



Housing First

The story of development and implementation
in the Auckland City Centre



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dedication.

The story of the development of the city centre Housing First programme: Te Pou Tuatahi o Tāmaki is dedicated to Rangi Carroll. Rangi was a member of the project working group. He was sleeping rough when the design process began and moved into his Housing New Zealand flat in the winter of 2016. Rangi had a strong belief in the potential of Housing First and the value of co-design. Rangi shared the following feedback after attending a Ngā Aho Hui for Māori designers in Blenheim.

"I walked away feeling great confidence for the future. Also feeling far ahead of many who have no idea what co-design really is and how pertinent it is to today's society. Co-design is a powerful tool for the enlightened and simply put, 21st century strategy and thinking. The new empowerment that will put Māori ahead in collectives which hopefully do not have to wait for political processes any more. Sooner or later politicians are going to have to face up to this narrative and move with it or become irrelevant. And that has me overjoyed."

- Rangi Carroll, March 2017.



Rangi passed away at home in April 2017.

introduction.

This document describes the genesis and rationale for the development of Housing First in the Auckland city centre. These insights may be useful for other communities that plan to implement Housing First. The story is told from the perspective of Lifewise, informed by weekly reflective practice sessions with the core project team and internal evaluator, qualitative and quantitative data from the design process, feedback from project members with lived experience of homelessness, documentary evidence and findings from the evaluation of the early implementation of the programme.

background.

Lifewise, the social development arm of the Methodist Mission Northern, has worked with people experiencing homelessness for many years. The Methodists established a Mission in the city centre in 1851. Like many faith-based organisations they used a charitable approach to manage homelessness which included a soup kitchen and a night shelter. Over the years as homelessness grew in Auckland City, Lifewise started to look for more effective ways to respond.

They brought Phillip Mangano to New Zealand in 2009, a key proponent of Housing First, in an effort to shift responses from managing to ending homelessness. The night shelter and soup kitchen were closed and resources were shifted into the establishment of a community café and the creation of a case management team providing wrap-around support with the aim of supporting people into permanent housing.

Lifewise supported the development of Te Kooti o Timatanga Hou (the New Beginnings Court—a specialist court for people experiencing homelessness in Auckland). Auckland City Mission was also running outreach and case management services focused on finding housing options. Both organisations were developing good inter-agency relationships in order to improve responses to people experiencing

homelessness in the Auckland city centre. However, the number of people experiencing homelessness continued to grow.

In May 2016, the annual street count hit record numbers with 228 people counted sleeping rough or in emergency beds within a 3 kilometre radius of the Sky Tower—an increase of 176 per cent since the first street count in 2004. Analysis of 2013 Census data indicated that over 20,000 people were experiencing severe housing deprivation in the Auckland region.

Auckland was experiencing a housing crisis with a shortage of affordable housing and increased rental prices. Access to housing was becoming increasingly difficult, particularly for people with active addiction issues. People remained stagnant on the social housing register and excluded from the private rental market because even with the accommodation supplement most city rents were unaffordable.

The caseloads for frontline staff in homelessness teams at both the Auckland City Mission and Lifewise increased. Staff were often engaged in crisis response rather than tenancy sustainment. Many people who obtained housing ended up returning to the streets because they didn't have the right level and type of support. Housing New Zealand eviction policies meant that people lost tenancies because of their own or family members' addiction issues. There

was no government funding for the work of either Lifewise or the Auckland City Mission despite the very high levels of need of the people they supported.

In 2013 Lifewise obtained significant grant funding from Foundation North as part of a new Catalysts for Change initiative to end street homelessness in Auckland. It became clear that in order to end street homelessness we needed to work with others to change the conditions that lead to homelessness (for example poverty and the care system). We also needed to change the way services create barriers which make it difficult for people to get off the street and move indoors.

As a result Lifewise explored its case management approach and the challenges with accessing housing in the city centre. We looked at the growing evidence base about the Pathways Housing First programme and the way it had been implemented in a range of contexts. We saw how the principles of Housing First can be used by whole communities to unite around a common goal of ending homelessness. As a result Lifewise decided to utilise some of the grant funding to support the development of a collaborative response to end chronic homelessness in the city centre using the principles of Housing First.



what is housing first?

[Click here to find out more](#)

Housing First is a rights based, person centred programme. It's starting point is that traditional services have failed our most vulnerable and that people need improved choices and support determined by them to sustain housing. The programme promotes scattered housing as a way of enabling people to integrate into communities and build natural supports. It represents a radical departure from conventional social housing and mental health and addictions programmes.

"It was these kinds of repeated failures that made us think we had to do something different. What we decided to do was to choose to let the person drive good

treatment rather than assuming we knew what was best for them, like taking them to the hospital. We decided to just try and engage people and do whatever it is that they want. At the beginning for me, Housing First was like letting go of the idea that you actually know what you're doing and instead see what the person wants. It moved from a clinician-driven system to a person-driven system. So, once we began to ask questions like that it was very clear that people want good housing, they didn't want to go to a residence or a shelter, they want just a simple place to live." - Sam Tsemberis 2018.

Housing First is not just a type of programme, it is also a philosophy and a set of principles.

Pathways Housing First Programme

Provides rapid access to permanent housing and flexible community-based support to individuals who are long-term homeless and experiencing complex mental health, addiction and / or physical health barriers.

Housing First Principles

Immediate access to housing with no readiness conditions

Consumer choice and self-determination

Harm reduction and recovery orientation

Individualised and person driven supports

Social and community integration

Housing First Philosophy

Emphasises that everyone has a basic right to housing

It is easier for people to address other issues in their lives if they are in stable housing.





preparing the ground for housing first.

Lifewise worked with international experts to help us get Housing First off the ground. Lifewise and Community Housing Aotearoa brought Dr. Sam Tsemberis, the original developer of Pathways Housing First in New York to New Zealand in October 2015. He ran workshops, met with politicians and policy makers as well as spoke to the media extensively about Housing First.

Lifewise connected with others working on or interested in Housing First through Sam's visit. Lifewise set up the National Housing First Community of Practice in late 2015. This group includes researchers and leaders from over a dozen organisations across New Zealand who are focused on the implementation of Housing First.

