

# Litmus

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## Housing First Evaluation and Rapid Rehousing Review

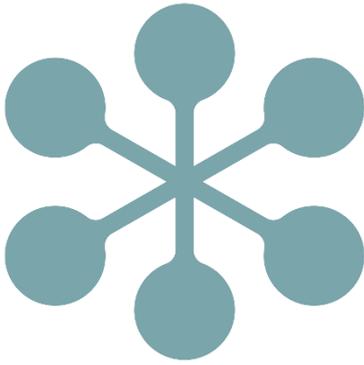
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Phase Two: Whānau Experiences and  
Outcomes

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1 March 2023





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# Acknowledgements

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Mā pango mā whero, ka oti te mahi.  
With black and with red, the work is completed.

Tauārai te pā, titoko te ao marama!

E mihi nei ki te reo karanga i whai wāhi ai mātou ki te kaupapa nei!

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# Report terminology

Term	Explanation
<b>AOD</b>	Alcohol and Other Drug.
<b>Discrimination</b>	Discrimination is when unfair treatment results in social exclusion (in terms of avoidance and withdrawal, segregation, and/or coercion (Corrigan et al., 2006). Discrimination can be experienced, anticipated, and internalised (Fox et al., 2018).
<b>Homelessness</b>	Homelessness includes rough sleeping, people without shelter, emergency and temporary accommodation, and living in overcrowded and uninhabitable housing.
<b>Housing First programme</b>	The national Housing First programme.
<b>Housing First providers</b>	The organisations contracted to deliver the Housing First service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Māori and Iwi Housing First providers are Iwi or Māori organisations who hold a Housing First contract.</li> <li>• Non-Māori Housing First providers refers to all other organisations holding a Housing First contract.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing First services</b>	Delivery of Housing First in specific locations. Housing First services are named using the following method – service name (location), (e.g., Kāhui Tū Kaha (Auckland)). The exception is where the service name includes the location (e.g., Housing First Nelson).
<b>HUD</b>	Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga/the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.
<b>Institutional racism</b>	Institutional racism is when government, organisations, education, and wider society use laws, policies and practices that create unfair advantage for some groups, and disadvantage for others. It builds over time and though not always intentional, drives inequality and disempowerment (Ministry of Justice, n.d.).
<b>Interpersonal racism</b>	Interpersonal racism is harmful beliefs, attitudes, or behaviour directed towards people because of their ethnicity or the colour of their skin (Ministry of Justice, n.d.).
<b>Kaimahi</b>	The general Housing First and Rapid Rehousing workforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Key worker” describes staff who work with clients. Other terms for key workers used across the programmes are kaiārahi and case worker.</li> <li>• “Property locators” describes staff who source houses for clients by working with property owners, property agents and developers.</li> <li>• “Tenancy managers” describes people who do housing inspections on behalf of the property owners/agents and work with key workers to address any issues identified.</li> </ul>

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>MAIHI</b>	Te Maihi o te Whare Māori – Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation Framework for Action released in 2020 by HUD.
<b>MAIHI Ka Ora</b>	The National Māori Housing Strategy released by HUD in 2021 and developed in partnership with Māori.
<b>Pacific peoples interviewed</b>	Pacific peoples in Housing First or Rapid Rehousing that we interviewed.
<b>Programmes</b>	Collectively both Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. The term reflects many clients interviewed were not clear which service they were in and the similarities of service delivery.
<b>Rapid Rehousing</b>	The two-year Rapid Rehousing trial that started in 2020.
<b>Phase one evaluation report</b>	The report for phase one of the evaluation and review. Reference: Housing First Evaluation and Rapid Rehousing Review: Phase One Report (Litmus, 2022a).
<b>Whānau</b>	People in Housing First or Rapid Rehousing that we interviewed for the phase two evaluation. We used the term “whānau” to acknowledge our relationship with participants through the interview process. We acknowledge different providers use other words to describe clients in Housing First (refer to the phase one evaluation report).
<b>Whānau Māori</b>	Māori clients in Housing First or Rapid Rehousing that we interviewed.

# 1. Executive summary

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Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, HUD) commissioned a two-phase developmental evaluation of the Housing First programme and a review of the Rapid Rehousing trial. This document contains key insights from the phase two evaluation of Housing First and review of Rapid Rehousing, focusing on whānau experience and outcomes.

## Evaluation and review context

### Severe housing deprivation is increasing in Aotearoa

The amount of people experiencing homelessness in Aotearoa is increasing. The demographic profile of those experiencing homelessness is also changing and increasing among young people and families with children. Māori and Pacific peoples and young people have the highest rates of severe housing deprivation. For Māori, colonisation has and continues to impact their experience of homelessness.

The Homelessness Action Plan's vision is that homelessness is prevented where possible or is rare, brief, and non-recurring

To meet the Homelessness Action Plan's vision, the Government funds a range of responses to homelessness, housing issues, housing supply, and building partnerships with Iwi, Māori, and marae. These responses are funded and delivered by HUD and other cross-government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

HUD is committed to advancing positive housing and urban development outcomes for Māori

In 2020, HUD released Te Maihi o te Whare Māori – Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation Framework for Action (MAIHI). MAIHI requires HUD to work collaboratively across government agencies to meet whānau Māori needs, prevent homelessness, and improve Māori housing security.

In 2021, HUD launched MAIHI Ka Ora, the National Māori Housing Strategy, which provides the strategic direction for the whole Māori housing system. MAIHI Ka Ora enables Māori and the Crown to work in genuine partnership on five shared priorities of system, support, Māori-led local solutions, supply, and sustainability.

Te Matapihi He Tirohanga Mō Te Iwi Trust (Te Matapihi) is the national peak body advocating for Māori housing outcomes. In July 2019, led by Kāhui Tū Kaha and Kahungunu Whānau Services (Wellington), Arohanui ki te Tangata was established as the national Māori collective of Iwi, hapū, and Māori organisations that deliver Housing First services.

## Overview of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing

Housing First is an international rights-based approach to homelessness

In Aotearoa, Housing First is the primary response to chronic homelessness. HUD currently funds 12 Housing First programmes with 17 providers across 11 locations in Aotearoa.

Housing First eligibility criteria are people experiencing chronic homelessness for more than 12 months; who have high, multiple and complex needs; and need intensive ongoing support to stay housed and achieve their goals (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021a). The programme aims to house and provide wraparound support to clients. Providers can support clients indefinitely.

Drawing from the international model, the Housing First programme has five core principles:

1. Immediate access to housing with no readiness conditions
2. Consumer choice and self-determination
3. Individualised and person-driven support
4. A harm reduction and recovery-orientation approach
5. Social and community integration.

In Aotearoa, Housing First services need to understand and adopt the values of rangatiratanga (self-determination), whanaungatanga (positive connections) and manaakitanga (self-worth and empowerment).

In 2020, the two-year Rapid Rehousing trial started

The Rapid Rehousing trial targets individuals who do not meet the Housing First eligibility criteria. The trial targets people experiencing homelessness for less than 12 months with low to medium social service needs. Rapid Rehousing providers support people into housing and deliver wraparound support to maintain their tenancy. Providers can support Rapid Rehousing clients for up to 12 months. Fourteen providers are contracted to deliver Rapid Rehousing.

## Evaluation and review overview

HUD commissioned a two-phased developmental evaluation of Housing First and review of Rapid Rehousing

Phase one focused on understanding the implementation of Housing First and the early implementation of Rapid Rehousing in Aotearoa (Litmus, 2022a). The phase one evaluation did not assess the implementation fidelity of Housing First with the international model. The focus was on understanding the adaption of the model in Aotearoa. The executive summary of the phase one report is in [Appendix 1](#).

Phase two focused on the service experience and emerging outcomes for 41 whānau in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing across five providers. We addressed the following key evaluation questions:

- What are the experiences and emerging outcomes of whānau supported through the Housing First programme and the Rapid Rehousing trial?
- How is the delivery of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing working for Māori?
- What is and is not working well?
- What improvements, if any, are needed?

## Phase two evaluation and review findings

Whānau entered the programmes through existing relationships

Whānau pathways into the programmes relied on agency referrals and word-of-mouth. Whānau were also connected to the programmes after being placed in a motel during the COVID-19

lockdowns. As a result, whānau less connected to services and those experiencing homelessness after the lockdowns may not be referred to the programmes.

### Overall, whānau interviewed had a positive service experience

Most whānau reported positive and similar service experiences with Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. Whānau feedback demonstrated service delivery mainly aligned with the five principles of Housing First and the three cultural values:

- Whānau had immediate access to temporary housing while more permanent solutions were found.
- The lack of housing availability and discrimination in the rental market meant whānau had limited housing choices. As a result, whānau in temporary and rental accommodation were anxious and unsettled due to fear they may lose their accommodation.
- Kaimahi built trusted relationships with whānau aligned to the Housing First cultural values of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga. Kaimahi helped whānau connect to support and services to meet their needs and goals. However, whānau continued to experience interpersonal and institutional racism, discrimination and accessibility issues when engaging with some agencies.
- A harm reduction approach is less evident. Some whānau are being connected to alcohol and other drug (AOD) services and advised on strategies for safer AOD use. However, others with addictions were not ready to start a recovery journey.
- A few whānau were being supported to reconnect with their wider whānau or connect with others in the community through work, education, and hobbies.

Expectations of the programmes varied. Whānau with children wanted a secure place to create a stable home to enable a positive future for them and their children. In contrast, single men interviewed living with AOD addictions wanted a place to live. These differences reflect the changing profile of people facing homelessness in Aotearoa. Housing First was initially established to support men with addictions who faced significant barriers to securing accommodation without the pre-conditions of sobriety. As more whānau with children and rangatahi experience homelessness, the programmes need to meet their needs of creating a home and opportunities for whānau to thrive.

The experiences of whānau Māori also varied by provider type. Whānau Māori with non-Māori providers spoke positively of the wraparound service and Māori kaimahi. Whānau Māori with Māori providers appreciated their kaupapa Māori approach, which connected them to their culture and community and had a longer-term vision of whānau thriving and, for some, pathways to home ownership.

### All whānau interviewed achieved some positive outcomes, although some adverse unintended outcomes were noted

Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are transforming whānau lives. However, progress was not linear, and varied based on whānau needs and aspirations.

Housing First and Rapid Rehousing addressed housing insecurity through temporary accommodation and support for their immediate needs. Some whānau reported making progress towards sobriety and started to connect with others again. Some reported improvements in their health and wellbeing. Some felt a sense of gratitude, calmness, and reduced anxiety.

Permanently housed whānau felt a sense of stability and pride. They were hopeful, identified goals and aspirations, and actively worked towards them.

Compared to Housing First whānau, Rapid Rehousing whānau progressed quicker once in accommodation, and some restarted employment and study. Rapid Rehousing is an important

programme to enable whānau with children to gain stability and support to work towards their aspirations and goals.

Unintended outcomes for Housing First and Rapid Rehousing were observed during the interviews, noted by a few whānau, and highlighted by some providers in phase one. The “no obligation” nature of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing fostered a lack of accountability and dependency on the system for some whānau. However, a few whānau living with AOD addiction appreciated the no-fault approach to support their recovery journey or recognise their realities.

COVID-19 intervention of placing people into motel accommodation, while vital in the pandemic, enabled government dependency, AOD use, and limited self-determination and whanaungatanga.

## The programmes support whānau Māori along the early stages of the MAIHI Ka Ora Māori housing continuum

Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are contributing to supporting whānau Māori along the stages of the Māori housing continuum:

- He Whare Āwhina, He Haumarū: The programmes support whānau Māori with housing insecurity to address their immediate needs.
- Kāinga Pūmanawa: The programmes also contribute to housing security and permanence by offering accommodation with no prerequisite requirements (e.g., sobriety).
- Pā Kari: Few whānau Māori are moving toward housing independence due to limited permanent housing solutions and anxiety over the permanence of their current housing arrangement.

## Evolution is occurring to align with Te Tiriti obligations and MAIHI Ka Ora

In 2021, feedback from Māori and Iwi providers in Arohanui ki te Tangata indicated they did not believe Housing First could be adapted to meet the needs of whānau Māori experiencing homelessness. They noted Housing First is not based on mātauranga Māori, and does not consider the impact of colonisation or systemic issues contributing to Māori homelessness. At the time, Iwi and Māori were not involved in the governance of the programmes. Further, more investment was needed to build the capacity and capability of kaupapa Māori and Iwi providers delivering the programmes to meet the needs of Māori experiencing homelessness.

In December 2022, the Government announced He Ara Hiki Mauri – a tangata whenua-led response to homelessness. Led by Arohanui ki te Tangata, He Ara Hiki Mauri is a step towards Māori governance and sector leadership and the development of Māori-led local housing solutions.

## Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are relevant, enabling positive change, and can be strengthened

As He Ara Hiki Mauri is being enacted, Housing First and Rapid Rehousing have an important role in supporting the immediate and short-term needs of whānau Māori and the diversity of whānau who experience homelessness. The evaluation and review offer insights into strengthening alignment with MAIHI and Te Tiriti obligations, the Homelessness Action Plan, and the programmes generally.

### Strengthening alignment to MAIHI through:

- continuing to work in partnership with Arohanui ki te Tangata to support Housing First and Rapid Rehousing
- continuing to invest in building the capacity and capability of Māori providers (existing and others) to respond to the scale of Māori homelessness
- ensuring non-Māori providers continue to build their cultural responsiveness to Māori
- monitoring providers to demonstrate cultural responsiveness for Māori, and their effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for Māori experiencing homelessness.

**Strengthening contribution to the Homelessness Action Plan through:**

- clarifying the role of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing in response to the changing demographics of people experiencing long-term homelessness and wider housing services
- determining who has access to Housing First as an indefinite service or clarifying the role of graduation and re-enrolment processes.

**Strengthening the programmes at the national level through:**

- strengthening the programmes' design to support rangatiratanga (self-determination) of whānau
- reviewing the provider contract, reporting, and review processes to ensure they are equitable and transparent
- continuing to share Housing First and Rapid Rehousing learnings across providers
- considering the programmes' role in supporting whānau who want into home ownership.

**Strengthening programmes at the operational level through:**

- recruiting and retaining diverse kaimahi that reflect their clients, and ensuring they are supported and not burning out
- reaching people experiencing homelessness who may be eligible for the programmes and less visible
- educating clients about available services and how to access them.

## 2. Evaluation context

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A comprehensive background to Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, and the wider housing sector in Aotearoa can be found in the [phase one evaluation report](#).

### Homelessness is a significant equity issue in Aotearoa

In Census 2018, more than 102,000 people were identified as severely housing deprived, about 2% of Aotearoa's population. Since 2013, the rate of severe housing deprivation has increased. Māori, Pacific peoples, and young people have the highest rates of severe housing deprivation (Amore et al., 2021).

