

Mental Health Homeless Pathways Project

Snapshot Report
February 2020

In May 2019, the Royal Perth Bentley Group (RPBG)* Service 3 implemented the Mental Health Homeless Pathways Project (MHHPP) to improve service to patients experiencing homelessness. The MHHPP provides discharge planning advice and intervention for multiple long stay complex patients. It also provides case management of patients accepted into the 50 Lives 50 Homes program until a lead worker is available from a community organisation.

Objectives of the project:

- Identification and data collection for homeless patients across RPBG Service 3
- Building and strengthening pathways to accommodation
- Building collaborative partnerships with community organisations
- Staff training and education

Between May 2019 and January 2020:



The MHHPP has been using the widely used VI-SPDAT as a triage tool to assess the health and social vulnerability of patients who are homeless.

Among a sample of 51 patients who had completed the VI-SPDAT at Bentley Health service:

3.2
YEARS
on average spent homeless,
ranging from 12 weeks to 40
years.

12
PEOPLE
spent 5 or more years
experiencing homelessness.

In the two years prior to the commencement of MHHPP, the first 150 RPBG mental health patients identified as homeless accumulated:



"The most socially disadvantaged mental health patient group seen in hospitals are those who are homeless. Mental illness is complicated and compounded by trauma, poverty, lack of family support and unsuitable or no accommodation. The result is a revolving door of crisis admissions, inability to discharge to a suitable environment and lack of engagement with outpatient and medication treatment. This costs the health system considerably. Through the MHHPP, people who had previously fallen through the cracks have been identified, and are being connected to homelessness services and to housing. Substantial reductions in hospital use are already being seen among some of these patients who are now housed and getting mental health support, and this program has enormous scope to further reduce inpatient bed utilisation among this high usage cohort, thus freeing up much needed mental health inpatient beds"- Dr Amanda Stafford, ED Consultant and Clinical Lead, RPH Homeless Team, Royal Perth Hospital

- 238** patients completed the VI-SPDAT over Service 3
- 175** patients scored ≥ 10 indicating high vulnerability
- 69** patients were eligible for 50 Lives 50 Homes
- 38** patients are awaiting a case manager
- 31** patients are active clients in the 50 Lives 50 Homes program



10

have been housed

IN THE 6 MONTH PERIOD PRIOR TO BEING HOUSED, THESE 10 PATIENTS HAD:



68

ED PRESENTATIONS



1,195

INPATIENT DAYS



\$1.9M

IN COSTS**

Since being housed, all 10 patients have sustained their tenancies and there has been only 3 inpatient days and 10 Emergency Department (ED) presentations.

CASE STUDY: PATIENT CONNECTED TO 50 LIVES 50 HOMES

Background

"Katherine" is a woman in her early twenties who experiences schizophrenia with neuro-cognitive and functional impairment, polysubstance dependencies and social isolation. Since 2015 she has had over 10 ED presentations and 7 inpatient stays due to mental health difficulties. When Katherine was admitted to Bentley Mental Health inpatient unit in December 2018 she had been living on the street for 6 years. Due to the bio-psycho-social complexity of her mental and social health needs she was transferred to the extended rehabilitation unit at Bentley for ongoing treatment, cognitive assessment, assessment of community integration and accommodation needs. She required a 263 day admission, equating to a cost of \$387,925** to the health system.

Support Provided

In May 2019 the MHHPP Manager at Bentley supported Katherine to complete a VI-SPDAT and she scored 10 which made her eligible for the 50 Lives 50 Homes program. The MHHPP Manager assisted Katherine to connect with the 50 Lives 50 Homes program which has provided here with the support of a Ruah Community Services (Ruah) intensive case manager and has access to the after-hours support service provided through 50 Lives 50 Homes. A Housing Department application was lodged and Katherine was put on the priority listing. In August 2019 she was housed in transitional accommodation and is awaiting permanent housing. She has also been supported to get access to National Disability Insurance Scheme support.

Current Situation

In the 6 months since Katherine was housed she has not required any ED presentations or admissions due to her mental health difficulties. She continues to receive support to remain in stable accommodation from the MHHPP Manager and Ruah Intensive Housing service, and is also now supported by a Community Mental Health case manager. Katherine is engaging in a recovery program and has joined a number of programs including a women's health group, a library and fitness centre. She is successfully attending to activities of daily living such as using public transport, budgeting and cooking her own meals. As noted by the MHHPP Manager four months after Katherine was housed, "she is going well and making her own choices, and in her own words, "is feeling happy". She continues to be fully engaged with mental health services.

*The RPBG Includes Bentley Health Service inpatients, Royal Perth Hospital inpatients and ED presentations, and people seen as outpatients by community mental health teams in East Metro Health Service catchment area.

**Data only includes psychiatric inpatient admissions and ED presentations (i.e. excludes inpatient admissions for non-psychiatric reasons). Average cost per ED presentation WA hospital \$838 based on the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority (Round 21) figures for the 2016-17 financial year for WA. Average cost per psychiatric admission is \$1,475 based on AIHW Mental Health Services in Australia 2019 Report.