

Never mind the Needs Assessment, where will I live when I get home?

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This presentation is about why people want to move, what influences a person as to where they choose to live, what can limit their choices and what we have found works to help get people into the accommodation of their choice. It's also about what doesn't work!

The CCT believes that disability funding should be used for providing Disability Supports.

This funding is limited, but currently it can be used for a variety of things . It could be used to subsidize a person's standard of living, or for property management services. The CCT believe that funding should be used wisely and only for providing actual disability supports.

We don't own houses, people own or rent their own homes at market rates.

This aligns with the CCT values.

Think about this: My home, Your workplace It's not your property, you're a guest in my home).

With this model there is no such thing as a vacancy, a bed that needs filling.

People choose and fund their own accommodation and wherever possible they choose who they want to live with and in what area. We support them to make this happen.

In the past some people supported by the CCT have managed their own change of accommodation, but with varying degrees of success.

In some cases this meant that peoples' choices became limited by 'what a person knows or doesn't know', and shifting went into the "too hard basket". For example, if a person felt at a loss as to how to go about finding a new place, or how to make the move happen, they may decide to stay put even though they are unhappy in their present accommodation.

Obviously as a service provider we assist in finding new accommodation and completing the moving process, but in the past it was not just one person's role to over-see the whole process.

Usual Support time is for specific goals and tasks, when someone wants to shift it increases the support time needed dramatically. Of course we would always provide support in this area but often the extra time needed meant that things could sometimes be overlooked. For example: notifying the change of address to a person's Dr and Dentist, contacting Telecom, getting a final reading from the electricity provider, contacting Winz, advising the bank of the change of address. This could disadvantage the person who was moving and make the whole experience more stressful for them.

The move was often financially unpredictable. One person may hire a removal van and be able to afford it, whereas another person could not .Some people may choose not to, or be unable to clean the flat they were leaving, and therefore may have to forfeit the bond.

New landlords can get annoyed if they are being contacted by several different people during the shifting process. Having one key person to liaise with the landlords and all services involved really tidies up the process.

While we support people to be as independent as possible, there are some things we have learnt in relation to making a house or flat move go more smoothly, be less stressful, and minimize the costs involved.

In preparing this presentation we looked at the experiences of **27** people who required a total of over **30** moves in an **18** month period.

Why?

- Social Reasons
- Evicted!!
- Financial reasons
- Environmental



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People move all the time but Why do people want to move?:

From the 30 moves we studied, We have identified 4 main reasons why people choose or need to move.

The first one is

Social Reasons

Relationships between people develop or change : for example two people fall in love and want to live together.

Two or more people might become friends and want to try flatting together.

Someone may no longer get along with their flat mates and decide to go it alone.

A marriage can break up and one or both people may decide to move out.

Accommodation needs change: one lady we support gave birth and needed a bigger place for herself, her partner and child. Her previous accommodation was not a safe environment for a baby. For another lady we needed to provide 24/7 staffing when she initially came home with her baby, so suitable accommodation had to be found.

That didn't last long so back to house hunting.....

Eviction:

People can be evicted for many reasons:

The Place may be needed by the landlord either for themselves or their family.

Failing a flat inspection due to hygiene issues or not maintaining the property to properly.

Breach of the flat agreement contract (getting a pet, smoking in the flat, having others move in without permission, destruction of property)

Disagreements with neighbours- community disruption

Disagreements with landlords.

Challenging behaviours' –ie: Noise/ Damage to flat/ Fire setting: In several instances people have started fires in their flats.

Financial Reasons

Rent increases, loss of income thru loss of job, lifestyle choices; EG choosing to 'downgrade' so you can afford other things like a car or maybe just to have more disposable income.

Environmental

The Location may no longer be suitable: a person with a history of offending against children may need to move if a family moves in next door.

The place turns out to be not as suitable as first thought eg dampness, too small, too cold, or too hot if it's in sunny Dunedin! too far away from shops, too far away from friends or work.

Unsuitable neighbours: We realise now that it was not a good match when a person on antiabuse medication and at risk of offending if they drink, moved in to a flat with a neighbour who gave them money to buy alcohol and then invited them to stav and drink it with them!.. (This also put a strain on the person's marriage.) Sometimes we aet it verv wrong!

Problems

- Legal
- Cleaning of flats
- Financial
- Location
- Landlords



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As mentioned in our introduction we had **30** moves within our Organisation in an 18 month period. **27** individuals were shifted, and this often involved liaising with several people within and outside the Trust. From this we identified 5 main “problems” (or Challenges) that people faced:

The **Legal** area was an interesting area, as some people coming into the Trust have been assessed under the Intellectual Disability Compulsory Care & Rehabilitation Act. For those of you not aware of this Act it meant that certain rights and choices can be removed or limits put in place for an Individual, to minimise their risk of reoffending.