As Lifewise learned more about Housing First it was clear that they needed to work with others to implement it effectively. Lifewise began partnering discussions with Auckland City Mission in early 2016.

Lifewise developed multiple business cases for the Housing First programme in the city centre. The Ministry of Social Development, Housing New Zealand, Auckland District Health Board and the Auckland Council-led Rough Sleeping Steering Group all agreed to support Housing First.

Māori participation was central to the design process. The lead designer was of Māori descent, as were other members of the project working group and interviewees.

Conversations were held with Ngāti Whātua ki Orākei kaumatua (mana whenua) about the city centre project and they were eager to support.

Te Ao Māori was infused throughout the design process by:

- Karakia, mihi and waiata at project hui
- Ensuring interviewers were competent in tikanga Māori
- Interviews with Māori who experience homelessness—11 of the 18 people who took part in the empathy interviews were of Māori descent
- Framing insights, needs and design challenges using a Māori worldview
- Intentionally inviting participants of Māori descent from a range of organisations and experiences to the ideation hui because many of the design challenges related to traditional Māori concepts and ways of being. Lifewise wanted to ensure that the programme design was steeped in a Māori worldview.
- Intentional whakawhānaunga sessions for Māori participants involved in the design process
- Data mining to identify specific issues for Māori experiencing homelessness in the city centre.

design process.



Lifewise chose to use a design process because they wanted to adapt an internationally proven model (Pathways Housing First) for Aotearoa and the Auckland city centre context in particular. Lifewise used a human-centered design methodology to ensure that people with lived experience of homelessness and their needs were at the centre.

A multi-agency project working group was formed to undertake the design process. People with lived experience of homelessness were invited to join. Four people who were leaders in the rough sleeper community agreed to be part of project from its inception. Out of all the working group members they gave the most time to the design process through interviewing others with lived experience, theming, developing insights and testing prototypes alongside the design lead.

Agencies who delivered services to people experiencing homelessness (that is, who were part of the homeless serving system) were invited to join the project group. Core members included representatives from the city centre Work and Income office, the Auckland City Mission, the Auckland District Health Board's Assertive Community Outreach Service, the Lifewise Housing and Crisis Support service along with senior staff from Housing New Zealand, Ministry of Social Development and the Community Alcohol and Drug Service.

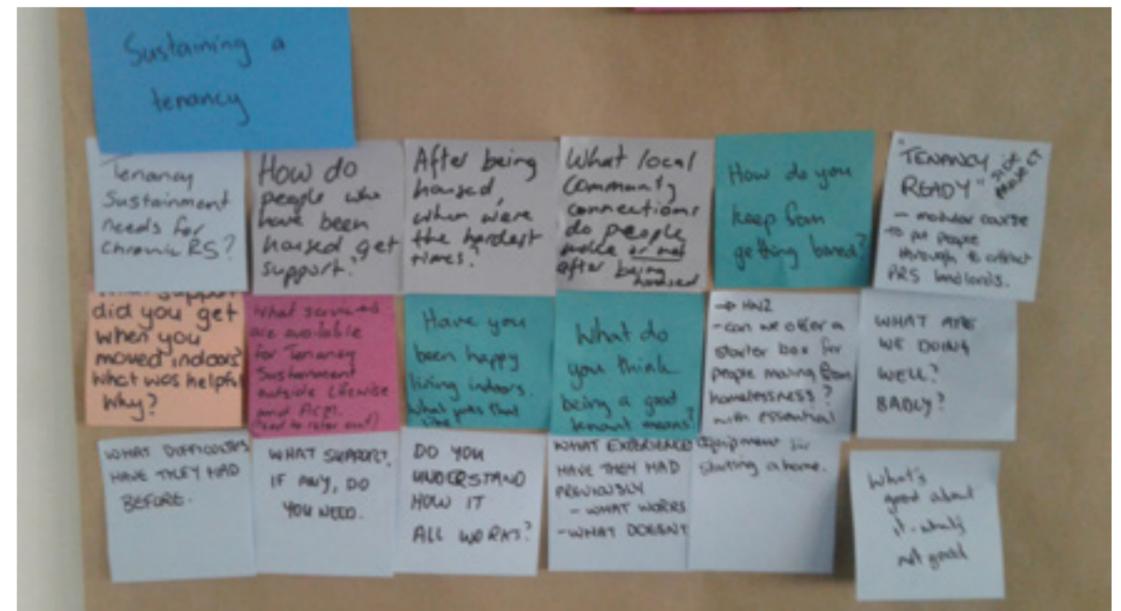
Airedale Property Trust (a sister trust to Lifewise) also agreed to take part bringing commercial property management experience to the project. The Project Working Group agreed on a clear Statement of Intent for the development of Housing First in the city centre:

"We are developing a collaborative response to end chronic homelessness in the Auckland city centre based on the principles of Housing First."

A dedicated sub-group worked on accessing housing for the programme. Members included the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Community Housing Aotearoa, Housing New Zealand (HNZ) and Airedale Property Trust and people with lived experience of homelessness. They worked closely with landlords. Auckland Council funded a project lead for this work.

In order to understand the experience of homelessness and housing the project team drew upon previous design work focused on homelessness in the city centre: Insights into the experience of Rough Sleeping:

[Click here to read the report.](#)



The design team used empathy interviewing and focus groups with users to deeply understand peoples' lived experiences of service provision and housing. Eighteen people with experience of homelessness were interviewed by members of the design team. Each person's story was shared anonymously with other members of the design team through a story-telling process.

The team also journey mapped service providers and people's experience of service delivery and identified pain and pleasure points along the journey. This helped to identify the key areas to focus on.

The design team identified key themes and insights across all the stories:

1. Moving indoors and creating a home can be an overwhelming experience. People often lack practical support with adjusting to their new home and can experience isolation, boredom and conflict.
2. People have everyday hopes and dreams for their futures including where and who they might live with. However, people often feel hopeless that their dreams will not be realized.

3. Many people feel disconnected or lack positive connections with their wider family and whānau. The pain of this can be debilitating for some and negatively impacts on their lives.

4. People living on the street quickly become part of the street culture. This culture is dominated by a Māori paradigm where concepts like Manaakitanga and whānau dictate how people live their lives. Once housed people carry these values with them and there is a strong desire to continue to support their rough sleeping whānau.

