



DIVERSITY NEEDS PARTNERSHIP

**“GETTING MORE BANG
FOR YOUR BUCK!”**

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Homelessness in the Western Region of metropolitan Melbourne appears to be on the increase, especially for families and individuals residing in the Outer West. More and more individuals and families are struggling to either obtain suitable, stable and affordable housing or maintain their current accommodation. As most of us here are aware the issues involving homelessness are often complex and interrelated and there is no easy solution to this problem within our society.

The Western Region of Melbourne is and I believe always will be diverse. The Inner West needs is often different in comparison to the Outer Western region. There are differences in household compositions; ethnic groups/communities including new arrivals especially from the Horn of Africa and infrastructure requirements within certain municipalities are either developed or need to be developed. For instance in the Outer West there are new housing estates being developed which often target young couples and/or families without the necessary infrastructure required.

For individuals and/or families on a low income, what was once considered to be affordable accommodation is no longer the case for this already disadvantaged group mainly due to the increase in market rent. In addition, there are negative perceptions, beliefs and attitudes from landlords. Landlords and real estate agencies often hold the view that individuals and or families especially those whom are Centrelink recipients, are not able to maintain their rental repayments and/or there is an increased possibility of damage to the property, especially from large families. This concern is rarely verbalised because to do so would be discrimination. This is one of the many barriers for service users not being able to access private rental as an option.

As a consequence to the lack of affordable, stable housing and the continuous rejection from the private rental market, there is an increase in demand for public housing from service users. Currently, in the Western Region, there is a two to three year waiting period for families experiencing homelessness who have been approved for public housing whom are requiring a two to three bedroom property. For single adults in this situation the wait is considered to be indefinite.

Due to these ongoing systemic changes, barriers and lack of housing options, as a service provider it is necessary that we develop new and creative ways to ensure that service users and providers are getting more bang for their buck.

This presentation will discuss and profile two housing services within Melbourne Citymission Western (Adult and Family Services and the Family Crisis Accommodation Service). Both programs provide intensive outreach support to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Both programs have developed an innovative and creative model to address the current challenges and barriers that service users encounter when accessing long term and stable accommodation. This model has involved various strategies, one of which has included the establishment of working in partnership with Transitional Housing Managers (THM's) in the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.

Both programs are significantly unique in the implementation of this model. The reasons for this are that the Western Metropolitan Region is diverse in population, ethnicity and household composition. Therefore the needs of service users often vary. Consequently, it is essential that there is a level of flexibility available within the model.

This presentation will explore diversity within the two individual programs and discuss the types of strategies adopted to ensure that service users receive an intervention that is positive, beneficial and leads to a positive outcome.

It will examine how each program developed various partnerships within the community i.e. THM providers, real estate agents and other services. The presentation will provide a description of both Adult and Family Services (AFS) and the Family Crisis Accommodation Service (FCAS) and the various components offered within each program.

Most importantly this presentation will discuss in greater length the model and interventions developed, the challenges that have been encountered and the future planning and direction. It will also highlight the importance of establishing and maintaining meaningful partnerships so that such a model can be sustained to provide the best outcome for service users.

DESCRIPTION of AFS and FCAS PROGRAMS

Both AFS and FCAS provide outreach support to those who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness working from the case management model. Whilst both programs work with homelessness, there are differences that make both programs unique. One of the significant differences between the two is that FCAS work only with families who have links with two Local Government Areas (LGA) in the Western Region. Whereas AFS work with both single adults and families, covering the whole of the Western Metropolitan Region.

ADULT and FAMILY SERVICES

Adult and Family Services is a program within Melbourne Citymission's Western region and comes under the umbrella of Community Services. Other programs/services also within Community Services Western include Reconnect, Women In Transition, Finding Solutions and the Family Crisis Accommodation Service. Adult and Family Services offers a wide range of information, outreach and support to families 18 years and over and single adults 21 years and over, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Western Region of Melbourne.

AFS comprise of five components, which consist of:

- Duty Service.
- Short Term Outreach Program (S.T.O.P.).
- Ongoing Support – nomination rights to THM (medium support).
- Young and Pregnant and Parenting Program (YAPP).
- Community Development (CD)

For the purpose of this presentation the main focus of discussion will be the STOP program however will briefly discuss the other four components of the service.

