

Y2I supported accommodation policy

Purpose

This policy provides the principles for operating Youth2Independence (Y2I) supported accommodation facilities in Tasmania to help young residents aged 16-24 years to transition to independence and sustain good housing outcomes.

Policy context

Tasmania's Y2I supported accommodation program is based on the international Education First Youth Foyer model, which supports young people to develop and succeed in education and employment pathways. Y2I recognises the essential element of the model – the goal of supporting young people to overcome trauma, and to make positive choices so they transition to independent young adults.

The program shares the vision of the [Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework](#), which recognises the need to work in partnership with families, community services and the broader community to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people in Tasmania.

Wellbeing is defined as when a child or young person:

- feels loved and safe
- has access to material basics
- has their physical, mental and emotional health needs met
- is learning
- is participating
- and has a positive sense of culture and identity.

Y2I recognises that each young person has opportunities and resources that can be developed, has the right to make their own decisions and should be supported to work through the things that have limited them, all so they can enjoy a good life.

Y2I provides accommodation and support for young people to become independent by participating in education and training. A young person accepted into Y2I will be aged 16-24 years who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness and willing to participate in education and training.

Housing Connect is the entry point for assistance for people who are experiencing homelessness or are in housing need. Housing Connect will assess the intensity of support needs and suitable fit of a young person before making a referral to a Y2I service.

The critical principles underlying the Y2I program are:

- the safety and wellbeing of the young person are always the primary considerations

- alternative options for safe, appropriate accommodation and care for the young person should be fully investigated before accommodation in specialist homelessness services
- where this is not achievable, young residents will be helped to participate in education, employment and training, and to develop skills across key life domains to build their independence to transition to, and sustain, a safe and stable place to live.

Risk factors

Known drivers of youth homelessness include drug and mental health issues, gender and LGBTIQA+ issues and difficult family situations, including parental drug and alcohol abuse. Long-standing family issues of poverty, abuse, neglect, trauma and family violence are often present in vulnerable children's lives, causing relationships to break down and resulting in homelessness.

Indigenous youth and young people leaving institutional care (including youth detention and/or statutory care) are disproportionately represented in homelessness statistics and are at increased risk of homelessness. Some young people with disability who are unable to live in the family home because of complex disability support needs can face significant challenges finding safe, stable accommodation appropriate to their needs.

Y2I is a pathway for vulnerable youth who are exiting from shelters, statutory care or youth detention.

Presentation and intake

Referrals in

Housing Connect is the principal referral point into Y2I supported accommodation for a young person aged 16-24 who is alone and without a home.

A Y2I service must contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 in the event that a young person presents on their own or is referred by an allied service, such as another specialist homelessness service.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Y2I, applicants must meet the same criteria as for social housing and be willing and ready to engage in education and training. This could be:

- high school or college
- training with or without a certificate
- apprenticeship, traineeship or employment.

The young person must be at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness, as evidenced by the person:

- exiting from emergency, crisis or transitional homeless accommodation into homelessness

- exiting from an institutional facility (such as custodial arrangements, foster care and child safety residential placements, hospitals and mental health facilities) into homelessness
- experiencing primary homelessness (such as living without conventional accommodation, eg sleeping rough)
- experiencing secondary homelessness (such as frequently moving from one temporary shelter to another, eg brokered emergency accommodation, youth refuges, couch surfing)
- experiencing tertiary homelessness (where accommodation falls below minimum community standards, eg boarding house or caravan park)
- experiencing insecure tenure (where the person has no tenure, or their tenure is short and not extendable)
- living in a home that is unsuitable for independent living (eg has no access to space for social relations or does not enable access to essential services).

Housing Connect may use discretion for Y2I applicants who do not meet some eligibility criteria, such as income and asset limits, or minimum age limit.

Readiness

Housing Connect will determine whether a young person is ready to participate and apply for Y2I.

Readiness will consider:

- any safety concerns to themselves, other residents or workers (such as violent or aggressive behaviour)
- willingness to enter into 'The Deal' about agreed goals.

Y2I residents are expected to conduct themselves in a way that does not limit their own, or others', participation in education or training.

Some situations, or 'deal breakers', will mean a young person is not yet ready for living at a Y2I service, including:

- recent history of serious offending, eg a charge or conviction for an offence involving arson, drug trafficking, or physical or sexual violence
- unmanaged mental illness, eg recent or repeated hospitalisations, suicide or self-harm attempts
- unmanaged alcohol and drug problems, eg negative impacts associated with substance use.

If a young person is not yet ready, Housing Connect will talk with the young person about other housing and support options for them. This may include returning to the family home if safe, or into other supported accommodation, mental health care, child safety care, or social or affordable housing.

A young person who is not yet ready can reapply for Y2I when their circumstances have changed.

Youth2Readiness (Y2R) supported accommodation homes are available in Tasmania for those young people who are not yet ready for living at a Y2I service.

The purpose and focus of support for Y2R residents is the same as for Y2I, but with a greater focus on addressing behaviours that are limiting their own, or others', participation in education or training.

Suitability and placement

Y2I providers allocate available bedrooms from their own waitlist of referrals that they receive from Housing Connect. This process is being streamlined to enable Y2I placements to be made from the Housing Register under the new Housing Connect 2.0.