5. Engaging with and navigating services can be an insurmountable challenge and many people often rely on support workers to do this for them.

6. Trust and mutual respect were seen as key factors for building meaningful relationships between participants and service providers. These relationships provide a platform for people to move forward. Alternatively, relationships where there was a lack of trust and transparency generated frustration and confusion.

design challenges.

Specific design challenges were developed from the insights and journey mapping. Key challenges were prioritised as needing solutions for Housing First to work well in the Auckland city centre. The design team created personas and journey maps that typified the emergent themes and design challenges. The personas and maps helped to communicate what had been learned through the "Understand" phase of the design process to a wide group of stakeholders. They were also used to check that all the identified needs of potential programme users were likely to be met as solutions to the design challenges were developed.

[Click here to find out more about the insights](#)

The following are the five personas that were used to inform the design process.



Hayden.

PROFILE

Ethnicity: Pakeha

Age: 25

Total time rough sleeping: 10 years

Current Status: Rough Sleeping

Social Connectedness

Motivation to be housed

Ability to navigate the system

Experience of housing

Ability to problem solve

Complexity of need

Background:

Hayden suffered from abuse within his family as a child. His family and schools found his behavior difficult to deal with and he was in and out of foster care. When he was 14 he had an assessment from a service who told his social worker that they suspected that he had a personality disorder. He drifted onto the streets in Henderson when he was 15. He later moved into the CBD where it was easier to get food.

Hayden feels really proud that he is a survivor and that he helps others on the street to stay safe. He likes to deal with any issues on his own. He says that his knowledge is "self-taught".

Hayden has lived in a few boarding houses but didn't like them. He felt scared of the other residents living there and thought that they weren't nice people. He also wasn't allowed any visitors in the boarding houses. He felt isolated and lonely. He said that he would rather live on the street.

When Hayden gets frustrated he sometimes smashes things up. Recently this led to an arrest for willful damage. Hayden's bail conditions meant that he

The Future State with Housing First

Hayden has been accepted onto the Housing First programme. This means that Hayden has agreed to regular visits from the Housing First team. He has also chosen his home from the pool of available houses and is now living in Onehunga. He has been offered a range of 'things' to support him.

needed an address so his probation officer helped him to get into another boarding house. The probation officer suggested that Hayden could go to an anger management course but he didn't see any point as he didn't think it would help him. Hayden only stayed a few days at the boarding house to get the probation officer off his back. He went back out on the streets with his mates.

Hayden can't ever get imagine getting a house to live in. It feels too hard and scary. Plus there would be too many responsibilities and he wouldn't know where to start. He once tried to call some places that he saw advertised in the newspaper so he and his friends could live together. But all the places wanted references so he gave up.

Hayden's main priority right now is to get his physical health issues sorted. He has an old shoulder injury that causes him lots of pain and he would really like to get his teeth fixed.

Hayden feels that if he could sort out his health and housing then the rest of his life would work out. He would love to do a course or look at getting a job too.

Our Design Challenges How Might We (HMW)...

HMW support people to live in friendship groups because they don't want to be lonely or isolated and they want to share the responsibilities of tenancy with others?

HMW support people when they move indoors with the new adjustments and with the set up and creation of a home?



Joe.

PROFILE

Ethnicity: Pakeha/
Maori

Age: 56

Total time rough
sleeping: 41 years

Current Status:
Rough Sleeping

Social Connectedness

Motivation to be housed

Ability to navigate
the system

Experience of housing

Ability to problem solve

Complexity of need

Background:

Joe's mum was dependant on alcohol and he was born with foetal alcohol syndrome. He is the youngest of seven children, but he doesn't know any of his siblings because he was taken into CYF's care when he was 18 months old.

He had 17 different foster care placements and at age 13 he was moved to a boy's home. He suffered violence and sexual abuse in the boy's home and in some of the foster homes. Joe never felt loved by anyone when he was growing up. At 15 Joe was released from state care and started living on the streets in the inner city.

When Joe first arrived on the streets a couple of the other street kids took him under their wing. They all stayed together and had each other's backs. They all started sniffing glue together and would drink or do whatever drugs they could get their hands on. Joe still feels a strong connection to those days and thinks of those friends as his true family. He doesn't trust anyone in authority.

Joe suffered a head injury during his time on the street when he

The Future State with Housing First

Joe has been accepted onto the Housing First programme. This means that Joe has agreed to regular visits from the Housing First team. He has also chosen his home from the pool of readily available homes and has been offered a range of 'things' to support him to maintain his tenancy and live well. Help us design what these 'things' might look like for Joe and others facing similar circumstances.

was attacked while sleeping. He still suffers from severe headaches and he finds making basic decisions really stressful. He gets easily frustrated when he doesn't feel like people are listening. He still likes to drink but sometimes he ends up in trouble with the police or with other people on the street.

Over the years Joe has had referrals to alcohol and drug counselling for his solvent use, but he doesn't want to do residential treatment where he has to follow rules. Joe has had brief periods staying in boarding houses. These usually get arranged by Probations as part of Joe's bail conditions. Most recently, Joe was staying at James Liston Hostel. He was asked to leave after he got really drunk one night and started threatening the staff.

After a recent collapse and hospital admission, Joe was diagnosed with Hepatitis C. He has been feeling sicker more often these days and he is finding it much harder to get around. This means that he sometimes is unable to shower for weeks at a time. Joe is feeling tired and old but is worried about feeling lonely if he moves indoors.

Our Design Challenges How Might We (HMW)...

HMW provide high levels of ongoing practical support for people with multiple and complex needs in their living situations?

HMW support people to be connected to people, places and or activities so they are not bored or isolated when they are housed?

HMW support people of Māori descent to reconnect (or connect for the first time) with their ancestral lands because they feel a sense of loss and disconnection?



Moki.

PROFILE

Ethnicity: Maori
(Ngapuhi/Ngati Hine)

Age: 48

Total time rough
sleeping: 8 years

Current Status:
Housed - Housing
New Zealand

Social Connectedness

Motivation to be housed

Ability to navigate
the system

Experience of housing

Ability to problem solve

Complexity of need

Background:

Moki had worked as a bricklayer in Manurewa for most of his life. Things started unravelling after a relationship breakdown ten years ago. Moki became really depressed, drinking heavily and he lost his job. His wife then moved back up north and she took their three children with her. This was devastating for Moki.