Duty Service:

Duty is the first point of contact for clients and external agencies with AFS. At this point people are assessed for direction to a specific MCM service or to support services within the community. Of equal importance, Duty workers are the first point of contact for workers' that have enquiries about housing issues. Hours of operation are Monday to Friday

Ongoing Support:

The Support Service within AFS is provided within a case management framework. It is based on a holistic, collaborative client focused approach. The aim of the support service is to empower individual service users to identify their issues and create their own goals in collaboration with their support worker. The issue of obtaining stable, secure and affordable housing will be the focus of support with the service user.

Community Development:

This position implements community development projects as identified by the AFS team and Community Services Manager. The position also guides the AFS team in maintaining a supportive working environment that focuses on team building activities.

YAPP:

Provides young single parents and young families aged 15-25 with housing assistance and support during pregnancy and parenting. YAPP also provides information and advice to Melbourne Citymission services as to how they can best support young parents.

Short Term Outreach Program - STOP

What makes this program unique and stand out from most others is that it is a partnership between MCM (a SAAP service) and the HIR service of a THM provider (MetroWest Housing Service). Both services identified various gaps within the housing sector. Some of these gaps include:

- Lack of short term, early intervention support provided as a strategy for service users especially those requiring outreach support immediately in order to access private rental or prevent homelessness.
- Lack of short-term support vacancies to assist service users to stabilise their housing situation, within a short time frame of presentation to the service provider. The attempt in preventing further deterioration of the service users' living circumstances and to prevent their entry into the homelessness service system.
- HIR was finding it increasingly difficult to find support agencies willing to assist service users in finding private rental accommodation and committing to a period of support until this was achieved given that most services are more likely to work with service users whom have chronic homelessness and where the support issues are complex.
- Better utilisation of HEF as support is allocated early.

This STOP service is targeted to those service users who are currently homeless, are at risk of homelessness, or who want to access private rental and are able to live independently. This group of service users however often experience temporary barriers, which prevent them from accessing private rental but with some support can have this addressed effectively within the timeframe.

These barriers may include:

- Non - English speaking or not spoken confidently.
- Lack of familiarity with the private rental system.
- Organisational skills underdeveloped.
- Lack of transport.
- Physical health issues.
- Mental or intellectual disabilities, which have minimal impact if they had accommodation.

Some degree of extra support may be required however this is often temporary or there are already supports in place to manage the ongoing issues. It is not appropriate for clients who require supported accommodation or for those who want/need to access public housing. This program focuses on short-term support of six weeks duration.

MetroWest Housing Role:

HIR team at MetroWest Housing Inc. undertake detailed assessment (generally 2 appointments will have occurred) and if client is interested in private rental, short-term outreach support is identified as appropriate; the HIR worker will make a referral to AFS if there is a support vacancy available.

FAMILY CRISIS ACCOMMODATION SERVICE

The Family Crisis Accommodation Service (FCAS) is a joint partnership between Melbourne Citymission Western and the Salvation Army Social Housing Service (SASHS). The HIR team at SASHS conduct all initial assessments before deciding on making a referral to FCAS. As stated previously, FCAS provides short-term accommodation and intensive support to:

- Families i.e. couple with or without children, single parent families, women who are pregnant with or without children, sibling groups and multigenerational families.
- Families who live or have significant links in the Brimbank or Melton LGA- eg, schools, work, family etc.
- Be homeless or at risk of homelessness and other housing related difficulties.

The two main components to this service are as follows:

- Short Term Intervention (STI).
- Crisis Accommodation Support Service.

Short Term Intervention - STI

As stated previously clients are initially referred to the FCAS STI through the Salvation Army Social Housing Service (SASHS) – Housing Information Referral (HIR) workers who are located at both Brimbank and Melton.

FCAS operates a 'Short Term Intervention' service in both Brimbank and Melton several days per week. This allows the opportunity for clients to have their housing needs addressed and may result in a referral to FCAS Intake for crisis accommodation following a more comprehensive assessment. Alternatively, clients can be supported for a once off visit or over a period of time through STI. Clients access the service, not a particular worker.

