

SETS Community of Practice
Communique: Health and Housing Service Linkages Subgroup Meeting
Videoconference – 19 July 2022

On 19 July 2022, SETSCoP held a Health and Housing Service Linkages subgroup meeting. The focus of this group is to discuss best practice strategies used and discuss trends and issues identified through the delivery of health and housing support to SETS clients. Attendees comprise SETSCoP members from around Australia with an interest in health and housing related supports for refugees and migrants.

This meeting focused on partnerships that support SETS clients into housing.

Service provider presentation

Access Community Services shared information on the various networks and groups they participate in, which assisted them to support clients into housing. Q Shelter facilitate a local Care Coordination meeting which occurs bi-monthly and includes representative from the Department of Housing Service Centre, Queensland Health, local neighbourhood houses, local community centres and specialist housing services. Any housing workers can refer directly into this meeting and share about the barriers their client is facing in securing housing. The Department of Housing can review any applications made to their service and all meeting attendees can make suggestions to support the individual or family into a housing solution. There are approximately ten referrals into this group each month and approximately 50% are housed through the increased coordination and access to services.

Access Community Services also participates in a strategic group which meet to discuss Housing and Homelessness in Logan. Participation in this group helps to bring the specific needs of diverse communities into the conversation, whilst the needs across the region are considered and advocacy is made through the group.

Other service providers shared that their experience of care coordination meetings. These meetings allow them to bring a case to a network of community service providers, and has facilitated support due to the understanding and buy in of the groups attending the meeting. Settlement service providers are not housing service providers, however, spend a lot of time supporting clients with this and therefore need to think about how to work collaboratively. Due to the housing crisis across the board, housing specialist services are at capacity, however, with advocacy from settlement providers, a client can be prioritised.

Key Issues

Service providers discussed the key reasons clients are affected by the housing crisis. The main one being that many are being priced out of the market, due to their limited income and many of them relying on income support payments from Centrelink. The cost of living has increased, however income rates have remained steady. In addition, there is a lack of available accommodation. This is especially the case for larger families, where options are extremely limited. Another concern is that home owners are selling their houses without much warning. Some clients are also affected by other barriers, such as:

mental health concerns, alcohol and other drugs. Some providers have supported clients with letters of support and received training from agents on the best ways to communicate with them.

There is some confusion for clients and some service providers due to the variety of supports available in difficult States and the complexity of the sector. It was suggested that a housing services map for each State would be beneficial for providers to know what is available to whom.

Shared Resources:

Q Shelter Care Coordination locations: <https://www.qshelter.asn.au/service-integration-initiative/>

NSW Housing and Accommodation Support initiative:
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/services-hasi-cls.aspx>

NSW Private Rental Brokerage Services: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/factsheets/brokerage-service>

Department of Community and Justice Rental support:
<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/ways/renting-private-market>