Moki ended up on the streets in the city because he knew it well. He had lived there for about six months when he was 15. Over the next 8 years Moki lived on the streets and made friends with other streeties. People shared everything and they pulled their resources together to get drinks or a feed. Sometimes ex-streeties would offer him a night at their house which made him feel really grateful. Moki continued to drink really heavily and would often get into trouble with police when he was drunk. He was often waking up in the cells after a big night drinking with everyone.

Throughout all of this Moki desperately missed his kids. Even on his biggest binges he would go to sleep with a photo of his children in his hand. He wants to see them, but he feels ashamed about how things ended when he left and he doesn't want them to see him living on the

The Future State with Housing First

Moki has been accepted onto the Housing First programme. This means that Moki has agreed to regular visits from the Housing First team. He has also chosen his home from the pool of readily available homes and has been offered a range of 'things' to support him to maintain his tenancy and live well. Help us design what these 'things' might look like for Moki and others facing similar circumstances.

streets. Moki decides to get on the Housing waitlist. Almost two years later Moki was offered a place with HNZ in the city. He felt really excited when he moved in and he even shed a few tears when he got his keys. He hopes that now he might be able to get in touch with his kids and invite them for a visit.

A few weeks ago one of Moki's old streetie friends turned up at his house in the middle of the night. He had all his stuff with him and another couple that Moki didn't know. He let them in and he felt really good that he could help his friend out. Over the next few weeks things started getting out of control. Other people kept showing up and they were having parties even when Moki wasn't home. Moki is starting to feel really stressed out and had a big argument with his neighbour because his neighbour accused him of stealing from him.

Moki's tenancy manager comes around a few days later and gives him a letter saying that the neighbours have been complaining about the noise and that it needs to stop. He doesn't know what to do or how to say no to his friend. Moki can't handle it and decides to just throw in his house and go back to his old spot on the street.

Our Design Challenges How Might We (HMW)...

HMW support people to re-connect with their whānau when they feel unable to do it on their own?

HMW support tenants to show manaaki and aroha to their friends without it jeopardising their tenancy AND HMW support people to employ effective strategies to manage visitors that get beyond their control? HMW connect people to local activities, places and or people so they are not isolated and lonely?



Ngairie.

PROFILE

Ethnicity: Maori (Te Arawa, Ngati Pukenga)

Age: 52

Total time rough sleeping: 12 years

Current Status: Rough Sleeping past 13 months

Social Connectedness

Motivation to be housed

Ability to navigate the system

Experience of housing

Ability to problem solve

Complexity of need

Background:

Ngāire grew up in Tauranga with her parents who drank a lot and were involved in gangs. Drinking and smoking weed were a big part of her life, especially later on as a coping strategy when she had abusive partners. Ngāire became pregnant at 16 years old and moved to Auckland to live with her partner and his family. Not long after the baby was born her partner became physically violent. She had had CYFS involvement with her children since she was 17. Ngāire now has four grown children. All her partners were violent towards her and the children. Ngāire ended up on the streets after her last partner went to prison and all of her kids were in CYFS care.

She started using meth when she was on the streets. At first it helped her to stay awake during the night, but then she started using all the time. She was still drinking a lot too. After 7 years on the streets, she spent 8 weeks at the Bridge, where she managed to stop using meth altogether. She then got a Housing New Zealand home in Grey Lynn where she lived for five years. She felt really proud of her home. She often felt very lonely, especially because she had stopped hanging out with her old friends from the street who used meth. She mainly watched TV to pass the time. Once in a while she would go to the City Mission clay group.

The Future State with Housing First

Ngāire has been accepted onto the Housing First programme. This means that Ngāire has agreed to regular visits from the Housing First team. She has also chosen her home from the pool of readily available homes and has been offered a range of 'things' to support her to maintain her tenancy and live well. Help us design what these 'things' might look like for Ngāire and others facing similar circumstances.

Just over a year ago, Ngāire's mokopuna came up from Tauranga and started staying on the streets. She invited them to come in for a feed and some drinks. They brought a few friends and they stayed a few nights. They started using meth in the house and at first Ngāire was very against them using but she was so happy to be able to keep them off the streets and grateful of the company. After a few drinks one night she got passed the pipe and joined in.

She stopped her automatic payment to Housing New Zealand so that she could buy more meth. She was feeling guilty about using and thought that it was wrong, but she felt like she couldn't stop. Her tenancy manager came round a few weeks later to talk about the missed rent payments. He noticed all the people there and came back to swab the house. Ngāire knew the test would come back positive and she'd lose her house. She was devastated and guilty that her moko had to go back to the streets.

She's been back on the street for just over a year now and feels hopeless. She believes she'll ever get another house because her name is mud with Housing New Zealand. Plus, she'd just spend her rent money on more meth and any home that she gets now they'll just have to rip the walls out because she can't stop using.

Our Design Challenges How Might We (HMW)...

HMW find ways for people who use methamphetamine to do so in a way that doesn't jeopardise their tenancy? HMW support people to positively connect and build strong relationships with their whānau? HMW support tenants to show manaaki and aroha to their whānau without it jeopardising their tenancy?



Sam.

PROFILE

Ethnicity: Unknown

Age: Approx 45

Total time rough sleeping: At least 2 years

Current Status: Rough sleeping

Social Connectedness

Motivation to be housed

Ability to navigate the system

Experience of housing

Ability to problem solve

Complexity of need

Background:

Sam has been around the streets for the past couple of years. He has a few places that he sits. The local café owner know him and make sure he gets something to eat every now and then.

Passersby recognise him and often buy him a coffee or something to eat too. When people try to talk to Sam he smiles and mumbles a little. If they hang around too long he looks the other way and they get the message it's time for them to move along.

Sam doesn't talk to the other streeties. They say he is a bit crazy.

Outreach services try and engage him but he doesn't seem to want any services. They make sure they drop off warm blankets and some food regularly for him. Recently, the outreach team have noticed that Sam has been coughing a lot and asked the Calder Centre nurse to visit him.