STI provides advice, information and advocacy, regarding housing options. Office of Housing applications including Segment 1, advocacy with private rental, for instance information to service users on how to best submit an application to access private rental with real estate agencies and private landlords as well as communicating directly with the real estate agents. The STI service has limited brokerage and can be accessed to secure or maintain long-term stable accommodation and to prevent homelessness. Because of the partnership that exists between FCAS and SASHS, a financial package can be created – Housing Establishment Funds and brokerage that will have more impact in accessing private rental for the service user. With the utilisation of the Bond Loan Scheme, this package goes a long way towards a service user being successful in accessing private rental.

Crisis Accommodation Support

In addition to the STI component of the service FCAS has access to six stand alone 'crisis properties' – three in each Local Government Area. The purpose of the service is to ensure minimal disruption to a families community connections by maintaining already established linkages such as schools and family/friends within their own community. A large proportion of service users who access the service have housing, material, financial, health (especially mental health issues) and emotional needs. Family violence also features predominantly in the service. Service users seeking assistance as a direct consequence of family violence or because it was for this

reason why families have entered the homelessness system initially, sometimes as far back as several years. This gives an indication of the level of transience and instability they have experienced.

- Families can stay between 6-12 weeks in a crisis property.
- Families are issued with a 60-day NTV in accordance with the Residential Tenancy's Act within the first 4 weeks of living at the property.
- The first two weeks are provided rent-free.
- A set amount to cover utilities cost including in-contact telephone service is added to the fortnightly rental amount.

During the family's time in the crisis property, the family and support worker will work intensively together in an outreach capacity to secure longer-term, stable accommodation.

MODEL and PARTNERSHIPS

Having the privilege of working in the Western Region for approximately seven years, what has become increasingly evident to me is the diversity and different trends that present within this region. For instance, there is a large Horn of African community most of which are single parent families, mostly single mothers, the majority of which have four to six children and most of which reside in the Inner Western Region. However, as time has gone by the Horn of African community, especially the newly arrived, are slowly moving into the Outer Western Region. Other identified trends include -inter-generational homelessness/welfare recipients, increase in the CALD community, increase of family homelessness especially in the Outer Western Region with minimal housing options available to them, first time service users whom are homeless due to a relationship breakdown (some have been home owners), variety of factors which may contribute to service users homelessness and other support needs.

Being aware of the limitations of resources and constraints of the current system in which we work, the development of the models has involved thinking more creatively in their approach to working with this disadvantaged and diverse population. It has challenged MCM to be more imaginative so that services users are getting more "bang for their buck". This means service providers feel that this approach provides greater satisfaction knowing that service users are being given a greater opportunity. This is also attempting to ensure that service users are being provided with a meaningful intervention that will hopefully prevent the revolving door phenomena often spoken of in this sector.

There are several components and frameworks that this model incorporates. The most important component that this model used is based on that of partnership. For the case of MCM it has approached two THM providers in the Western Region. The main purpose of these partnerships is to ensure that the programs developed is adding value to the existing programs and is attempting to fill the gaps that service users encounter when approaching services. Both the STOP program and FCAS have made attempts to address this.

Historically it has been uncommon for services to enter into any form of partnerships other than those formed for network meetings rather than for a model that requires significant collaboration in order for positive service delivery. The three services involved have been extremely committed in working together to develop programs that are positive for all involved especially for the service users. MCM's experience with developing these partnerships is that a common aim and purpose is necessary, and that there is a commitment from the services involved that the partnership would be long term.

In 2001 the Victorian Government released the tender, to establish six crisis initiative programs to target different groups, one of which was families experiencing homelessness in the Brimbank and Melton Local Government Areas. Both organizations (MCM and SASHS) agreed to combine their resources and knowledge to provide the type of service that the Department was seeking.

Both organizations decided that MCM would be responsible for the delivery of the service eg. MCM provides the support to these families. While SASHS had two roles - HIR team would be the gatekeepers for the program conducting the initial

assessment for referral to FCAS and secondly to manage the tenancies of the crisis properties.

Another significant component of this model is the attempt to address some of the gaps within the Western Region. How these individual programs attempt to do this will be discussed in the Intervention section of this presentation.

What makes this 'partnership' model unique is that it is unusual to have two services located together providing a similar service, working in partnership and sharing resources. FCAS is co-located with SASHS and MCM and Metrowest Housing are next door to each other. Both services have easy access to the other given their location. This has contributed to a positive working relationship between the services involved.

