

# Homeless Intervention Team (HIT)

A Housing First Model

**HAYMARKET  
FOUNDATION**



# A project overview

- HIT is an initiative that initially provided supported housing to 20 chronically homeless inner city clients, with complex needs, and assisted to resolve impediments to the effective provision of housing, health and support services for their clients. This was a pilot which was funded for 12 months, but has since been extended for another 18 months, until June, 2011, and will provide support for a further 30 clients.
- HIT is funded by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the project was overseen by a team consisting of representatives from DoCS, Housing NSW and NSW Health, for the initial six months. The project is now administered under the facilitation of DoCS.
- Funding for Support packages are auspiced to The Haymarket Foundation and Mission Australia.



# A project overview (cont)

- Clients entering the program do not have to demonstrate that they are 'housing ready'.
- The Homelessness Intervention Project (HIP) within each agency provides ongoing support to clients to address their current issues and promote rehabilitation into living independently in the community.
- HIP work in conjunction with various support providers such as Housing NSW, Bridge Housing, Mental Health, The Office of Guardian, AOD services, etc.



# Support component

This presentation will focus on the support component of the project and address the following:

- Risks/challenges/issues in building packages of support for chronically homeless, complex needs clients
- Effective engagement with government & non-government partners
- Outcomes of the model



# HIP aims

- House and stabilise clients in independent accommodation.
- Meet the requirements of long term homeless individuals with complex needs.
- Client focused intensive case management.
- Provide/referral to long term mainstream support services.
- Work in partnership with stakeholders to holistically meet clients needs.



# HIP principles

- Client centred, focusing on clients identified needs and goals.
- Flexibility in meeting clients changing needs
- Holistic stabilisation for clients in areas of housing (tenancy management), health, complex needs, lifestyle and community involvement



# What client services does HIP offer?

- Support in securing accommodation.
- Providing establishment costs in setting up a fully functional home.
- Initial material aid if needed.
- Advocacy and referral.
- Transport.
- Case management.
- Crisis intervention.
- Service collaboration through meetings with Government & Non-Government agencies.
- Provides a safety net respite in the event of a client's tenancy becomes unstable.



# Client demographic

- Female & male
- Varied ages
- Varied sexual identities
- All long term homeless
- Varied and multiple AOD disorders and mental health
- Varied criminal backgrounds
- Varied challenging behaviours
- Varied physical health issues
- Varied diverse background with diverse needs



# Challenges

## Complexity of clients:

- Long term homeless- lacking in skills to manage a tenancy
- Long term AOD/Mental health disorders
- Long lead up to engagement with case managers
- Client's negative supports/ lack of social skills
- Levels of intoxication
- Recurring crises
- Difficulty in keeping appointments



# Challenges (cont)

## Systemic Issues

### (Review of the Homelessness Intervention Project March 2010)

- Lack of suitable properties - reluctance of some landlords to head lease to Housing Provider for this client group
- Eligibility of Housing – clients deemed ‘Unsatisfactory Former Tenant’ must repay former debt or have 6 month probationary lease
- Eligibility for dental services – clients in transition not considered homeless by some services
- Eligibility for specialist homeless services – access often denied if client still using, chaotic, etc. Problems with addressing issues whilst sleeping rough
- OH&S policies of referral agencies – delays due to concerns of client’s offending behaviours



# Challenges (cont)

- Privacy & confidentiality –limits information sharing-joint consent forms developed.
- Lack of exit planning for homeless clients exiting hospitals, prison.
- Difficulty in sourcing other support agencies to provide ongoing support when the client has exited HIP
- Required documentation to access services – housing, support causes delays



# Challenges (cont)

## Access to health services impacted by:

- AOD issues - entry to detox, rehab; ringing daily whilst homeless
- Literacy or cognitive impairment issues
- No access out of homelessness on exit from treatment.
- Multiple entry points to agencies -complexity of making referrals due to range of eligibility criteria



# Effective engagement of government & non-government agencies

Recognition of a need for a partnership approach, as it

*“added value that would not have been possible if the program delivery had been through a single organisation”*

(Review of the HIT Project – March, 2010)



# Effective engagement of government & non-government agencies

## Value added by partnership:

- Agencies worked together with a common vision
- Improved client outcomes
- Easier access to various government departments
- Shared understanding regarding individual clients
- Increased opportunities for cross agency learning and understanding of each partner's processes



# Effective engagement

The partners had distinct responsibilities

The partners were:

- The Haymarket Foundation – support packages
- Mission Australia – support packages
- Bridge Housing- source Head lease properties
- HIT Team- provide knowledge of, and facilitate access to their agencies



# Engagement

- All partners have a clear vision of the objectives of the project
- Mission Australia and the Haymarket Foundation had worked in partnership previously, so had a good understanding of each others processes
- Bridge Housing works well with the support agencies, and often attends the weekly meetings with all the other partners
- Weekly meetings provide a forum for staff and managers of the project to monitor clients progress and coordinate partnership activities



# Report to date (success rate)

Actions	Clients
Referrals made to date	49
Referrals accepted	39
Referrals declined	10
Number of clients housed	28 (7 referred to alternative pathways)
Number of clients still to be housed	4
Referrals made to mainstream services for handover	23
Clients stabilised and managing tenancy successfully	18
Clients that remain housed although still presenting chaotic behaviours	10



# Outcomes

*‘The HIT demonstrated that supported housing using a ‘housing first’ model can work very effectively for chronically homeless people in a location where there is good access to mainstream services and high levels of commitment by housing and support providers. SAAP agencies participating in HIT are now receptive to ‘housing first’*

*‘Early project outcomes are in line with the positive evidence base for overseas ‘housing first’ projects. They have also given senior agency representatives insights into the issues in implementing a ‘housing first’ approach in the Australian context’.*

Review of the Homelessness Intervention Project

Report to NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (March 2010)





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