Home or other family options

What is it?
Support is provided to you, to help you work towards improving the relationship with your family so you can return home. This is done through family work, mediation and counselling for the individual and the family or group.

If returning to your family home is not an option, you can also explore the possibility of approaching extended family, friends or other people that you could stay with. This can include grandparents, aunts or uncles, cousins, family friends, neighbours, mentors or anyone else you have a relationship with that you feel comfortable approaching.

How do you get it?
You will need to speak to your family, extended family or friends to ask if you can reside with them short, medium or long term.

Support is available for you and the family or friends you stay with, before and during your stay. Contact the services listed below to find out what kind of support you require.

Things to think about
Being able to stay with people you know might be cheaper than other options, and it could mean you’re able to move in quickly, rather than spending time on a wait-list for other housing options.

Other benefits are that it could help you to stay connected to your local supports and community, and importantly, you have the choice to only explore locations and people you are comfortable staying with.

If there is a chance you could remain or return home, you will need to ask yourself some questions.

What would need to change for me to remain or return home?

Is there someone in my extended family, friendship group or anyone else who I trust, and might be able to stay with?

Could support from a service or program help to make these changes easier for everyone involved?

Costs involved
You may be required to pay board to the person you are staying with.

You may be required to contribute to the bills for gas, electricity, water and food.

You may be entitled to rent assistance from Centrelink if you are living with an extended relative – your worker can help you with this.

Find out more
Contact the services below to find out what support is available for you.

Family Reconciliation Mediation Program (FRMP) on 03 9611 2416 or www.frmmp.org.au

Detour Program on 1800 338 687 or www.detour.org.au

Western Reconnect on 03 8311 5458

Melbourne Gateway Reconnect on 03 9611 2452 or 03 9611 2420
Home or other family options

Discussion points

- Before discussing emergency housing options, ask the client if they have explored the option of returning home or moving in with a different family member, friend or significant other.
- Find out what the client would need to return home (if safe to do so) or to reside with a different family member, friend or significant other.
- Discuss a referral to an alternative program outside of an Access Point.
- Kids Under Cover
Share Accommodation

What is it?

A share house is a property you live in with other people. It is a great way to get a foot in the private rental market.

You get to choose the location you rent in, and what type of property it is. It could be a house, apartment, or flat.

The length of your rental contract varies – it is usually a minimum of 6-12 months, but some properties are rented on a month-to-month basis. You may be asked to sign a lease, or the original tenant may just sub-let a room to you, so you don’t have to sign the lease.

Ensure you have your lease arrangements in writing from the landlord.

What can you afford?

Most young people live in share accommodation at some point. Because costs are shared between house mates, it can be a very affordable option, and can be a great way to meet new people and make new friends.

Households may already be partially furnished with items such as a fridge and washing machine.

The application process

You will have the opportunity to meet with the other tenants before you commit. When you find somewhere you like, you can potentially be moving into a property within weeks.

Keeping up with all the costs

You may be required to pay a bond. A worker can show you how to do this. Help is also available if you fall behind in paying your rent, so speak to a worker as soon as you think you may need assistance. If you are not named on the lease, ensure you receive a receipt of the rent you have paid.

You will need to pay for the bond and rent in advance. You may be entitled to Rent Assistance from Centrelink, and some funding may be available for set up costs if you sign the lease – ask your worker to help you with this.

You will need to pay for gas, electricity, water and the rent. These costs are split between all house mates.

Explore house insurance with the other tenants. This is a good idea if you can afford it, to protect your belongings.

Find out more

These websites list share properties that are currently available, including the location, price and inspection details.

au.easyroommate.com  www.realestateview.com.au
www.share-house.com.au

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Share Accommodation

Discussion points

- Private Rental Brokerage – requirement that the rental is sustainable, and a formal lease is in place.
- If appropriate discuss material aid options such as Good Shepherd buying service, No Interest Loans for Whitegoods, etc.
- Explore living with other people (pros and cons).
- Encourage role plays with clients (see attached information).
- Discuss timeframes VS THM/Public Housing.
- Discuss shared accommodation as good entry into private rental market – opportunity to gain a rental reference.
- House-mates will probably be looking for someone with:
  » Good living skills – no-one will want to be picking up after you.
  » Good budgeting skills – it is important to keep on top of rent and bills.
  » Good social skills – being able to relate to your house-mates will be important.
  » Respect for other people.

