HOUSING FIRST IN TASMANIA: AN EVALUATION OF SINGLE-SITE SETTINGS

Julia Verdouw

HACRU, University of Tasmania
National Housing Conference, (NHC), Perth WA, October 2015
Introduction

• Acknowledgement: co-authors Dr Michelle Gabriel & Assoc Prof Daphne Habibis

• Service evaluation:
  • Mixed method
  • Five single-site Housing First facilities in Tasmania

• Presentation agenda: the role of single site facilities in Housing First model of housing
Housing First principles

- Immediate access to permanent housing
- Comprehensive support following clients
- Scatter-site housing in mainstream environments
- Prioritising consumer choice

REFS:
Johnsen & Teixeira 2010
Stefancic & Tsemberis 2007
Parsell et al. 2013
Scatter-site model

- Housing in mainstream environments
- No more than 15-20% clients in any one building
- Fidelity to Housing First (HF) principles

REFS:
Gilmer et al. 2014
Stefancic et al. 2013
Watson et al. 2013
Single-site model

- Cluster housing in single building
- On-site tenancy and support services
- Socially mixed resident group
- Associated with ‘low-fidelity’ HF programs

REFS:
Gilmer et al. 2014
Watson et al. 2013
Johnson 2012
‘We shape our buildings, and thereafter, they shape us...’

Winston Churchill
Evaluation findings

• Assist people to access and sustain housing
• General tenant satisfaction with housing
• Satisfaction notable for key groups
• Service flexibility improves tenant outcomes and satisfaction

REFS:
Brown et al. 2015
Collins et al. 2013
Russolillo et al. 2014
Parsell et al. 2015
Watson et al. 2013
Evaluation findings

- Limited consumer choice
- High security negative for some
- Transitions to independence problematic
- References to internally divided community

REFS:
Johnsen & Teixeira 2010
Stefancic & Tsemberis 2007
Parsell et al. 2013
Evaluation findings

- Support tied to housing retention
- Permanency vs. Independence
- Tension between organisational and wider sector goals
Single-site Housing First models may be more likely to achieve optimal service outcomes for clients in cases where the client group, their needs and service outcome goals have very clear articulation and focus within the program.
Research tells us...

- Different groups require different housing
- Single site generate clear fidelity challenges
- Generally, scatter-site is optimal for episodic/chronic homeless people with support needs

REFS:
Leff et al. 2009; Collins et al. 2003
Van den Berk Clark et al. 2005; 2015
Busch-Geertsema et al. 2010
Randolph & Wood 2005; Lipmann 2009
Leff et al. 2009; Collins et al. 2013
Research tells us...

Single-site works well for some groups:

‘...those homeless people whose needs are sufficiently great to mean that independent or semi-independent living in ordinary housing is not a realistic goal’

REF: Busch-Geertsema 2010: 73
We suggest that policy-makers consider the adoption of a diversity of housing arrangements to cater for client differences in need and choice. This may include single-site Housing First settings with a focus on particular life-stage or need groups; or scatter-site models for adults for whom choice is a higher priority and housing independence is a realistic goal.
Benefits:

- Fewer environmental considerations
- Fidelity to Housing First principles encouraged
- Adaptability to diversified funding environment
- Capacity to clarify/justify service goals to stakeholders in context of heightened accountability and scrutiny
Thankyou for listening.