If accommodation is available, the Y2I provider will prioritise a placement by wait time before determining whether a young person is suitable for intake.

Suitability will consider:

- health and mobility
- any safety concerns to themselves, other residents or workers
- the young person's ability to live in a communal setting (relevant to larger facilities)
- requirement for a one-bedroom unit only (in most cases).

The first step in accepting a Y2I placement is for the young person to enter into 'The Deal' about agreed goals.

Special allocations

When an applicant with exceptional needs is identified, Homes Tasmania may determine the need for immediate prioritisation and Y2I placement.

In this event, Y2I providers will work closely with Homes Tasmania to identify an available and appropriate unit.

The Deal

'The Deal' is an agreement between the young person and the Y2I provider including completion of a Certificate I in Developing Independence (DI). The DI recognises the unique skills and talents of each young person and supports their participation in six key areas to achieve independence. In return, the young person enjoys safe, secure, supported and affordable accommodation.

The six areas of independence are:

1. education
2. employment
3. health and wellbeing
4. housing and living skills
5. community participation and
6. social connections.

Accommodation services

Y2I provides essential accommodation services to meet the material basic needs of residents. At a minimum this must include:

- **A single bedroom with access to an ensuite or shared bathroom facilities** – in exceptional circumstances, rooms may have more than one bed for shared bedroom arrangements such as when siblings are placed together. Bathrooms should be gender neutral. At least one room and bathroom should be accessible for residents living with mobility issues. Rooms should have access to Wi-Fi.
- **Placement for the duration of need** – the length of stay is flexible to support the young person’s progress against goals set under the Deal approach. Residents will sign a short-term lease of three (3) months, which is renewed over the term of their stay subject to them consistently meeting the conditions of their lease and the Deal. It is intended that the maximum term of a placement will be up to two years.
- **Meals** – residents are supported to establish patterns and skills to help them prepare, budget for and access three well-balanced healthy and nutritious meals per day. There is a focus on learning and achieving healthy habits to meet the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) for meals as well as supplementary foods, eg morning tea and healthy snacks. This includes consideration of special dietary requirements such as allergies/intolerance.
- **Laundry service** – residents will have access to on-site laundry facilities, including washing machines and dryers, to launder their own personal clothing.
- **Affordable** – residents will pay affordable rents based on 25 per cent of their independent income plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance. Y2I providers may require a security deposit (bond) of up to two weeks’ rent and may make arrangements for this to be paid in instalments.

Focus of support

Y2I provides support that is focused on helping young residents transition to independence and sustain good housing outcomes.

Y2I support is intentional and intensive to grow young people’s confidence and skills to live independently, to get and keep a home, and to live a good life. In most cases, such as communal living facilities, Y2I support is provided on-site (24/7) or, in dispersed settings, it may be provided in-reach during the day.

A Y2I service will:

- **Be tailored to the strengths of each young person** – a Y2I service will tailor its service to address the individual needs and maturity of young people, by applying a trauma-informed capabilities approach of Advantaged Thinking to make positive transitions to independent adulthood. Negotiating relationships, developing life and independent living skills, understanding sexual identity, and developing an understanding of what each young person values and stands for, are all part of this journey to support them to make decisions about their own lives by focusing on what they are able to be and do – their potential – rather than their deficits.

- **Provide a coordinated service response** – a Y2I service will work with key allied services to deliver a connected and integrated service system response with a shared vision and collaborative practices where roles and responsibilities are clear and effective to achieve the best outcomes for the young person.
- **Be part of a community** – a Y2I service will build intentional connections within its local community to build social inclusion and civic participation.
- **Apply a person-centred response** – a Y2I service will create opportunities for young people to participate in decisions affecting them so they are an active participant in their own life; including being able to have a say and have their opinion heard and valued.
- **Be culturally responsive** – a Y2I service will be culturally appropriate and inclusive of diversity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, other cultures, community identity, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and differences of thoughts, ideas and interests.

Exiting from Y2I

Y2I providers will work with each young resident to plan a safe and appropriate exit from their service. This could include:

- exiting into independent living (social housing or private rental) with the necessary supports, or
- returning to the care of parents or other family where safe and possible to do so.

Unplanned exits from Y2I should be avoided and no young person should exit the service into homelessness. Where an exclusion of a resident from the service is unavoidable, then alternative accommodation should be in place before a young person is excluded.

Post exit support

A young person leaving Y2I continues to receive low-intensity support from the Y2I provider for up to six months that is focused on sustaining their tenancy (keeping them housed) and maintaining connections. Former Y2I residents should be encouraged as 'alumni' graduates to visit and become involved in volunteering, peer mentoring and sharing experiences with current residents.

Reporting abuse or neglect

Y2I providers who are concerned for the safety, risk or welfare of a child should call the Advice and Referral Line on 1800 000 123.

Where there are safety, risk or wellbeing concerns relating to family violence, housing support providers should call the Family Violence Response and Referral Line on 1800 633 937.

If the provider believes a member of a household/Y2I is at immediate risk and police or medical assistance is required, they should call emergency services on 000.

Relevant documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant policies and procedures for youth at risk, including the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework.

Our contact details



housing.programs@homes.tas.gov.au



www.homestasia.com.au