

Neighbourhood House Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Matrix

Objective of the guide – this guide is designed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of parties to the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP), and other stakeholders where a Neighbourhood Houses experiences some difficulty that is best addressed through direct intervention. It complements the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Guidelines 2009-2012¹

Context - The guide has been created as a project of the Neighbourhood House Common Interest Group. It has been developed collaboratively by working groups comprising DPCD and DHS Regional Team staff, Neighbourhood House Networkers and the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC). The document was completed in 2011.

Document Status and Circulation – draft for trial, circulation to Neighbourhood House Networks, DHS Regional Teams, DHS Central Office

Principles underpinning interventions in Neighbourhood Houses -The purpose of any intervention is to strengthen the capacity of the Neighbourhood House to fulfil its mission, meet the NHCP aims and program requirements² and comply with the accountability requirements³.

It is recognised that providing the opportunity for community members to develop new skills and gain experience in governance 'is a central community strengthening activity of Neighbourhood Houses'⁴. This practice is consistent with the Neighbourhood House Sector Principles⁵.

Consequently, when Neighbourhood Houses experience difficulty this is understood as a predictable part of the developmental governance model practiced by Neighbourhood Houses .It is seen as a development opportunity rather than as a problem. Intervention is therefore undertaken as a community strengthening activity.

Intervention where required is therefore guided by the following principles:

- The terms of the NHCP guidelines
- The Neighbourhood House sector principles
- The values of:
 - Trust
 - Mutual respect
 - Confidentiality
 - Respect the diversity of the roles of DPCD staff and Neighbourhood House Networks
 - Collaboration and a partnership approach

¹ DPCD. (2009). *Neighbourhood House Coordination Proram 2009-2012*. Melbourne: DPCD.

² for NHCP aims and program requirements see DPCD,2009, p. 7

³ for NHCP aims and program requirements see DPCD, 2009, pp. 11-12

⁴ DPCD 24

⁵ for Sector Principles see DPCD,2009, p.33

Definitions: The following terms are defined as follows:

- Experiencing difficulty - refers to a difficulty that impacts on the performance of a Neighbourhood House to such an extent that non-compliance with the requirements of the NHCP (as per the guidelines) and/or other legal and contractual obligations is evident or likely
- Intervention – where direct contact is made with Neighbourhood House committee and or staff in order to resolve a difficulty

Roles and responsibilities framework

Where interventions are required, the roles and responsibilities of intervening parties will be determined by the presenting issue and the underlying cause.

Presenting issues are categorised as:

1. Governance – the issue is about the way the Committee of Management (COM) conducts itself
2. HR and people issues – the issue is about people in the organisation including roles and relationships internally or with others
3. Financial Issues - the issue is about the management of money
4. Program delivery – the issue is about the outputs of the Neighbourhood House

Underlying causes are categorised as:

1. Knowledge - People may not know what is required
2. Skills - People may know what is required but do not have the skills they need
3. Attitude - People may know what is required, may have the skills to do what is required, but do not wish to do what is required.

In each combination of presenting issues and underlying causes, the Network, DHS regional team, or DHS Central Office will take the lead role.

The lead role is the party responsible for initiation, coordination, monitoring and communication associated with an intervention.

Where issues are systemic in nature with implications beyond the circumstance of the individual Neighbourhood House, the Networks will report this to ANHLC and the DHS regional Teams to the DHS Central Office.

Responsibilities are allocated for each relevant party. Some tasks will involve a team approach. The DHS Central Office may delegate some tasks to the DHS regional team. Due to the wide variation in the levels of funding for Neighbourhood House Networks, their capacity to respond will vary.

In some cases third parties may have a role to play such as local government, ACFE, other government departments, specialist organisations (eg unions and employer IR organisations) or regulators (e.g. ATO, consumer affairs). This may be voluntary or mandatory dependent on the circumstances.

There is a table of roles and responsibilities for each category of presenting issue.





Predictors of difficulty

Known predictors include

- Less than 20 hrs NHCP funding
- Low Neighbourhood House income – often associated with lack of significant other funding such as ACFE
- Poor to fair relationship with Regional Teams and Networks
- Financial issues are more likely to result in greater risk to Neighbourhood Houses

Risk assessment framework and response times

Recommended response times are dependent on the degree of difficulty being experienced by the Neighbourhood House and the likelihood of the situation escalating in the short term as per the table below.

