

**LIFEWISE**

*turning lives around*

# **LIFEWISE**

## *Pathways Evaluation: Summary Report*

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**By Positive Thinking Limited**

**July 2009**

**A shove in the right direction, that was enough, I think it was just the fact that someone believed in me more than anything else, just someone saying you can do it**

**LIFEWISE Client**

# LIFEWISE – Pathways Evaluation: Summary

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## Introduction

In April 2008, LIFEWISE began implementing a new model of service delivery at its Centre in Airedale Street, in the Auckland CBD. The Centre had operated a 'soup kitchen', crisis-relief service for almost 150 years, and the change to a new approach was a significant event in the life of the Service, its staff and clients. The Pathways programme aimed 'to establish a service that supports people into housing rather than continue to maintain them in homelessness'. It adopted an approach based on the 'Housing First' model. LIFEWISE also created a multi-agency approach to addressing homelessness by formally inviting partner agencies to work on-site alongside LIFEWISE staff.

At the time, the organisation committed itself to an evaluative audit of the new model at regular intervals. This is the summary report of the evaluation of the first 12 months of LIFEWISE's 'Pathways out of Homelessness' (Pathways) programme. This evaluation has been conducted as the first of several annual reviews focusing on establishing progress and areas for future development.

The author would like to acknowledge all the people who contributed to this evaluation of the first year of the LIFEWISE Pathways Programme: The LIFEWISE Centre Clients and Staff and the Pathways Partners and Homelessness Stakeholder Organisations. The author would especially like to thank Stephen McLuckie (LIFEWISE) for his assistance in arranging interviews with clients and providing the service uptake data, and also Tipene Pickett (Te Atea Marino) and Vicky Clothier (Community Alcohol and Drug Service) for providing service uptake data.

The evaluation of Pathways was funded by LIFEWISE and the Auckland City Council and conducted by Positive Thinking with approval from the Northern Ethics Committee of the New Zealand Health and Disability Ethics Committee, reference: NTY/08/80/EXP.

A hard copy of the full evaluation report is available by request from LIFEWISE, [www.lifewise.org.nz](http://www.lifewise.org.nz)

## Methodology

The evaluation of Pathways was primarily a formative evaluation, in that the focus is on the *progress* of the programme with a smaller component evaluating the emerging *impact* of the programme, with an acknowledgement that this more summative evaluation of outcomes would be more meaningful further on in the programme's implementation.

The data collection and analysis methods had two main strands:

1. Quantitative - de-identified client information from the records kept by The LIFEWISE Centre staff and those provided by Pathways Partners was collected and analysed through descriptive statistics.
2. Qualitative - individual semi-structured interviews were conducted and thematically analysed with:
  - The LIFEWISE Centre Clients (6)
  - The LIFEWISE Centre Staff (3)
  - Pathways Partner Agencies Staff (7)
  - Homelessness Stakeholder Organisations (4)

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## Findings

The evaluation findings are presented in two categories:

### 1. Service Uptake Statistics

Key output statistics for the first year of Pathways (April 2008 – March 2009):

Area	Year Totals	Monthly Average
Estimated Total Number of Individual Clients	80	NA
Accumulative Total Number of Clients~	297	25
Total LIFEWISE Interventions	838	70
Accommodation Interventions+	53	4
<b>Pathways Partners Engagements</b>		
Department of Corrections	75	6
Work and Income New Zealand	59	5
Housing New Zealand	113	9
Community Alcohol & Drug Service*	84	7
Te Atea Marino*	110	9
Homeless Mental Health Team	21	2
<b>Totals – Pathways Partners Engagements</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>39</b>

~ The 'Accumulative Total Number of Clients' represents the combined total number of clients seen each month

\* Estimated totals based on service uptake information provided by Te Atea Marino and Community Alcohol and Drug Service; please see Full Report: Appendix D for more details

+ Number of clients accommodated: 26 clients housed; 1 client returned to the street

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## 2. Key Themes

Key themes from interviews with LIFEWISE Clients and staff, Pathways Partners and Homelessness Stakeholder Organisations presented across the following areas:

Key Theme	Summary
Defining Pathways	<p>The 'Pathways' label had variable recognition, though all participants could identify changes and improvements in services over the 12 month period, with clients tending to blur the LIFEWISE (organisation) and Pathways (service) distinction. Pathways was also acknowledged as a cohesive, strategic partner to the Homelessness Action Plan.</p> <p><i>"The primary focus is to get people off the street; it's a moving philosophy from a hand out to a hand up, recovery strengths-based, working with the individual from where they are rather than where we expect them to be."</i> LIFEWISE staff</p>
Clients' Experiences	<p>Clients' experiences of Pathways was presented very positively, with benefits identified in the assisted access to services, the nature of those services and the impact this was having in the clients' lives. For many clients there was also an overall sense of how Pathways had supported them in their journey and enabled them to achieve aspirations.</p> <p><i>"I'm trying to get a job, there's not many going around, but I think I will definitely find something because now I'm more focused, I know what I want to do, whereas before I was just walking around town daily, spending time here to spend time, and I used to come here for the meals and then I found out that they have HNZ and WINZ, they come here, and now I think most people who come here are aware of the services that they offer and it's a very full service, it's a helpful service."</i> LIFEWISE client</p>
Professionals – First Year Positives	<p>Professionals linked positives from the first year to better client outcomes, successful Pathways partnerships and the development of trusting relationships with clients. The Homeless World Cup and ongoing sports activities were seen as a highlight of the first year.</p> <p><i>"Seeing people, particularly Maori who have lived on the streets for quite a long time, now have housing and talk about that housing in a really positive way, that those who have achieved housing have achieved a sort of stability, that's been really pleasurable to watch, and in terms of the treatment goals they've had with our service, it's facilitated that."</i> LIFEWISE Pathways Partner</p>
Areas for Improvement	<p>The main areas for improvement were identified in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing – increasing numbers of staff and developing a formal volunteer programme</li> <li>• Follow Up/Outreach – developing capacity for off-site community based work</li> <li>• Additional Partners – bringing other Pathways Partners on board such as gambling agencies, ACC, social workers for elderly, Maori NGOs</li> <li>• Building &amp; Safety – continuing the plans for moving to a new 'Hub' location and addressing the potential risk at the Centre</li> </ul> <p><i>"There has been change, the place is a lot calmer than it used to be, but it doesn't mean the place can't just blow up, so it's just being aware of that."</i> LIFEWISE Staff</p>
Pathways Partners Perspectives	<p>Pathways Partners talked about an initial degree of uncertainty and scepticism about providing services for homeless clients, and now recognising the benefits in terms of providing access for people who do not ordinarily engage with services. The positive working relationship with LIFEWISE staff was seen as enabling effective work, though one agency felt this had got worse over time not better. Pathways Partners also saw benefits in the inter-agency connections being made as a result of participation in</p>

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	<p>Pathways, in terms of professional networking and relationships building.</p> <p><i>“It’s helpful having the social worker doing joint assessments, they can assist in drawing out the client in a very respectful way, and because Stephen knows the kind of information I’m after in my assessments he can sometimes point somebody’s conversation down a specific area, that’s very good for me.”</i> LIFEWISE Pathways Partner</p>
<p>Working Collaboratively</p>	<p>There was acknowledgement of the ways in which homelessness service providers were increasingly working together and agreement that this needed to continue. There were also strong calls from amongst Pathways Partners for a formal inter-agency case management approach as a natural next step to the current collaborative work.</p> <p><i>“There’s an ongoing piece of work where we’re looking at ways in which we share client focused information and protocols, and a disclosure release that allows info sharing across LIFEWISE, Auckland City Mission, Salvation Army and that’s a mark of professionalism and the nature of the relationship between the three agencies.”</i> Homeless Stakeholder Organisations</p>
<p>Working Biculturally</p>	<p>There was recognition that many of the LIFEWISE clients were Maori and that more could be done to work biculturally, including involving iwi and Maori service providers, and working with Tikanga in the overall service development – this would make it a 10 out of 10 programme.</p> <p><i>“This is what we need is our Maori, our iwi’s in here to help our own, because what’s happening is that it’s a lot of our own. A lot of them now are going to see Steve, because I tell them, if there’s a problem go and see Steve, that’s what he’s there for, this place is there for you, to support you, and the work that Steve is doing is amazing and I really need to get my iwi on board, to see what it is that they’re doing for our people, because it’s our people out there, there’s a few Pakeha, but it’s more our people.”</i> LIFEWISE client</p>
<p>Key Homelessness Issues</p>	<p>The key homelessness issues were identified as housing (access, support, shifting from the street culture), mental health and addictions, and cultural identity.</p> <p><i>“The key issue is to get people into independent housing, to be in either independent or supported housing long term, not meandering around boarding houses, not having a programme, never being assessed, not even when they leave prisons or psychiatric institutions, these people are vulnerable, they need a lot of input, they to have plans for that and their long term goal is to be in either independent supportive or independent accommodation.”</i> Homeless Stakeholder Organisation</p>
<p>The Bigger Picture</p>	<p>There was acknowledgement of how far the strategic context for homelessness had progressed in recent years and recognition that this needed to continue to make more progress. Caution was expressed about the development of a ‘homelessness industry’ and also the need for funding and a national response to homelessness. There was general agreement that the homeless sector had come a long way and that the future lay in building on this progress and strengthening relationships.</p> <p><i>“The other thing I’m really conscious of is not building a sector... the homelessness sector, and I think that’s one of the things we’ve done well, is identify agencies and services in general society who can come in and work with the client group rather than create something new.”</i> LIFEWISE staff</p>