A range of complex and intersecting factors causes homelessness. Homelessness is driven by structural factors (e.g., institutional racism and discrimination), system failures (housing shortages, rising rents, high cost of living), and individual vulnerabilities or circumstances (e.g., experiences of family violence, trauma, addictions). For Māori, colonisation has and continues to impact on their experience of homelessness (Pihama et al., 2018). Homelessness is associated with a range of poor socio-economic outcomes (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2019).

### HUD is committed to meeting the Homelessness Action Plan's vision and advancing positive housing outcomes for Māori

The Homelessness Action Plan is a comprehensive central government-led and cross-agency plan to prevent and reduce homelessness

The Homelessness Action Plan's (2020–2023) vision is homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring (New Zealand Government, 2019). To meet this vision, the Government funds a range of responses to homelessness, housing issues, housing supply, and partnerships with Iwi, Māori and marae. Action areas cover prevention, supply, support, and system enablers in the immediate and long term. The Homelessness Action Plan is delivered by HUD and other cross-government agencies, and NGOs.

### MAIHI and MAIHI Ka Ora set up the strategic direction for Māori housing in Aotearoa

In 2020, HUD released Te Maihi o te Whare Māori (MAIHI – Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation framework) – its strategic framework for action. MAIHI states that supporting Iwi and Māori to find and keep safe, secure, healthy and affordable housing is essential to reducing the number of Māori becoming homeless (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2020a, 2020b).

In 2021, MAIHI Ka Ora (the national Māori housing strategy) was released (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021b). MAIHI Ka Ora was developed by Māori for Māori, to provide strategic direction to current and future policy and processes impacting Māori housing. The strategy sets out a 30-year shared vision that *“all whānau have safe, healthy, affordable homes with secure tenure, across the Māori housing continuum.”*

MAIHI Ka Ora reflects the structure of the wharehau (principal house). The marae ātea and surroundings represent a space where Māori and the Crown unite in genuine partnership, a starting point before entering the whare. Shared priorities are represented by five pou at the back of the

whare: system, support, Māori-led local solutions, supply, and sustainability, which are grounded in Māori-Crown partnership and held together by MAIHI Whare Wānanga.

Whānau transition through three stages of the Māori housing continuum, which are represented by poutama panels that sit behind the pou, specifically:

- He Whare Āwhina, He Haumarū: Support whānau experiencing housing vulnerability and insecurity
- Kāinga Pūmanawa: Support whānau to achieve housing security and permanence
- Pā Kari: Support whānau to achieve housing independence and thrive in communities.

Te Matapihi is an active voice advocating for improved Māori housing outcomes

Te Matapihi He Tirohanga Mō Te Iwi Trust (Te Matapihi) is the national peak body advocating for positive Māori housing outcomes. In July 2019, led by Kāhui Tū Kaha and Kahungunu Whānau Services (Wellington), Arohanui ki te Tangata was established as the national Māori collective of Iwi, hapū and Māori organisations that deliver Housing First services. Te Matapihi acts as an umbrella organisation for Arohanui ki te Tangata, bringing aspects of interest related to homelessness for discussion. The purpose of Arohanui ki te Tangata is to increase collective capacity and capability and uphold tikanga Māori and the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and rangatiratanga in their mahi and within the sector (Arohanui ki te Tangata, n.d., p. 1).

## Housing First is an international rights-based approach to chronic homelessness

In Aotearoa, Housing First is the primary response to chronic homelessness. Housing First eligibility criteria include people experiencing chronic homelessness for more than 12 months and who have high, multiple, and complex needs, and need intensive ongoing support to stay housed and achieve their goals (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021a).

The programme aims to house and provide wraparound support to clients. Providers can support clients indefinitely. HUD currently funds 12 Housing First programmes with 17 providers across 11 locations in Aotearoa.

Drawing from the international model, the Housing First programme has five core principles:

1. **Immediate access to housing with no readiness conditions** – Housing is offered without any conditions. People just need to be willing to engage with support services and want to be housed.
2. **Consumer choice and self-determination** – People have choices about the housing and support that's right for them. However, their choice of housing might be restricted by cost and availability.
3. **Individualised and person-centred support** – Support is tailored to each person's needs and goals and is given for as long they need it.
4. **Harm reduction and recovery** – People are supported to make positive steps towards wellbeing and reducing harmful behaviours.
5. **Social and community integration** – People are encouraged and supported to be part of their communities and connect with whānau, support networks, social activities, education and work.

In Aotearoa, Housing First services need to adopt the values of rangatiratanga (self-determination), whanaungatanga (positive connections) and manaakitanga (self-worth and empowerment).

## The two-year Rapid Rehousing trial started in 2020

The Rapid Rehousing trial targets individuals and whānau who do not meet the Housing First eligibility criteria. The trial targets people experiencing homelessness for less than 12 months with low to medium social service needs. Rapid Rehousing providers support people into houses and deliver wraparound support to maintain their tenancy. Providers can support Rapid Rehousing clients for up to 12 months. Fourteen providers (most of which also deliver Housing First) are contracted to deliver Rapid Rehousing.

## HUD commissioned the evaluation of Housing First and review of Rapid Rehousing in 2020

Before 2020, the Housing First programme in Aotearoa had not been evaluated at a national level. In 2020, HUD commissioned a two-phased Housing First evaluation and the Rapid Rehousing review:

- Phase one focused on understanding the implementation of Housing First and the early implementation of Rapid Rehousing in Aotearoa.
- Phase two focused on the emerging client outcomes in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing.

HUD and providers are using evaluation and review findings to enhance the delivery of Housing First and the Rapid Rehousing trial to improve housing outcomes. Evaluation and review findings will also inform strategic organisational learnings and decisions around future funding allocations.

### Phase one of the Housing First evaluation and Rapid Rehousing review identified process and implementation insights

In phase one, we interviewed 160 people (governance, management, and frontline delivery) involved in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing in mid-2021. Further information on the findings and approach can be found in the [phase one evaluation report](#). [Appendix 1](#) contains the executive summary of the report.

Key insights from phase one were:

- Single Māori men were over-represented in the Housing First cohort, but the demographic make-up of people experiencing homelessness is changing due to the broadening definition of homelessness.
- Housing First services were at different development stages, from early to more mature implementation, reflecting different durations of service delivery.
- Four Housing First governance and operational structures existed, including a dispersed collective, an integrated collective, a lead provider, and Iwi- and Māori-led models.
- The Housing First programme was evolving to be more responsive to Māori. Māori and Iwi Housing First providers were delivering a kaupapa Māori service. Non-Māori providers were working to encompass the three cultural values. Alignment with MAIHI needed strengthening.
- Pacific peoples' access to Housing First was low compared to their severe housing deprivation prevalence rates and varied by region. No Pacific strategy existed to guide implementation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Following the phase one report, in November 2022, Fale mo Aiga (Pacific Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2030) was launched. Fale mo Aiga is a pragmatic and tailored approach to progressing the housing aspirations of Pacific Aotearoa. More information can be found here: <https://www.hud.govt.nz/our-work/fale-mo-aiga-pacific-housing-strategy-2030/>

- Housing First may be strengthened by enabling contracts and sharing learnings across the sector, and having clarity of roles; increasing workforce capacity, retention and safety; improving referral processes; and clarifying graduation and maintenance processes.
- Rapid Rehousing was at an early implementation stage with little differentiation in service delivery with Housing First, except for Rapid Rehousing's 12-month duration.
- Housing First and Rapid Rehousing contributed to the delivery of the Homelessness Action Plan.

## 3. Phase two purpose and methodology

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### The phase two purpose was to understand whānau experiences and outcomes

Having understood the provider perspective, phase two focused on understanding whānau experiences of engaging with Housing First and Rapid Rehousing and the outcomes they attributed to these programmes.

### We addressed four evaluation and review questions

The phase two evaluation and review addressed the following questions:

- What are the experiences and emerging outcomes of whānau supported through the Housing First programme and the Rapid Rehousing trial?
  - What are the experiences and journeys of clients and whānau?
  - What outcomes do whānau attribute to Housing First and Rapid Rehousing?
  - What are unintended outcomes?
  - How sustainable are the outcomes?
  - To what extent could these outcomes be achieved without Housing First and Rapid Rehousing?
- How is the delivery of the Housing First and Rapid Rehousing working for Māori?
- What is and is not working well?
- What improvements, if any, are needed?

### We used a qualitative evaluation and review approach

We used qualitative data collection methods to undertake this evaluation. We completed in-depth interviews with diverse whānau across five Housing First and Rapid Rehousing programmes.

We received approval for the evaluation from the Kāinga Ora Human Participants Research Ethics Committee.

[Appendix 2](#) contains the developmental evaluation approach, key evaluation questions for both phases, the recruitment and informed consent process for phase two, and the evaluation team.

### We selected five Housing First and Rapid Rehousing programmes

The selected programmes enabled us to interview a range of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing clients with diverse experiences. Programmes were selected to cover both rural and urban locations, a range of governance and operational Housing First models<sup>2</sup>, levels of programme maturity (time since establishment), and whether they delivered Housing First or both Housing First and Rapid

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<sup>2</sup> In phase one, we identified four models: 1) dispersed collective model, 2) integrated collective model, 3) lead provider model, and 4) Iwi and Māori-led models. More information can be found in the [phase one evaluation and review report](#).

Rehousing. We excluded locations where client research has been recently conducted to reduce burden on clients and providers.

The provider locations were:

- He Korowai Trust, Hau Kāinga – Kāinga Whenua (Mid-Far North), and Ngāti Hine Health Trust (Whangārei)
- Kāhui Tū Kaha (Auckland and Whangareī)
- VisionWest (Auckland)
- Te Tahi Whare Ora (Hawke’s Bay)
- Housing First Nelson.

We interviewed 41 whānau in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing

We interviewed whānau from a range of ethnicities, gender, age, and type of housing situation (permanent or temporary). We interviewed whānau who had been in the programmes for one month to nearly five years. Ages ranged from people in their 20s to 60s. We interviewed six people in their 20s, including two rangatahi aged 24 and under and five in Housing First.

We detail the achieved sample in Table 1 (demographics) and Table 2 (programme characteristics).

**Table 1**

*Sample profile across Housing First and Rapid Rehousing whānau interviewed*

Domain	Māori	Pacific <sup>3</sup>	New Zealand European	Female	Male	Average age
Far North / Whangareī (Hau Kāinga, Ngāti Hine) (n=7)	7	-	-	4	3	32
Kāhui Tū Kaha (n=8)	5	2	1	4	4	43
VisionWest (n=7)	3	2	2	7	-	43
Hawke’s Bay (n=8)	7	-	1	1	7	47
Nelson (n=11)	4	-	7	5	6	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	-

**Table 2**

*Sample profile of programme characteristics across whānau interviewed*

Domain	Housing First	Rapid Rehousing	Permanent housing	Temporary accommodation
Far North / Whangareī (Hau Kāinga, Ngāti Hine) (n=7)	5	2	3	4

<sup>3</sup> Pacific peoples interviewed reflected a range of ethnicities, including Tongan, Samoan, and Cook Island Māori.

Kāhui Tū Kaha (n=8)	5	3	7	1
VisionWest (n=7)	5	2	5	2
Hawke's Bay (n=8)	8	-	3	5
Nelson (n=11)	6	5	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>

## We interviewed whānau in person

We worked closely with providers to recruit and schedule interviews with whānau. We used informed consent processes. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted about 30 minutes. We audio-recorded interviews with the participants' permission. Interviewers were trained in trauma-informed interviewing. We ended interviews if participants experienced any signs of distress.

Whānau received \$80 koha (supermarket or Warehouse voucher) to recognise their time and contribution.

## We systematically analysed interviews and facilitated sense-making workshops

We analysed whānau experiences against the five core Housing First principles and the three cultural values (whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and rangatiratanga). Whānau outcomes were assessed along the three stages of the Māori housing continuum as outlined in [MAIHI Ka Ora](#).

We conducted an internal sense-making workshop with the evaluation team. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and systematically coded by domains and themes (based on the key evaluation and review questions) in an Excel spreadsheet. We presented the preliminary findings in three workshops with the HUD steering group, Arohanui ki te Tangata members, and Housing First and Rapid Rehousing providers.

## Limitations of the evaluation and review approach exist

The report draws on whānau interviews and, where appropriate, insights from the phase one evaluation. The evaluation team is confident the report findings accurately reflect the interviews completed.

We acknowledge the following limitations to the qualitative evaluation and review approach:

- **Potential for selection bias:** Whānau feedback on their service experience and outcomes was fairly similar across locations. We have noted key differences in the report, where they exist. We cannot guarantee that other Housing First and Rapid Rehousing whānau in the same or different programmes may have had similar service experiences or outcomes.
- **Limitations of whānau sample:**
  - We did not interview any whānau who had withdrawn from the services due to recruitment challenges. We, therefore, cannot comment on whānau reasons for leaving the services.
  - We only interviewed one whānau who graduated from Rapid Rehousing. We cannot therefore comment on the impact of the time-limited nature of this service.
  - We interviewed four Pacific peoples. Given the diversity of Pacific peoples, more targeted research is needed to understand their experiences and outcomes.
  - We interviewed six people in their 20s and two under 24. Given the diversity of young people and their high rates of severe housing deprivation, more research is needed to understand their perspective.

- **Bias due to COVID-19 support and interventions:** Housing First and Rapid Rehousing operated during COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. Some whānau may have viewed the programmes more positively than they would have without COVID-19 support. The qualitative evaluation and review cannot explore a counterfactual apart from asking whānau interviewed what would have happened without the service.
- **Recall bias:** We note some whānau had difficulty recalling all their engagement with Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. Some whānau did not know the programme they were in (i.e., Housing First or Rapid Rehousing). In phase one, providers noted little distinction between Housing First and Rapid Rehousing service delivery except for the latter’s 12-month duration.

## The report structure addresses the evaluation and review questions

The report reflects the themes from the analysis, supported by de-identified quotes. We have structured the report against the key evaluation and review questions, specifically:

- whānau service experiences of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing
- whānau outcomes from Housing First and Rapid Rehousing
- improvements to enhance whānau experience and outcomes
- alignment of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing to MAIHI Ka Ora
- key insights across phases one and two.

We use the terms “many” or “most”, “some”, and “few” in the report to indicate the frequency of the themes across interviews.

- “Many” or “most” indicates a common theme by the majority of whānau interviewed.
- “Some” indicates the theme noted by a cluster of whānau interviewed.
- “Few” indicates a less mentioned but important theme.

Whānau interviewed appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing and what they gained from the service. If requested, whānau interviewed will receive a summary of the findings. In addition, the five Housing First providers will also receive the whānau summary to distribute to their clients.

