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DEFINITION OF CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING AND WHO SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE

There are two main types of special needs housing: group housing and individual housing. The principle difference between them lies in the level of emergency, care and expertise required and the ability or inability of a person in special need to live independently.

1. Special Needs Group Housing (SNGH)

This is housing provided by registered and suitably capacitated NPO's for those requiring special group care for a range of reasons. These people are usually in urgent need of a type of care which requires specialised capacity, resources or expertise. Individual's names are not registered on the national housing database. At the moment a variation of the institutional subsidy (referred to as a transitional subsidy by some) is still utilised because the draft national SHN Policy is not yet approved by the Minister of Human Settlements. The relevant oversight Department (e.g. Social Development or Health) must confirm that the NPO has the necessary capacity to undertake the project sustainably and that the project concept is supported.

Special housing refers to the following categories of persons who have low incomes (as defined in the draft SHN Policy) or have no incomes or are dependent on social grants:

- Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC's);
- Older persons;
- Persons with physical disabilities
- Persons with intellectual and psycho social disabilities
- Victims of domestic abuse and similar crimes;
- The terminally ill and frail persons (including those infected by HIV/AIDS);
- The homeless or destitute or those living on the street (including children);
- Those receiving substance abuse rehabilitation services;
- Other vulnerable people such as victims of serious crime and victims of human trafficking.

2. Special Needs Individual Housing (SNIH)

SNIH is the provision of subsidised housing opportunities to individuals in special need and who are able to live independently of institutional or group care. Beneficiaries are typically afforded preferential allocations on mass housing projects (project-linked housing subsidy), allocated an individual stand-alone house (individual housing subsidy or FLISP¹), or given preferential access to rental housing opportunities². Project-linked subsidies (as on a mass housing project) or individual housing subsidies (stand-alone house) would usually apply. A narrower category of eligibility should apply, partially for practical reasons³ and partially to prevent opportunists using this avenue to

¹ Finance linked individual subsidy for those earning between R3,500 and R15,000 per month.

² E.g. on a social housing project, in a shelter (which may be provided via SNGH), or a CRU. In this case no individual housing subsidy would apply. There is precedent for such approaches e.g. NMBM, KZN policy for the aged and disabled, and a Gauteng policy

³ E.g. young orphans or people with certain intellectual and psychiatric disabilities should not qualify.

secure preferential treatment. This requires further consideration and municipalities would need to exercise control and, where appropriate, be guided by the advice of the relevant oversight Departments (e.g. Social Development or Health) and/or local NPO's. The usual subsidy eligibility criteria⁴ apply, except that single people without financial dependents may also be eligible. It is however suggested that the categories of special need which should be considered as being potentially eligible for SNIH may include:

- a. **The elderly** in fairly good health able to live independently (even if this might be with limited family or other assistance)
- b. **People with disabilities** as described in the Housing Code⁵ who are able to live independently with or without their families.
- c. **Abused women and children for 3rd stage housing.** It should be noted that only those actually undergoing treatment and referred by the NPO should be able to qualify. With high levels of domestic abuse in South Africa, this would need to be tightly controlled.
- d. **Child headed households** (provided the household is headed by person 18 years and older and government accepts that children in the affected household are seen as financially dependent).

Please contact Liesel Du Plessis, PPT's Special Needs Housing programme manager, at lieseldp@pptrust.co.za for further information.

⁴ Lawful resident in South Africa; legally competent to contract; not previously benefitting from a housing subsidy; gross monthly household income may not exceed the prescribed maximum amount (currently R3,500).

⁵ Wheel chair bound, partially physically disabled, deaf or blind.

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