Once you’ve secured an interview, here are some questions you may ask potential flat mates, or they may ask you.

Here is an example of a phone script for calling about shared housing vacancies:

Hi/Hello my name is ..................
I’m calling about the room you have advertised for rent.
Is the room still available?
Can I make a time with you to meet and view the room?
Can you tell me is the house close to public transport?

How long have you been looking for properties?
Are you a student? If so, what are you studying?
Are you working? If so what do you do?
Are you employed full time or part-time?
How long have you worked there?
Have you lived in a share house before?
How long were you there for?
Can you supply references?
When are you looking at moving in?
What are your interests/hobbies?
Do you smoke/drink?
If so, how often?
What music do you like?
Are you dating? How often do you think you will have your partner over?
Why did you leave your last premises?
Can you afford the rent and bills?
What chores do you like doing?
What are your working hours?
What’s your idea of a gathering of friends?
Are you religious?
What time to get up/go to bed?
Do you have pets?
Private Rental

How do you get it?

You need to have a steady income so you can pay the rent every month.

You can look at lists of available rental properties online or at real estate agents’ offices.

You will need to attend an inspection to look at the property, then complete an application form to apply for a rental contract.

You will need to provide a few forms of ID. A rental reference and/or support letter may be useful to show real estate agents and landlords that you would be a reliable and stable tenant.

Costs involved

Rental prices vary depending on the location, size, and type of property you choose.

You will need to pay the bond and one month’s rent in advance.

You will need to pay for the gas, electricity, water, and rent, which is paid fortnightly/monthly.

You may be entitled to rent assistance from Centrelink, and some funding may be available for set up costs – ask a worker to help you with this.

Things to think about

What can you afford?
The property will need to be within your budget. A worker can help you work out which areas will be most affordable for you.

You can apply to rent with friends and/or family to make it more affordable, but if you are living alone, you can live however you like, without having to rely on other people.

The application process
You may need to apply for many properties before you are successful, so be patient. Think about attaching a cover letter to your housing application form, giving an introduction to who you are, and why you will be the best tenant for the property. When you are successful, you can potentially be moving into a property within weeks.

Keeping up with all the costs
If you need assistance with paying the bond, you can apply for a loan. A worker can help you with figuring out how to do this. Help is also available if you fall behind in paying your rent, so speak to your worker as soon as you think you may need assistance.

Your obligations when you are renting
You will be responsible for the property you lease – this includes maintaining the garden and property, and paying the rent on time. If you don’t, you may be evicted.

Find out more

These websites list rental properties that are currently available, including the location, price and inspection details.

www.realestate.com.au
www.domain.com.au
www.realestateview.com.au
www.rent.com.au
www.gumtree.com.au
www.melbourneexchange.com.au

This website can help you work out your expenses and budget for rent. Use the budget calculator to do this.

www.moneysmart.gov.au
Private Rental

Discussion points

• Private Rental Brokerage – requirement that the rental is sustainable, and formal lease in place (this must be applied by workers).
• (HEF) rent in advance, private rental arrears (not THM or OOH), storage removal, HEF-available funds on the Resource Register or contact a homeless service.
• If required discuss with client about discrimination if excluded from housing
• Clarify with clients what their understanding of a lease is and what it involves?
• Show clients example application forms
• Discuss with clients their 100 points of ID
• Explore budgets with clients
• Explore living alone (pros and cons)
• Discuss timeframes VS THM/Public Housing
• Discuss benefit of rental reference
• Age for signing a lease – a person under 18 years can sign a lease. There is no minimum age, but if the person is under 17 years, DHHS may become involved if there are concerns about their safety when not living at home.
• See document attached for role plays and practice phone calls
• Discuss what to wear to housing inspections
• Explore with client the role of a gaurantor, if appropriate.
Foyer Accommodation

What is it?
There are several Foyer model programs that operate across Melbourne. Please note, the criteria for each foyer program may vary, so prior to making a referral, contact the individual service.

At Melbourne City Mission the Foyer program is suited to young people who are at risk of homelessness or disengaged from mainstream supports, by incorporating long term supported housing with links to education, employment and/or training, and intensive casework support.

Foyer models vary from 24–36 month support with a focus on supporting young people through a transition into independence.

Things to think about

The application process
- Referrals are to go through an access point/or referral to a service (please contact the service for their referral process).
- Young people are to participate in an interview process.
- Young people are linked to a caseworker throughout their tenancy.
- Young people are encouraged to link in with education/training and employment (Criteria may vary across programs).

