



4

Supported accommodation: Entry and exit points for homeless young people

project i broadsheet

About this broadsheet and the homeless young people

This Broadsheet is based on surveys conducted with 674 homeless young people in Melbourne between November 2000 and August 2002. It reports on the young people's past and present living arrangements, particularly the places from where they 'entered' and then 'exited' refuges or shelters; juvenile detention or jail; psychiatric hospitals; Child Protection placements; and medium-term accommodation.

We are using the terms 'entry' and 'exit' points to denote the living arrangements of homeless young people immediately before and after living in each type of supported accommodation. In using these terms we are not necessarily suggesting that they entered or exited homelessness (e.g. in entering crisis accommodation a young person is not exiting homelessness).

To attain the history of their living arrangements, the homeless young people were asked a series of questions about all the places they had ever lived, including those for a short time. Time spent as a ward of the State, in secure welfare, juvenile detention or jail was included in their history, but holiday destinations were not.

The young people surveyed were referred from 96 youth or homeless services across metropolitan Melbourne. Half of the young people were female and the average age was 17 years and 8 1/2 months (range: 12 to 20 years).

About Project i

Project i is a five-year study of homeless young people in Melbourne and Los Angeles. Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health in the USA, it is a collaborative project between the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University, Melbourne and the Center for Community Health at the University of California, Los Angeles. **Project i** consists of three interrelated areas of research: surveys and interviews with homeless young people; surveys and interviews with service providers; and reviews of Local, State and Federal Government policies relating to homelessness. A more detailed description of the way the research was conducted can be found in earlier Broadsheets and from the **Project i** website.

Refuges or shelters

Most young people (59%) reported that at some stage during their life they had lived in a refuge, with young men (61%) being marginally more likely than young women (57%) to have stayed in this type of accommodation. Furthermore, one-quarter (26%) of the young men surveyed had lived in 3 or more refuges, as had 16% of young women (range: young women, 1-13; young men, 1-10).

Entry Points

The most frequently reported entry points to a refuge were another refuge (23%), a friend's house (22%), and a birth family home (20%). These were followed by street or squat (8%), relative's home (7%) and Child Protection placement (5%).¹

Young men were more likely than young women to have lived in another refuge, on the street or in a squat before entering a refuge but were less likely to report living at a friend's house or a birth family home (see Table 1).

1 Entry and exit points for refuge by gender (%)

| | ENTRY POINT | | EXIT POINT | |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Birth family home | 24 | 17 | 12 | 9 |
| Step-family home | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Relative's home | 7 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Friends | 28 | 17 | 20 | 11 |
| Child Protection | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Refuge or shelter | 18 | 26 | 30 | 38 |
| Medium term accommodation | 2 | 1 | 11 | 9 |
| Hotel, motel | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Juvenile detention | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Psychiatric hospital | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Caravan park | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Own apartment | 2 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Street, squat | 5 | 10 | 5 | 9 |
| Other | 3 | 4 | 4 | 9 |
| Number of occasions | 333 | 420 | 203 | 287 |

Note. Column percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding
F:Female M:Male

Exit Points

Many of the young people surveyed were currently living in a refuge (yw: 38%, ym: 40%) and, as a consequence, information concerning their exit points was not available.

The most frequently reported exit point from a refuge was another refuge (35%), with young men more likely to exit to another refuge than young women (see Table 1). A friend's house or birth family home were also frequently reported as a refuge exit point by both young women and men, although more so for the young women. Young men were slightly more likely to exit to the street or a squat.

Entry and Exit Patterns

One-quarter of young people (yw: 27%, ym: 26%) reported exiting to the same type of living arrangement they had been in when they entered the refuge. Of those who entered a refuge from a refuge, more exited to another refuge than any other type of accommodation (yw: 42%, ym: 50%). The next most frequently reported exit points for young women were a friend's house (19%) and birth family home (12%), while for young men it was own apartment (7%) and street or squat (7%).

The most common exit points for those entering a refuge from a birth family home, were another refuge (yw: 26%, ym: 30%), a birth family home (yw: 24%, ym: 25%), or a friend's house (yw: 19%, ym: 13%).

