Evaluation of the Housing Support Worker Initiative

Findings and Recommendations

June 5, 2014

common knowledge
research and consulting

CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
Nova Scotia Office

Overview

Our approach

Key Findings and Recommendations

How do we know what we know?

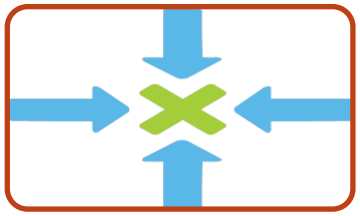
- Online stakeholder questionnaire (37)
- Participant intake data (418)
- Stakeholder interviews (4)
- Staff interviews (12)
- Participant interviews (20)
- Literature review
- Internal document review

Key Messages

The HSW Initiative has been successful in helping clients achieve positive outcomes

The Initiative is effective because of the decentralized model with HSWs as front line workers in community agencies

The sustainability of the Initiative depends on strengthening the model through improved administration and support across all partner agencies



The success and ongoing sustainability of the HSW Initiative will also be greatly influenced by a number of external factors that are beyond the control of the organizations involved

Key Finding 1

Clients of the Housing Support Worker Initiative achieve positive outcomes

- Finding and maintaining appropriate housing
- Overcoming barriers to accessing services
- Living independently, feeling empowered and having increased stability

Key Finding 2

The success of the Housing Support Worker Initiative is related to the type of service provided

- Flexible
- Individualized services
- Strong, personal relationships
- Understand client needs, issues, and barriers
- Ongoing support to clients

Key Finding 3

The relationships built with property owners, other agencies and government service providers increase the effectiveness of the Initiative

Key Finding 4

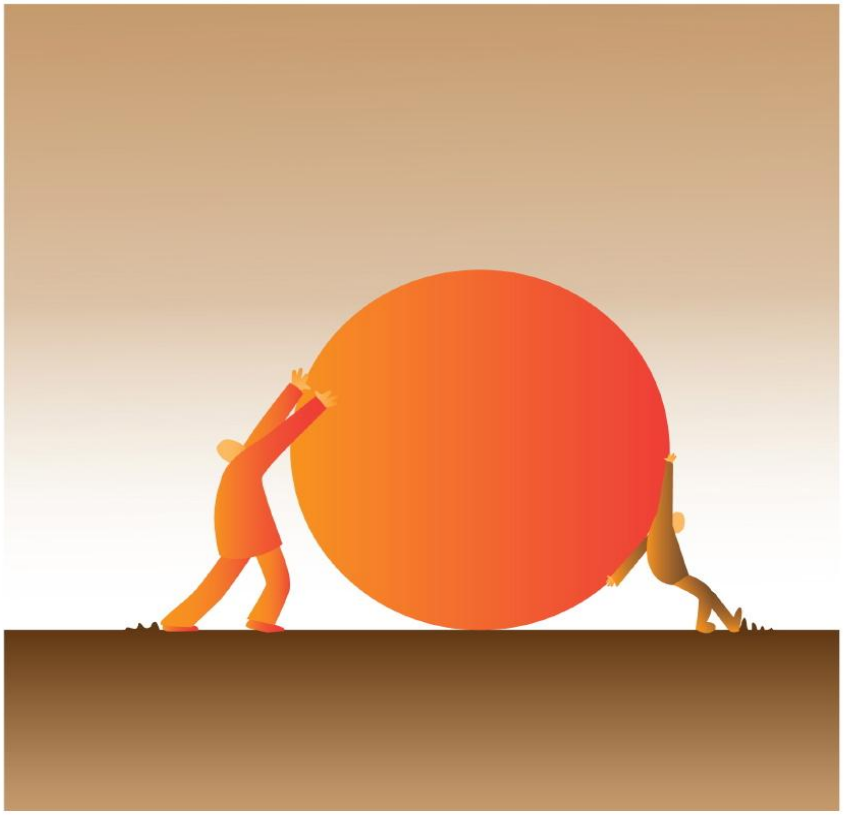
The model used by the Housing Support Worker Initiative has important strengths

- Focused, dedicated HSWs located in specialized community agencies
- Focus on the needs of specific populations
- Network of supports

Key Finding 5

The model used by the Housing Support Worker Initiative also has important challenges to be addressed

- A lack of clear, common goals across the initiative
- Insufficient resources for the program to work with high need clients
- Inadequate support for HSWs professional development and networking opportunities
- A need to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of program administration



Recommendation A

The organizations currently hosting HSWs need to develop and articulate a clear, shared understanding of the principles for the HSW Initiative

Recommendation B

Develop a common set of guidelines to define the work of the HSWs.

- Guidance around client screening and selection, caseloads, scope of practice and safety considerations.
- Continue to allow flexible support tailored to the individual
- Balance the best interests of the client and workers themselves

Recommendation C

If the decision is made to continue to work with clients with complex needs the HSWs will require additional resources and supports

Recommendation D

Develop and implement professional development plans for HSWs

Recommendation E

Continue to strengthen communication among HSWs and across agencies

Recommendation F

The HSW Initiative requires the investment of more time and resources to increase the quality, efficiency and consistency of program administration

Key Finding 6

The success and ongoing sustainability of the HSW Initiative will be greatly influenced by a number of external factors that are beyond the control of the organizations

Conclusions

The HSW initiative has been successful in contributing to the achievement of positive outcomes

The Initiative does have some challenges that need to be addressed if that success is to be sustainable over the long term

The HSW Initiative is well positioned to make necessary changes

To increase the number of individuals safely and securely housed in HRM will require a **continuum of services** and support and the commitment of **all levels of government** to addressing the **root causes of homelessness**

FEEDBACK
COMMENTS
SUGGESTIONS
THOUGHTS
QUESTIONS

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