# Phase two findings



## 4. Whānau experiences of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing

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This section presents the service experience of whānau in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. We follow the whānau journey from before joining the programmes<sup>4</sup> through their referral, working with their kaimahi, being in temporary or permanent housing, and receiving wraparound support.

Whānau experience is assessed against the [five principles of Housing First](#) and the three cultural values of rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga, and manaakitanga. We highlight areas where whānau experience differs.

### Whānau interviewed experienced long-term homelessness, trauma, and system bias

Whānau interviewed in both Housing First and Rapid Rehousing had experienced long-term homelessness. They were sleeping rough, sleeping in cars, couch surfing, or in uninhabitable or overcrowded living situations. Whānau interviewed shared a range of traumatic experiences that contributed to homelessness, including:

- mental health issues
- AOD addictions
- relationship breakdowns, family harm, and violence
- experiences of prison, psychiatric institutions, and/or the care and protection system
- deaths of loved ones (e.g., partner, parent, child) and grief
- significant health issues, injuries, and disabilities
- disconnection from their whānau and culture
- poverty and debt.

Whānau interviewed sought support from government services but faced many issues relating to institutional racism and discrimination. Understanding whānau journeys before entering the programmes helps to appreciate how historic trauma can influence their engagement and service experience. Earlier experiences can also influence the outcomes whānau attributed to the programmes.

### Whānau Māori experienced ongoing colonisation and system trauma and inequities

Whānau Māori interviewed shared their experiences of institutional racism, discrimination, and judgment when engaging with government agencies and other services. Their experiences resulted in system trauma and distrust for the government, agencies, and other authorities. As a result, some whānau Māori were reluctant to engage with government agencies or faced access barriers.

I don't like racism, oppression, depending on the police officers and even that authority type of figure. I don't dig that type of feeling, even if I see it off WINZ workers, **I just completely lock up**, like, "No, I don't want to talk to you, bro." **I want someone who is going to**

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<sup>4</sup> While whānau journeys before the programmes do not reflect their experiences of the programmes, they are critical to understanding how whānau received the services and subsequently, their outcomes.

## **understand what I'm going to say, not just look at me as a piece of black and white paper.** (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, male)

The ongoing impact of colonisation has resulted in some whānau Māori being houseless on their whenua or owning land and not having the resources to build on it. For Māori, colonisation and the resulting loss of land and culture have had a devastating effect on whānau health and wellbeing (Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019; King, Cormack & Kōpua, 2018; Cram, 2019; Durie, 2017; Kingi & Durie, 2018; Pihama et al., 2019). Key losses include:

- separating whānau from their whenua
- destabilising whānau, hapū and Iwi identities
- the loss of language, economic and political independence, and whānau as a protective collective
- the undermining of agency and autonomy.

### **Pacific peoples interviewed experienced immigration, racism, and system trauma**

Pacific peoples interviewed<sup>5</sup> usually had children and connections with their wider families. They spoke of living in overcrowded situations or sleeping in cars/vans. Immigration, lack of support in a new country, having English as their second language, and difficulties navigating the system contributed to some Pacific peoples experiencing chronic homelessness. Pacific peoples interviewed spoke of the shame of being homeless and the hidden aspect of homelessness through overcrowding.

Pacific peoples interviewed shared experiences of institutional racism and discrimination when engaging with government agencies. A few spoke of the lack of support from their own community or staff with the same cultural background, which further eroded their trust in others.

### **Younger people experienced a range of trauma contributing to their homelessness**

The six rangatahi interviewed aged under 30<sup>6</sup> spoke of abusive relationships with ex-partners and relationship breakdowns with whānau (including deaths of loved ones). Some had young children in their care. Some had AOD addictions. Rangatahi interviewed had lived on the streets, in cars, and in overcrowded situations.

Whānau interviewed indicated the programmes' eligibility criteria on the duration of homelessness worked to exclude rangatahi. The phase one evaluation noted only 10% of Housing First clients are rangatahi aged under 24 years. However, young people have the highest rates of severe housing deprivation in New Zealand, with around half being under 25 years of age (Amore et al., 2021). Rates were highest among Pacific and Māori young people.

## **Whānau journeys to Housing First and Rapid Rehousing were long and traumatic, which affected their service experiences**

### **Whānau perceived wider government agencies' services were siloed and inaccessible**

Whānau have had long and traumatic journeys through the system before entering Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. Whānau interviewed had complex and interlinked issues (e.g., addictions, mental and physical health issues, as well as homelessness). In seeking help, whānau needed time and

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<sup>5</sup> We note the interview sample only includes four Pacific peoples from diverse Pacific Islands. The small sample size and diversity of experiences means common themes were limited.

<sup>6</sup> We interviewed two rangatahi aged 24 and under. To protect confidentiality, we have reported on themes that surfaced across young people aged under 30. Among the six, all were in Housing First except one.

resilience to negotiate with multiple government agencies. Whānau interviewed sought help from the Ministry of Social Development (Work and Income), Kāinga Ora, Oranga Tamariki, the Department of Corrections, Tenancy Tribunal, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), and non-governmental social service providers.

Whānau interviewed commonly experienced being shuffled and referred through disconnected services. Whānau were frustrated with the diverse range of eligibility criteria across services they needed to meet to gain support and help. Many whānau spoke of continuously hitting closed doors or repeatedly sharing their stories and having to prove they were worthy of getting help. As a result, some whānau stopped seeking and applying for support, as they did not want to go through another process to get declined or be re-traumatised sharing their story.

It got complicated because Social Welfare started making us go see other people and those people would send us back to Social Welfare and **that's what it was like, back and forth, and we never got help.** (Housing First, Māori, male)

Whānau interviewed were not supported to navigate services effectively. Whānau felt agencies and providers did not offer proactive support or guidance. Without information, whānau did not know the right questions to ask, the right places to look, or the appropriate actions to take.

I used to be in the system years ago, didn't like it, and then all of a sudden, I gotta go back to the system. **I had to restart again from the bottom, like, "What do I do? Who do I go to?"** MSD didn't help. Kāinga Ora certainly did not help. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

Access was also slow, given bureaucratic processes and a lack of service capacity to meet demand. Whānau spoke of waiting for extended periods to hear back, which affected their motivation to stay engaged.

Whānau found wider government agencies' services discriminatory and unsupportive

Whānau found services unsupportive and judgmental, which was detrimental to their wellbeing. They did not feel listened to, validated, or treated with respect. They also felt discriminated against due to their circumstances, e.g., as a solo parent or beneficiary, experiencing homelessness. Whānau Māori and Pacific peoples interviewed experienced both institutional and interpersonal racism.

**I just think that Kāinga Ora is cold.** You get a bit of warmth here [with the Housing First provider] but there, you don't. You just don't, cold. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

Some whānau spoke of traumatising experiences with agencies such as the Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki, Tenancy Tribunal. A few whānau were referred to services or housing in other cities and had to uproot their life.

**There was all that ugliness when you've been homeless.** There's racism, there's the colour of your skin, there's the beneficiaries kōrero, there's the homeless thing. There is that **big brick wall that a lot of people had to fight against**, those challenges to get over. You get a lot of ugly looks. (Housing First, Māori, female)

Whānau found services do not communicate with them effectively. They also received inconsistent information. Examples of situations included having to go through application processes multiple times, being unknowingly taken off the housing register or other waitlists, and not being able to access the right supports, e.g., benefits.

That one [MSD], she said she was going to help, and the next minute, **I tried to ring again, and they said we were off the list.** (Rapid Rehousing, Pacific, male)

## Whānau interviewed entered the programme through service referrals and word-of-mouth

Whānau were connected to providers through referrals and word-of-mouth

Whānau were referred to the programmes by police officers, pastors and churches, the courts, hospitals, psychiatric institutions, Iwi providers, and other non-governmental service providers. The referral process therefore usually relied on people or providers who were aware of the Housing First or Rapid Rehousing programmes or associated providers.

I ended up in hospital because I was on the streets. And **it was the hospital that approached [provider] and Housing First to put me in accommodation** and they took the advice on. (Housing First, Māori, male)

Some whānau self-referred if they were told about the provider from their personal networks, including whānau, existing clients in the programmes, or others in similar situations.

It was the people that helped me find this place, those on benefits, **those already in the system.** (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

Whānau were also connected to Housing First during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020

Some whānau mentioned they entered Housing First after being placed in motels during the first COVID-19 lockdown. In this context, the Government mandate to house everyone due to COVID-19 was a catalyst for referrals to Housing First.<sup>7</sup> Once placed into motel accommodation, providers assessed whānau to identify what support services they needed, which could include Housing First.

This pandemic happened, and everything just happened so fast that everyone wasn't allowed on the streets. **Well, the pandemic did help. That got everyone swept off the streets and into motels quite fast.** (Housing First, Māori, male)

The phase one evaluation highlighted, for some Housing First providers, referrals into the programme were initially slow before the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this, some Housing First providers were proactively engaging with people who were sleeping rough. Inequities of access to the programmes may exist for those experiencing homelessness who are less connected to services, not visible in communities, or who experienced homelessness after the 2020 lockdown intervention to house people.

## Whānau experiences of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing service were similar

Once whānau were accepted into the programmes, experience of the two programmes was similar due to few differences in actual service delivery (e.g., accessing housing, working with a kaimahi, and receiving a wraparound service).

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<sup>7</sup> Rapid Rehousing contracts did not commence until late 2020 and took time to get up and running.

The key differences between Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are their eligibility criteria based on need, and length of time whānau have experienced homelessness. Service duration is another key difference, with Rapid Rehousing limited to 12 months and Housing First having no time limit.

## Whānau experiences mainly aligned with the five Housing First principles and three cultural values

### 1. Whānau experienced immediate access to accommodation with no readiness conditions

**Principle 1: Immediate access to housing with no readiness conditions.** Housing is offered without any conditions. People just need to be willing to engage with support services and want to be housed.

#### Whānau appreciated gaining access to accommodation

Whānau interviewed were grateful to gain immediate access to accommodation. Aotearoa is currently experiencing a housing shortage and high levels of housing competition. As a result, and further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic response, many whānau were placed in temporary accommodation (e.g., motels) for extended periods until more permanent housing could be located and secured. Although the accommodation was temporary, whānau were grateful and gained a level of security through having shelter.

#### Whānau did not have to meet conditions to be accepted into the programmes

As long as they met the programmes' eligibility criteria, whānau did not have to meet further conditions (e.g., sobriety) to access the programmes. One exception is that accessing Hau Kainga housing in the Far North required a commitment to sobriety and compliance with their rules.

#### Some whānau found living in temporary motel accommodation challenging

While not a part of the programmes, staying in temporary accommodation long-term negatively affected whānau experiences and outcomes. While living in a motel, some whānau did not feel settled and secure. In addition, focusing on longer-term aspirations, like study or employment, was difficult in this temporary environment.

Some whānau did not feel at ease in motels. Some whānau felt restricted by rules, unwillingly having people in their space (e.g., cleaners), and had limited furnishings (e.g., hot plates instead of a kitchen). They also had negative experiences, (e.g., theft, partying, loud noise). Some motels were poor quality, and whānau had to live in spaces with infestations, mould, and methamphetamine contamination.

Some of the hotels probably need to maintain them, like black mould. I guess, because they are classed as emergency accommodation, **they don't feel like they really need to be looked after.** (Rapid Rehousing, NZ European, female)

Single women and families felt unsafe in this accommodation due to the proximity to gangs and violence. Whānau with children also felt the accommodation was unsafe for their children due to the presence of people living with addictions and moteliere entering without their consent. However, some whānau were concerned they would lose custody of their children without this accommodation. Some whānau interviewed with children highlighted their resilience in spending

significant time each day seeking private rental accommodation. This left little time to consider their or their children's wider needs.

## 2. Some whānau lacked housing choice

**Principle 2: Consumer choice and self-determination.** People have choices about the housing and support that's right for them. However, their choice of housing might be restricted by cost and availability.

Whānau had housing preferences, but limited housing stock meant some whānau had to settle for unsuitable housing

In general, whānau preferred housing close to public transport and other facilities, in an area they wanted to live in, and where every child had a room.

Limited stock and high demand meant a lack of housing options. Providers operated a housing waitlist with clients. Some providers moved clients to the bottom of the list if they declined a house offer. As a result, some whānau felt pressured to accept their first housing offer. Some whānau therefore did not have consumer choice and accepted housing unsuitable for their needs. Some whānau interviewed noted providers supported them into suitable housing without getting bumped.

Like this rule here, "If you didn't take [housing offered by the Housing First/Rapid Rehousing provider], you get bumped", I can understand. You should be grateful for what's given, but then it's still got to meet your needs. **You might end up in an area that you don't want to be in** because of somebody you knew there. (Housing First, NZ European, female)

Without choice, some whānau settled for housing that was of poor quality and needed extensive renovations and repairs. Some whānau noted some landlords were not supportive or willing to pay for maintenance. As a result, they had to work and pay for repairs to make the space habitable and comfortable.

Some whānau had limited housing choice due to perceived discrimination

Some whānau perceived they are discriminated against when seeking public housing through the Housing Register. Housing First and Rapid Rehousing clients are supported to go on the Housing Register when they enter the programmes. In phase one, providers noted many clients are not aware of the Housing Register or don't know how to get on it. They noted some clients are reluctant to enrol as they feel the process is intrusive, impersonal, and re-traumatising. Providers also noted delays of up to two to three months existed to get on the Housing Register. Not being on the Housing Register can create delays in moving into a house.

Permanent housing through Housing First and Rapid Rehousing tends to be a private rental. Some whānau spoke of the challenges of competing with the public to secure a tenancy. They perceived landlords and property management companies preferred tenants in stable employment without children. Whānau felt disadvantaged by having pets and children, being a beneficiary, or solo parent. As a result, whānau faced difficulties in having their applications considered and getting a viewing.

[Landlords] prefer to have no pets, no kids as well. Another is, no one wants kids in their house, especially if you have more than one or two. **I look all the time and probably 50/50 chance if you hear back or get a viewing.** (Rapid Rehousing, NZ European, female)

Some whānau were anxious they could unexpectedly lose their rented accommodation

Some whānau were conscious rented housing was not permanent, which reduced their sense of security. They recognised house owners could sell the property or not renew their lease. A few whānau interviewed had lost their tenancies due to these scenarios.

I still have a bit of fear. **It's the fear of the owner coming and selling the house.** Just that fear at the back of the mind, "Is it getting closer to that?" and ka hōhā ke, **us as a people get hōhā moving to another place. It takes a lot out of you.** (Housing First, Māori, female)

It's good [to be in your own home] ... it took a long time to grow on me because I just felt like, **"Oh, is it going to be a temporary thing? Am I going to get shunted out again?"** But that is the **disadvantage of renting** ... (Housing First, NZ European, female)

An alternative to rental and motel accommodation exists for He Korowai whānau who were offered housing in cabins on papakāinga<sup>8</sup>

He Korowai whānau could be housed in self-contained cabins with communal spaces. Whānau noted the space enhanced community and felt like a marae where everyone contributed and supported each other. Some whānau were given part-time jobs (e.g., working at the cafe or as a cleaner), contributing to their job experience.