The most frequent exit points for young women entering a refuge, from a friend's house, were a friend's house (28%), another refuge (24%) and medium-term accommodation (20%). For young men the most common exit points were another refuge (36%), medium-term accommodation (22%), and street or squat (14%). Also of note, is that one-fifth of young people (yw: 20%, ym: 22%) who entered a refuge from the street or a squat, returned to the street or a squat.

Juvenile detention or jail

A small number of homeless young people surveyed (7%) reported ever living in juvenile detention or jail. Young men (12%) were more likely than young women (2%) to report ever having lived in juvenile detention. Three-quarters of young women (75%) and young men (77%) who had lived in juvenile detention had done so only once (range: yw, 1-2; ym, 1-3).

Entry Points

The most frequently reported living arrangements prior to young women entering juvenile detention were birth family home, relatives, refuge, or friends (see Table 2)². The entry points to juvenile detention of young men were more variable and included refuge, birth family home, Child Protection, own apartment, street or squat and friend's house.

| 2 | Entry and exit points for juvenile detention or jail by gender (%) | | | |
|----------------------------|--|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | ENTRY POINT | | EXIT POINT | |
| | F | M | F | M |
| Birth family home | 40 | 14 | 10 | 6 |
| Step-family home | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Relative's home | 20 | 2 | 30 | 2 |
| Friends | 10 | 10 | 20 | 8 |
| Child Protection | 0 | 12 | 0 | 13 |
| Refuge or shelter | 20 | 26 | 0 | 29 |
| Medium term accommodation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Hotel, motel | 0 | 0 | 20 | 2 |
| Juvenile detention | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Caravan park | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Own apartment | 0 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| Street, squat | 10 | 12 | 10 | 15 |
| Other | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Number of occasions | 10 | 50 | 10 | 48 |

Note. Column percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding
F:Female M:Male

Exit Points

The majority of young women reported exiting juvenile detention to a relative's house, friend's house, or hotels or motels, while young men were more likely to exit to a refuge; the street or a squat; or a Child Protection placement.

Entry and Exit Patterns

Young men (38%) were more likely than young women (10%) to return to the same type of living arrangement after leaving juvenile detention as they had when they entered. A little under one-third of young men (29%) who entered juvenile detention from a birth family home returned to a birth home; a further 29% exited to a friend's house.

Half the young men (50%) who entered juvenile detention from a refuge, returned to a refuge. Furthermore, one-third of young men who

entered juvenile detention from their own apartment exited to their own apartment and one-third of those who entered from the street or a squat returned to the street or a squat.

Psychiatric hospital

The number of homeless young people who reported having ever lived in a psychiatric hospital was very low; only ten young women and two young men. All of the young men who reported they had ever lived in a psychiatric hospital said they had lived in only one such hospital. In comparison, four young women reported they had lived in two psychiatric hospitals.

Entry Points

On six occasions a birth family home was reported as the only living arrangement prior to entering a psychiatric hospital. Other entry points included Child Protection placements; relative's home; medium-term accommodation; refuge; hotel or motel; own apartment; and street, squat or abandoned building.

Exit Points

The living arrangements of young people immediately after exiting a psychiatric hospital varied considerably. On four occasions young people reported exiting to a refuge or shelter, and on three occasions young people reported exiting to a birth family home, friend's home or Child Protection placement. Other exit points included medium-term accommodation, own apartment, and other types of accommodation.

Entry and Exit Patterns

A little under half (44%) of young people exited a psychiatric hospital to the same type of accommodation from which they entered.

Child Protection

Almost one-quarter of young people (yw: 24%, ym: 24%) surveyed reported that they had ever lived in accommodation provided or supported by Child Protection. Three-quarters of these young people (yw: 77%, ym: 76%) had lived in 1-2 Child Protection placements (range: yw, 1-8; ym, 1-11).