The cornerstone for this model to be successful is that each organization is clear on what their aim and role is, what the other organization can provide to clients, how the other organization/service is able to add on and compliment what has currently been done so that the service user gets the best possible outcome. Duplicating an existing service would have been unproductive e.g. the screening/initial assessment for FCAS referrals was completed by the HIR team of SASHS and likewise for the STOP program given that AFS operates a daily duty service. For both programs, the HIR's role is to refer those service users who fit the criteria to the relevant service. With STOP, MetroWest Housing HIR team refer only those clients where private rental is a viable option i.e. are eligible, able to maintain but have barriers preventing them from being successful without the support of a worker.

What has become more apparent is the degree of diversity that exists within the Western Region, including acknowledging the differences between the Inner and Outer West. For instance most service users who live in the Outer Western region are less likely to move out of their local government area even though there are minimal housing options available to them. Through the FCAS and SASHS partnership model what has been able to be achieved is that there is an attempt to keep families living in their community so that they are able to maintain their current links and supports during this difficult period.

Both of these partnerships are innovative, creative and unique. Both programs have been developed due to a variety of reasons most of which have already been discussed. As previously stated another very important component of this model has also involved being able to combine and maximise resources, workers knowledge and experiences. The main focus has been to ensure the two programs are meeting the needs of the service users and ensuring the best possible outcome.

A model of this nature also requires flexibility, co-operation and ongoing communication from those involved in the day-to-day service delivery. Communication is the catalyst to success and ongoing achievements, as well as addressing any issues that arise within the service delivery. Trust, respect and goodwill are other prerequisites that come to mind in ensuring a successful partnership. At the same time, this model has also allowed for the organizations involved to be able to maintain their individual identity and mission statements.

CHALLENGES

Even well established services working with the homeless community encounter challenges that impact on day-to-day service delivery. For new programs such as FCAS and AFS-STOP it was no different. The biggest challenge initially was that they were working with a model based on partnership. The implementation of a new program/service can be complex, couple this with working together or in the case of FCAS side by side in the same office, requires some definite strategies.

Both programs have encountered a myriad of challenges that have needed to be addressed at varying stages – sometimes immediately, others as time progressed. The challenges, which both programs have experienced, have involved the set up of the service delivery, the ‘teething issues’ that any service/business might experience. A lack of understanding of each other’s role and workers expectations needed to be addressed very quickly. It was very much the old adage of ‘trial and error’ for both partners. Ironing out these internal processes quickly, sensitively and professionally was the key to a positive outcome. For instance, both programs experienced the need to ‘fine-tune’ the referral process so that inappropriate referrals were kept to a minimum.

One of the benefits of either being co-located and/or next door to each other is that these minor challenges can be addressed through open communication and mini meetings. An example of this for FCAS was that while some families were in crisis, their only option other than emergency accommodation or referral to other services was the completion of a housing application i.e. Segment Three. With no housing and support vacancies, FCAS was unable to offer any further support other than that provided by HIR. With the HIR teams completing this application a doubling up of service did not occur.

For AFS-STOP a different challenge involves worker availability. The HIR team were finding that they were unable to refer service users to the support program as most of the worker vacancies were coming through on a Monday. Given that AFS have their intake meetings on Tuesday most STOP referral vacancies were taken up.

Another difficulty for both programs is ensuring that the service user has exited the service within the allocated timeframe, and has done so into longer-term housing. Given that the exit options were limited, the pressure for workers to ensure that the service user has accessed alternative accommodation within this time frame is significant. There is an expectation that workers will meet this timeframe given that they are required to provide intensive outreach support to service users to secure private rental. While at times this can occur, it isn’t always a realistic timeframe even though weekly appointments are made with service users.

For FCAS ensuring that families have vacated the crisis accommodation property within the 6-to12 week timeframe at times can also be a significant challenge given minimal exit options available to them. While FCAS provide intensive support to families, which often include two contacts per week, factors outside of the programs control such as support and transitional housing vacancy available to families in the region are minimal and often the family’s ability to secure private rental can be problematic. The main reason for this is often due to the attitudes and beliefs of real estate agencies and the private landlords.

