

Prague House: Findings from an evaluation of SVHM homelessness services (2015)

What is Prague House?

Prague House is a 45 bed, specialised, aged care facility operating under the auspices of St Vincent's Health Australia. It provides low-level care for residents living with a mental health diagnosis and or an acquired brain injury, helping them live life to their fullest potential. Many residents have a history of homelessness or have been at high risk of becoming homeless.

The staff at Prague House consist of nurses, activity staff, pastoral care, personal carers, housekeepers, cooks and administrative staff.

Staff often take on the role of family, with many residents having no contact with family or friends. Prague House is 'home' to the residents where their individuality is respected, however, it is a dry house and there is the expectation of no swearing, fighting, bullying or bartering.

"But the level of care, thoughtfulness, flexibility that Prague has is just amazing."
– External stakeholder

Prague House Service Usage in 2015

- 6.8** years average length of residency
- 29%** residing there for more than 10 years
- 10%** supported by other SVHM homelessness services



Who used Prague House in 2015?

41 experiencing or at risk of homelessness accessed Prague House



63% male
37% female

65 average age

83% born in Australia

2% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A Prague House Case Study:

A 51 year old male has a 30 year history of alcohol dependency, a diagnosed alcohol-related brain injury and depression. He has had frequent contact with police and had numerous outstanding warrants. He frequently presented at ED for alcohol intoxication, falls and chest pain. Since being referred to Prague House in June 2015 by his ALERT social worker, the number of ED presentations has decreased from 45 in the 12 months prior, to 8 presentations in the six months directly after moving in. This represents a savings to the system of \$7,775 per six months.

The reduction in ED presentations, admissions and police contact demonstrate a significant reduction in this individual's health system expenditure and improved stability/quality of life for the individual.

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Health Profile of Prague House Clients

Primary diagnoses at commencement:

56%	Schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorders
27%	Neurological disorders
10%	Mental health disorders
2.4%	Cancer
2.4%	Liver disease



"Then Prague House came into the picture and the way they held that bed for her and the way they responded to her was just amazing... it's such a pleasure to work with these people."
– External stakeholder

Impact of Prague House on Healthcare Utilisation

Overall in the six months after episode of care commencement with Prague House:

29%	decrease in number of residents who presented at ED.
7.7	hour decrease in the average ED presentation length of stay.
17%	decrease in the number of residents who had unplanned inpatient admissions
35%	reduction in total number of days of unplanned inpatient admissions
84%	reduction in the total number of days of planned inpatient admissions

"Just that it's a great place to stay. You meet some good friends." – Resident

Cost Reductions Associated with Changes in Service Utilisation

Evaluation findings add to the growing evidence that targeted interventions for people who are homeless can reduce their use of more acute hospital services.

For the 21 Prague house residents who utilised hospital services, there was an average cost decrease of:

\$22,025 per person in the six months following service contact

"One of the ladies said to me - and she's 58 - she said to me the other day in all my life I've never had people who've said good morning, how are you. It's like well you expect that. You and I expect those things so it's just being able to give people what we take for granted." – Service staff