Sometimes he is on the move and talks incoherently as he walks along the street. He likes to sit in the sun in Myers Park and keeps a stash of old blankets and cardboard behind one of the buildings adjoining the park.

No-one really knows Sam's story.

The Future State with Housing First

The Housing First Team think that Sam could be an ideal candidate for the Housing First programme. The Housing First team have a pool of houses that Sam could choose and would offer him a range of various supports that he could take up (or not).

Our Design Challenges How Might We (HMW)...

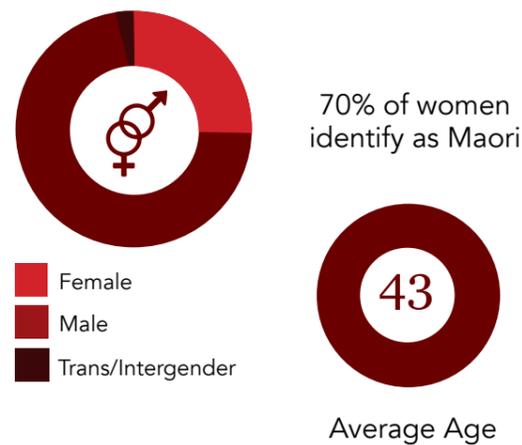
HMW engage with people that services usually find really difficult to engage, with so that we might offer Housing First services?

HMW keep people engaged in the weekly visit from one of the Housing First team members?

collating data.

Lifewise and Auckland City Mission collated a snapshot of people experiencing chronic homelessness in the city centre utilising staff knowledge and service data. The data was analysed to understand the scale and type of issues in the city centre.

In August 2016 there were 189 people experiencing chronic homelessness in the Auckland City Centre.

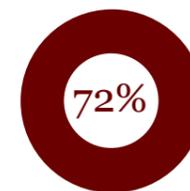


83% of people experience 2 or more problems



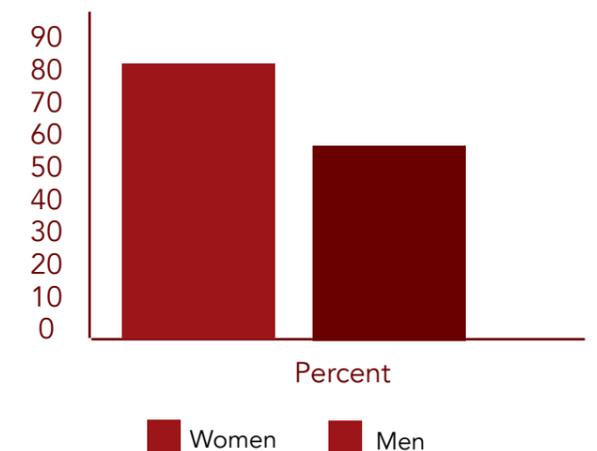
These might include mental health, substance use, physical health or cognitive difficulties

More Maori experiencing justice issues

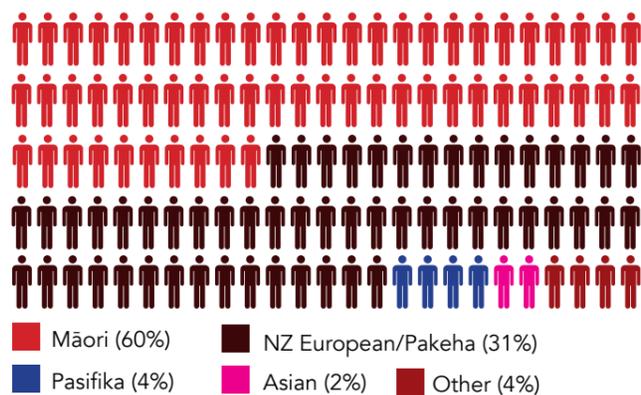


72% of Maori experience justice issues compared to 49% of non-Maori

Women experience a greater rate of mental health issues than men



Almost 60% of people identify as Maori



90% have slept rough for 2 or more years



90% of people have substance use issues and 5% of people engaged with AOD services.

74% of people have moderate to severe mental health issues and 14% are engaged with mental health services

- The average length of time homeless is 7.5 years
- Maori spend 1 year longer than non-Maori
- 61 people have been homeless for more than 10 years

Specific analysis was completed for Māori experiencing chronic homelessness in the city centre—almost 60 per cent of the population.

[Click here to see the analysis](#)

Chronic homelessness is when a person sleeps rough for a year or longer AND has a mental health, substance use or other physical health issues

prototypes.



Ideation workshops were held to develop concepts and prototypes to address the design challenges. Over 60 people took part in the ideation workshops. Over half were of Māori descent and many had lived experience of homelessness.

The team tested the prototypes with people experiencing homelessness to generate further insights and to get feedback. Some prototypes were quickly rejected; others were adapted and refined. The prototypes that people with lived experience thought should continue to be iterated were:

1. Powhiri/welcoming event

This is an opportunity to celebrate participants moving into their new whare and to set the kawa for their home in front of their friends and whānau. It is also an opportunity to explore cultural concepts relating to powhiri.

2. Setting kawa

Supporting participants to set their own kawa for their whare is a way to openly identify the specific rules and values that are important for people in their new home. Having the kawa based in tikanga and Māori values adds cultural weight and validity, making the kawa more likely to be adhered to.

3. Bringing out the Pineapple

In Samoa when the host brings out the pineapple at the end of the night, guests know that it is time to leave. In the city centre context, the concept is a 24/7 text or call alert system. Participants can identify several different people to contact depending on the situation. They might include a support worker, their building manager or the police who will respond in a pre-determined manner.

4. Manaaki Days

This is where people can use neutral spaces such as the Merge café to host events, dinners, family gatherings or meals for friends and family. It provides a space away from people's homes where they can awahi and manaaki their whānau and friends.

5. Weekly Wananga

This provides a way for participants to learn and explore a range of different topics through group learning. Housing First participants could nominate ideas and the Housing First team helps to organise a wananga on that topic. Topics might include; how to have difficult conversations; mindfulness; family violence; managing boundaries, managing visitors and so forth.