If a person had been released from jail and **had not** been placed under this Act, they would normally have the same rights and choices you and I may expect when looking for a home.

However for a person who was placed under this Act this could mean being told where to live, as this may directly relate to the nature of their offending so for example schools or highly populated areas would not be a consideration.

It could also mean 24hr supervision in their home and having to work with several different people ranging from the Probation officer in conjunction with our RIDSAS (Regional Intellectual Disability Supported Accommodation Service) Manager, and everyone in-between (Behavioural Specialists, Senior Support Workers, Key Workers and Support Staff)! Its a lot of people to deal with when you just want to move on from the cell block to living in the community.

Cleaning of flats:

Often flats can be in serious need of a through clean and it may have been like this for some time making the job much harder. Some people would rather forgo the bond refund if the flat needed cleaned rather than attend to this. Even getting staff on board to assist in cleaning could pose a problem as some staff may not feel it is their role to support people in this area. Often role modeling from staff (as in getting alongside people by showing them how to use that vacuum cleaner) is not as simple as it would appear if cleaning is LOW on their own list of priorities.

In other cases people will get the flat cleaned by professionals but have not allowed for the cost involved as quotes have not been obtained.

Financial Reasons:

As previously mentioned Finances can also often play a big part in problems when wanting to shift.

This could mean wanting a larger flat, in a more desirable area, but not actually having the budget for what a person ideally wants.

Peoples income is often the main driver that limits the persons options.

While over a 3rd of the people we support are in some form of paid employment the majority remain on the invalids benefit.

Location is an issue:

Its not on bus route, in an undesirable area – cheap but not ideal (best house - worst street), away from family and friends, not near shops, banks etc. We have had instances where gang members have moved into the area which immediately changes the dynamics of an otherwise quiet neighborhood. Property and staff cars have been damaged and in one case a gang member just “wandered into the house” claiming to be a friend of the person living there which wasn't

Solutions

- Listening to what people want
- Financial Solutions



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We listen to what people want

Find out their wish list and work thru it. Finding the perfect flat with a deck over looking the harbour, a cottage garden and an outdoor spa may not be feasible for many people.

Often having a drive around (which costs of course) and seeing what's on offer can be a fun experience for the person involved and it may give a better insight into what is actually out there to rent. We all know how easy it is to read about that "wee gem in a quiet area" only to find out it is really a crib in the middle of nowhere with a long drop ☺

Explaining this to a person who has an Intellectual Disability whether it mild or severe and even working with people who are non verbal (or as previously mentioned under the Act) can often take some time and

we have to establish what is realistic and within peoples budgets.

Several discussions with staff and other people associated with a persons support to identify what needs to be the priority may have to be had.. (i.e.: Behaviour Specialists may identify safety factors required like polycarbonate windows if a person has a history of breaking windows).

And of course wanting Sky TV or an Internet connection may be the difference between a flat in the area someone wants versus what they may have to go without to be able to meet the rent..

It can also mean Financial Solutions

Where possible the rent may be able to be negotiated if there is a good relationship with an existing Landlord, long term tenants are definitely preferable to short term and having the Trust as a go-between can often make negotiations easier between a Landlord and a tenant.

We are fortunate to have at least 4 different Landlords who we have a great working relationship.

In some instances we as an Organisation will sign the lease if that is the **only** way the person can get into the flat however this is not a common practice.

There are also the obvious WINZ Accommodation Supplements which a person may be eligible for and sometimes additional assistance may be available but you definitely have to ask as this may not be generally advertised. A person may be entitled to a Medical disability allowance that could save a few dollars in the long run.

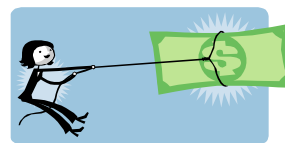
We may also look into the possibility of part time employment to supplement a persons income and by maintaining good working relationships with places like Work bridge and WINZ can sometimes lead to additional income opportunities.

What about an extra flat mate? This may relieve some of the financial pressure, power and phone bills including disconnection and reconnection fees can be costly and if there is a history of bad debt this may need to be addressed. For example simply changing the phone number from one flat to another in a Council flat complex will cost you \$52.00. This could equate to a persons food budget for the week!

Setting up AP's and Direct debits area good solution to managing peoples money on a regular basis as opposed to hoping there will be enough money when the bill arrives.

It can be quite enlightening/empowering for a person who has always "never had enough money" to actually have written

Organisational Costs



- Hours of support – Staffing ratios
- Maintenance Crew – hours, Moving, cleaning + reinforcers (pizza)
- Tips charges, road tax, fuel costs.
- Behaviour support – Care Manager - Meetings
- Community support + Doctor etc
- Time spent searching for homes to meet what the person wants
- Bonds (when the lease is in the Trust's name)
- Maintenance
- When it all goes wrong



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A lot of the organisational costs are sometimes hidden not always identified. We have tried to identify them in this presentation and think the following are some of the main costs.

