

Youth Foyers

Yfoundations factsheet

What are Youth Foyers?

'Foyer' is the word used to describe a transitional youth housing model that originated in post-war Europe. Youth Foyers provide at-risk young people – typically those aged 16 to 24 – with stable accommodation and support in a shared living environment for up to two years. In return, they pay affordable rent and commit to education, training and/or employment programs.

By providing a safe and supported environment for vulnerable young people to learn, Youth Foyers aim to divert them away from chronic homelessness and break cycles of disadvantage.

In Australia, the [Foyer Foundation](#) oversees the Youth Foyer accreditation process. There are currently [13 accredited Youth Foyers in Australia](#). Three of these are [Education First Foyers](#), which provide onsite education and training. Other 'Foyer-like' services exist across Australia, providing support housing to vulnerable young people engaged in education and training.

What's the situation in NSW?

Of the 15 Youth Foyers in Australia, there only two are in NSW. These are:

- The [Southern Youth Foyer Project](#) in the Illawarra, which [Southern Youth and Family Services](#) launched as a pilot in 2004. It was officially launched in February 2010, providing 60 units for 20 young people aged 16 to 24 years across three sites
- [Foyer Central](#) in Chippendale, launched by Uniting Social Ventures, St George Community Housing and Social Ventures Australia in 2020. It offers 53 studio apartments specifically to 18 to 22-year-olds who have been in out-of-home care. Foyer Central is funded through a [Social Impact Bond](#). This means that the NSW Government will pay investors in this Youth Foyer for social outcomes (such as improvements in employment and health) that lead to long-term government savings

Lemongrove House in Penrith, run by Platform Youth Services, is also a 'Foyer-like' model.

What does the research say?

Research on the impacts of Youth Foyers is still emerging. But the research we do have suggests that this kind of housing can produce positive, long-lasting change in the lives of vulnerable young people.

In 2017, [KPMG's evaluation](#) of [Foyer Oxford](#) in Perth found that more than 90% of residents existed long-term housing options, and more than 80% were still in this housing a year later. Two years later an [evaluation by Brotherhood of St Laurence](#) of the Education First Foyers in Victoria found that residents had significantly better education, employment, housing, health and wellbeing outcomes a year after they existed.

[KMPG's cost-benefit analysis](#) of the Education First Foyers found that these long-term improvements offset the substantial costs of establishing and running this housing, meaning each Foyer would save the government approximately \$10m over a 20-year time frame. While some researchers have [questioned the methodology](#) of this analysis, which may lead to the prioritisation of Education First Foyers over other Foyer and Foyer-like models, it's clear that linking education and employment to supported housing provides both social and economic benefits.

Whom can Youth Foyers help?

Youth Foyers works for at-risk young people who are ready and able to engage in post-school training and education. Many programs do 'readiness' tests to ensure that residents meet this criterion.

Homeless young people who are in crisis often aren't ready to commit to education and training programs. This explains why, as AHURI highlight in the [Redesign of a homelessness service system for young people](#) report, the introduction of a 40-bed Education First Foyer in Shepparton didn't reduce the demand for youth crisis accommodation.



[Read our factsheet on crisis and transitional accommodation](#)



[Read our position paper on housing for young people with complex needs](#)

Many homeless young people also have complex needs, and require more intensive, therapeutic support than Youth Foyers offer. A [2011 evaluation](#) of Melbourne City Mission's foyer-type model found that residents with drug abuse and/or mental health weren't able to benefit from the program, and usually exited early. Similarly, a [2013 evaluation](#) of a foyer-type model in South West Sydney reported high drop-out rates and low engagement among young people exiting youth detention.

Those aged 16 to 17 also generally require more intensive, 24/7 support than Youth Foyers offer, such as medium-term accommodation.



[Read our position paper on homeless 16 and 17 year-olds](#)

Where can I learn more?

- Homeless Hub, [The Foyer Toolkit](#)
- The Foyer Foundation, ['How Foyers work'](#)
- National Youth Commission Australia, [The Future of Housing: Are Youth Foyer the Answer?](#)