He Korowai whānau praised the community's strict rules. Rules included no alcohol, drugs, violence, pets, or overnight visitors. Kaitiaki (security) were on the premises to manage disruptions, and whānau had set hours to wake up and have meals. Whānau said these rules enhanced safety, contributed to sobriety, and built discipline and accountability towards self and others. However, this structure meant only whānau who were willing to follow the rules would be offered accommodation.

You have set rules, a kaupapa. And if you abide by those, **it is actually a good way to discipline yourself** in certain things in regard to sleep and your social habits. You're focusing more on keeping in line with how things should be, and it's not a bad thing. (Housing First, Māori, female)

### 3. Most whānau received individualised and person-centred support

**Principle 3: Individualised and person-centred support.** Support is tailored to each person's needs and goals and is given for as long they need it.

Whānau highly valued their relationship with their key worker

Whānau mainly talked about their relationships with their key workers. The key worker was usually their primary support when they entered and started progressing through the programmes. Key workers supported whanaungatanga and positive relationships.

Whānau spoke positively of their key worker. They trusted their key worker to speak openly with them and felt listened to and supported. Whānau were reassured their key worker would advocate

<sup>8</sup> In 2018, He Korowai Trust in Kaitiaki built a series of self-funded, self-contained cabins for emergency housing. These cabins (an alternative to private rentals and motels) are offered to people in their housing programmes, including Whare Ora/Housing First. He Korowai runs a rent-to-own scheme based on a housing continuum, where home ownership is the goal.

for them and do their best to help, (e.g., when dealing with moteliers or other services). Whānau felt relieved and hopeful having someone they knew was on their side.

It took me a long time to trust other people because I have trust issues. But **they make you feel safe. They listen.** They don't judge you, and if you're down, text or call, like, "Hey, are you okay? Do you want me to come over?" (Housing First, Māori, female)

Whānau also recognised key workers supported and encouraged them to make their own decisions. In this way, key workers enabled manaakitanga (empowerment) and supported whānau towards rangatiratanga (self-determination).

They push you to your best and **they tautoko you in every decision you make**, and they do their best to help you where you need to be. And **they make you feel comfortable ...** This place lets you speak your mind. Other places I don't feel comfortable to completely say everything. (Housing First, Māori, female)

Unlike other agencies, whānau experienced an "open-door approach" with their key workers. They perceived their key worker as accessible and only a text or phone call away. They appreciated having their key worker check in and visit them regularly. They were also comfortable calling their key worker if they needed anything.

Whānau appreciated key workers supporting with necessities, including transport, appointments, food, shopping and furnishing their house, and domestic skills.

[The kaimahi] are very supportive, and if there is anywhere I want to go, like appointments, shopping, things like that, **I can ring them up and they will come and pick me up.** They bring me food parcels and things like that. They're very supportive. (Housing First, Māori, male)

Whānau Māori and Pacific peoples interviewed appreciated having key workers from the same cultural background

Whānau Māori and Pacific peoples interviewed felt more comfortable with key workers from the same cultural background. They perceived these key workers implicitly understood where they were coming from, their life experiences, and the institutional and interpersonal racism and discrimination they faced from others and the system. For whānau Māori, they were connected through whakapapa and the shared impacts of colonisation. Pacific peoples interviewed come from different Pacific nations and appreciated key workers who could speak their Pacific language to build easy rapport and a foundation of trust.

**Straightaway, we just connected just like that.** My [whānau member] was her [whānau member]. It was just amazing, and we just hit it off. (Housing First, Māori, female)

Whānau were connected to services for their needs and goals, but issues with wider services remain

Whānau progressed at their pace. They regularly met with their key workers to identify and develop plans to meet their goals. Whānau were able to decide how they wanted to progress, which gave them control.

Whānau interviewed connected with a range of services, courses, and programmes:

- health services, e.g., doctor, counselling and mental health support, in-home disability support, healthy nutrition
- AOD services, e.g., AOD rehabilitation and counselling, harm reduction techniques

- financial support through Work and Income and budgeting courses
- employment support, e.g., employment brokers, resume writing, getting a driver's license, study courses
- tenancy services, e.g., ready-to-rent course
- intergenerational support, e.g., parenting; daycare arrangements; supporting children with disabilities, behavioural issues, and other needs; navigating custody arrangements
- Māori and Pacific providers
- Trauma support groups and courses, e.g., anger management, survivors of violence and abuse, women's support groups, and men's support groups.

I'm learning at the same time, because knowledge is my thing. **I just love learning.** But at the same time, **I'm still learning how to make those steps into learning,** and making my way into going back to courses. (Housing First, Māori, female)

Key workers worked to connect whānau to wider services. However, many whānau interviewed continued to face issues with service accessibility and suitability beyond the programmes. Many whānau interviewed continued to face difficulties with eligibility criteria, waitlists, and disconnected support that relies on referrals.

The one time I went up to [provider] and they said, "What can I help you with?" And I was like, "Meth." She said, "Oh, I thought it was alcohol. **I can't help you.**" I'm like, "Are you kidding me?" So that really put me off. **Those sorts of things put you off getting help when you need help.** (Housing First, NZ European, female)

## 4. Some whānau were supported toward harm reduction and recovery

**Principle 4: Harm reduction and recovery.** People are supported to make positive steps towards wellbeing and reducing harmful behaviours.

Whānau and key workers worked together to develop a plan and goals to enable progress. Whānau have the choice to decide what changes they wanted to make. For some whānau, their AOD dependency, a lack of motivation, and lack of wider accountability hindered their recovery journey. Some implemented harm reduction strategies to reduce their level of AOD consumption.

Some whānau were actively working on their recovery. Key workers connected them to services based on needs, e.g., AOD services and counselling. Programmes where abstinence was mandatory meant whānau in these programmes had to be sober.

[The provider] helps with support in ways like drug services, which is amazing. So, they give you **tips and tricks on how to deal with whatever drug addiction you have, how to minimise it, how to step-by-step drink water.** Cold water if you're on meth. If you feel like you can't eat, then you just make little food for nibbles, just slowly make your body eat, which helped. (Housing First, Māori, female)

As discussed in the next section, COVID-19 interventions had the unintended outcome of enabling addictions for some whānau.

## 5. The programmes supported some whānau to build relationships with others

**Principle 5: Social and community integration.** People are encouraged and supported to be part of their communities and connect with whānau, support networks, social activities, education and work.

Some whānau formed positive relationships with others living at the motel and other whānau in the programmes. Being in accommodation enabled whānau to host friends and gatherings, which fostered good connections.

One of my friends came over and stayed the night. **I cooked him breakfast and he stayed in the living room**, cushions off the couch and a few blankets. He said, “It’s quite a good place,” and he washed the dishes and all of that and I said, “You don’t have to do that.” (Housing First, NZ European, male)

Some whānau had close bonds with others from the street who were now in the programme. A few examples existed of whānau who got along well moving in together into a house (which also made use of two- or three-bedroom properties available).

Well, a lot of guys I hang with today I met on the streets, and **we’re still together today**. They asked if we want [to live together], and yeah. (Housing First, Māori, male)

As whānau made progress, some started reconnecting with their families. Some whānau also began to integrate into the wider community, through education, employment, and hobbies (e.g., art, gym).

### Programme expectations varied between single people and families

Different expectations existed between single people with AOD issues (usually men) and people with children and tamariki (usually women).

Single people (usually men interviewed with AOD addictions) tended to be happy and content to be off the streets. They were grateful and appreciated having a roof over their heads and comfort from having a bed and being warm. Many struggled with mental health issues and AOD addictions. Some had goals, such as to be in employment and study.

Families (people with tamariki; usually women interviewed) were also happy and grateful to be in accommodation. However, they looked beyond being housed and more towards a home. They were committed to their whānau and wanted to do well for their children, especially if they were young and in their care. They wanted to break cycles and be role models to the next generation. Whānau with tamariki tended to be committed to sobriety and sought study and work. Whānau with custody arrangements or children in care and protection aspired for their children to live with them. These whānau measured their success by their children being safe, settled, and well.

It’s the kids, **it’s just having a whare for our kids**, having a whare for me, but mainly for the kids, because I’m okay. Without the kids, I’ll be okay. Life is easy to cover just yourself, but when you’ve got children, and even just one, it’s not about you anymore, it’s about that child ... **It’s every parent’s dream, happy with settled, good kids. It’s more than I can ask for.** (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

I know some people say you shouldn't live for your kids, but I do. I do. **They push me to be better.** I want them to have stability. I want them to at least have a parent to actually stand there and guide them through it. Like if they fall and get in trouble, I'll be there. But, at the same time, **I'll teach them the lessons that I have.** (Housing First, Māori, female)

## Whānau Māori experiences varied between Māori and non-Māori providers

All whānau interviewed had positive service experiences. Whānau Māori interviewed highlighted service and philosophy differences between Māori and non-Māori providers.

### Whānau working with non-Māori providers experienced a needs-based and functional wraparound service

Whānau experiences with non-Māori providers were focused on the practical aspects of delivering Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. They experienced support with obtaining accommodation (at a motel and then private rental) and help with sustaining their tenancy. Whānau were also connected to services for their needs, e.g., visiting a doctor, budgeting advice, and counselling.

[The key worker has] helped with health things, accessing a doctor. They've helped with WINZ, so contacting and interactions there. They've helped with getting to appointments I needed to get to, helped with getting me to shopping. **I'm thankful the service is here.** It's both helped me to find a foundation for moving forward and encouraged me to move forward. (Housing First, Māori, male)

Whānau Māori supported by non-Māori providers were offered access to Māori key workers and cultural support. They valued having a Māori key worker, given shared backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews. Whānau Māori could also access support and services from Iwi and Māori providers.

Māori know how to work with Māori, eh? Māori want to work with Māori. **If there's anyone who understands us, it's our own people.** It's not something they've read in a book, it's not something that they've heard, "Oh, this is what happened for one of my clients so can I suggest this?" They have all those suggestions. **They've lived through that.** If it's not their own whānau, it's friends of whānau or whānau of where they grew up and all the rest of it. **So just that whole kaupapa of that Māoridom, that empathy, that aroha.** (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

**Waipareira, they make me feel like a wahine toa,** how I deserve to be. They gave me strength and kaha as a wahine toa. (Housing First, Māori, female)

### Whānau perceived Māori providers offer holistic Whānau Ora services

Whānau working with Māori providers experienced a service that was culturally grounded in Māori worldviews, cultural norms, and whakapapa. An example of cultural support provided was when a whānau was educated about their Iwi, tūpuna, migration history, and relationship with the rohe/area. Their goal was to relocate their whole whānau to the rohe, which the provider then organised with the marae.

[Māori provider] has been so wonderful, so manaaki. They've got it all, you know. When you look at it, **these values of manaaki, awhina, aroha, all of that, it's there.** That makes me resonate with them because they don't just talk about it. They show it in action. (Housing First, Māori, male)

I feel like I have a voice and **they understand Māori and our traditions and our culture and the respect.** And [for the other provider], what I see is you're part of the system – are you just doing your job and that's about it? So there's like two different sides. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

Whānau Māori working with Māori providers experienced an emphasis on building community. Whānau in these programmes awhi each other and felt accountable for themselves, their whānau, and one another. They thought the nature of the housing infrastructure, provider rules, and culture encouraged this.

Everybody shares the cooking, cleaning, and shopping. It's actually a good way to be. **It's almost like being on the marae.** I find myself being drawn towards the kitchen and kai side and trying to make sure there is a healthy balance in our meals, especially for the elders. We have quite a few elderlies in here and people with disabilities who don't have the physical or mental capability, **so being able to make them a nice meal with vegetables and stuff.** (Housing First, Māori, female)

If it gets too loud, **the community takes it upon themselves** to go over and say, "Can you just keep it down a bit?" (Housing First, Māori, male)

Whānau Māori working with Māori providers tended to have housing aspirations beyond renting. For example, some whānau interviewed had goals of home ownership. Whānau working with non-Māori providers did not mention aspirations of home ownership.

### Whānau Māori valued Māori providers

Whānau Māori felt comfortable working with Māori providers as they are inherently Māori. Māori providers operate from a Māori worldview and embed cultural values in their work. Māori providers tend to employ kaimahi Māori, which contributes to their cultural capability, cultural capital, and shared experiences of institutional racism and impacts of colonisation. Whānau Māori expressed feelings of being safe with Māori providers, as they would not be judged or discriminated against.

I think [having a Māori provider] is a plus because the majority of people are our people that are homeless. **There is an understanding where you don't even have to say words.** So awesome. Not like some other places that aren't very nice in how they talk, so right away, you put your defensive up. From my experience, you don't have to do that here because of **the wairua they share. The respect they have is huge.** (Housing First, Māori, female)

Whanaungatanga between whānau Māori and kaimahi Māori was enhanced through the sharing of whakapapa, connections to the whenua, and to one another. Relationships became long-lasting and extended beyond the programmes.

I saw that door, and because **it was a Māori establishment, it made it easier to approach** them. More so than a Pākehā Housing New Zealand. When I saw [Iwi], and that is me, **those are my people.** I found it easier to approach them and tell them, "Hey, can you help?" **Without embarrassment, without being judged,** and I wasn't judged ... [Working with a key worker is] a whanaunga relationship. That's how I would look at it. (Housing First, Māori, male)

## 5. Whānau outcomes from Housing First and Rapid Rehousing

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This section presents self-described outcomes by whānau interviewed, which they attributed to Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. Outcomes were identified from across all whānau interviewed. Whānau outcomes were categorised based on the [MAIHI Ka Ora's Māori housing continuum](#).

### Whānau experienced positive changes through Housing First and Rapid Rehousing, but progress took time

Compared to before entering the programmes, whānau interviewed achieved positive change, and some made positive progress along the Māori housing continuum as represented by poutama panels in MAIHI Ka Ora (Figure 1, p. 36):

- He Whare Āwhina, He Haumarū: The programmes supported most whānau with housing insecurity to address their immediate housing and other needs.
- Kāinga Pūmanawa: The programmes gave whānau housing security and permanence by offering accommodation with no prerequisite requirements (e.g., sobriety).
- Pā Kari: Few whānau were moving toward housing independence due to limited permanent housing solutions and anxiety over the permanence of their current housing rental arrangement.

Whānau interviewed were at different stages of the continuum, depending on the complexity of their needs and time in the programmes. For example, whānau interviewed in Rapid Rehousing tended to progress faster along the continuum, reflecting their different starting point compared to whānau in Housing First.