Your obligations
- To be willing to engage in education or employment.
- To participate in house meetings and living skills programs.
- To engage with your caseworker during your tenancy.
- To participate in caseplan reviews throughout your tenancy.

How do you get it?
Referrals are made through the Access Points to vacancies listed on the Resource Register, or alternatively by self referral to a service.

Please contact the individual service to find out how to refer.

Costs involved
Rent is calculated based on 25% of your income. Rent assistance is available.

Find out more
To find services connected to Foyer programs, look up ‘Foyer programs Melbourne’ in a Google search. This will showcase a list of providers who offer Foyer programs.
Foyer Accommodation

Discussion points

• Contact the individual service for the referral pathway.
• Discuss the criteria of the program with the young person. Are they willing to engage or are they engaged in education or employment? What are their medium to low needs? They must be willing to engage with a caseworker for the duration of their tenancy.
• Discuss how to make a referral to Foyer programs with the Access Point Worker or service.
• Discuss the interview process with the young person – i.e have they had an interview before, what should they expect, and so on?
• Discuss the program timeframes.
Youth Refuge

What is it?
Youth refuges provide crisis accommodation for young people 16-25. The refuges are designed for young people who require a higher level of support.

Refuges are safe and secure locations, and staff are on site 24 hours a day.

A stay in a youth refuge is usually around 6 weeks, and during that time you need to work towards finding long-term accommodation.

A number of people stay at the refuge at once, so it is shared accommodation. There are specific youth refuges available for young women only.

How do you get it?
You will need to go to an Access Point to be placed in a youth refuge.

In collaboration with a worker you will undertake an assessment to determine whether a placement in a youth refuge would be suitable.

A youth refuge vacancy may not be available on the day, so you may be placed on a waiting list.

Is refuge the best option?
You will have support from workers to find a safe and realistic housing option. Refuges provide accommodation for various groups including unisex, couples and siblings, and some have family rooms.

There are Family Violence-specific refuges. This information can be accessed by contacting Women’s Domestic Violence Service or speaking to a worker at an Access Point.

The application process
There are 17 youth refuges in the Melbourne Metropolitan area. Due to demand and availability you may not be able to choose your location. It is most likely you will be offered a bed wherever there is one available. At most refuges you’ll have your own room, but be aware that you cannot choose who you live with.

Your obligations while you are there
There will be rules by which you need to abide, such as curfews on weekdays and weekends.

You will be expected to complete basic household duties. It is important to know and respect that youth refuges are alcohol and drug free sites.

You may not be permitted to have visitors and at most refuges you will be asked not to give out the address.

Costs involved
You will often have to pay a service fee, which covers your rent and bills.

During your stay, furniture will be provided, as well as most of your food.

Find out more
You will be able to find more information at Access Points.
Youth Refuge

Discussion points

- Discuss timeframes and prioritisation waiting lists.
- Discuss Refuge Service Fees.
- Clarify clients’ understanding of the need to engage with workers while in youth refuge.
- Clarify with clients that they understand the youth refuge is only temporary accommodation.
- Clarify clients’ understanding and their ability to abide by rules while in the youth refuge.
Transitional Housing (THM)

What is it?
Transitional Housing is short to medium term supported accommodation. While you live in transitional housing, you work with a support worker towards finding your most suitable long term housing option. You can stay in transitional housing for 3 to 18 months. You could be placed in a house, an apartment, or a unit. As well as having a housing support worker while you live there, you will receive assistance from a Tenancy Manager. Your stay is conditional upon you engaging with your support worker to address self-identified support needs, and actively working towards finding long term housing.

Costs involved
No bond is required. The rent will be 25% of your income, and you will not be eligible for Centrelink rent assistance. You are responsible for paying all bills – gas, electricity and water, but basic furniture will be provided during your stay.

How do you get it?
You will need to visit an Access Point to be placed on the Transitional Housing waitlist. In collaboration with a worker you will undertake an assessment to determine whether you are eligible. If you are eligible, you need to be put on a Priority Wait List, which can be done at an Access Point. Wait times vary according to your housing needs, and the availability of a suitable property.

Things to think about
The application process
You do not have the option of choosing the location, size or the type of property. In the majority of transitional properties you will live alone, however some transitional properties are shared with another person. Be aware that there are long waitlists for transitional properties.