Current degree of difficulty	Is the issue likely to escalate YES/NO	Response initiation timeframe
Some Difficulty - a degree of difficulty that impacts on the performance of a Neighbourhood House that could affect compliance with the requirements of the NHCP and/or other legal and contractual obligations	Yes 	Early intervention recommended within 1 month
	No 	When possible within 3 months
Moderate Difficulty - where there is minor non-compliance with the requirements of the NHCP and/or other legal and contractual obligations that if left unaddressed pose a substantial risk to the organisation.	Yes 	Intervention required within 2 weeks
	No 	Early intervention recommended within 1 month
At Risk - where there is substantial non-compliance with the requirements of the NHCP and/or other legal and contractual obligations that threaten the viability of the Neighbourhood House if left unaddressed		Immediate intervention within 1 week
Unviable - where there is substantial non-compliance with the requirements of the NHCP and/or other legal and contractual obligations which can only be addressed through major structural change		Immediate intervention same day

1. GOVERNANCE – allocation of responsibilities and tasks where governance is the presenting issue

Common issues - Policies & processes absent or not adhered to, lack of or weak strategic plan, lack of understanding of governance role, confusion between governance and management functions

Possible Symptoms –high committee or staff turnover, lack of proper employment processes, inappropriate committee composition e.g. family members, cliques, complaints from any source, limited relationship with Network and/or DHS regional team

Early detection strategies – Monitor annual reports and COM membership post AGM, check committee’s intended employment process following a vacancy occurring, log and monitor changes in staff, monitor programs, annual reports. Annual or strategic plans should show development and contain SMART goal, skill audits of committees.

Practice note – The first party to become aware of issue ensures relevant parties are made aware. Action plan is developed collaboratively with nominated parties. Central Office works in collaboration with the regional team. Joint decision is made as to which third parties to include if beneficial. Where Neighbourhood Houses are auspiced by other organisations, the legally constituted governing body of that organisation is responsible for governance standards. In Neighbourhood Houses auspiced by Local Government Authorities, the network has no responsibility for governance support. DHS Central Office has responsibility for monitoring compliance with NHCP auspicing arrangements.

Underlying cause Possible actions	Knowledge - People may not know what is required	Skills - People may know what is required but do not have the skills they need	Attitude - People may know what is required, may have the skills to do what is required, but do not wish to do what is required.
Organise to meet/contact the NH to clarify issue/s	Network	Network	Network
Assist the NH to develop an action plan to overcome the issue/s. The plan should include timeframes and milestones	Network DHS regional team	Network DHS regional team	Network DHS regional team
Organise for professional development where required	Network	Network	Network
Organise for mediation where required	Network	Network	Network Consumer affairs*
Notify and/or include relevant partners as required	Network	Network	Network
Set timeframe for improvement as part of an action plan	DHS regional team DHS Central Office	DHS regional team DHS Central Office	DHS regional team DHS Central Office Consumer affairs*
Monitor improvement against action plan timeframes	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office
Follow up within specified timeframe to ensure improvement has been achieved	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office

Lead role in **bold text** is responsible for coordinating any intervention

* May be involved dependent on circumstances

2. HR AND PEOPLE ISSUES– allocation of responsibilities and tasks where roles and/or relationships are the presenting issue

Common issues Coordinators unable to adequately support their committee due to insufficient funded hours or other reasons. Conflict exists between committee and coordinator or between individuals which paralyses the organisation. IR regulations are not complied with. Staff appraisals not conducted.

Possible Symptoms –high committee or staff (less than 3 years) turnover, mid-term resignations, whole or majority of committee not re-standing at AGM, someone raises a concern, internal or external to the Neighbourhood House, sudden resignation of coordinator, stress leave, sick leave

Early detection strategies – Monitor annual reports, monitor COM membership updates post AGM, check quality staff appraisals processes are in place, log and monitor changes in staff

Practice note – Action plan is developed collaboratively with nominated parties. Central Office only involved if NHCP contract is at risk. Where there is an IR dispute, employer and employee bodies assume full responsibility for resolution.

Underlying cause Possible actions	Knowledge - People may not know what is required	Skills - People may know what is required but do not have the skills they need	Attitude - People may know what is required, may have the skills to do what is required, but do not wish to do what is required.
Organise to meet/contact the NH to clarify issue/s	Network External services*	Network External services*	Network External services*
Assist the NH to develop an action plan to overcome the issue/s. The plan should include timeframes and milestones	Network DHS regional team External services*	Network DHS regional team, External services*	Network DHS regional team External services*
Organise for professional development where required	Network External services*	Network External services*	Network External services*
Organise for mediation where required	Network External services*	Network External services*	Network External services*
Notify and/or include relevant partners as required	Network	Network	Network
Set timeframe for improvement as part of an action plan	DHS regional team DHS Central Office External services*	DHS regional team DHS Central Office External services*	DHS regional team DHS Central Office External services*
Monitor improvement against action plan timeframes	Network DHS Central Office External services*	Network DHS Central Office External services*	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office External services*
Follow up within specified timeframe to ensure improvement has been achieved	Network DHS Central Office External services*	Network DHS Central Office External services*	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office External services*

Lead role in **bold text** is responsible for coordinating any intervention

* external services may include Jobs Australia, ACEVic, Unions, Fair Work Aust, mediation services, Consumer Affairs, Worksafe, auspicing body etc. depending on circumstance.

