



WAPHA
WA Primary Health Alliance

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COUNTRY WA
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Media Release

After hours service gives the newly housed a fresh start

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A service providing after hours support to some of the most vulnerable people in Perth is helping them keep a roof over their heads and improve their health, social connections and participation in meaningful activities, things that most people take for granted.

Funded by WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) and delivered by Ruah Community Services and Homeless Healthcare, the After Hours Support Service provides nursing and psychosocial support, as part of the wider 50 Lives 50 Homes collective impact project which aims to sustainably support and house Perth's most vulnerable rough sleepers.

One of the service's innovative features is its after-hours nature, as this is the time of day when many people experience social isolation, are at home and accessible, or are subject to anti-social behaviour.

The service was designed to be flexible and informal allowing the support workers to engage with people in a timely manner and in a way that regular case managers can sometimes find difficult.

WAPHA general manager Bernadette Kenny says the organisation is delighted to have been able to fund such an innovative service that has been successfully delivered by Ruah Community Services and Homeless Healthcare.

"What the initial results are showing is what we and other organisations involved in the 50 Lives 50 Homes project suspected: once people are housed, they can focus on needs that most of us don't think twice about such as personal hygiene, self-motivation, physical and mental health, managing finances, building relationships and taking part in meaningful social activities," Ms Kenny said.

Ruah Community Services executive manager, research, design and innovation Ben Hawthorn says a core principle of the 50 Lives 50 Homes collaborative campaign is stable housing coupled with comprehensive wrap around support services to address the underlying causes of homelessness and to support the new tenant to maintain their tenancy.

"The After Hours Support Service plays an integral part in this, with 100 per cent of housed clients accessing the service. Early results are positive indicating clients are shifting away from 'crisis' patterns of help-seeking to taking a more planned, proactive and preventive approach," Mr Hawthorn said.

Client case study:

One client had spent many years living on the streets and in her van with her small dog. Once housed, she battled with isolation, severe mental health issues and self-harm.

She has been supported by the After Hours Support Team since July 2016, offering social, health and wellbeing support.

Over the past few months, the lady has made great positive changes to her life. She has completed a positive pathways course, is involved in a local community garden group and works at the Big Issue Women's Subscription Enterprise, as well as having a cleaning job.

Her visits have dropped to weekly, her mood has brightened and she is looking forward to further positive steps in her life.

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About WAPHA: WAPHA oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, Area Health Services and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au