

Housing New Zealand Corporation: An integrated service initiative with the Ministry of Social Development to improve housing outcomes

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Abstract

The Mangere Integrated Services Pilot (“the Pilot”) was a joint venture between Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) and the Ministry of Social Development: Work and Income (WI), with the key aim of improving housing solutions and providing a more seamless service to mutual customers. It was based on an all of government approach to address the housing, income and employment needs of the South Auckland community of Mangere.

The Pilot had four key components:

- *Co-location* of HNZC’s social allocation staff from the Mangere Neighbourhood Unit in the Mangere WI Service Centre.
- *Joint needs assessment* in which the WI Case Manager and HNZC Housing Support Manager work together to assess the financial position and income entitlements of the customer as part of HNZC’s standard housing needs assessment process.
- *Assistance to participants to enter or maintain private rental accommodation* through the identification of additional entitlements for which the customer may be eligible. The HNZC Pilot Team offers a range of services to locate and establish private tenancy arrangements.
- *Work brokerage* assistance to support participants to gain employment.

Over a twelve month period the pilot achieved some excellent outcomes. Evaluation findings reported that customers and community advocates rated the joint service centre highly. In particular the holistic approach to addressing customer needs enabled broader options to be explored and more targeted solutions to be delivered.

Nearly 20% of customers seeking housing assistance were found to be entitled to additional income support entitlements. The number of applicants waiting for HNZC provided accommodation reduced by 26% during a time when demand increased across Auckland. A significant number of potential waiting list applicants were able to sustain their current housing arrangements or take up alternative private sector housing offers. In a smaller number of cases employment was found for people who initially applied for housing assistance.

The pilot has provided valuable information about the benefits of looking beyond the traditional state supply model to address housing demand.

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