Whānau were supported to move at their own pace, and their progress was not linear. Whānau recognised their progress might go forwards and then backwards. Sometimes their needs were higher, and at other times, their needs were lower.

I think [the provider] finds it really difficult with me because **I don't need anything and then all of a sudden, I need lots**. When [key worker] had a talk to me and she says, "Can I take you to once a month instead of every week or every fortnight?", I was like, "Yes, that's fine" and then it was instantly after that, **something happened and then it became two weeks again**. (Housing First, NZ European, female)

All whānau interviewed made positive steps since being in the programme. At the time of interviewing, some whānau were adjusting and trying to find stability in their lives. Some whānau were still struggling with AOD addictions and mental health issues which they were not ready to address. Some whānau were further along in their journey but might not be ready for study or work. Some whānau had reached a point where they started achieving goals and felt they were self-sufficient without their key worker.

What happy? I don't know what happy is. **I've been fighting for God knows how many months**. We're still trying to find our feet, so to speak. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

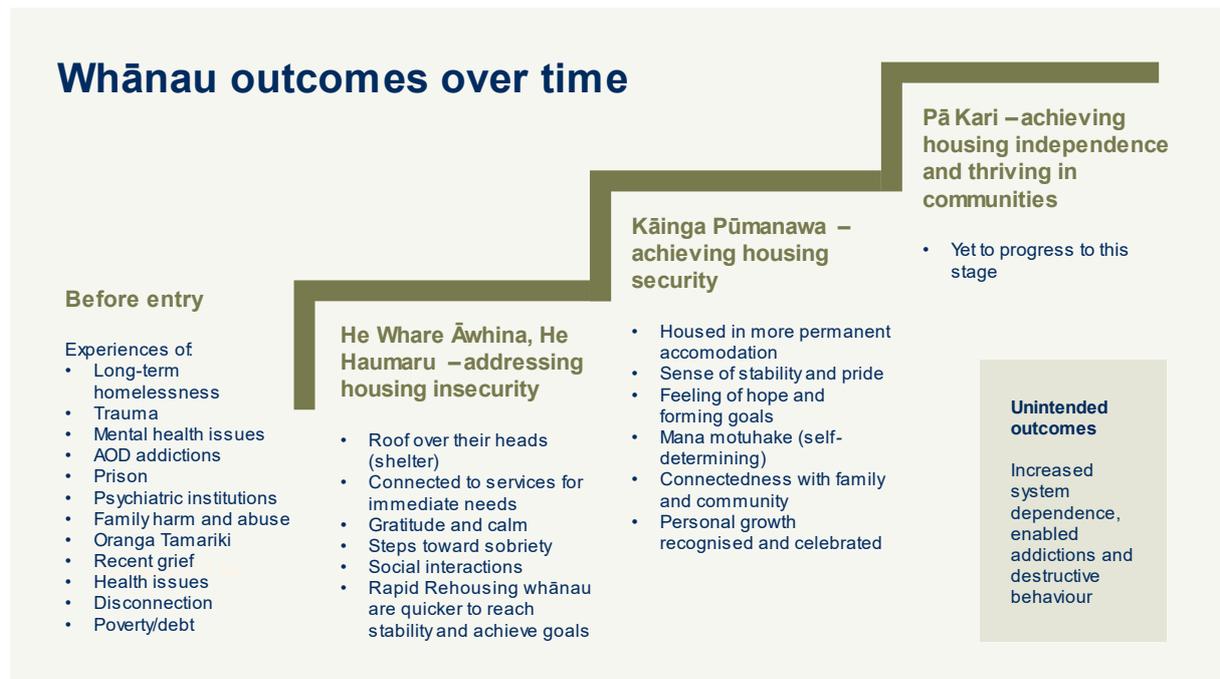
Obviously, WINZ wants me to get a full-time job or just know that I'm doing something. And I'm doing something, **I'm still getting there**. I definitely think the whole from getting clean

to now, **it's a good two years that is definitely needed.** (Housing First, NZ European, female)

Figure 1 summarises positive outcomes achieved by whānau interviewed across the three poutama panels of MAIHI Ka Ora.

**Figure 1.**

*Whānau outcomes achieved mapped along the Māori housing continuum*



In general, whānau attributed positive changes in their wellbeing and lives to Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. They believed they could not have gotten to where they were without the programmes. Instead, they felt their circumstances would not have changed (i.e., still houseless), or worsened. Whānau interviewed recommended the programmes to others who are in a similar situation to theirs.

## Whānau were housed (He Whare Āwhina, He Haumarū)

Most whānau interviewed were placed into temporary (motel) accommodation when they joined the programme. Whānau felt thankful for a roof over their heads. They enjoyed being protected from cold and rainy weather and sleeping in a bed (rather than concrete, cars, etc.). However, whānau felt a sense of unease in emergency accommodation as it is temporary. They did not feel settled in. Some had to comply with motel rules; otherwise, they would get kicked out.

**I'm actually not homeless anymore and I'm not hanging around with the old mates in the streets ... [I'm in a] better place. But I'm still wondering if I'm getting my own house. Well, it's better than sleeping on the concrete.** (Housing First, Māori, male)

## Whānau learnt how to connect with services to address their needs

Key workers supported whānau with identifying areas where they needed help, and supported them in connecting with services. For example, they helped whānau address health concerns by connecting them with a doctor, other medical specialists, and programmes (e.g., AOD counselling).

I just want to get better, that's all. Because I'm sick at the moment, recovering from the drugs in the past. **They're putting me on the AOD programme soon, so that's coming up for me. That's good for me to go there.** (Housing First, Māori, male)

They helped whānau with financial security by setting up a bank account, applying for a benefit and the Housing Register through MSD, and budgeting.

Yes, my key worker. She was the one that instigated it all because she asked why I was always in a red and I said I've got an overdraft and there just isn't enough going into it to clear it. **She said there must be something we can do about it to at least get it into the black.** I haven't been in the black for ten years. (Housing First, Māori, male)

## Whānau described positive changes in their mental wellbeing

Whānau felt grateful, calmer, and safer once they were placed in accommodation. They were no longer focused on trying to overcome daily challenges to survive. Supported by a key worker, they were reassured they would not be navigating the system alone. Whānau felt they were able to breathe and focus on other priorities. As they made progress, whānau began to feel happier and more confident.

Happy wouldn't do it justice, it's really overwhelming. You're content and happy, but there is also a calm. **There is a lot of weight off the shoulders when you are finally making progress** and when you have been kicked down for so long and kept down for so long. (Housing First, Māori, male)

## Some whānau made steps toward sobriety

Some whānau stopped using substances and became sober upon entering or during the programmes. Some noted the “no drugs or alcohol” rules set by the provider and expectations set by Oranga Tamariki contributed to this. They recognised positive changes in their wellbeing after getting sober. They felt more motivated, clear-headed, and their mood was more stable.

## Some whānau began interacting socially again

Some whānau interviewed struggled with mental health issues and AOD addictions. Before entering the programmes, they isolated themselves, withdrew from family and friends, and stopped attending gatherings or events. For these whānau, talking with others and building a trusted relationship with their key worker was a big achievement.

**Talking to people [is a big success].** When I was low, I didn't want anything to do with anybody. And I suppose it's being in an environment where my mental health has been accepted and my boundaries have been ... what's the word there? **I've been encouraged to reach out of my comfort zone.** (Housing First, Māori, male)

Some whānau were used to being independent, relying on themselves, and did not ask for help when needed. The programmes enabled these whānau to interact with and trust other people again.

## Housed whānau gained a sense of security (Kāinga Pūmanawa)

Whānau interviewed who have been in the programmes for a longer time (and more likely to be in permanent housing) had a sense of security. These whānau had also learned to sustain their tenancy successfully. Their needs lessened over time, and they felt more prepared to navigate the system and life independently.

[The provider has] sort of incubated me, I guess, in a way. When I first got out, all little things, they used to come and support me with, and then as I've gone on, **my needs have not been as great as they were at the beginning**. And so, they've just allowed me to develop in that space. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, male)

### Once in accommodation, whānau in Rapid Rehousing were quicker to reach goals compared to whānau in Housing First

Whānau interviewed in Rapid Rehousing progressed towards their goals more quickly once in accommodation. This stability enabled them to reconnect with social networks, school, training, and employment. The speed of progression reflects that whānau had recently started experiencing homelessness (or were at risk) and had low to medium complexity of need.

Just having a roof over our heads, to be honest. That's a start. Then the kids having a school to be at. Then, once I've gotten them into school, I can go back and pick up where I left off at my training. **I just put all of that at halt when I had no house**. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

I'm starting to find different ways to enjoy life. **Like, this job, even though I've just started, I'm really enjoying it there and starting to have good things come my way**. Whereas before, it was like I was really fighting, things were going wrong, but now it's having good people in my life and all of that stuff. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, male)

### Housed whānau noted changes to their mental wellbeing

Whānau observed health and wellbeing benefits once they moved into a house. They experienced better health outcomes from shelter, staying warm, and sleeping in a bed. Disabled whānau had access to in-home support.

Housed whānau also noted a reduction in their stress and anxiety as they were not constantly seeking shelter or having to renew their accommodation each week. Without this stress, they had time for other aspirations like hobbies, finances, study, and employment.

It's beautiful, yeah, the kids absolutely love it. And just having that security, feeling secure that **there's no more moving, no more living week to week, renewals**, because that's what it was like at motels, renewing your stay once a week. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

### Housed whānau felt stability and pride

Whānau felt a sense of security and stability once they moved into a house. They were more assured their accommodation was no longer temporary and their basic needs were met. From here, whānau started rebuilding their lives.

Once you get yourself back into a house, **you start to find out who you are again**. (Housing First, NZ European, female)

Whānau felt proud of looking after their house and living independently. They had responsibilities, e.g., paying rent, utilities, and keeping their house clean. They enjoyed decorating and furnishing the space to make it their own. Whānau with children were able to re-enrol them in school. Over time, whānau began to live independently.

**I'm a lot bossier.** When people come over, I'm like, "Hey, make sure ..." (Housing First, Māori, female)

Beautiful, it's in [name]. We haven't been there long, maybe not even a month. I got a little yard. **I'm happy, I'm grateful.** I got the front, because then I got that little parking. I open my front door and see both sides of the street. **It's beautiful, yeah. The kids absolutely love it.** (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

### Whānau made progress toward being self-determining

Once whānau were in a stable place, they felt hopeful and had a sense of purpose for the future. They began to see opportunities for themselves and what their lives could be.

They gave me, **first of all, that sense of hope**, that there was hope. I'm not just left as someone to call up once a month and that gave me hope and **willingness to keep at it**. There is a **purpose there, meaning**. That's all someone needs, really. They saw me as a whānau in need, not just someone that doesn't need it. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

Whānau began to form goals and aspirations and made choices that helped them meet these. They took and used skills they learned from their key worker. They became increasingly self-sufficient and could do things on their own, e.g., go to appointments or search for services they need. Whānau also explored hobbies that brought them fulfilment, e.g., art, gym, cooking, and gardening.

**I've got plans.** I'm looking at becoming self-employed by the end of the year. (Housing First, Māori, female)

If I know I can get somewhere, I'll walk. I know if I've got the money for it, I'll take a bus. If I know I can get somewhere, I'll just get up and do it. I don't need to rely on anybody for a ride. **I don't need to rely on someone and call them up, "Hey I need this."** (Housing First, Māori, female)

Over time, whānau started to feel in control of their lives. They had a greater sense of personal accountability for their actions. They recognised and embraced their personal growth.

[The provider] already did good. If I need help, I can just call them. **But I try not to rely on them, I have to do it myself.** That's why I'm quiet and try to do it myself and be strong. (Housing First, Pacific, female)

I learnt this the hard way, was if you fail you can go back and reassess the situation. You can learn from what you failed on, or how you failed, and **pick yourself back up and try again.** (Housing First, Māori, female)

### Whānau reconnecting with family was an emerging outcome

Some whānau were already well connected and supported by their whānau before entering Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. These relationships strengthened as whānau became more settled and regained confidence.

Over time, some estranged whānau started reconnecting with their children, siblings, parents, and wider families. For some whānau, being housed and more settled helped with custody arrangements.

Some whānau found joy in rebuilding their relationships and support system. They perceived their families were proud of them.

**The first [success] is finding my roots, as a māmā, with my tamariki.** That was an eye-opener for me, being a stronger wahine toa, should I say ... The happiness just being together. Being together is what keeps us happy. Being together united as a family and doing things together as a family. (Housing First, Māori, female)

### A few whānau were reconnecting with their community and culture

Some whānau were reintegrating back into the community. They went back to church and connected with neighbours.

[My whānau] are happy because they see that I'm happy because of the kids when they come and stay with me. They feel, I think, proud of me ... **I think just going to church and spending time with the kids and the family, it's all the good things.** The family's around, they protect you and it's just good, especially when you grow up with a big family, you are used to it. (Housing First, Pacific, female)

He Korowai whānau living in cabins on papakāinga were reconnecting to their Iwi, hāpu and whenua. Some whānau were offered part-time jobs (e.g., working at the cafe or as a cleaner), contributing to their job experience. Over time, whānau had the opportunity to work towards home ownership through the organisation's rent-to-own scheme.

## Some unintended outcomes were noted

Unintended outcomes can hinder or enable the achievement of intended outcomes among whānau in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. Unintended outcomes result from either the programmes' design or other interventions unrelated to the programmes (e.g., provider policies, the use of motel accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic). The following unintended outcomes for Housing First and Rapid Rehousing were mainly observed during interviews and noted by a few whānau.

The “no obligation” nature of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing can foster a lack of accountability and dependency on the system

The programme design of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing places the principle of individualised and person-driven support at odds with value of rangatiratanga.<sup>9</sup> In line with Housing First principles, whānau can progress at their own pace and choose what support they want. The “no graduation” policy of Housing First means whānau do not face any consequences for behaviour and they will be supported for as long as they want the support.

Without intrinsic motivation, this level of enabling support could create few incentives for whānau to become self-sufficient and self-determining. Further, the support could increase reliance on the Government for day-to-day living and enable addictions and other behaviours.

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<sup>9</sup> Tino rangatiratanga can be defined as absolute self-determination about doing the right thing in the right way for selves and others (Elder, 2020). As noted in the phase one evaluation, Māori and Iwi providers work with clients to address their individual needs and offer choices where choice exists (e.g., choice of house, service options, kaimahi). However, Māori and Iwi providers also focus on choice within what is right within whānau, hapū and Iwi. These providers feel the individualised interpretation of self-determination overlooks the importance of reconnection to whānau and contribution to collective responsibilities. Other providers perceived the “forever” nature of the programme risks building dependency.

However, a few whānau interviewed note the importance of being able to retain their accommodation regardless of their actions, particularly when living with AOD addiction.