Outside of the challenges relating to the service delivery, there is also the need to grasp and understand an organization's culture and trying to work within that. The additional pressure is working along side this while at the same time attempting to build on a professional working relationship. While on most occasions the culture of the organization has a minimal impact on the service delivery, it is often about ensuring that there is a level of trust and respect from both sides. At times this can be somewhat difficult especially if the same issue arises and there is a belief that it has been dealt with. Ensuring that there is a good working relationship and that there is a level of trust and respect takes a significant amount of time and energy to establish. For both AFS-STOP and FCAS this has been a priority in order to ensure good service delivery.

One of the common issues that both services have encountered as stated previously is a service user securing private rental and the need to develop stronger links and partnerships with real estate agencies. For most service users, private rental is a feasible housing option. What was becoming more and more evident when assisting service users to access private rental was the level of discrimination and barriers they were encountering when attempting to access real estate agencies themselves. Often they are judged upon not only due to the fact that they are Centrelink recipients based on the common stereotyping and attitudes, for instance those whom are Centrelink recipients will not maintain their rental agreement will damage the property and that their income was not secure. Additional barriers also included the family composition especially if they have four or more children, the age of the children and way in which service users may present at the estate agencies. For instance, service users from the often the Horn of African community often have large families.

For both programs it has been a challenge to develop meaningful partnerships with any given real estate agency.

Ways in which relationships have been built:

- Approaching individual real estate agents, explaining what we do and that our business was not to make families homeless therefore we as an organization would not be encouraging service users to access private rental if they are assessed as not being able to maintain it. Eg a rental history not so fantastic, history of eviction.
- We initially sent letters requesting a meeting - not so successful.
- Decided to choose a day and visit as many real estate agencies in the LGA areas and explain what we do.
- Including other housing services to conduct a Real Estate Forum in the community. By informing agents about the services and the need a greater understanding would be achieved. Several Forums have taken place in the West and a third is planned before the end of the year.
- A survey was sent to a vast number of agents seeking their input on what would assist them to make a positive decision for an applicant.

Forming positive relationships with the rental property managers has been an extremely slow process that is still ongoing and at times problematic. When a positive relationship has been formed with a rental property manager this can be short lived, if they leave and a new person starts, often the process has to start again.

INTERVENTIONS

Having a clear understanding of the model including its various components has compelled each program to think of creative and innovative interventions to ensure a win-win outcome for its services users. FCAS and AFS-STOP view early intervention as a strategy that can prevent service users from becoming chronically homeless.

One of the major benefits for both service providers is that they are either co-located or located next to a THM provider. This is significantly beneficial for service users as it may mean they are able to obtain an immediate response. An example of this is with the STOP program. MetroWest Housing HIR team has the capacity to refer service users who fit the criteria to AFS STOP on the day that they are aware of a STOP vacancy. Furthermore, MetroWest Housing HIR are also able to make an appointment for the service user as they have been provided with available times including that particular day.

As stated previously, the model aims to reduce the gaps within the system some of which include minimal services where families can access additional funding to assist with rent in advance or arrears, limited services that are able to assist with finding private rental or short term support until their housing crisis is addressed. Another gap includes services that are able to support families for a short period of time while in transitional housing until the relevant service has a support vacancy.

One of the gaps that the AFS-STOP program has been able to address is that of providing weekly outreach support. This was one of the major reasons for the programs implementation. The major challenge for the HIR team was making successful referrals to services for those clients who only needed short term but valuable intervention to assist them with securing private rental. One of the challenges for MetroWest-HIR service is knowing that there are limited vacancies and once that vacancy is filled, more than likely it will be 6 weeks before another vacancy is available.

A gap that FCAS has been able to address relates to the policy and guidelines in relation to HEF (Housing and Establishment Funds) such as that which is provided by SASHS HIR. According to Office of Housing (OoH) policy, HEF cannot be used for Bond Loan or public housing debt i.e. rent arrears or rent in advance. All debt must be cleared or an agreement is to be made in most circumstances, before OoH assistance is provided again. FCAS has developed interventions that are creative to address financial gaps within the system that often prevents and hinders service users from accessing accommodation.

FCAS has access to a limited amount of brokerage dollars that does not follow the same guidelines as HEF. Having this level of flexibility on how the program can spend its brokerage funding has benefited the service user in accessing or maintaining both public housing but more importantly securing or maintaining private rental. This includes clearing the Bond Loan debt in some circumstances so that the Bond Loan can be re-accessed. By financially contributing to the debt (often in combination with other services) the service user successfully accesses long-term housing.