6. Monthly Meth Testing

Airedale Property Trusts tests participant's home each month for meth use. Tenants are provided with a certificate when their reading comes back below the health guidelines. Tenants can use the certificate to inform guests and visitors that they need to smoke in designated areas.

7. Alternative smoking areas

Support workers and tenants identify alternative spaces outside people's homes where they can smoke meth. This harm minimisation approach was necessary because of the risk of eviction associated with using meth inside an apartment. Alternative spaces might include a covered balcony, a small moveable shed or some other private space free from wind for people to smoke meth outside their home.

8. Hīkoi across the Motu

This is an extension of Kahikatea Tu Te Uru which aims to connect people to their ancestral lands. The hīkoi would pull together Housing First participants with a connection to an area (for example the Far North) and work alongside them to understand their stories of home. That group would organise for the ropu (and other interested people) to travel to places where those stories took place. Doing this as a group takes the pressure off hosting as an individual. This is a way of supporting whānau to increase positive connections with whānau, hapu and iwi.

9. A toolbox for connecting with potential Housing First participants who are not engaged with services:

Through the co-design process we learnt that the people sleeping rough who are not connected with services can have positive connections with other community members, for example, a local café worker. This concept is a toolbox that provides information, support and advice for members of the community who are connected to an "unengaged" person experiencing homelessness. The idea is that community members can support people to engage with the Housing First team.

These are some of the ways that Housing First is being adapted to meet the specific needs of people in the city centre context. When Housing First moved into the implementation phase the team started the live prototyping and iterating of solutions that were developed specifically for the city centre context.

Members of the design team produced a detailed service blueprint and brought in consultants from Deloitte to help develop a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) ready for implementation in early 2017. Throughout the design phase core members of the project working group met weekly to reflect on what was being developed, what was being learned and identifying what needed to be done next as a result. The insights and learnings were documented along the way.

[Click here to read more about the prototypes.](#)

the leadership of people with lived experience.

The city centre homeless community is large, established and unique. In order to design a responsive service it was crucial that people with lived experience of homelessness (the users of the service) were involved right from the beginning and at every level. People with lived experience were involved in project meetings and all aspects of the design process including interviewing, developing insights, personas, journey maps plus ideation and prototyping.

Lifewise was supported by funding from the JR McKenzie Trust to contract Peer Support Training and ongoing supervision from Mind and Body (an independent service-user organisation that provides training, supervision and peer support services in the mental health and addiction sector).

In late 2016, 12 people with lived experience of homelessness graduated from the Peer Support training contracted by Lifewise and run by Mind and Body. Two graduates of the Peer Support Training were employed as Peer Support Workers into the newly established Housing First team in February 2017. They had also been key members of the project working group for the Housing First design process. They have gone on to have further training and experience in human-centred design

through the Southern Initiative and the Ngā Aho network. They utilise their design skills to work creatively as Housing First peer support workers.

Once Housing First began, the Peer support workers along with Sophia Beaton led the development of the Lived Experience Advisory Group. Members of the group provide advice or advocate around the Housing First programme, help the team to problem-solve topics as well as develop and implement ideas.

The Lived Experience group also highlight issues relating to the Housing First programme that come from the wider homeless community, share any messages or communications from the Housing First programme to the community and are part of a wider conversation around issues relating to homelessness, particularly in the Auckland city centre. Two members of the group were chosen to sit on the inaugural Housing First Governance Group in the city centre.



systemic & catalytic change.

Nudging at systems

Lifewise understood that homelessness results from the failure of social systems. Introducing a Housing First programme was seen as a strategy to help reconfigure those systems to better meet people's needs. The introduction of the Pathways Housing First programme offers an almost immediate solution for people who are experiencing chronic homelessness. Evidence from overseas shows that in order to implement Housing First effectively other 'systems' (housing, health, welfare, corrections and so on) also need to change.

One of the strengths of the city centre Housing First programme is that it was sponsored by the Rough Sleeping Steering Group (RSSG). The RSSG includes senior personnel from central and local government as well as the two key NGOs responding to homelessness in the city centre (Lifewise and Auckland City Mission). The RSSG has a goal of ending rough sleeping and the implementation of Housing First was adopted as one of the group's strategic priorities in 2016.

As part of the design process the project working group mapped all the organisations that respond to homelessness in the city centre. The team worked with Deloitte on ways to intentionally influence systems change especially through the governance group.

Housing Supply

A separate sub-group focused on how to access affordable properties for Housing First. They spoke to landlords and investors about their expectations and requirements. Lifewise and Airedale Property Trust negotiated with MSD for the Housing First rental subsidies. They obtained Income Related Rent Subsidies (IRRS) plus 50 per cent which means Housing First participants pay a maximum of 25 per cent of their income in rent. This is better than the Pathways fidelity standard of a maximum of 30 per cent of a participant's income in rent. In addition the 50 per cent top up helps cover the costs of intensive property management and any maintenance issues.

The direct access to IRRS effectively unlocked housing supply for a group of people who did not have access to any other permanent and affordable housing options. HNZ offered 11 properties for Housing First in the city centre. Lengthy lease negotiations due to concerns over liability surrounding methamphetamine contamination resulted in a working group to explore how to make process easier for other Community Housing Providers.

Work and Income

MSD agreed to dedicate a proportion of a Work and Income staff member's time in the city centre to support the Housing First programme. As a result one person, who understands the specific processes for this



programme, deals with most Housing First matters. The dedicated worker streamlined entry into emergency housing options for Housing First participants while they waited for their home and also dealt with other Work and Income issues. This reduced time demands for the team and frustration for participants. A senior manager at Work and Income meets regularly with Lifewise and Auckland City Mission management to problem solve any issues or concerns. Senior managers in the Auckland District Health Board mental health services were excited by the design insights and challenges and were eager to work with the programme to explore how health services can be delivered to Housing First participants in ways that work for them.

In February 2017 Lifewise shifted crisis and drop-in support services to the Merge Community Team. The Housing and Crisis response service was restructured into the Housing First team. The Merge Community Team was formed with people who took part in the peer support training. They provide peer-support through the café as well as support the development of community-led initiatives for Housing First whānau and the wider homeless community.