Your obligations while you are there
You are encouraged to engage with your support worker throughout your tenancy. If you do not engage with your support worker, you can be issued a notice to vacate. Housing providers often have rules about whether you can have family or friends stay at the property.

Find out more
You can find more information about Transitional Housing at Access Points.
Transitional Housing

Discussion points

• Importance of continued engagement with support worker
• Necessity of working towards a housing exit plan (in some cases it will be private rental)
• Transitional housing, like the name suggests, is temporary
• Long wait lists apply and priority to THM properties is done via the Access Point. Explore with Access Points their process of applying for transitional properties – processes will vary.
• A housing support worker must be allocated to a client before a Transitional Property will be allocated. Housing support workers advertise their vacancies on the Resource Register.
Public Housing

What is it?
Public housing may be an option for people who have been homeless for an extended period of time and have ongoing support needs.

Public housing is managed by the Department of Human & Health Services, and provides long term housing to people who meet the eligibility criteria.

There is a high demand for public housing and wait lists for these properties are very long. Public housing could be in a house, a unit, or a high-rise flat.

Public Housing is grouped into waiting list areas. You cannot choose a suburb to live in but you can choose three waiting list areas. You may be offered a property from any of these suburbs.

Provided you continue to meet the income/asset limit and abide by your responsibilities as a tenant, you can live there long term.

How do you get it?
There is criteria you need to meet, and processes to follow.

You need to complete a general housing application and submit it at your local DHHS Housing Office.

You will then be assessed to determine your eligibility for the early housing wait list.

Make sure you keep the Office of Housing informed about your contact details and circumstances.

Things to think about
You do not have the option of choosing the location, size or type of property.

You will only receive one offer. If you do not accept, you will need to find a different housing option.

There are three categories of applications, and certain criteria that must be met in each category.

Wait times are long and vary depending on your application category, the broadband area, and the availability of housing.

There are long wait times for public housing and you also need to meet the criteria to be eligible to apply.

There are 3 categories for public housing:
1. Homeless with support – You must meet criteria for this application. Your support worker will assist you in assessing your eligibility.
2. Supported Housing – If you (or a household member) receive assistance or care from a supported housing program, for example, you have a medical condition or a physical disability, please ask your support program worker to assist you.
3. General Housing – This is the first form that is required to be completed to have your details listed with the Office of Housing. From here you are assessed for your eligibility for the other two categories. Long wait times apply for this category. You can fill this document in yourself.

Costs involved
Rent is 25% of your income, and you will not be eligible for Centrelink rent assistance.

No bond is required.

You are responsible for paying all bills – gas, electricity and water, and you must provide your own furniture.

Find out more
You will be able to find more information at Housing Access Points, and local DHHS Offices.
Public Housing

Discussion points

- Eligibility criteria for homeless with support – e.g. ongoing support needs, inability to sustain alternative accommodation
- Long wait times – discuss different categories of applications and current wait times
- ‘Myth busting’ – if you are on the early housing list, it will only be a 3 month wait!
- List categories, homeless with support, general housing
- Housing support services are required to support the housing with support applications
- Explore DHHS website – www.housing.vic.gov.au
- Aboriginal housing – if the young person you are working with identifies as Aboriginal, they may be eligible for Aboriginal Housing. More information is available at www.ahvic.org.au
Community Housing

**What is it?**
Community housing is managed by not-for-profit community housing organisations. It provides long term rental for people who have low incomes.

Community housing could be in a house, an apartment, a flat, or a unit, and it can vary a lot. Some properties include high levels of support and some provide no support.

As long as you continue to meet the income/asset limit, and to meet your responsibilities as a tenant, you can live in community housing long term.

**How do you get it?**
Information and applications are available online, or by contacting community housing providers directly – some websites with this information are listed in the Find Out More section.

You have to research and complete your own applications. It’s important to be aware that there is no guarantee you will be offered a property once you send through an application.

**Things to think about**
You do not have the option of choosing the location, size or the type of property, but you can choose the general areas you are wait-listed in.

Wait times will vary depending on the housing provider and availability of properties. Community Housing Providers list their vacancies on their website and also advise if they have capacity to take new registrations.

Community Housing Providers can also be searched on realestate.com.au to view available properties.

