

PIR Agency:	Aftercare
Date:	September 2015- Feb 2016
Key issue(s)	A significant issue in the Peninsular area is a lack of housing services being permanently located or having a presence in the community. This has impacted considerably on PiR consumers and the wider community as these individuals are unable to access housing information and support without significant travel and financial strain.
Main Objective(s)	<p>The overall aim of the project was to improve access to housing information & services for people with severe and complex mental illness, in the Redcliffe Peninsula area.</p> <p>Key Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improve availability, and assist with ease of access, to information on housing options. 2) Minimise the stress and anxiety experienced when navigating housing options. 3) Reduce the experience of homelessness and/or reduce the risk of homelessness in the region.
Summary of Impact or Result	The impact of the project is that people in the Peninsula area now have access to the service offered by Department of Housing. This is due to an officer now being based out of a community centre on a fortnightly basis. This has resulted in community members being able to access housing support in a much more user friendly manner. It has also resulted in positive outcomes for some PiR consumers as they have been able to access Department of Housing in a more time sensitive manner and in an environment that made them feel more comfortable.
Context	<p>Since 2013, PIR in the Peninsula area, have actively supported 185 (Qlikview data September 2015) of people. Of that number, 75 participants have been directly supported to manage and deal, with multiple complex issues that have <i>included</i> housing issues. These issues have had a direct, detrimental, impact on mental health and wellbeing. Of that number 28 have directly experienced homelessness and 47 have experienced multiple tenancy issues; these issues have either placed them at risk of homelessness or have resulted in them becoming homeless. The PIR experience to date provides evidence which suggests that, the main challenges for people in our region are, accessing housing information (on all the options available and navigating the application requirements) and, interfacing with a user friendly service system i.e. one that can professionally and compassionately accommodate persons living with severe and persistent mental illness.</p> <p>Participants experience a range of challenges e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No DoH officer based in the Peninsula area (nearest offices are Caboolture or Chermside), many participants do not drive. • The local 'Homestay' officer's position in Redcliffe is part time, and the demand for

services far outweighs her capacity.

- A person's experience of their illnesses can make it difficult or impossible, for them to access public transport.
- Most are recipients of welfare and cannot afford Taxi's.
- When a tenancy is under threat and a person is unwell, there is no 'go to' service to assist them to explore their options or manage the paperwork associated with bond loans and rent assistance.

Stakeholders/Partnerships

Key stakeholders in the project are-

PIR Aftercare staff

Lee Banfield- Coast 2 Bay Housing

Talia Van Gils- KEIHS

Miranda Lipke- Encircle

Department of Housing Caboolture- Senior manager and officers.

Project Management

This was planned to be a 3 phase project that was expected to run over a 6-12month period.

Phase 1 – Collate the data that has been entered on the PIR 'issues Register' as well as any other relevant data at the early stage of the project. Connect with sector partners that have a vested interest in the housing/homeless issues and identify partners from other areas that are crucial to the collaboration (e.g. centre link, MH services); enter into initial discussions on a way forward; 'map out' in more detail, what the key issues are and identify existing models of good practice.

Phase 2 – Establish a working/advisory group (homeless network, participants, Centrelink, relevant MH services etc); facilitate meetings with a view to identifying some key goals, strategies and actions, which are likely to result in positive systems changes. Consider evaluation and reporting progress; seek feedback and recommendations for action via a project plan/agreement.

Phase 3 – Commence work on actions identified within the project plan; monitor and evaluate progress with working/advisory group. Report any final decisions/outcomes to relevant parties.

Description of Activities

Key Expected Outcomes of the project where-

- Central point/location to access information and housing support in Redcliffe, in a speedy/timely manner i.e. as the need arises.
- Consumers have a positive experience of navigating their housing options.

The initial conversations among the working group highlighted a need for people experiencing housing issues in Redcliffe to have better access to housing information and support. A key issue that continued to arise was that Department of Housing did not have a presence in the area and that it was extremely difficult for people living with mental health issues to access their service in a user friendly way. From this conversation, a meeting occurred between the working group and Department of Housing Caboolture where it was highlighted that there was a significant need for

them to have a regular presence in the area. Unknown to the working group, Department of Housing had internal conversations about the need for this prior to the meeting. The result from the meeting was that Department of Housing would have a housing officer working out of Encircle Neighbourhood Centre every Monday fortnight. Consumers and the wider community could access this service to complete any housing applications, access the rent connect program, speak about their housing options and speak with an officer about any issues/queries they have.

Another outcome of the meeting was an outreach morning to be held at the Breakfast Club in Redcliffe. Department of Housing advised they had been in discussion with the Breakfast Club about some services attending one of their morning breakfasts to provide outreach to the homeless community who attend the breakfast. Aftercare PiR, Department of Housing and Bric Housing agreed to attend this morning. This outreach occurred on 30/11/2015 and was successful.

Project Impact	
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	The project resulted in a Department of Housing officer being based at the local neighbourhood centre. The Aftercare PiR team have noticed a significant benefit in our consumers being able to access Department of Housing service more easily. Previously, consumers would have to rely on PiR supporting them in completing and submitting any housing applications as the travel was unrealistic. Consumers have also reported having more positive interactions with Department of Housing through the community centre as they have felt more comfortable in the community setting. The project was self-sustaining as the officer is still working from the community centre with no plans to cease in the near future. The project also encouraged more collaboration between stakeholders involved and resulted in services communicating more effectively.
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Lessons Learned	
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	Overall, a lesson learnt from this project was the importance of collaborating and having a collective strategy. The working group for this project developed from a local housing/homeless meeting. This allowed services attending the meeting to choose to be involved in the working group after already highlighting mutual housing issues during the meeting. The collective strategy of the group also allowed the project to have more of an impact on changing the system in a timely manner.
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	Another learning was that attending the housing/homeless meeting supported not only identifying issues but then strategize how to improve the issue. Out of this, actions were then not only identified but also followed up on.
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Appendices	
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