Working collectively

Just before the Housing First design process began (June 2016) media interest in homelessness exploded in New Zealand due to comments made by politicians, advocacy efforts by journalists, Te Puea marae, community members, NGOs plus increasing awareness of systems failures. Lifewise intentionally positioned Housing First as an effective way for the government to respond to homelessness.

Moira Lawler (Lifewise Chief Executive) spoke to Members of Parliament, Council and government officials about the potential for Housing First to work in Auckland. Julie Nelson (People's Project Lead) was invited to share insights with Auckland stakeholders about the successful implementation of Housing First in Hamilton.

The Lifewise annual fund-raising event, the 2016 Big Sleep Out (BSO) was focused on raising funds to implement Housing First. An advertising campaign for Housing First ran alongside the BSO campaign to raise awareness among the general public and decision-makers that Housing First is an effective solution for ending chronic homelessness.

In 2016, the Labour, Greens and Māori Parties launched a Cross-Party inquiry into



homelessness. They heard from people, communities, academics and providers across New Zealand. One of the key recommendations was to roll out Housing First as the primary response to severe homelessness.

In June 2016 the Minister of Social Housing and the Mayor of Auckland indicated their support for an Auckland Housing First project and by July the government announced that \$3 million would be available for Housing First programmes in Auckland with an additional \$1 million from Auckland Council plus \$6 million for a Sustaining Tenancies pilot programme (support for people at risk of losing Housing New Zealand or private tenancies).

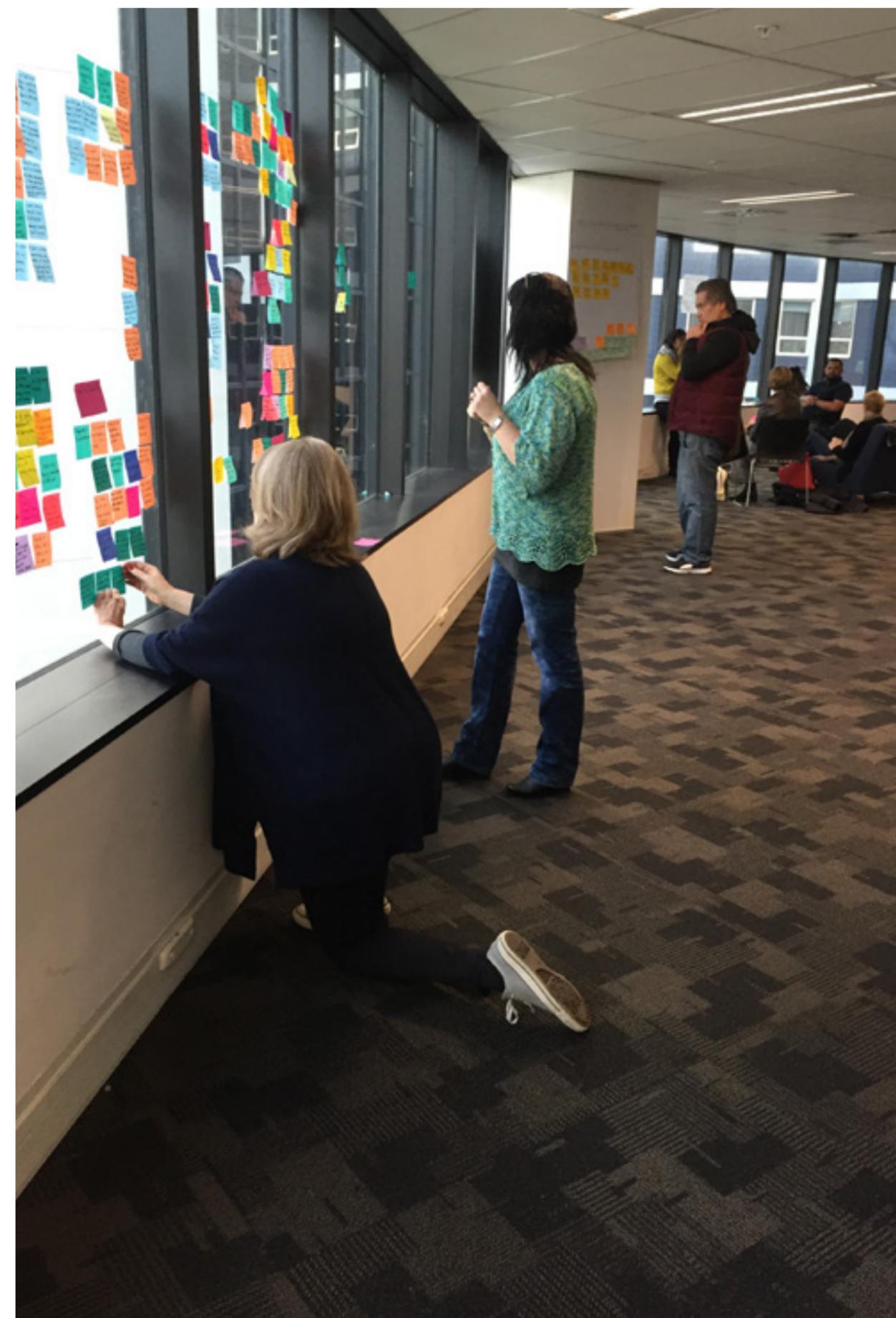
Providers within the Community Housing sector chose to work together rather than compete when it came to Housing First. When the RFP process was announced in late 2016 some Auckland providers chose not to participate in order to reduce competition for other providers. A joint bid between Lifewise and ACM was successful. There was an emerging consensus amongst Community Housing Providers to back Housing First even when pressure was on to deliver more emergency beds.

By the end of 2016 members of the Housing First Community of Practice had been meeting regularly for a year. A group of

ten people from New Zealand traveled to Canada to visit providers in Calgary (where there is a sophisticated homeless serving system based on the principles of Housing First) and to attend the National homelessness conference. The group included Chief Executives and other staff from most of the providers who were awarded Housing First contracts in Auckland along with representatives from Auckland Council, the Ministry of Social Development and Community Housing Aotearoa. During the conference the NGO providers decided to work together on the delivery of Housing First in Auckland, despite having individual contracts.