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Pathways & Homelessness 2010	<p>Over the next year people wanted to see a continuation of the development thus far along with the realisation of the plans for a ‘hub,’ assessment focus and greater collaborative work. There was also a sense that key indicators could be established around the numbers of street homeless people and the impact on the community.</p> <p><i>“The Hub, Housing First, getting away from transitional housing, a large team of tenancy sustainment staff, floating support model, more accommodation, work with boarding houses, legislation and monitoring, standards, safety, rough sleeping to be an issue of the past, all the agencies working together to keep people in tenancies, having accountability for what they’re doing.”</i> Pathways Partner</p>
Summing Up	<p>Assessments of the first year of Pathways were positive with recognition of achievements in terms of service delivery and client outcomes, and a sense that the programme was itself on the right pathway. Clients were very clear about the difference the programme had made in their lives.</p> <p><i>“This place has helped me out a lot, kept me out of trouble anyway, 26 years in and out of the court system, now there’s a big gap in my record, been out of trouble for a while now, this place keeps me occupied, gave up drinking, my drinking binges out here were bad, and I went on the programme just to get my sickness benefit, but it was good to learn what the problems were and solve them, how to so I can help other people get on it, they’re killing themselves.”</i> LIFEWISE client</p>

### Future Developments

The evaluation highlighted key areas for future service development.

Area	Summary
Service Development	<p>A continuation of current service development with focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing First Model</li> <li>• Assessment and Data Collection</li> <li>• Risk Management</li> <li>• Promotion of Pathways programme</li> <li>• Integrating other interventions, e.g. sports, cultural</li> <li>• Offsite follow up, tenancy sustainment and outreach</li> <li>• Bicultural work</li> </ul>
Workforce Development	Increase in staff capacity, leading to a team of Pathways workers, formalisation of the volunteer programme, a substantial training programme for staff and volunteers
Inter-Agency Case Management	Professionals linked positives from the first year to better client outcomes and the development of trusting relationships with clients. The Homeless World Cup and ongoing sports activities were seen a highlight of the first year
Areas for Improvement	Establish/confirm formal partnership arrangements with Pathways Partners (including information sharing and disclosure protocols) and the development of a formal case management model. Continued identification of additional Pathways Partners
Strategic Responsiveness to Homelessness	Maintain role in overall strategic responsiveness to homelessness and ensure strategic developments filter down to operational developments and that operational developments dovetail with strategic developments of other homelessness organisations

## Proposed Future Evaluation Framework

Future evaluations would be along similar lines, with formative assessments of progress based primarily on consultation with clients, staff and stakeholders. There is also potential for shared formative evaluation with the Auckland City Mission and Salvation Army to assess the progress of Pathways as one component of a 'joined-up' approach to homelessness across the three main homelessness service providers.

The summative evaluation of programme impact would increase with each successive evaluation and would be based on the implementation of an outcome measurement tool.

Outcome measures for homelessness are discussed with the potential recognised in the 'Outcomes Star'<sup>1</sup> as both an outcome measure and key work/case management tool.

**We're at the end of one thing but at the start of something even bigger, there's been a significant shift in this service in the last 12 months but that's only the start.**

**LIFEWISE staff**

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Outcomes Star, see [www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk](http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk) and MacKeith, J., Burnsof, S, and Graham, K (2006) The Outcomes Star - Supporting change in homelessness and related services, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Triangle Consulting for the Homeless Link, UK)

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