**Costs involved**
No bond is required for Community Housing. The rent will be 25-30% of your income. You may be eligible for rent assistance from Centrelink, but this will be dependent on how much rent you pay, and your eligibility – ask a worker for help with this.

You will need to pay for the gas, electricity, and water you use, and you have to provide your own furniture.

Help is also available if you get behind in paying your rent, so speak to a worker as soon as you think you may need assistance.

**Find out more**
You will be able to find more information at Access Points, and online.

This is a list of websites for providers for community housing, including information about eligibility, and the application process.

- [www.housingchoices.org.au](http://www.housingchoices.org.au)
- [www.ych.org.au](http://www.ych.org.au)
- [www.chl.org.au](http://www.chl.org.au)
- [www.unitedhousing.org.au](http://www.unitedhousing.org.au)
- [www.missionpromotion.com/mahousing](http://www.missionpromotion.com/mahousing)
Community Housing

Discussion points

- Many community housing providers are no longer accepting applications or only open their waiting lists from time to time.
- Applicants with additional income to their Centrelink benefits may be considered more favourably.
- People on the public housing waiting lists may also opt for their applications to be considered by Community Housing Providers.
- Community Housing Providers are meant to house 50% of their tenants from public housing waiting lists or show that 50% of their tenants are public housing eligible.
Rooming House

What is it?
Rooming houses provide housing for people who are finding it difficult to access private rental accommodation or may just need somewhere to stay temporarily. You have to be over 18 years to apply for a space in a rooming house.

They can be either privately owned and managed, or publicly owned and managed by a community organisation, and are spread throughout Victoria. When you apply, you will have little choice of where you’d like to live – you will be offered a room when and where there is a vacancy.

Most rooming houses will offer you your own room, but in some you may have to share with other people. In most rooming houses you will share the bathrooms, kitchen, laundry and other common areas with other residents.

How do you get it?
You can speak to a worker at an Access Point for assistance or you can refer directly yourself.

Things to think about
You cannot choose who you live with, but there are some rooming houses that are female only. You will need to be respectful of other residents.

Staying in a rooming house can be a good option if you don’t want to make a long term commitment. The length of your stay is dependent upon the rooming house provider.

You must ensure that you pay rent on time, or you could be evicted.

Costs involved
Depending on the rooming house, two weeks’ rent in advance may be required, and a bond may also be required.

The cost of rent at rooming houses varies, and sometimes it can be quite expensive, but you may be entitled to rent assistance from Centrelink. Gas, electricity and water are usually included in the cost of rent, and basic furniture is sometimes provided.

Find out more
You can find more information about rooming houses at Access Points.

The Tenants Union of Victoria also provide some information about rooming houses on their website at www.tuv.org.au
Rooming House
Discussion points

- Access Points may allocate a homelessness support worker if you are at risk of homelessness.
- Discuss referrals to other services that may assist clients while in a rooming house, e.g. education and employment, mental health and AOD services.
- Some rooming houses have a reputation for being dangerous.
- The range of people that the person may be sharing with, including individuals with varied support needs.
Caravan park

What is it?

Caravan parks can either be holiday style parks or urban parks that have caravans and cabins for rent. You need to be over 18 years to rent them.

In most caravan parks you will have shared bathroom and laundry facilities, and on-site managers are available during business hours.

There aren’t many caravan parks close to the city, so you may not have many choices available for the location.

How do you get it?

You can find caravan parks online and book in yourself, or you can ask for assistance at an Access Point.

Things to think about

Caravan parks can be a good option if you don’t want to make a long term commitment. Both short and long term accommodation may be available.

If possible, it’s a good idea to visit and inspect the caravan park before booking in.

You must ensure that you pay rent on time, or you could be evicted.

You cannot choose the other residents at the park, and you’ll need to be respectful of them.

Costs involved

Depending on the caravan park, two weeks’ rent in advance may be required.

The cost of rent at caravan parks varies, and sometimes it can be quite expensive, but you may be entitled to rent assistance from Centrelink.

Gas, electricity and water are often included in the cost of rent.

Find out more

You can find more information about caravan parks online or ask a worker at an Access Point.
Caravan Park

Discussion points

- Access Points may allocate a homelessness support worker if you are at risk of homelessness.
- Some caravan parks have other services available, such as soup vans and health services.
- Discuss referrals to other services that may assist clients while staying at a caravan park, e.g., education and employment, mental health and AOD services.
- Some caravan parks may have a waitlist.