

Homeless programme wins award for innovation

Media Release

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LIFEWISE

A programme run by the community agency LIFEWISE to house homeless people was recognised by the Australasian Housing Institute at an awards ceremony in Auckland yesterday evening, winning the team award for Leading Innovation.

Based within the LIFEWISE Centre the programme has been running for approximately 18 months and is the first of its kind in New Zealand.

The programme which involves a number of collaborative partners is based on a *housing first* approach, a model which is working well overseas. Rather than moving homeless individuals through different 'levels' of housing, whereby each level moves them closer to independent housing, *housing first* moves the homeless immediately from the streets or homeless shelters into their own accommodation and supports them to be able to stay there.

"For the programme and the Centre to be recognised by the Institute in this way reflects the enormous effort LIFEWISE has put in to re-shaping how we support homeless people. This is very much a team award for all the staff and volunteers at the Centre" comments John McCarthy General Manager of LIFEWISE. "It's also a reflection on the commitment of the various government and community agencies involved in the programme and to the philanthropic funders who make this work possible."

Corie Haddock who manages the Centre adds "in the last year we've shown that it's possible to successfully house long-term homeless people straight from the streets. We've housed approximately 50 homeless people in the last 12 months and are now celebrating their one-year anniversaries in housing. These are people who are now about to have their first Christmas for many years in secure housing thanks to this programme. That's worth celebrating."

Various agencies support the programme by providing regular services on-site at the Centre to add to the case-management work done by LIFEWISE Support Workers. These include CADS and Te Atea Marino (Waitemata DHB alcohol & drug services), Taylor Centre (ADHB mental health service), Probation Services, Work & Income and Housing NZ.

LIFEWISE is a primary provider of community services in Auckland, working across a diverse range of services including foster care, social work support to families, parenting education, home-based support services for older people, community development, and extensive homelessness services provided from The LIFEWISE Centre www.lifewise.org.nz.

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