We get our benefit but we don't pay rent. That's why **most of the people around here just smoke it up or drink it up** because they know they don't have to pay rent, you don't pay for power ... **It's very luxurious really.** I've had a couple of dramas and I'm so blessed that they let me come back every time. (Housing First, NZ European, male)

### Some provider rules, driven by organisational philosophy, enabled self-determination

Hau Kāinga whānau appreciated the sobriety and other rules set by He Korowai Trust as they enabled their recovery journey. Rules around sobriety have supported some whānau to reduce their AOD use as they did not engage with others using AOD substances, reducing temptations and violence. Rules around visitors also meant no parties or gangs close by, which contributed to a sense of safety for whānau (and women and children, in particular).

**It's peaceful as down there.** I love [the rules]. There is no trouble around my kids, so I feel safe for my kids too. (Housing First, Māori, female)

### As a result of COVID-19 interventions, the use of motel accommodation enabled Government dependency, AOD use, and limited self-determination and whanaungatanga

The use of motel accommodation is a COVID-19 intervention and is not part of the Housing First or Rapid Rehousing design. The use of motel accommodation created a situation which enabled some whānau to become dependent on Government support. Whānau had their rent and utilities paid for them. Some also received food parcels and had their rooms cleaned.

Living in close quarters with other whānau with addictions encouraged AOD use. Whānau received a benefit (as entitled) and had their bills paid, giving them more disposable income for buying alcohol or drugs. Some whānau noted this led to disruptive behaviours in the motels (e.g., fights, threats to others). For whānau wanting to reduce AOD use, living in this environment made goal-setting and realising their future aspirations challenging.

For the emergency housing buildings, because you've got all of the people there, they're all in this building, and, man, **you know when it's payday 'cos you look out the window and there's deals going on, the whole place comes alive.** (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, male)

Furthermore, motel rules could minimise self-determination. Rules included who could stay, curfew hours, requiring people to sign in, and having security and cameras in place. Some whānau felt the rules undermined their independence, choice, and social connections to friends and whānau. Some whānau believed motelier rules did not enable them to prepare for permanent housing where they would not have rules to comply with. Whānau felt they were not trusted to make their own decisions.

I'm a grown adult. I do not need a government department or security to tell me I can and can't come home. We weren't allowed to have visitors. **How does that work for me? I've got kids in their 20s and a grandkid.** (Housing First, NZ European, female)

After so long living on the streets, I hadn't seen my family. So the day I got told I was getting housed, the first thing I did was I rang my mum, told her, "I got a whare." But **then I was told we weren't allowed visitors and if I wanted visitors, they had to park out on the street and I had to go meet on the street.** I thought that was dumb, I didn't like that one bit ... (Housing First, Māori, male)

## 6. Alignment of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing with MAIHI Ka Ora

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This section presents an overview of the alignment of the design and delivery of Housing First and Rapid Housing with MAIHI Ka Ora, the National Māori Housing Strategy. The findings draw from both the whānau and the provider insights in evaluation and review phases one and two, as well as a review of key documents (e.g., MAIHI Ka Ora).

### Alignment of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing with MAIHI can be strengthened

MAIHI represents a fundamental shift in the Crown's response to housing. MAIHI requires HUD to partner with Māori, take a systems approach, and support kaupapa Māori approaches.

MAIHI Ka Ora is an expression of the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As noted in MAIHI Ka Ora, *“the strategy sees the Government using its levers (Article one) to enable Māori-led local housing solutions (Article two) so Māori housing aspirations are achieved. If both arms of Te Tiriti work cohesively together, the strategy will provide oritētanga (Article three), equity”* (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021b, p. 3).

MAIHI Ka Ora has six major components:

1. Māori-Crown partnerships
2. Māori-led local solutions
3. Māori housing supply
4. Māori housing support
5. Māori housing system
6. Māori housing sustainability.

Below is an assessment of how Housing First and Rapid Rehousing align with the articles of Te Tiriti as defined by MAIHI Ka Ora.

#### Article one – the programmes' design and delivery is not Māori-led or governed housing solutions

As noted in the phase one evaluation, Iwi and Māori were not involved in the co-design or governance of the Housing First and Rapid Rehousing programmes. Further, Māori and Iwi providers did not believe Housing First and Rapid Rehousing could be adapted to achieve equity for Māori experiencing homelessness.

The phase one evaluation recommended Māori partnership in the governance and oversight of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing at national level is needed (e.g., a role for Iwi Chairs or Te Matapihi in the investment decision process).

In December 2022, the Government announced \$24.7 million investment to support the delivery of He Ara Hiki Mauri – a tangata whenua-led response to homelessness. Mana motuhake is a guiding principle of He Ara Hiki Mauri in recognising the strength and ability of whānau to achieve their aspirations. Arohanui ki te Tangata will lead the delivery of He Ara Hiki Mauri supported by Te Matapihi.

He Ara Hiki Mauri lays a foundation for Māori governance and leadership to develop Māori-led local housing solutions. While in development, Housing First and Rapid Rehousing continue to have an important role in supporting whānau Māori experiencing homelessness. As recommended in the phase one evaluation, more investment and work is needed to build the capacity and capability of Māori providers, given the scale of Māori homelessness.

### Article two – the programmes need to strengthen Māori self-determination to achieve their housing aspirations

Tino rangatiratanga can be defined as absolute self-determination about doing the right thing in the right way for selves and others (Elder, 2020). Phase one findings highlighted the Housing First principle of self-determination is focused on individual choice and does not include reconnection to whānau and contribution to collective responsibilities. Further, the “forever” nature of Housing First was seen as risking dependency and not transitioning whānau Māori along the Māori housing continuum to Pā Kari.

Whānau Māori in Māori providers were being supported to show more accountability to the collective. Whānau Māori interviewed, particularly in some non-Māori providers, are not being given the environment, tools and framework to fully exercise tino rangatiratanga.

### Article three – the programmes’ ability to achieve equity is impeded by institutional racism

As a result of colonisation and inter-generational trauma, the ability of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing to contribute to equitable outcomes is reduced due to institutional racism and discrimination through siloed government services. Whānau Māori do not receive prompt interventions and support that may prevent homelessness (e.g., access to AOD and mental health services, income support).

Housing First is an internationally developed housing response model, originally targeted at single men with complex needs due to long-term addictions. In Aotearoa, some work has been done to deliver the services in line with three Māori values (i.e., rangatiratanga (self-determination), whanaungatanga (positive connections) and manaakitanga (self-worth and empowerment)). However, Housing First is not philosophically based on mātauranga Māori and does not take into account the impact of colonisation or systemic issues contributing to Māori homelessness.

Going forward, non-Māori providers delivering Housing First and Rapid Rehousing need to ensure they do not increase inequities of access and outcomes for Māori experiencing homelessness. Non-Māori providers need to continue to build their cultural responsiveness to Māori. HUD needs to monitor providers’ cultural responsiveness for Māori.

Consideration is also needed on increasing access to the programmes to support whānau wāhine, rangatahi, and LGBTQIA+ people and takatāpui experiencing homelessness.

## The programmes are supporting whānau Māori to start the transition along the continuum

Whānau Māori in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are transitioning through the early stages of the Māori housing continuum.

## The programmes work to support those with housing insecurity (He Whare Āwhina, He Haumarū)

As shown in the previous sections, Housing First and Rapid Rehousing play an important role in supporting whānau Māori experiencing housing insecurity (He Whare Āwhina, He Haumarū). The programmes offer accommodation and support as whānau Māori work with kaimahi to address their immediate needs.

## The programmes offer a level of housing security (Kāinga Pūmanawa)

Housing First and Rapid Rehousing offered support to address housing insecurity by placing whānau in temporary accommodation in the first instance. Accommodation in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing being unconditional on prerequisite requirements offers whānau Māori a level of housing security. For some whānau Māori, particularly those with children, this security created space to work towards whānau goals and create a positive environment for tamariki (Kāinga Pūmanawa).

Temporary COVID-19 motel accommodation offered an immediate sense of relief from experiencing homelessness. However, whānau Māori in temporary accommodation fear “rules” will change and they may lose the accommodation. In this context, some whānau Māori interviewed spoke of underlying anxiety and insecurity, particularly when they heard the use of COVID-19 motels was ending. Motel rules can also undermine their sense of security and self-determination.

## For a few, the programmes supported a shift towards housing independence (Pā Kari)

HUD defines Pā Kari as having access to warm, dry and safe homes with the security of being able to stay in them for as long as is appropriate for their circumstances. Housing independence also includes connecting to services needed to sustain housing, and opportunities to fully participate in communities. In this context, housing independence incorporates home ownership and acknowledges whānau Māori have different housing aspirations for their housing independence.<sup>10</sup>

The housing goal of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing is to house whānau in longer-term accommodation, usually a private rental or Kāinga Ora housing (where possible). Housing First and Rapid Rehousing providers worked to address housing security and permanence. However, as demonstrated in phase one, limited housing stock makes this transition challenging.

About half of whānau Māori interviewed in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are in private rentals, offering a level of permanence. These whānau were appreciative to be out of temporary motel accommodation and into “their” place. However, those in private rentals also have a level of unease that they may lose their rental due to market changes (e.g., landlord selling the house).

For some whānau Māori, the shift to housing independence is achieving their aspiration of home ownership, ideally on their whenua. A few whānau Māori noted they owned land but did not have the resources to build a whare. One Māori provider is working to create more permanent housing solutions within their community (i.e., He Korowai, in the Far North). He Korowai Trust offers whānau a range of housing options based on various levels of income and need.<sup>11</sup> Their services are based on He Korowai vision to develop tino rangatiratanga and their tikanga (e.g. sobriety, non-violence). He Korowai offers one kaupapa Māori approach to step whānau Māori along the continuum towards Pā Kari and home ownership.

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<sup>10</sup> The definition was from personal correspondence to clarify the meaning of Pā Kari.

<sup>11</sup> He Korowai Trust Housing Continuum is shown in Figure 3, page 16 in the 2020 Annual Report (<http://hkt.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/He-Korowai-Trust-2020-2021-Annual-Report.pdf>).



## 7. Improvements to enhance whānau experience and outcomes

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This section presents improvements identified by whānau interviewed. These opportunities align with improvement areas identified in the phase one evaluation report.

### Wider system improvements are needed to enable the programmes' success

The wider system refers to policy settings beyond Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. The issues identified affected how Housing First and Rapid Rehousing were implemented and therefore affected whānau experience and outcomes.

Ongoing work is needed to increase housing stock to offer whānau permanent accommodation of their choice promptly

The Government is working to increase housing stock. However, in the current housing crisis, one of the most pressing issues for Housing First and Rapid Rehousing was the inability to house people permanently. Many whānau were in temporary accommodation, unsure of when they would move into permanent housing. If housing was available, whānau lacked a choice of the type or location of housing. This lack of certainty and choice created anxiety and impeded the ability of whānau to work towards their goals.

[Thinking about improvements is] a bit of a tough one. Not that I can think of. Like I guess if **there were more houses for families**. But you know, it goes with the market as well. (Rapid Housing, Māori, male)

Consideration is needed on whether the programmes have a process or pathway to support whānau with home ownership aspirations

The programmes were not set up to support whānau aspirations of home ownership. The programmes focus on creating a permanent housing solution through renting. However, some whānau Māori aspired to own a home or to have the resources to build on their whenua. Consideration is needed on whether the programmes are expanded to support whānau with home ownership aspirations or whether they are linked to other housing initiatives.

**I don't want to rent** and I keep saying that to them. **I'm in a place where I can possibly buy a cabin and put it on land**. It's just sorting that land issue out. (Housing First, Māori, female)

Whānau noted past and regional initiatives exist that enabled longer-term housing aspirations. For example, He Korowai has long-term housing options through their rent-to-buy scheme on papakāinga. Some whānau with other providers would also appreciate this option. One whānau noted the value of government housing schemes, such as the Māori Affairs state housing and loans for home ownership.

If there was an opportunity, they own the homes, say, for example, and if they decide you've been in here for this many years, **we have an opportunity for you to rent to buy**, or something like that. (Housing First, Māori, female)

## Improved access is needed to mental health, AOD, and other services

The wider health system needs to improve access and support to enable whānau AOD recovery and health and wellbeing goals. Due to lack of capacity in the health system, whānau experienced long waitlists and strict eligibility criteria, making it difficult to access mental health and AOD addiction services. If whānau reached a point where they were ready to address these issues, they might not qualify for support which was disempowering and created further distrust in the system.

For everybody who is in, or been, or needs, or what I've been through, **that's a hell of a lot of shrinks we need out there because there isn't enough shrinks to go around.** And there are waiting lists, so I think that's really sad, waiting lists to help people in addiction services. There's not enough there. (Housing First, NZ European, female)

Whānau also sought support from other services from non-governmental agencies, e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, which could support with advocacy. However, they experienced similar capacity issues and could not receive support.

## Policy and implementation improvements were identified

The programmes' policy refers to the design of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. Improvements are suggested to address the negative consequences noted.

### Referral pathways and outreach activities need strengthening to improve access and awareness

Whānau in the programmes were referred to the programme by people or organisations they engage with. As noted, some whānau less engaged with services may be missing out on accessing the programmes (e.g., whānau wāhine, rangatahi, and LGBTQIA+ people and takatāpui experiencing homelessness).

There should be a system for those who don't know. **I think the worst thing about it was not having anybody tell you where you should go,** where to find the info. (Rapid Rehousing, Māori, female)

Whānau interviewed suggested more promotion is needed about the programmes across connecting agencies and with people experiencing homelessness. Whānau experiencing homelessness need multiple entry points to the programmes (i.e., no wrong door). As used by some Housing First providers, outreach activities are important to support whānau who are less visible and experiencing homelessness. In the phase one evaluation report, some Housing First providers highlighted outreach services were not included in their contract.

More marketing, more advertising and being more open to the families because **me finding these guys, it was quite a bit of a fluke.** The first thing when you search up emergency housing, it goes WINZ, Housing New Zealand, straight off the bat. (Rapid Housing, Māori, male)

### Consider reviewing the eligibility criteria to ensure rangatahi can access the programmes

Whānau noted rangatahi were missing from the government's housing response. Rangatahi usually did not qualify for Housing First due to the duration criteria of having experienced more than 12 months of homelessness. Another barrier for rangatahi was the need for caregiver consent if they were under 18, which was challenging for those estranged from their family.

The housing provider was telling me to just drop them back where I found them. And I was just like, “No, I’m not just going to drop them back on the street. They’re kids, like 14 and 15” ... **That’s when I realised there is nothing in [city] and probably New Zealand for teenagers that are on the streets.** (Rapid Rehousing, NZ European, female)

Whānau in the programmes need more education about the services available and how to access them

Educating whānau and providing them with information could build self-sufficiency to navigate the system and advocate for themselves. Some whānau interviewed did not understand how the programmes, agencies, and policies (e.g., Income-Related Rent Subsidy) worked.

