



**Imagined Futures
Community of Practice
“Enter Here”
networking event
September 2023**



**Q and A - Accessing Homelessness and Housing services in the
South West Metro region**

Q Does St Pat's have any housing for families with children with a disability?

A St Pat's has two family properties, each have a minimum of a 12 months' tenancy, which means that they don't become available very often and as such, we do not waitlist for these. However, other organisations specialise in family accommodation such as Centrecare and Wattle House (Mission Australia).

The best way to access this type of accommodation is to link the family in with an organisation who have a homelessness/housing support program who can best assist and advocate for them to receive suitable housing through the Rough Sleeper Coordination Group (RSCG). This group is chaired by the Office Of Homelessness and attended by all relevant outreach and case workers in the areas, to facilitate communication and coordination and ensure that the most vulnerable people who are experiencing rough sleeping are prioritised for housing.

Even if help is not available straight away it is good to be linked into the RSCG, as they will still be considered for future placements where housing is available and appropriate for their needs.

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Q We are seeing lots of families sleeping cars. What is the best way of connecting them to support?

A Call Entrypoint and/or Crisis Care. Entrypoint screens clients and compares their situation against the eligibility criteria and then makes referrals to all housing service providers, including crisis accommodation. Entry point will also link them in with organisations who are best able to assist them.

There are few crisis accommodation options for families, so please also find out the contact details & physical address of your closest drop-in centre to direct them to i.e.. St Pat's Community Support Centre Fremantle, Salvation Army Rockingham, Tranby Drop In Centre Perth City. This then connects them to multiple services and different elements of assistance.

Q What can you do if you identify someone as experiencing rough sleeping?

A A. Call the St Pat's main line (08) 6372 4800 and they will link the person in with an outreach service where possible.

Our experience is that most rangers and security people know to call in an outreach/housing provider rather than attempt to move the person on without providing information of where to seek help.

Q How can people access St Pat's services?

A People can attend the St Pat's day centre located at 12 Queen Victoria St, Fremantle Monday to Friday 7.30am-2.00PM to access facilities such as; showers, health clinics, meals, emergency relief, legal services, financial counselling and social supports.

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Q What outreach services are available for people experiencing rough sleeping?

A The Homeless Engagement, Assessment Response Team (HEART) is one such outreach program operating across the Perth metropolitan region.

HEART provides rapid, flexible outreach and intensive supports primarily for people who are chronic rough sleepers in collaboration with its sector partners including:

St Patrick's Community Support Centre (St Pat's) as the lead sector agency for HEART, is a specialised homelessness agency, both as a service and community housing provider, with a service suite including crisis assistance, alcohol and other drugs, mental health, legal, medical, allied health and dental services.

Wungening Aboriginal Corporation (Wungening), as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation provides culturally secure and holistic supports that promote a healing environment for Aboriginal people and communities.

Uniting WA (Uniting) brings to HEART its significant experience supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, providing access to outreach, crisis support and accommodation.

Indigo Junction contributes its extensive experience supporting individuals experiencing homelessness in the Midlands areas, with added expertise in area of Youth Accommodation, and a strong connection to the local Aboriginal Community.

HEART Assertive Outreach Caseworkers can go out and meet with people identified as rough sleepers and link to other supports. This team has access to brokerage funding which they can leverage to help remove barriers for the people they are working with, including in some cases, even paying for a short term stay in a hotel while they arrange for longer term supports.

Other Outreach programs also exist across the metropolitan region including programs such as Street to Home, Safe Cities Perth Initiative (a subset of HEART), and Assertive Outreach workers in the cities of Kwinana, Rockingham, and Mandurah.

For access to all the above, it is best to contact the organisation who is responsible for providing the program.

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Q

Have you got a waitlist for female accommodation?

A

Yes, currently we have an approximate wait of 2 months for female applicants.

Q

We find a lot of families do not wish to consider housing options outside of the area their children are going to school. What is your advice to them?

A

Accommodation for families becomes available rarely, so if a house is offered then if at all possible, they should strongly consider taking it irrespective of location. Changing schools for children is difficult but experiencing homelessness at a young age is harder.

Q

How accessible are St Pat's housing options for people with a disability?

A

Unfortunately, due to the age of many of our buildings we have limited disability accessible accommodation available and so this often leads to not being able to offer vacancies to anyone in wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

Q

What is the status of the St Pat's homes for women over 55?

A

The homes are up and running. The last three vacancies have been filled through the Rough Sleeping Coordination Group. These homes are leased on periodic agreements – tenants only need to give three weeks' notice if they would like to move on.

Q

How much does St Pat's accommodation cost?

A

The cost of the accommodation is worked out as 25% of a person's income plus Centrelink Rent Assistance (CRA) if they are on Band A, and 30% plus CRA if they are on Band B.

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Q

What services does St Pat's provide?

A

St Pat's offers a wide range of services including:

- Day Centre – Monday to Friday 7.30am to 2.00pm
 - o One stop shop for anyone experiencing or at risk of homelessness within our catchment area.
 - o Showers
 - o Health, optometry, podiatry, dentist etc.
 - o Emergency Relief by appointment
 - o Other visiting services including Street Law, Jacaranda Financial Counselling, Orange Sky Laundry and Foodbank mobile food van.
- Lodging accommodation within the Greater Fremantle area (single furnished rooms, generally with shared bathrooms, kitchens & common areas).
- 18 Units of longer term accommodation for older women aged over 55 years in North Fremantle
- If community members require a housing assessment they should come to the Day Centre before 9am on a Tuesday morning where our Housing Allocations Officer will explain the accommodation options available and offer an assessment

Q

We've been approached by a woman who has been on the priority housing wait list for a very long time. What advice can we give her about her options?

A

The person can be referred to St Pat's (while noting that the current wait list is 6 weeks to 2 months for access to lodging). The person can come in do the assessment, view the room and can choose if they take it. There is no lease or minimum time that they have to sign up for.

This option can be an interim measure while they are on the priority list – a place at St Pat's comes with support and advocacy which can sometimes speed things up in relation to Department of Communities waitlists. Being housed in St Pat's accommodation will not compromise their position on priority wait list.

