



“It’s about having a home”- Keys social housing makes a difference in people’s lives

Ani went from living on the streets to having a home when she became a Keys tenant. For Ani, having a home is about being able to do things most people take for granted. She likes being able to sit down to watch TV whenever she feels like it. She likes that family and friends have somewhere to visit her and she's found her life is filling up. "With no home there are many things you can't do, can't access or can't enrol in...but now I am working part-time. This has made a massive difference for me. Huge". It wasn't that Ani hadn't tried looking for a place on her own, but it wasn't until she met her Keys housing co-ordinator that things fell into place and she found a home that was just right for her.

Keys Social Housing (formerly Keys Living Choices) has been working in New Zealand communities since 2001. They exist to enrich the lives of people who have a mental illness and/or alcohol and other drug issues through the provision of safe, healthy, affordable homes and practical support. They assist people into their own social housing or assist clients to find private tenancies in the community. Keys employ housing and tenancy coordinators in the six regions of Auckland, Hamilton, Taranaki, Whanganui, Wellington and Christchurch to help tenants find a safe, healthy and affordable home; a home they choose, which aids recovery and enriches lives.



Having a stable home is the springboard to possibilities, dreams and life

Rainbow is enjoying living in her own home. In the past she spent time in hospital and short-term respite when she needed a break. When Rainbow started looking for a new house she found rental agents difficult to deal with. Her experience with Keys was less stressful! "You go into Harakeke House and it is just like a rental agency. Once we worked out what I was looking for I was picked up and taken to look at places." Rainbow also appreciated having a back-up opinion from her housing co-ordinator. "There was one place that we took one look at and my housing co-ordinator said she wouldn't live there either. With some agents they act as if you should be grateful to get anywhere."

Keys social housing provide a tenancy support service that helps people find, get and keep their home.

- having specialist housing and tenancy advisors available to support people every step of the way
- working with landlords (government, community-based and private) to ensure their properties are available to the people who need them

Once they have supported people to find and get a home, Keys housing and tenancy advisors provide practical support to help them keep it.

Key's people make good tenants

Sometimes people's perception is that those with experience of mental illness don't make good tenants. Richard, a private investor landlord, is quick to point out quite the opposite is true. He's been renting properties to clients from Keys for some time and is very happy with the arrangement. "We know the rent is going to be paid because generally the tenants have a rent redirection arranged with Work and Income, and they look after the houses." Another benefit for Richard is the tenants want to be settled which means they're fairly permanent. He believes there are fewer hassles with tenants from Keys because their housing co-ordinators are there to support them and help sort out any problems.

Two other social housing programmes are provided by Keys Social Housing. These are:

- managing housing for government, community and private providers
- developing social housing assets to make sure people have access to safe, healthy, comfortable and affordable homes

For more information go to: www.keyssocialhousing.co.nz