

Independent living for tangata whaiora



What's happening?

Tui Ora is transitioning tangata whaiora from supported homes to independent living in the community. This model is not new and has been part of our long-term care plan for clients.

So what's changing then?

The new part of the model will be people living independently sooner than previously, with intensive wrap-around support. This has always been the aspiration for the service.

Tangata whaiora will have more choice and greater control over their own lives, decisions and recovery, but will still have access to the same level of support they received in a supported home.

This support includes an on-call care team made up of registered nurses and recovery support workers. Unlike some providers, Tui Ora has registered nurses who can provide support at a clinical level for tangata whaiora with higher needs.

Tui Ora will continue to run a supported residence in Waitara, but will transition out of its residence in New Plymouth. Clients who currently live in the New Plymouth home will gradually transition, either into living independently, or to the Waitara home. Clients will only move into the community if they are ready and willing. Ongoing care and support is available to clients for as long as it is required.

Who's it for?

Independent living is for:

- ✓ Tangata whaiora willing and interested in independent living in natural settings who give their consent
- ✓ Tangata whaiora with intensive mental health issues who require intensive support
- ✓ Tangata whaiora who may require 24-hour psychiatric support from a nurse
- ✓ Tangata whaiora who would benefit from practical support for life skill development, from shopping to gardening
- ✓ Tangata whaiora whose current living situation has broken down and is impacting on their mental health
- ✓ Tangata whaiora who have lost their independence through illness, hospitalisation or long term residential stays
- ✓ Tangata whaiora who do not do well in group housing situations
- ✓ Tangata whaiora who require culturally relevant support

Independent living is not for:

- ✗ Tangata whaiora who require 24-hour residential care
- ✗ Tangata whaiora whose physical health and ageing needs outweigh their mental health needs
- ✗ Tangata whaiora who are a serious risk to others
- ✗ Tangata whaiora with severe alcohol and drug use, who are actively suicidal or actively psychotic

How do I get in contact?

If you would like more information about the service, please contact Residential & Community Support Team Leader:

**Victor Verveer on +64 6-759 4064 or
by email: victor.verveer@tuiora.co.nz**

Tony's Story

Tony*, a former resident at a Tui Ora residential home moved in to his own flat last month. He says the transition was hard, that even though he wanted to live independently, the idea of change made him anxious, even though he knew it was the right thing to do.

One month on and Tony is doing well living independently. He cooks, cleans and shops. He manages his own money, and is doing a course to regain his driver's license. He looks well, turned out neatly with smart sneakers. He smiles, makes eye contact, speaks calmly and eloquently.

Tony has had a long battle with mental illness and addictions. He says that prior to meeting Tui Ora AOD specialist Kirsten Gamby, he had struggled to get the help he needed:

"I would speak to nurses or doctors but I didn't fit in with their assessments so they wouldn't help me. Kirsten was different. She stuck by me, listened to me, and supported me. If it wasn't for her I think I wouldn't be here."

Kirsten assisted Tony to find new accommodation. A short-term stay at a Tui Ora residential home put Tony in touch with a network of nurses and social workers that broadened his support network.

Tony describes learning about his illness as a major breakthrough. "When I was younger I was scared to talk about what was happening in my head. I was being judged because of mistakes I was making, but I wasn't being helped because I was ill. Now I know what's wrong with me I feel more comfortable talking about it."

The Tui Ora Residential & Community Support team have worked extensively with Tony over the past few months but Team Leader, Victor Verveer says that Tony's journey to living independently is a testament to his own hard work:

"We didn't do this for Tony, he did it for himself and we supported him to reach his goal. Tony wanted to get himself better, he wanted to live independently and take care of himself, and he's doing that. We will provide as much or as little support as he needs from now until he decides he no longer needs us."

*Not his real name. Changed to respect client privacy



Tony will continue to receive a range of support from Tui Ora. Nurses visit him at home twice daily and provide clinical oversight. Transport is provided if Tony needs to go shopping, or has appointments with his GP, key worker or WINZ.

At the moment Tony is taking things slowly. He says he takes each day as it comes. He is content with his own company, having his own space and making his own plans.

Testimonial from Matthew Manderson, Senior Psychologist.

"I want to write to you all expressing absolute appreciation for the work that Tui Ora has done for Tony. When I first met Tony, I was very concerned about Tony's poor physical and mental health, and dire social circumstances."

Tony had been assaulted, was not eating, had poor hygiene, was not taking medications and appeared cognitively deficient. The Tui Ora Alcohol and Drug Specialists work with Tony was fantastic and was it very evident they cared for this poor person."

Tony's placement in supported accommodation resulted in a complete turnaround. When I saw Tony today, he was so proud of his new flat, he looked incredibly well, was focused and goal orientated. The work done by those involved shows what can be done for clients like Tony and it has been great to be part of it. This case is one for everyone to be very proud of."

Team Leader Victor shares his vision



Victor Verveer just moved in to his new job as Residential & Community Support Team Leader for Tui Ora this month but he already knows the ropes. Prior to taking on the management role Victor, a registered nurse (RN), had worked in the supported home for the past 18 months.

Although it means he will be doing less of the hands on care himself, Victor is excited about the direction the service is heading:

"Research suggests that the length and severity of mentally unwell people is lessened if they are treated in their own homes – where they feel most comfortable. A block sometimes happens in the system where clients spend most of their time in supported homes. They can become institutionalised by becoming too comfortable and less capable of looking after themselves."

Victor will be overseeing a large team of carers that will include four (RNs) and 10 recovery

support workers (RSWs) who he describes as the backbone of the service.

"We are really lucky to have highly trained and skilled people working at the coal face."

"All of our RSWs have their Mental Health Level Four certificate and are able to recognise when we might need to step up support for a client. They work collaboratively with the nurses to ensure that we are all up to speed on a client's health and medication."

Victor says clients often arrive at the home having completely lost hope, feeling negative about themselves and angry at the world:

"It's such a buzz to see people rediscover themselves, to see them remember old skills, or develop new ones, and to move on to a new place where they look after themselves."