africa's need for low-income housing of various guises. Many inhabitants get trapped in a system in which, due to an over-demand and a limited supply, there is little choice but to pay high percentages of monthly income to share rooms in dilapidated, grime-ridden, buildings with broken ablutions and no privacy. As a solution to this, Madulamoho has developed three housing projects, with another two in construction phase.

One of these, the Europa, offers four different types of housing for low income tenants. First up is a hundred bed facility that is reserved for emergency situations in which people, rendered destitute for whatever reason, can seek shelter for 72 hours while they get their lives back on track and find alternative accommodation.

Second is a transitional housing unit in which up to four residents can share a room for R150 each a month, and in which MES are actively involved in providing vocational training projects, sponsored by the national Department of Social Services. Some of the residents are those that have been discharged from HIV and AIDS palliative care institutions such as Zaziwa that is run by MES, and are reintegrating themselves into society and seeking employment that will allow them to rent other permanent accommodation.

The third level of housing is the communal housing model in which single residents, couples or families are able to rent rooms for R690 a month with shared cooking and gender separate ablution facilities being provided. Each room has a prepaid electricity and gas meter and residents are expected to cover their own utility bills.

Lastly, there is also communal housing in which residents have their own en-suite ablution facilities, are able to stay as long as they like and pay R900 per month.



Special Needs Housing Forum

The forum is made up of organisations:

- **Women and Children's Shelters;**
- **Mental Health Organisations;**
- **Organisations for the Physically Disabled;**
- **Services to Orphaned and Vulnerable Children;**
- **Older Persons;**
- **Transitional, Communal and Emergency Housing;**
- **Professionals working in the Housing Sector;**
- **NGOs working in the Housing Sector;**
- **National, Provincial and Local Government Departments.**

Please direct any queries to the SNHF Co-ordinator at the Social Housing Foundation, Mr Danny Vengedasamy, who can be contacted on (011) 274 6200 or dannyv@shf.org.za