Hours of support.

The number of hours needed to support someone moving is varied and a lot of costs occur indirectly. Hours for flat hunting, looking at flats, meeting with potential landlords. People who want to flat together and the staffing ratios that that may entail. 2 people who say one has had a few hours staff support and one has had sleepover staff, what does the new staffing look like?

Staffing suitability - particularly if the staff needs to be gender specific or requires a specific person specification to meet the person's needs. If the person needed a quiet environment we would not put the bubbliest staff person with them.

Matching the staff well with the person. Not filling gaps. A staff member may complete orientation hours and we find that it is not a good match, so it is back to finding a good match. We don't always get it right but we do try! We never use agency staff which can stretch our resources. We over staff to assist with this.

There are also changes to be made by admin around database information, phone lists etc. The actual costs incurred by driving around to look at the flat and take the person to look at the flat and the staff hours involved in this. If you had 4 people at once looking to move then several people may need to be involved in this. (ie: key worker/staff/coordinator/Ridsas Manager even our General Manager has been involved). So it takes a lot of resources.

Maintenance Crew. The actual \$ dollar costs of paid people, moving a person also the fuel and road tax costs, wear and tear on the vehicles. The full cost is negotiable. Also there may be incurred tip charges, in addition to wages there is the cost of the pizza- the reinforcer for the packing, cleaning and unpacking (it's a dirty job sometimes). The maintenance crew may be involved in the clean up. Also if the crew turns up ready for the move and nothing has been packed or organized, again this is a hidden cost. We do this to make the move achievable and affordable for people.

Meetings that need to happen prior to any move with various people, RIDSAS Manager behaviour team, Winz, change of bank accounts if it is a flat account. If 2 or 3 people wish to flat together it may be necessary to assist them to set up a flat account for food etc.

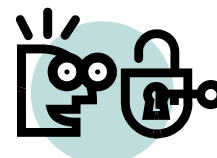
Community Support

People may need extra initial assistance to move into their new community. Do they need to change doctors, where they shop. This may involve a number of hours of support to be successful in the long term for the person. They may need staff to travel the bus route with them until they are familiar with the stops. Then fade the staff.

Time involved in finding the 'perfect home', this can vary from To (Hamish)

Practical Solutions for the Trust

- Creativity? Positive attitudes – can do attitude!
- What makes a difference?
- Transition person
- Moving – maintenance crew
- Links with others, eg Landlords, agencies
- Taking on leases on behalf of people
- Checklist for changing flats/setting up a new flat
- Aim high



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Practical Solutions for the Trust

Creativity – staff who have a “can do” attitude and allowing them to think differently and be solution focused. Instead of saying this is too difficult, acknowledging the difficulty and saying how can we make it work. Giving people permission? Not everything has to be run past management. To have new ideas and opportunities to challenge. Staff are not responsible or aware of funding arrangements so they can focus purely on the support needs of the person.

What makes a difference....listening to what people want and find innovative ways to make it happen. If it takes several weeks and looking at 20+ flats then this is what we do. Having a person dedicated to this role makes a big difference. If a person decides they want to flat with others, (staff feel certain his will not work, it is not about staff and we would support the person to have a go), even if it means they will move again in a few weeks time.

Transition person – this trial position was set up 18 months ago. This has now been made a permanent position as it has proved to be invaluable to the people we are supporting and the Trust. The position involves.....

- Facilitation of the assessment bed..it is the role of this person to ensure everything is in place at the house and staffing is covered for the interim period. And also is the liaison person.

- This person needs to ensure that people have suitable accommodation of their choice in a timely manner.

Maintenance crew. We have a crew of 6? This is a mix of staff and people supported by the Trust. This crew moves people and completes maintenance where required. This is a user pays service as much as poss.

Links with landlords, agencies. Over a period of time we have made some good links with Landlords, we have some that come to us offering flats and have even had landlords willing to purchase places to be rented back. It is not always smooth sailing and there are some landlords who do not want anyone we support as tenants. Links with other agencies are important and they include places like WINZ, banks, power, phone etc.

At times we may take on a lease on behalf of. This may happen when a person has no other way of getting into a flat. This enables a solution for people in these situations

Checklist. Developed a checklist to ensure all areas are covered and the move goes as smooth as possible.

Aim high. Don't let peoples budget be restrictive, look at accommodation supplements or negotiating rents.

While we don't have all the answers we don't let the Funding totally determine the outcome for the person!! We focus on the persons needs.

So where will I live when I get home?...A home of my choice.