

# Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Housing

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Shelter WA welcomes the recommendations from the Auditor General's Report on Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Housing but has ongoing concerns on the impact of the disruptive behaviour strategy on tenants with complex needs.

Recently tabled in Parliament, the objective of the Report was to assess how effectively the Department of Communities (the Department) manages tenants that are disruptive or conduct illegal activities in public housing: With specific focus on the Department's Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy (also known as the three strikes policy) policies and procedures, and its management of complaints about tenants.

Whilst the Report found that although the Department adequately manages over 11,500 complaints per year, it outlines that the Department still had work to do to better support tenants, particularly those with complex needs, to avoid disruptive behaviours from occurring.



In particular, the Report found that the Department needs:

- A more holistic approach to tenancy management to reduce disruptive behaviour incidents;
- A stronger focus on early intervention through tenant engagement and support. It is hoped that this will include a clearer procedural approach from the Department for those experiencing possible situations of domestic violence or mental illness;
- Improved information sharing and engagement internally and with external governmental agencies; and
- A more comprehensive and consistent data collection and analysis to improve its approach to managing disruptive behaviour and how it directs its resources.

The Report identified a number of health and social issues that contribute to disruptive tenant behaviours including poor mental health and family violence. "There is a critical need to focus on early intervention and support for tenants, with appropriate referrals to enable people to maintain and sustain their tenancies, said Michelle Mackenzie, CEO of Shelter WA, and not to take a punitive approach to these complex issues. "It is not appropriate that tenants with complex needs are being evicted into homelessness. This does deliver positive outcomes for the tenant or the community."

While we are supportive of the Report's recommendation for more comprehensive information sharing between the Department and other government agencies, the Report does not acknowledge or recommend the positive impact of partnership with the community sector and tenants to co-design a tenancy support system to better maintain and sustain tenancies.

The Department has accepted all of the Report's recommendations. To read a copy of the report click [here](#).