I didn't really know if it was the Council or Housing First. **I didn't know who was what.** I struggled to... it wasn't quite clear. I mean, you've got Housing First on one hand and yet it's a Council house. So **sometimes you don't know who to see about** the thing or what have you. (Housing First, NZ European, female)

**I still don't fully understand what [Housing First provider] offers with everything,** so I can't suggest that they come here because I don't know, fully know, what they offer. (Housing First, NZ European, female)

Consideration is needed on how to ensure kaimahi avoid burnout

Whānau observed key workers were busy, stretched, and burnt out. They also noticed high staff turnover. While whānau appreciated their support, they acknowledged key workers had to take care of themselves and tried not to add to their burden. Consideration is needed on how to ensure the existing Housing First and Rapid Rehousing workforce have the capacity to meet the high and complex needs of whānau.

I think they do quite a bit. They do a lot. **And they've got to think about themselves too.** I mean, **it can't be easy,** I don't think. Seeing some of the things they see or even trying to help people that don't want to be helped. (Housing First, NZ European, female)

They have said the whole time, "If you need any help, just come to me." ... **I try not to ask too much of them** because I know that they are under **a lot of pressure,** and I know that I'm capable of doing things for myself. (Housing First, Māori, female)

Consideration is needed on how to strengthen the design of the service to support rangatiratanga (self-determination)

The COVID-19 interventions and the programmes' focus on individual choice had unintended negative consequences for whānau living in motel accommodation. As a result, the programmes enabled Government dependency, addictions, and other destructive behaviour for some whānau. More work is needed to understand the application of the value of rangatiratanga (self-determination) in Housing First and Rapid Rehousing, particularly in non-Māori organisations.

## 8. Conclusions and areas to strengthen

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This section presents conclusions from the phase two evaluation and areas to strengthen the programmes drawing from phases one and two.

### Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are relevant and needed

Housing First and Rapid Rehousing contribute to the Homelessness Action Plan's vision

The programmes address a known service gap. Before Housing First, no government-funded service existed to meet the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness. The Rapid Rehousing trial enables people who do not meet the Housing First criteria or criteria for other housing services to access housing and wraparound support. As people experiencing homelessness increases in Aotearoa, these programmes, within their capacity, will support this growing group.

### Whānau interviewed are grateful to be housed and supported

Whānau interviewed in Housing First were grateful to have a place to live with no pre-conditions, particularly single men with long-term AOD addictions. Whānau interviewed with children were relieved to be able to create the stability and security of a home to enable them and their children to work towards their goals.

Whānau appreciated the “whatever it takes” approach of kaimahi, which enabled whanaungatanga and rebuilt their trust. Their experience was in marked contrast with other housing, health, and financial services which whānau described as inaccessible, disconnected, unsupportive, discriminatory, and institutionally racist.

### Housing First and Rapid Rehousing contributed to positive outcomes for whānau

Housing First and Rapid Rehousing are transforming whānau lives. Whānau experienced improved physical and mental wellbeing, enhanced social relationships, steps toward their aspirations, and personal growth. Whānau attributed their outcomes to the programmes and did not believe they would have gotten there without them. Whānau interviewed made positive progress along the Māori housing continuum.

### Ongoing evolution is needed to meet Te Tiriti obligations and align with MAIHI Ka Ora

Housing First is not philosophically based on mātauranga Māori, and does not consider the impact of colonisation or systemic issues contributing to Māori homelessness. Iwi and Māori were not involved in the co-design or governance of the programmes. Further, investment is needed in the capacity and capability of kaupapa Māori and Iwi providers delivering the programmes to support whānau Māori experiencing homelessness.

### More sustainable adaption is needed to support the changing profile of people experiencing long-term homelessness

Homelessness in Aotearoa is growing and changing. Less visible groups experiencing homelessness include women, whānau with children, Pacific peoples, younger people and rangatahi, older people, people who identify as LGBTQIA+ or takatāpui, and refugees and migrants. Consideration is needed on whether the current Housing First and Rapid Rehousing design can meet their needs.

For Housing First, clarification is needed on who needs access to an indefinite service based on their needs. Alternatively, more guidance is needed on when whānau graduate from the programme and their ability to return to the service if needed.

Rapid Rehousing is an important programme to enable whānau, particularly those with children, to gain stability, security and the opportunity to build their lives. Rapid Rehousing therefore may be better placed to meet the changing demographic profile of people experiencing homelessness.

## Housing First and Rapid Rehousing can be strengthened

The evaluation and review offer insights into strengthening alignment with MAIHI and Te Tiriti obligations, the Homelessness Action Plan, and the programmes generally.

### **Strengthening alignment to MAIHI through:**

- continuing to work in partnership with Arohanui ki te Tangata to support Housing First and Rapid Rehousing
- continuing to invest in building the capacity and capability of Māori providers (existing and others) to respond to the scale of Māori homelessness
- ensuring non-Māori providers continue to build their cultural responsiveness to Māori
- monitoring providers to demonstrate cultural responsiveness for Māori, and their effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for Māori experiencing homelessness.

### **Strengthening contribution to the Homelessness Action Plan through:**

- clarifying the role of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing in response to the changing demographics of people experiencing long-term homelessness and wider housing services
- determining who has access to Housing First as an indefinite service or clarifying the role of graduation and re-enrolment processes.

### **Strengthening the programmes at the national level through:**

- strengthening the programmes' design to support rangatiratanga (self-determination) of whānau
- reviewing the provider contract, reporting, and review processes to ensure they are equitable and transparent
- continuing to share Housing First and Rapid Rehousing learnings across providers
- considering the programmes' role in supporting whānau who want into home ownership.

### **Strengthening programmes at the operational level through:**

- recruiting and retaining diverse kaimahi that reflect their clients, and ensuring they are supported and not burning out
- reaching people experiencing homelessness who may be eligible for the programmes and less visible
- educating clients about available services and how to access them.

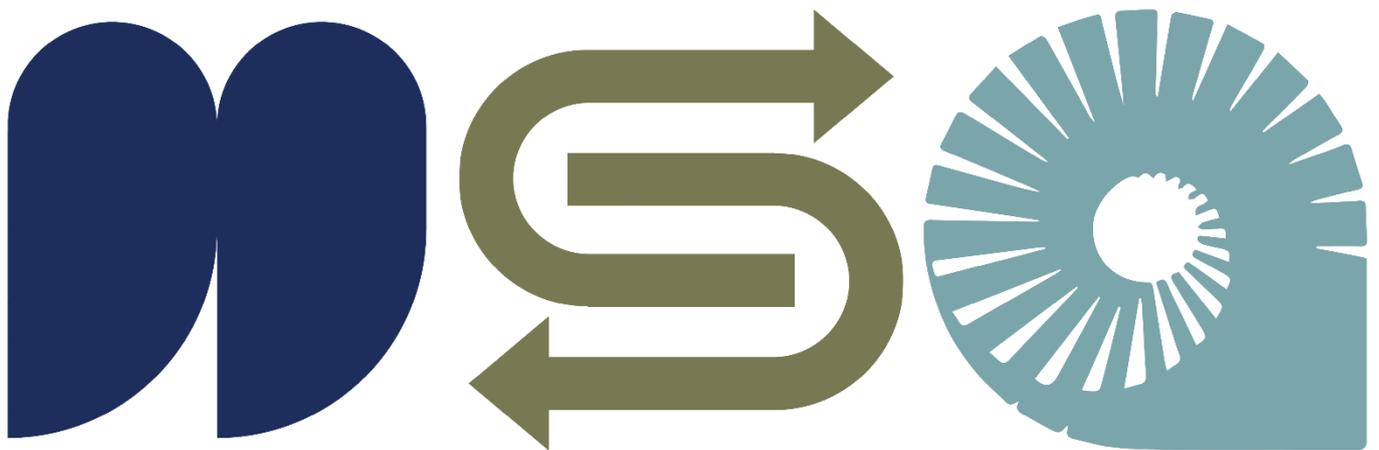
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# Appendices



# Appendix 1: Key phase one evaluation insights

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## The profile of people in Housing First is single Māori men and changing due to the broadening definition of homelessness

As of March 2021, 3,396 individuals and households had been accepted into Housing First in Aotearoa. Of those accepted, 1,891 clients (56%) have been housed. Four in ten clients have withdrawn for a range of reasons (38%).

Nearly two-thirds of clients accepted are male (63%) and aged over 36 (63%). Of those currently in the programme, 58% primarily identify as Māori, 9% as Pacific peoples, and 24% as New Zealand European.

Providers noted they are receiving more referrals from whānau with children, reflecting the lack of houses in Aotearoa. Some providers commented women, Pacific people, younger people, and older adults who could benefit from Housing First may be missing out.

## Housing First services are at different development stages

Housing First services in operation for more than three years have refined their service delivery based on practice learnings. Providers contracted from 2019 are at an earlier development stage and are learning how best to deliver the services.

## Four Housing First governance and operational structures exist

In Aotearoa, the governance and organisational structures of Housing First services have evolved. In early 2021, four broad governance and organisational models were identified:

**A dispersed collective model** is where several Housing First providers in a region are contracted to deliver Housing First services to a specific region or population group. The providers form a governance structure to respond to and advocate about issues impacting Housing First clients. A backbone function shares information and data about Housing First.

**An integrated collective model** has a lead Housing First provider contracted to deliver Housing First. The lead provider creates a Housing First hub and seconds staff from other providers with a range of expertise. A cross-agency governance group guides the work of the central hub in delivering Housing First.

**A lead provider model** holds the contract and delivers the Housing First services. A cross-agency group made up of external government agencies and NGOs provides strategic direction on Housing First and a network of services for Housing First clients.

**Iwi and Māori-led models** are based on delivering a holistic kaupapa Māori and whānau-centred service to whānau Māori experiencing homelessness. While structurally, the Iwi and Māori-led models are similar to the three models above, their underlying philosophy embedded in a Te Ao Māori worldview differs.

Collective action underpins the four Housing First models with multiple agencies working together to address regional homelessness. The different collective action models used in Housing First have different benefits and challenges. Working collectively is not easy as providers need to balance organisational accountabilities with collective responsibilities.

## Housing First service delivery, with some variations, follows the contracted pathway

### Referrals to the Housing First programme come from three sources

The three referral sources are self-referrals, other agencies, and outreach. Providers check eligibility on referral using a range of tools. Opinion varies on the validated assessment tools available, ranging from useful to determining client need to potentially re-traumatising. Ineligible clients tend to be referred or supported to other services. Due to workforce capacity and housing stock, some providers have wait lists.

### A multi-disciplinary workforce is evident across the 12 services

Several workforce models exist with a mix of key workers with a range of mental health, addictions and other support skills, property locators/tenancy managers, and peer support workers. A Whānau Ora workforce is also evident across Māori providers. The Housing First workforce does not consistently reflect the diversity of clients.

### Kaimahi capacity is stretched

Key workers have an average caseload of around 15 clients and up to 25 – not the internationally recommended seven to 12 clients (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2020; Wright & Peasgood, 2018; Pollock, 2021). Housing First kaimahi offer an intensive wraparound service to clients and try to meet clients weekly or more often. Most key workers develop a plan with clients to work on their priority needs and aspirations. Key workers connect clients to other services.

### A lack of houses and discrimination against clients impedes Housing First

By March 2021, 56% of clients were housed across Aotearoa. Others were in emergency housing, such as motels. Given the housing stock shortage, property locators can play a critical role in the programme.

### Providers want more clarification on the graduation process

Several long-term Housing First providers use a graduated transition process. As a result, the support clients receive reflects their level of need. The Housing First contract does not have a fixed duration period for supporting clients, ongoing conditions to remain on the programme, or a process to graduate clients when they are settled in permanent housing and thriving. All Housing First providers strongly support the long-term nature of the approach.

### Housing First implementation is hindered by several structural barriers

Housing First requires access to housing stock to deliver on its human rights principle of first a house and then support. Other structural inhibitors of the Housing First programme are:

- The delays and challenges for clients to get on the Housing Register can slow down the process to get a house
- A lack of mental health addiction services to support the level of client need

- Institutional racism, discrimination, and stigma by the public and other government agencies towards Housing First clients
- A lack of information sharing across agencies, creating a siloed system for clients.

## Housing First’s responsiveness to Māori experiencing homelessness

The Housing First programme is evolving in Aotearoa to be more responsive to Māori. Arohanui ki te Tangata is enabling the adaption of the programme to Aotearoa. Māori staff in non-Māori organisations are working to strengthen the cultural responsiveness in non-Māori Housing First providers. This role can be challenging.

All Housing First providers are applying the Housing First principles and cultural values in implementing the service. However, how the principles are actioned reflects how the values are being interpreted. The differing interpretations of the cultural values reflect differing worldviews – Māori and non-Māori. The adaption of Housing First occurs along two pathways reflecting worldviews, organisational values, and levels of cultural responsiveness.

Some Māori providers feel the views of non-Māori providers in applying cultural values are given more credibility than that of Māori.

### Māori and Iwi Housing First providers are delivering a kaupapa Māori service

Māori and Iwi Housing First providers’ delivery is based on local Iwi tikanga and a Whānau Ora approach. Māori and Iwi providers focus on mana motuhake to enable Māori to be Māori, to exercise their authority over their lives, and to live on their terms as Māori. In this context, a tangata whenua-led solution is being developed for whānau Māori who are homeless. Arohanui ki te Tangata supported by Te Matapihi is leading this transformational work.

Using a kaupapa Māori delivery approach, Māori and Iwi providers are adapting the Housing First principles. Adaptions include using a whānau-centred approach, connecting to Te Ao Māori, using mate Māori and traditional healers, and recognising self-determination includes the reconnection to whānau and contribution to collective responsibilities.

### Non-Māori providers are working to encompass the three cultural values

The extent to which non-Māori providers have embedded the cultural values in their organisations and practices varies based on their level of cultural responsiveness to Māori.

Some non-Māori providers are working to identify how to apply the cultural values in their organisation and the delivery of Housing First. In these providers, both managers and most kaimahi are aware of the cultural values. Managers have or are exploring processes to apply the cultural values in delivering Housing First relevant to their region. Internal Māori cultural leaders or external Māori organisations support this work and staff. These non-Māori providers are aware more work is needed to embed the cultural values across all layers of their organisation.

Other non-Māori providers, tending to be new to the delivery of Housing First, have given limited consideration to applying the cultural values. Managers are aware of them. They tend to see kaimahi Māori as responsible for ensuring the values are applied in their work with Māori clients. Non-Māori staff have limited knowledge of how to apply the values in their work with Māori or non-Māori clients. As indicated, more work is needed to build the cultural responsiveness of non-Māori Housing First providers.

