



A partnership between Homelessness NSW, Domestic Violence NSW and Yfoundations

Community of Practice on Helping Young People Experiencing or at Risk of Homelessness

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The aim of the Community of Practice is to engage in deep discussion and case-based learning about responding to young people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. The scope of the issues to that may be discussed is broad, the group can choose to focus on specific issues as the group considers necessary, the group commits to considering both rural and city perspectives. The intention is to have representatives from a number of different organisations (with no more than two people sharing the role of representative) who are given the opportunity to engage in deep reflection, discussion and learning from the experiences of other workers. Members will then use their learning to influence practice in their own organisations and the sector generally.

Meetings

The community of practice will, if funds are available, have three 'supported meetings' a year. Supported meetings are those where members traveling more than 200 kilometres to attend, will have travel costs subsidised.

The community of practice will have three 'unsupported meetings' a year. Unsupported meetings will provide the option of remote attendance.

Minutes will be taken at each meeting with the two purposes of providing notes on the learnings of the community, and recording administrative information such as agreements to alter the terms of reference or to accept new members.

Meetings are open to members of the community of practice, those supporting the meetings, and others only as agreed to be invited by the community of practice.

Support

Resources for subsidising travel to supported meetings will be provided by the Industry Partnership of the three homelessness peaks.

Facilitation and organisational support for the community of practice will be provided by Yfoundations. Yfoundations will nominate a staff member as a facilitator whose responsibilities will include being a contact point for the community of practice, keeping the list of members with contact details, and making arrangement for meetings such as venue, secretarial support and remote attendance support.

Members

Members must be part of an organisation focussed on helping young people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness; or be a practitioner within a more generalist organisation whose role is focused on helping young people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

Members must make the following commitments:

- *To remain a member for a period of at least 12 months*
- *To attend all supported meeting in-person*
- *To attend all unsupported meetings either in-person or remotely*
- *To, if sharing the role, fully brief the other member of the organisation after each meeting*
- *To declare any conflicts of interest that may arise*

Eligible individuals can nominate to become members by writing to the community of practice facilitator with a brief statement (no more than half a page) on why they wish to join. The facilitator will make this available to all members prior to the next meeting. The community of practice will decide at the next meeting whether to accept the nominee as a member.

Members resigning must notify the facilitator.

No more than two people from an organisation can be part of the community of practice.

Chair

When the position of Chair is vacant members will at the current or next meeting agree on a new Chair.

The responsibilities of the chair are to keep meetings running so that all agenda items are given sufficient time.

Confidentiality

In order to aid the distribution of learnings in the community of practice to the wider sector, all information discussed in meetings is to be considered non-confidential, except for the following circumstances:

When discussing individual cases, members will avoid using the real name of those discussed and be mindful to avoid, if possible, giving potentially identifying information. If the identity of a person discussed is revealed, all attendees at the meeting are to keep this information strictly confidential.

At any time during the meeting members may invoke the “Chatham House Rule” meaning that the information they are giving may be used by others, but neither the identity nor the organisation of the speaker may be revealed.

Members should avoid giving information that cannot be shared outside the meeting, as this inhibits other members from sharing their learning. If necessary to give this information, members should make it clear that it is off-the-record.

Decision-making

Where possible all decisions of the community of practice will be made by consensus at meetings.

If a consensus cannot be reached at a meeting, the decision will be put on the agenda of the next meeting for further discussion, and if consensus is still not reached it will go to a vote of those members present at that meeting (with the Chair holding a tie-breaking additional vote in the case of an even split of votes).

Only in the case where a decision is required before the next meeting, a decision can be put to a vote immediately. (If there is not agreement on the urgency of the decision a vote on this will be taken first.)

At the discretion of the Chair decisions can be made between meetings (out-of-session). The process for this will be that the facilitator will email all members as a group outlining the decision to be made so that discussions can occur out-of-session. Members will communicate their views to the facilitator, and a unanimous agreement will constitute an out-of-session decision.

Term

These terms of reference last for a period of 12 months from being agreed on by the community of practice, after this time they should be revised and a new terms of reference document agreed on. At any time prior to that the community of practice can decide to revise the terms of reference and renew it.