Entry Points

The majority of young people entered a Child Protection placement from either another Child Protection placement (36%) or a birth family home (33%)³. Slightly more young men than young women reported entering a Child Protection placement from a birth family home, while the reverse was true for a friend's house (see Table 3).

3 Entry and exit points for Child Protection placements by gender (%)

| | ENTRY POINT | | EXIT POINT | |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Birth family home | 30 | 36 | 19 | 18 |
| Step-family home | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Adoptive family home | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Relative's home | 4 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Friends | 13 | 3 | 13 | 7 |
| Child Protection | 35 | 36 | 37 | 37 |
| Refuge or shelter | 4 | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| Medium term accommodation | 2 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Juvenile detention | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Psychiatric hospital | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Caravan park | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Own apartment | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Street, squat | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Other | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Number of occasions | 175 | 180 | 167 | 178 |

Note. Column percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding
F:Female M:Male

Exit Points

Exit points followed similar patterns to entry points, with the majority of young people exiting to another Child Protection placement (37%) or a birth family home (19%). Young women were more likely than young men to exit to a friend's house but less likely to exit to a refuge.

Entry and Exit Patterns

Approximately one-third of the times young people (yw: 35%, ym: 33%) exited a Child Protection placement they did so to the same type of accommodation from which they entered. The percentage of young people who reported entering a Child Protection placement from a Child Protection placement and then exiting to another Child Protection placement was high for both young women (56%) and young men (49%). The next most frequently reported exit points for young women were a birth family home (13%), and friend's house (10%), while for young men they were a refuge (17%) and a birth family home (12%).

When young people entered a Child Protection placement from their birth family home, the most frequently reported exit point was another Child Protection placement (yw: 35%, ym: 32%) or

back to their birth family home (yw: 33%, ym: 33%). The next most common exit point for young men was a relative's house (15%), while for young women it was a friend's house (10%).

Medium-term accommodation

About one-quarter of young people (yw: 27%, ym: 20%) surveyed reported that they had ever lived in medium-term accommodation and most of them (yw: 92%, ym: 94%) had lived in 1 or 2 such places (range: yw, 1-4; ym, 1-5).

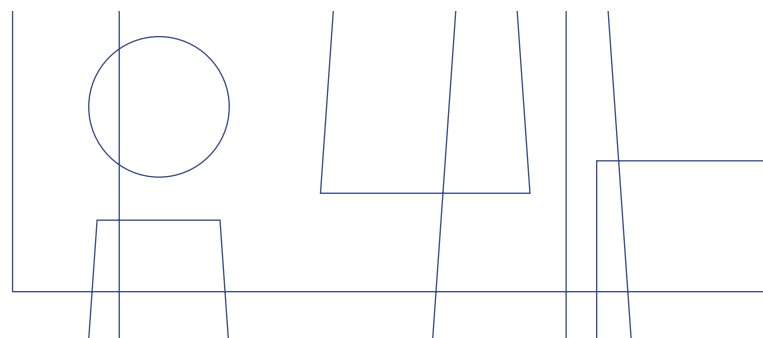
Entry Points

The most common living arrangement prior to entering medium-term accommodation was a refuge (21%), friend's house (20%) or birth family home (16%). For young women, the most common entry point was a friend's house and for young men it was a refuge (see Table 4).

4 Entry and exit points for medium-term accommodation by gender (%)

| | ENTRY POINT | | EXIT POINT | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Birth family home | 19 | 11 | 9 | 8 |
| Step-family home | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Relative's home | 9 | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| Friends | 26 | 14 | 27 | 22 |
| Child Protection | 7 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| Refuge or shelter | 17 | 26 | 11 | 8 |
| Medium term accommodation | 7 | 11 | 18 | 22 |
| Hotel, motel | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Juvenile detention | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Psychiatric hospital | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Caravan park | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Own apartment | 2 | 2 | 8 | 7 |
| Street, squat | 5 | 8 | 8 | 11 |
| Other | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Number of occasions | 129 | 96 | 74 | 72 |

Note. Column percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding
F:Female M:Male



Exit Points

Many young people surveyed were currently living in medium-term accommodation (yw: 19%, ym: 8%) and, as a consequence, information concerning exit points was not available for approximately one-third of the times young people reported living in medium-term accommodation.

