



# Youth Mental Health and Alcohol and other Drug Homelessness Service

## About the project

In June 2020, the Government announced it had allocated \$25 million for the establishment and construction of a new youth mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) homelessness service in the Perth metropolitan area. This includes the establishment of an interim option while the new facility is being built so that services can be provided earlier.

The new service will provide transitional supported accommodation for up to 12 months for young people aged 16-24 years who show signs and symptoms of a mental health issue, with or without a co-occurring AOD issue, and who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

It will provide both mental health supports, and AOD supports, and is the first time a youth residential mental health service will also formally incorporate AOD support and treatment.

## What does transitional supported accommodation mean?

'Transitional' means the service will support young people for up to 12 months to develop a range of skills to prepare the young person to transition from the service into suitable accommodation that meets their needs within the community.

'Supported' means it will not only be a residential facility to enable young people who are homeless to have a safe place to live, but to also have access to dedicated on-site specialist mental health, AOD and psychosocial support services.

## What services will be provided along with accommodation?

Psychosocial supports, based on a mental health recovery framework and AOD support/education, will be provided alongside clinical support provided by the public mental health service. Supports will focus on enabling young people in their recovery journey, developing their skills in independent and daily living, and promoting community participation. Supports will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Who will be able to access this service?

The service will specifically cater to young people aged 16 to 24 years who have signs and symptoms of mental health issues (who may also have a co-occurring AOD issue) and are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

## Where will it be located?

The new 16 bed facility is proposed to be located in the North Metropolitan area, or surrounding suburbs. It will complement the existing Youth Homeless (Ngatti House) service currently operating in Fremantle.

## When will the new service be operational?

A new purpose built facility will be established to ensure the most effective and efficient service, with completion anticipated in mid-2023. In the meantime, the Mental Health Commission intends to utilise existing infrastructure available in the community that may be suitable to provide an interim solution to be operational in 2021.

## Why is this service needed?

Having a safe place to live is critical to a young person's recovery, and management of mental health and/or AOD issues. It provides the feeling of safety that comes with the security of housing.

Over 3,000 children and young people under the age of 25 were counted as homeless on Census night in 2016 in Western Australia. Homelessness includes rough sleeping on the streets, parks and in cars, couch surfing and reliance on temporary lodging.

This new service is being established as part of the first phase of the Mental Health Commission's 'A Safe Place - a Western Australian strategy to provide safe and stable accommodation and support to people experiencing mental health, alcohol and other drug issues'.

This significant investment is also in line with the recommendations of the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan and the Minister's mental health and AOD priorities released in March 2020.