Another intervention that FCAS uses to address the financial gap within the system includes financial packages with the HIR team at SASHS. These packages are mainly used for those service users who are accessing the private rental market or who need assistance with maintaining their current accommodation. This has been one

successful intervention adopted by FCAS and the HIR team. There is a strong belief that this intervention would not have come about if both services were not sharing office space and committed to the partnership model. Another benefit to being co-located is that the service user is not necessarily required to attend an appointment with a FCAS worker unless there are other support issues that need to be addressed. The HIR worker and the FCAS team will always discuss the assessment that has been conducted and may agree that a financial package would be of benefit to the family to prevent homelessness. The family may also be linked into financial counselling or be provided with information that may assist them in the future. This process eliminates the service user having to retell their story to another worker and often there is an immediate response on whether FCAS is able to assist financially.

For those service users whose housing situation is complex, HIR will refer them to the FCAS STI component of the service. An example of this is when the service user's tenancy is at significant risk and a combination of interventions is required to salvage the tenancy, provided that it is feasible to do so. Before any financial assistance is provided, negotiations need to occur with the landlord and the client. For instance, a tenant might need to agree to a repayment plan where they contribute additional money to the already existing weekly rent to repay the arrears. Where possible, and with client consent, negotiations may need to take place where rent can be paid either fortnightly or weekly rather than monthly and arrangements made for this to be direct debited. In these circumstances, both landlords and tenants might agree to these terms and at times have them finalised at the tribunal. Together with the financial package agreed upon between SASHS HIR and FCAS, the client may also need to make a contribution towards the arrears or advance.

STI has also developed other creative interventions, as an attempt to prevent the service user experiencing chronic homelessness. These interventions include:

- Completing Office of Housing applications especially the Reoccurring Homelessness Segment. This has required significant creativity given the guidelines. For instance, family needs to be in either crisis or emergency accommodation, in transitional housing or a crisis managed accommodation. Given that there are no properties attached to the STI component of the program a strategy used to overcome this minor detail is that once the application is ready to go, FCAS will pay for the accommodation. More often than not the accommodation paid for is a caravan park.
- Being able to access floating THM's i.e. neighbourhood fatigue property for a tenancy through the SASHS -TA service and providing the family with support for a maximum of 6 weeks until a support vacancy arises with a SAAP service.
- Financially assist service users who cannot be assisted by SASHS HIR as they have already received financial assistance in the past.

In addition to this, FCAS will often provide outreach support to families who have gone from their crisis accommodation into a THM until a support worker vacancy becomes available within that service.

PLANNING and FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The question in most peoples minds is "Where to from here?"

For both FCAS and AFS-STOP some of the future directions will be similar however there will also be some differences given that one has been operational longer than the other. AFS STOP has most recently had an evaluation. Whilst the evaluation confirmed that this program had been successful thus far, recommendations were also made which involved further establishing partnerships with real estate agencies. The Department evaluated the FCAS program within the first year of being operational for a 12-month period. The Department concluded that the partnership between MCM-FCAS and SASHS had demonstrated a best practice model.

One of the main focuses for both programs is that of assisting service users to secure private rental. What is evident is that both programs need to further persevere with real estate agencies within the Western Region. What may be helpful is if both programs formalised 'Friendly' partnerships with real estate agents. This can occur via developing a list of real estate agents who are helpful and co-operative with the service users who access either service. What is vital for this to occur is that each real estate agent needs to be approached individually in order to start eliminating some of the barriers that service users encounter. This has been attempted several times in the past and the success is sporadic and not always prolonged.

What has also been attempted is a Real Estate forum. Whilst attendance by the real estate agencies was minimal those that did attend found it valuable. With appropriate planning and resources it is possible that more estate agents may attend the next one planned for the coming months. This will continue to be an extremely slow process however, if both programs work together and with other service providers it is possible that eventually some of the barriers that service users encounter accessing private rental may no longer exist.

What is most important for both programs is to know whether these assisted tenancies have been sustainable. FCAS has started collecting data in this area to find out this information. This feedback process will allow both programs to reflect upon their interventions and make any changes as required.

What is fundamental for both programs is that they continue incorporating the partnership model in their practice. This will ensure the continuation of sharing resources, knowledge and most importantly addressing the diversity within the Western Region ensuring that service users and providers are getting more bang for their buck!