The most frequently reported exit points for both young women and men were a friend's house and another medium-term accommodation setting. Young women were slightly more likely, than young men, to exit to a friend's house but less likely to exit to another medium-term accommodation setting (see Table 4). The next most frequently reported exit points for young women were a refuge or birth family home, but for young men, it was the street, a refuge or birth family home.

Entry and Exit Patterns

Young women (42%) were more likely than young men (30%) to return to the same type of living arrangement after leaving medium-term accommodation as they had when they entered. The percentage of those who entered medium-term accommodation from medium-term accommodation and then exited to another medium-term accommodation setting was high for young women (88%) and men (70%).

The most common exit points for young women who entered medium-term accommodation from a refuge was another refuge (42%) or a friend's house (33%). For young men, it was a friend's house (35%) or refuge (18%). Almost half of young people (yw: 45%, ym: 50%) who entered medium-term accommodation from a friend's house returned to a friend's house. Also of note, is that most young people (yw: 50%, ym: 83%) who entered medium-term accommodation from the street, returned to the street.

1 Data concerning entry and exit points are based on the number of times young people reported living in each type of accommodation and **not** on the number of young people.

2 Care must be taken when interpreting the data about young women's entry and exit points because of the small number of young women who actually reported ever having lived in juvenile detention or jail.

3 The numbers of entry and exit points to Child Protection are not equal because of missing data and some young people reported Child Protection was the first place they had ever lived.

Further comment

These data presented provide a complex and diverse picture of homeless young people's past and present living arrangements. The following trends emerged:

- The number of young people exiting to a birth family home after living in each type of supported accommodation was much less than the number who had entered from a birth family home.
- Young women were more likely than young men to exit all forms of supported accommodation to a birth family home.
- Young women were more likely than young men to enter and exit all forms of supported accommodation from a friend's house.
- Young men used refuges more than young women
 - More young men had ever lived in a refuge than young women and they had lived in a greater number of refuges.
 - Young men tended to move from one refuge to another refuge or to the streets.
 - Young men were more likely to exit Child Protection to a refuge than young women.
- Young people often lived in consecutive Child Protection placements
 - Young women were more likely than young men to exit to a friend's house but less likely to exit to a refuge.
 - Young men and women were equally and most likely to exit to a birth family home.
- Many young people had lived in medium-term accommodation.
- Very few young women surveyed had spent time in juvenile detention.
- Young men were more likely to exit to the streets from juvenile detention than they were from other types of supported accommodation.
- Very few young people had spent time in psychiatric hospitals.
- Very few young people entered or exited supported accommodation from caravan parks or hotels and motels.
- A comparatively small number of young people entered or exited supported accommodation from a relative's home, step-family home or their own apartment.

For more information about Project i, contact:

Ben Rossiter

Community Liaison Officer

Project i

Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society

La Trobe University

1st Floor, 215 Franklin Street, Melbourne 3000 Australia

Telephone +61 3 9285 5138

Facsimile +61 3 9285 5220

Email projecti@latrobe.edu.au

Web Site <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/projecti/>

Project staff Melbourne

Professor Doreen Rosenthal

Dr. Shelley Mallett

Dr. Ben Rossiter

Mr Paul Myers

Ms Judy Edwards

Project staff Los Angeles

Professor Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus

Dr. Norweeta G Milburn

Ms Andrea Witkin

Ms Zulema Laurent

Dr. George Ayala

Reference as:

Myers, P., Mallett, S., Rossiter, B., & Rosenthal, D. (2003). *Project i Broadsheet #4 – Supported Accommodation: Entry and Exit Points*. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University.

Previous Broadsheets in this series:

Project i Broadsheet #1 - Service Provision

Project i Broadsheet #2 - Pathways into Youth Homelessness

Project i Broadsheet #3 – Working with Homeless Young People

**All Project i Broadsheets are available online
free-of-charge from the Project i website**

ISBN 1920697373

© Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, January 2003