

Model of care for MyHome in Canberra

draft of 9 December 2022

There are four major respects in which our model of care is broadly similar to those of HOME in Queanbeyan, Haven in Victoria and Clear Breeze in Queensland, even though it is adapted to –

- the likely integration on the Curtin site of the MyHome building/s with an adjacent development of affordable rental housing, and
 - MyHome’s prospective place among ACT options for supported long-term housing for people with enduring mental illnesses.
1. The first feature of the MyHome model is **autonomy**: residents will each have a one-bedroom unit in which she or he can live independently of others and with as much privacy as she or he wishes, since no sharing of living rooms, kitchens or bathrooms will be required. There will be spacious, inviting common areas, both indoors and outdoors, a standing invitation to a cooked lunch each day in the shared dining room, and other community-building activities; but mixing with others will remain a matter for residents’ own choices.
 2. The second feature of the MyHome model is **support**: the near-constant availability of support from suitably qualified staff (with staff support late at night or in early morning for emergency needs only). The support which staff will provide to residents will be mainly for using medical services and taking medication; for nutrition, self-care and housekeeping; for maintaining tenancies; and for community engagements. Initially for each resident it may also include helping to establish or review entitlements under NDIS. This staff support will accommodate other supports which individual residents may receive from other agencies or family members.
 3. The third feature of the MyHome model is **community**: active encouragement of residents to engage, first, in the community of MyHome residents themselves, secondly, in the community including other residents in the affordable rental housing part of the development, with whom some indoor and outdoor areas will be shared, and thirdly, in the surrounding local community with whom engagements will be formed through hosting activities in MyHome, inviting MyHome residents on activity excursions, and welcoming volunteers from community organisations. Location in the centre of Curtin with easy access to shops and public transport would help MyHome residents also to engage independently in social and community activities.
 4. The fourth feature of the MyHome model is **providing homes for the long term**, through a combination of purposes in managing residents’ tenancies: to seek referrals of people with enduring mental illnesses for whom living in MyHome is likely to be suitable and beneficial as well as avoiding their being homeless; to expect prospective residents to make free choices about whether living in MyHome suits them, including through an initial trial period of some months; to offer each resident a home for as long as she or he wants, provided this causes no problems for other residents; and to help residents find other housing if they want to move out, cannot fulfil their tenancy requirements, or become too unwell or frail to live alone.

Tenancy management: we want the MyHome in Canberra association to continue with a role in tenancy management, because of its importance for fulfilling our model of care. We therefore envisage a tenancy management committee with a role distinct from that of providing core support services to residents, although this committee must include the agency providing those core support services and ensure the closest cooperation with it. Another reason for a tenancy management committee is to help ensure that the MyHome part of an integrated development is operated in the best interests of its residents, even if this might at times not fulfil the wishes of other stakeholders.

Family support: we would welcome financial or practical help from family members of prospective residents, but without requiring it. Having affordable rental housing on the same block as MyHome would make it possible for supportive family members to live close by MyHome residents, provided their incomes made them eligible for affordable rental places.

Physical security: it will be important for residents to keep away from those of their former friends and contacts who would be unhelpful for their living in MyHome. So we intend there to be suitable fencing, privacy, access controls, and a concierge service by the core support agency to help ensure that access by visitors is only for those whom residents want to meet.

The number of MyHome residents will not be fixed as in HOME, but variable according to both the choices of prospective and established residents and tenancy management decisions, while also being limited to around 15 in the light of the experience of HOME in Queanbeyan, Haven in Victoria and Clear Breeze in Queensland that this helps in building mutual support among residents. We therefore intend the buildings' design to provide for this flexibility as well as for the physical security of residents as described above.

Resident agreements: we intend the main requirements of peaceful community living to be stated as conditions in residents' tenancy agreements, so as to provide a framework for the trial period mentioned above and, if necessary, a basis for responding to harmful or anti-social behaviour by terminating a tenancy.

Drug/alcohol addiction: the experience of those managing HOME and Haven indicates that for the sake of others, MyHome residents must have only minimal drug and alcohol problems if any, and not behave in ways that are an unhelpful influence on others.

Recovery: another lesson from HOME and Haven is that after a time living with security, support and engagement in the wider community, some residents can manage their mental illnesses well enough to move out and live successfully in normal housing. Our model of care encourages that kind of recovery, which with MyHome adjacent to affordable rental housing need not mean residents' leaving their familiar surroundings.