3. FINANCE ISSUES– allocation of responsibilities and tasks where finance is the presenting issue

Common issues - Financial systems, reporting and monitoring are deficient, low levels of financial literacy, failure to generate income streams or attract grant monies

Possible Symptoms – House records a deficit, successive annual losses, finance reports contain inadequate detail, external party raises an issue e.g. taxation office, ACFE, inadequate reserve funds for liabilities such as long service leave or wind up, excessive reserve funds

Early detection strategies – Monitor annual financial reports, balance sheets, and audit reports, where possible check finance reports to committee, monitor annual income relative to NHCP grant

Practice note – The first party to become aware of issue ensures relevant parties are made aware. Action plan is developed collaboratively with nominated parties. Central Office works in collaboration with the regional team. Joint decision is made as to which third parties to include if beneficial.

Possible actions	Underlying cause	Knowledge - People may not know what is required	Skills - People may know what is required but do not have the skills they need	Attitude - People may know what is required, may have the skills to do what is required, but do not wish to do what is required.
Organise to meet/contact the NH to clarify issue/s		Network#	Network	Network
Assist the NH to develop an action plan to overcome the issue/s. The plan should include timeframes and milestones		Network DHS regional team	Network DHS regional team	Network DHS regional team
Organise for professional development where required		Network	Network	Network
Organise for mediation where required		Network	Network	Network Consumer affairs*
Notify and/or include relevant partners as required		Network	Network	Network
Set timeframe for improvement as part of an action plan		DHS regional team DHS Central Office	DHS regional team DHS Central Office	DHS regional team DHS Central Office# Consumer affairs*
Monitor improvement against action plan timeframes		Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office
Follow up within specified timeframe to ensure improvement has been achieved		Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office

Lead role for each Underlying cause in **bold text** is responsible for coordinating any intervention

* May be involved dependent on circumstances

4. PROGRAM DELIVERY– allocation of roles and responsibilities where NHCP outputs are the presenting issue

Common issues - Required activity hours not being achieved, imbalance of activities e.g. all programs and no CD work or vice versa. Limited community consultation or engagement, Non-compliance with accountability requirements

Possible Symptoms –House runs few programs, limited participation, limited relationship with Network and/or DHS regional team, failure to lodge annual report, annual plan or quarterly report, other programs’ requirements not being met e.g. ACFE stats not submitted, low Neighbourhood House income levels, no project funds

Early detection strategies – Monitor annual reports, monitor compliance, monitor programs, annual or strategic plans should show development and contain SMART goals, regular scanning meeting between Networker and DHS team to check level of involvement, monitoring website content and currency

Practice note – The first party to become aware of issue ensures relevant parties are made aware. Action plan is developed collaboratively with nominated parties. Central Office works in collaboration with the regional team. Where requirements of other funded programs are not being met, other stakeholder may be involved e.g. ACFE local government. Joint decision is made as to which third parties to include if required.

Possible actions	Underlying Cause	Knowledge - People may not know what is required	Skills - People may know what is required but do not have the skills they need	Attitude - People may know what is required, may have the skills to do what is required, but do not wish to do what is required.
Organise to meet/contact the NH to clarify issue/s		DHS regional team	DHS regional team	DHS regional team
Assist the NH to develop an action plan to overcome the issue/s. The plan should include timeframes and milestones		Network DHS regional team	Network DHS regional team	Network DHS regional team
Organise for professional development where required		Network	Network	Network
Organise for mediation where required		DHS regional team	DHS regional team	DHS regional team
Notify and/or include relevant partners as required		DHS regional team	DHS regional team	DHS regional team
Set timeframe for improvement as part of an action plan		DHS regional team DHS Central Office#	DHS regional team DHS Central Office#	DHS regional team DHS Central Office#
Monitor improvement against action plan timeframes		Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office	Network DHS regional team DHS Central Office
Follow up within specified timeframe to ensure improvement has been achieved		DHS regional team DHS Central Office	DHS regional team DHS Central Office	DHS regional team DHS Central Office

Lead role in **bold text** is responsible for coordinating any intervention