On return from Canada staff from the Wise Group, VisionWest, Lifewise, Auckland City Mission and Kāhui Tū Kaha (previously Affinity) rapidly developed a joint proposal for a collective impact approach for the implementation of Housing First in Auckland. MSD and Auckland Council agreed to provide additional funding for the backbone support. As a result, the Housing First Auckland Collective was formed.

[Visit our website here.](#)



learnings.

Design process

Human-centered design is a useful way to adapt Housing First for a local context. The use of a thorough, clear process meant that the Auckland City Centre Housing First programme was designed around the specific needs of people who experience homelessness in the city centre. The human-centered design methodology gave the Project Working Group a clear pathway to follow. Developing a clear statement of intent at the start was very important. This was used to keep the Project Working Group very focused on the purpose and scope.

Introducing Housing First is a challenging change process for frontline workers, for providers delivering services to the homeless community and for the wider public system. In order to work differently some people had to process that the way they were working previously was not achieving their desired outcomes. This meant there were tensions and challenges throughout the design process.

Some things really helped to navigate these tensions. The empathy interviewing with people who had spent years rough sleeping in the city centre was a particularly bonding and enlightening part of the team process early on in the project. Supportive relationships and values alignment amongst the core project team meant that they were able to look after each other plus maintain focus and energy. Regular reflective practice

by the core project team was an opportunity to debrief as well as generate new insights, approaches to the design process as well as document key developments. As knowledge grew from the design process the sense of optimism that Housing First was actually going to work became stronger.

The opportunity to utilize the knowledge of experts (both international and local people with lived experience of homelessness) meant that the design process was informed by a broad knowledge base.



Nothing about us, without us

Involving people with lived experience of homelessness in all aspects of the city centre project was essential. Their involvement provided credibility amongst the homeless community and they were important advocates for Housing First. They believed that Housing First could work and that it would happen. Lifewise provided media training for project and design team members. All the project members with lived experience gave media interviews and spoke at events explaining and promoting Housing First in the public arena. People with lived experience were able to access people in the homeless community for interviews and testing prototypes. They added their own knowledge and experience of the street community, being housed and engaging with support services directly into the design process. People from the different agencies enjoyed the opportunity to work alongside them.

There were several factors that enabled the involvement of people with lived experience in the Housing First design process. Firstly, an absolute commitment from the Lifewise team to make that happen. Secondly, previous involvement with community-led initiatives meant people with lived experience were keen to be part of the Housing First design process and they had strong, trusting relationships with a key person in the project team. Thirdly, there were regular opportunities for people to ask questions and de-brief after project meetings

and planning sessions so that everyone was up to speed. Exploring opportunities to support capability and capacity building of local community members unleashed the potential of people which in turn strengthened other community-led efforts. People learnt skills that were shared with their wider community and whānau. This meant that the ripple effect of the design process spread further into spaces beyond that of traditional services.

Involving people with lived experience helped to counter an “us and them” culture where professionals are seen as experts and the homeless are seen as “clients”. Although putting people with lived experience at the centre of the design process did build empathy it didn't entirely eliminate instances of ‘othering’. It was important to find constructive ways of challenging unhelpful beliefs about people who experience homelessness. Everyone needs to think carefully about words and language.

When members of the design team were employed as peer support workers in the Housing First team they took a tuakana role with their colleagues who knew little about Housing First or working alongside people with lived experience of homelessness. They shared their knowledge and expertise. This helped to challenge potential power imbalances between workers with professional qualifications and those with lived experience.



Optimising Housing First for Māori

All the learnings from the design process informed how Housing First in the city centre was intentionally adapted in order to achieve optimal outcomes for Māori. Once the Housing First team was established one of the first decisions made by the team was to use the term 'whānau' rather than clients to refer to people participating in the programme. Whānau also refers to staff members. The Housing First programme is the common parent and both staff and participants are the whānau members of Housing First. This is an effort to diminish power relationships as much as possible and to foster a tuakana / teina relationship between staff and participants.

The Housing First programme has benefited from support from Ngāti Whātua ki Orakei kaumatua, including representation on the city centre governance group. In the first year of implementation:

- Staff with strengths in tikanga me te reo Māori were recruited
- A part-time cultural leadership role was established from the outset within the Housing First team

- Each day starts with karakia, waiata and check in for the team (Housing First whānau members attend when they are present)
- The principles tika, pono and aroha; manaakitanga, tino rangatiratanga and whakawhānaungatanga as well as Housing First principles are applied in practice.
- The team regularly reflect on how these principles inform and are applied in practice, for example, are their processes mana-enhancing; are they supporting tino rangatiratanga?
- The team provide cultural support to whānau, for example, supporting whānau members to reconnect with family and support with tangihanga
- The team utilise Māori concepts to enhance tenancy sustainment, for example, setting kawa for the home (to help manage visitors etc.)

Resourcing

Ideally, Lifewise and Auckland City Mission would have developed the Housing First programme within the context of a broader national, or at least regional, strategy focused on ending homelessness. While there was great engagement from key agencies within the city centre – a regional or national approach may have created more impact. Ideally, Housing First programming needs to be part of a system that includes housing-led responses with low, medium and high levels of support in order to meet a range of needs.

Implementing a Pathways Housing First programme on its own means that it is very difficult for staff and the community when people do not meet programme criteria and there are no other options (other than emergency housing) to refer people to. Without funding from Foundation North, Lifewise would have struggled to find the capacity and time to develop the focus on systems change. The team's understanding of how to best influence change in other social systems grew throughout the design process. They discovered that they needed to be clearer about what was meant by "systems", which ones they were trying to

change, and how. It was very useful to take advice from experienced systems, planners, designers and thinkers. Lifewise was fortunate to have the time and resources to identifying the unique strengths and gaps in our community.

The insight that Lifewise could not effectively implement Housing First alone meant they had a strong commitment to work with others. However, managing multiple external and internal relationships was very time-consuming. They used stakeholder mapping tools to help clarify who they needed to build relationships with and when. Lifewise contracted in a specialist to help them develop a communications strategy. Both the project manager and Lifewise Chief Executive allocated a considerable amount of time for communicating about Housing First to a range of audiences and stakeholders throughout the design process. Other organisations were very supportive in unexpected ways—for example Auckland Council provided a large workspace for the design space which meant Lifewise was able to host multiple workshops, walkthroughs and meetings with large groups.





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