Non-Māori providers are delivering Housing First in line with the five core principles. In delivering to the principles, the core focus tends to be delivering to individual person-centred needs. However, Māori and Pacific staff in non-Māori organisations tend to adopt a more whānau-centred approach.

## Housing First’s alignment with MAIHI needs to be strengthened

MAIHI represents a fundamental shift in the Crown’s response to housing. MAIHI requires HUD to partner with Māori, take a systems approach, and support kaupapa Māori approaches. Iwi and Māori were not involved in the co-design or governance of the Housing First programme. To date, the level of kaupapa Māori delivery does not align with the representation of Māori experiencing homelessness.

Feedback from some Māori and Iwi providers in Arohanui ki te Tangata indicates they do not believe Housing First can be adapted to meet the needs of whānau Māori experiencing homelessness. They note Housing First is not philosophically based on mātauranga Māori, and does not take account of the impact of colonisation or systemic issues contributing to Māori homelessness. Māori and Iwi providers are drawing on the insights of delivering Housing First to develop a kaupapa Māori response for whānau Māori experiencing homelessness.

As indicated through interviews with Housing First providers and our analysis, alignment with MAIHI can be strengthened by:

- Māori partnership in the governance and oversight of Housing First at a national level (e.g., a role for Iwi Chairs or Te Matapihi in the investment decision process)
- shifting the balance of investment funding towards a greater level of kaupapa Māori delivery by Māori and Iwi providers
- continuing to invest in building the capacity and capability of Māori providers (existing and others) to respond to the scale of Māori homelessness<sup>12</sup>
- working with Arohanui ki te Tangata to determine the appropriateness of the Housing First design in Aotearoa and enabling the design of a kaupapa Māori response
- ensuring non-Māori providers continue to build their cultural responsiveness to Māori
- increasing contractual accountability mechanisms to demonstrate their cultural responsiveness for Māori.

## Pacific peoples’ access to Housing First seems low

Access to Housing First by Pacific peoples varies by location (i.e., higher in Auckland). The level of access by Pacific peoples seems low compared to their severe housing deprivation prevalence rates. Housing First providers are working to be responsive to Pacific peoples through the guidance of their Pacific staff and the acknowledgement of the diversity of Pacific peoples. Consideration is needed on whether a Pacific strategy is required to guide the programme’s implementation for Pacific peoples.

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<sup>12</sup> HUD’s He Taupua and He Taupae investment funds were set up to build the capability of Māori and Iwi to accelerate housing projects and provide support services (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2021c).

## Housing First may be strengthened if known challenges are addressed

The evaluation identified several challenges that, if addressed, may strengthen the Housing First delivery.

**National challenges** include:

- The HUD contract is creating challenges in the delivery of the programme due to:
  - resource inequities in not recognising different starting points of providers and costs of rural delivery
  - not covering the costs of outreach and insurance for houses contaminated by methamphetamine
  - inconsistent funding models for housing maintenance
  - onerous and unused reporting, and the need to supply individual data on clients
  - uncertain processes for contract renewal due to a lack of timely information
  - not enabling clients to graduate or re-enrol if needed.
- A lack of opportunity to share Housing First learnings across providers in Aotearoa in a way that respects and gives voice to the range of providers.

**Operational challenges** include:

- Agencies within collectives negotiating differing roles, responsibilities, values and approaches in the delivery of Housing First
- Retention and recruitment of a diversity of kaimahi that reflects their clients
- Referrals challenges –
  - reaching people who may be eligible for Housing First and less visible to some providers
  - Housing First providers stepping in to support people referred by other agencies in extremely challenging situations who do not meet the Housing First criteria
  - the lack of capacity for kaimahi to meet demand is creating waitlists.
- Service delivery challenges –
  - the impact of COVID response on setting up the services and being able to provide wraparound support to clients
  - stretched kaimahi capacity due to dealing with urgent client issues resulting in delays supporting other clients
  - the potential risk to kaimahi safety due to the complexity of client need
  - in rural areas, the lack of agencies to support clients' needs and aspirations.
- No agreed graduation and maintenance process to enable clients to receive ongoing tenancy support and to return to the programme, if needed.

## Rapid Rehousing is at an early implementation stage

Twelve Housing First providers deliver Rapid Rehousing. Holding the Rapid Rehousing contract enables providers to support clients who do not meet the Housing First criteria. Feedback indicates clients' service experience is similar to those on the Housing First programme except for the 12 months' duration.

## Housing First and Rapid Rehousing contribute to the delivery of the Homelessness Action Plan

The Housing First programme has some alignment with the Homelessness Action Plan's guiding principles. More work is needed to align with Te Tiriti and kaupapa Māori principles. Housing First and the Rapid Rehousing trial have important roles in meeting the needs of people who experience long-term homelessness with moderate to complex needs. However, sector fragmentation, increasing housing demand and a lack of houses is creating housing sector competition and adversely impacting the programmes.

At a policy level, consideration is needed on how to create a whānau-centred housing system that addresses immediate and long-term needs for the diversity of people and whānau. Insights from Housing First delivery can inform this policy work and the kaupapa Māori response being developed by Māori and Iwi providers. The insights from Housing First evaluation can also strengthen the MAIHI framework within the policy settings.

# Appendix 2: Evaluation and review methodology

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## A developmental evaluation approach

A developmental evaluation approach is participatory, adaptive, and has a strategic learning focus. Using a developmental evaluation approach allows us to be responsive to context, which is important in this complex and dynamic environment. This evaluation and review approach means HUD, its stakeholders, and providers continue to be engaged in discussions about the findings to determine their implications (i.e., the “so what” and “now what” questions).

The evaluation and review took both a whānau-centred approach and systems approach. The whānau-centred approach seeks to understand the aspirations, experiences, and benefits for people in the programmes. A systems approach focuses on the effects of the wider social and economic system in which the programme and services are nested. Phase one focused on the systems. Phase two shifts to focus on clients and whānau.

## Key evaluation and review questions

The following are the key evaluation and review questions for phases one and two.

<b>Key evaluation and review questions</b>
1. How are the Housing First programme and the Rapid Rehousing trial being implemented?
2. How are the Housing First programme and its principles being tailored to meet the diverse and complex needs of people experiencing homelessness across regions?
3. How does implementation of the Rapid Rehousing trial fit with the Housing First programme and other existing housing services to meet the diversity of people’s needs?
4. How are the design and delivery of the Housing First and Rapid Rehousing trial programmes working for Māori experiencing homelessness?
5. What are the experiences and emerging outcomes of those individuals and whānau supported through the Housing First programme and the Rapid Rehousing trial?
6. What are the enablers and barriers for the successful delivery of the Housing First programme and Rapid Rehousing trial at the local, regional, and national levels?
7. What is and is not working well with the Housing First programme and Rapid Rehousing trial?
8. What improvements, if any, are needed in the Housing First programme and the Rapid Rehousing trial to sustain a consistent service and support the attainment of functional zero homelessness?

## Recruitment and informed consent process in phase two

We worked closely with providers to recruit and schedule interviews with whānau. We virtually met with providers to explain the interview process and selection criteria. We excluded whānau if taking part in an interview may be retraumatizing or upsetting, where potential risk for interviewers existed, and if they had already engaged in research and evaluation activities.

Providers identified potential whānau, explained the interview process, gained their consent to participate, and provided this list to the evaluation team. The evaluation team selected participants

from this list. Providers then identified a convenient location to conduct interviews (e.g., provider office, outreach centre, or whānau homes) and a suitable time and date.

Our interviews enabled whānau to tell their story. We used the Success, Evidence, Strategy (S.E.S.) tool (developed by Kataraina Pipi) to identify outcomes. The S.E.S. tool sought to help participants understand and reflect on their achievements and positive changes while in the Housing First and Rapid Rehousing programmes. The tool helped them reflect on the strategies that have enabled this. This tool also supported the unpacking of participants' inherent cultural knowledge and experiences.



# Whānau consent form

## Experiences of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing Client/whānau consent form

This research project has been approved by the Kāinga Ora Human Participants Research Ethics Committee (Application: HPREC-015-22). If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research please contact ethics@kaingaora.govt.nz

Thank you for joining us and agreeing to take part. We appreciate you sharing your stories. It's important to us that you understand what happens in the interview and to the information you choose to share.



If I agree, the interview will be audio recorded, and may be written out. I can have a copy of my interview notes.



Audio recordings and notes will be kept securely at Litmus and will not have my name on it.



I don't have to answer all the questions, just ones I feel comfortable with. I can stop the interview at any time.



Taking part or not, or what I say, won't change my relationships with any agencies or service providers.



If I change my mind and don't want to take part, that's fine. I can also ask to have what I say in the interview removed from this project up to two weeks after the interview.



I will receive a koha for taking part.



Anything I tell you will not be passed on to any agencies, except when someone's safety is at risk. You will tell me if you are passing on my information.



Litmus will write a report about the programme. I will not be named in the report. The report will be shared with HUD and Housing First providers, and be on the HUD website.

The evaluator will ask you if you wish to take part

Consent: Verbal / Written

I agree to have some of my comments in the report: Yes / No

I want a copy of my interview notes: Yes / No

I want an evaluation summary: Yes / No

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Whānau discussion guide

### Introduction

- Mihimihi/Introduce self/Litmus
- Uiuinga/Interview purpose: To understand your experience of Housing First/Rapid Rehousing
- Whakāetanga/Informed consent
- Ngā Pātai/Questions

### Opening

We would like to ask you some questions about your journey in Housing First/Rapid Rehousing, from when you first heard about the programme up to today. There are only right answers and it doesn't matter if you don't remember everything. Does that sound okay to you?

- How long have you been with the programme?
- Are you in the programme by yourself or with your whānau/tamariki?

### Engagement with Housing First or Rapid Rehousing

- How did you first hear about Housing First/Rapid Rehousing?
- For what reasons did you decide to join the programme? What sounded good about the programme?
- How easy or hard was it for you to get into the programme?

### Experience of Housing First or Rapid Rehousing – housing and wraparound services

- Tell us about your relationship with your key worker, how you work together, and how often
  - How does your key worker/the programme support you to make your own choices (rangatiratanga)?
  - How does your key worker/the programme support you to have positive connections with other people (whanaungatanga)?
  - How does your key worker/the programme support you to feel empowered and have positive self-worth/self-esteem (manaakitanga)?
- What kind of housing have you been supported into since joining the programme?
  - How was your experience being connected to housing?
  - How has the housing affected your experience of the programme?
- What support services have you received since joining the programme?
  - How were you connected to these services?
  - How easy or hard is it for you to get these services? What, if any, services do you need to access to achieve your goals but can't? How come?
  - How useful were the services?
- If relevant – Rapid Rehousing is a 12-month service, how useful was it to have this length of time?
- What is working well for you with this programme? What hasn't worked?
- How could the programme be better for you?

### How Housing First or Rapid Rehousing meets cultural needs

*Interviewers to adapt these questions so they are appropriate/relevant to the context/whānau*

- What, if anything, does the programme do that helps you feel comfortable as someone who is Māori/Pacific/Other?
  - In what ways did the programme acknowledge or connect with your culture?

- What else could the programme do to make you feel more comfortable as a Māori/Pacific/Other using the programme?
- What would make this programme better for other Māori/Pacific/Other using it?

### **Outcomes related to Housing First or Rapid Rehousing**

Use the SES Template provided or draw up 3 columns on a piece of paper with headings SUCCESS - What has gone well?; EVIDENCE: How do you know/feel? How so? and STRATEGIES: How did you do it?

- **SUCCESSSES:** What has gone well?
  - I am going to ask you to think about three positive changes or successes that happened for you since using the programme. It might help to think about your life before joining Housing First/Rapid Housing and now. It could be changes that you have noticed in how you think or do things, in your day-to-day life, with other people, or goals that you have met.
- **Evidence:** How do you know?
  - How do you feel about these successes?
  - What do you think other people think, feel, or see about you?
  - What are people saying that makes you know that this is a success?
- **Strategies:** How did you do it?
  - How did you go about achieving these successes? What steps did you take?  
How are you maintaining these achievements?
  - What do you think happened in the programme for you to make these changes?
  - Would you have been able to do any of this on your own, without the support of the programme?

### **If relevant – withdrawal from HF/RR**

- For what reasons did you leave Housing First or Rapid Rehousing?
  - How were you supported to transition off the programme?
  - What, if anything, would have supported you to stay with the service?
  - Would you use the service again if offered? Why or why not?

### **If relevant – graduation from HF/RR**

- How did you know you didn't need to be in the programme anymore?

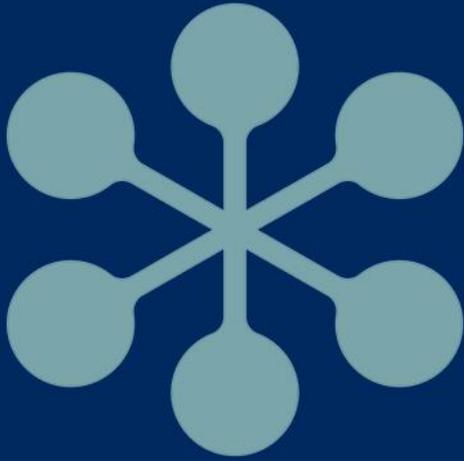
### **Close**

- What else would you like to add about your experience of Housing First/Rapid Rehousing?
- Thanks, koha, next steps, contact numbers (if needed).

## Evaluation team

Our team members, roles, and responsibilities were as follows:

<b>Team members and role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Liz Smith</b> <b>Project lead</b>	Overall responsibility for evaluation design and implementation Management of relationship with HUD Ensuring ethical and quality assurance protocols Developing evaluation tools and interview guides Quality review of data collection Analysis, drafting, and finalising report
<b>Carmen Lau</b> <b>Senior evaluator</b>	Project managing and coordinating project team Developing evaluation tools and interview guides Undertaking interviews Data analysis and sensemaking Drafting report
<b>Maria Marama</b> <b>Senior Māori evaluator</b>	Reviewing and revising the evaluation plan and tools Undertaking interviews Data analysis and sensemaking Peer review of report Providing kaupapa Māori oversight
<b>Marty Rogers</b> <b>Senior Māori evaluator</b>	Reviewing and revising the evaluation plan and tools Undertaking interviews Data analysis and sensemaking Peer review of report Providing kaupapa Māori oversight
<b>Dr. Lanuola Asiasiga</b> <b>Senior Pacific evaluator</b>	Reviewing and revising the evaluation plan and tools Undertaking interviews Data analysis and sensemaking Peer review of report Providing Pacific oversight
<b>Roimata Hanchard</b> <b>Evaluator</b>	Participant recruitment and logistics Other support where needed



# Litmus

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