Inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland

Submission No: 149

Submitted by:

Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name

Attachments: See attachment

Submitter Comments:

2 February 2024

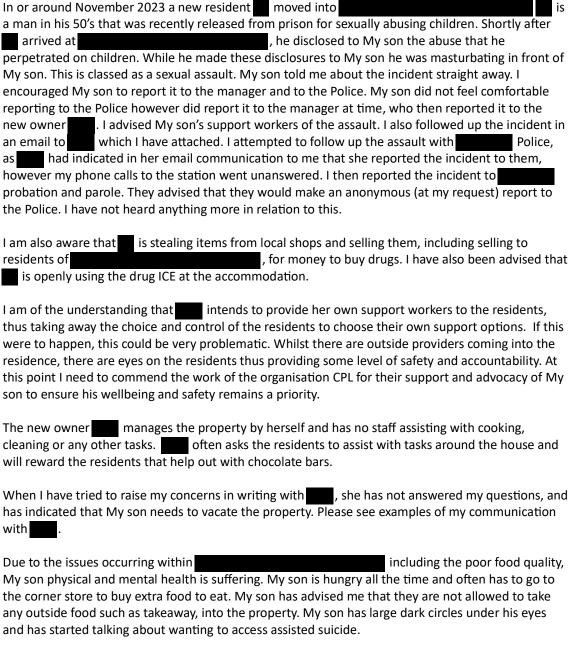
Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Committee Secretary

[SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION AND REGULATION OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION IN QUEENSLAND]

I am making this submission as an individual and as the family member of a resident currently residing in supported accommodation in Queensland.

My son is a 27-year-old man that lives with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and oppositional defiance
DLD. My son has lived at for 12 months. Prior to coming to , My son lived at another supported accommodation residence,
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Often for people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness, supported accommodation has become a last resort due to the unaffordability of the private rental market and the long wait lists of public and social housing. Currently My son is paying \$470 per week to live at this eaves very little money for My son to be able to afford to save for the bond and two weeks rent required up to access independent accommodation, not that he would be able to afford to rent on his own in the private rental market. Residents effectively become trapped in this sort of accommodation as there is no security of tenure and no viable options out of the accommodation unless they are lucky enough to obtain public or social housing.
The first day that My son arrived at he was given two pillows that had clearly been used by other people, as they were stained and marked. I went and brough My son some new pillows as it was unacceptable that someone be provided with pillows to sleep on in the condition that these pillows were in. Please see attached photos. Since his time at how made numerous complaints to me about the cleanliness of the property, particularly the showers and bathroom. Shortly after moving into hy son develop a fungus growing on his feet that took several months to treat effectively.
Around October, was taken over by a new owner/manager named. Since this time the quality of the food has declined significantly. Please see attached photos of an example of the meals provided. I do not believe that the new owner is abiding by the recommended <i>Toolkit for healthy eating in supported accommodation: A best practice guide</i> , published by Queensland Health.
Shortly after came onboard as the new owner, she forced all the residents to sign a document agreeing to her contacting all the current disability support agencies and other external providers to disclose their personal and confidential information to the owner. My son told me that he signed the document because he was scared that he would be made to leave if he didn't. Please see attached document and my email to in relation to my concerns about the document.



There needs to be consideration given in relation to the staff employed at supported accommodation having a minimal level of qualification, so they safely and respectfully support the residents living there. This needs to include the owners/managers. There needs to be consideration given to eligibility criteria of new residents coming into the accommodation. Some of the people living in supported accommodation are the most vulnerable in our community. These residents have the right to be housed safely and with dignity. There needs to be further review of the intersection between corrective services, the homelessness sector and supported accommodation. Released prisoners have the right to housing, however I don't think it is always beneficial to place them into supported accommodation with other vulnerable residents that are experiencing mental illness and disability and at times, are not able to make good decisions.

Moving forward, I would like to see the recommendations of this inquiry include the following:

- Regular auditing approaches like HSQF (Human Services Quality Framework) be implemented for all supported accommodation services. This approach to funded human services across Queensland maintains important safeguards for people using services while streamlining quality requirements. It needs to be extended into non-government funded services that care for or provide supports to vulnerable people as a safeguarding measure.
- Specialist Police Officers with specific training in mental health, disability and trauma informed support be embedded in police stations across Queensland to specifically support and investigate matters relating to the most vulnerable in our community, including the elderly, those experiencing mental ill health and disability and those experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, similar to the current child protection notification system, I would like to see a mandatory reporting response be implemented for these vulnerable groups. Whilst CPL have been advocating for the residents of
 - , I am aware that there are other support providers that have witnessed what is happening there but have chosen not to report or say anything.
- Priority waitlisting on public housing register for people living in supported accommodation
 that have a current housing application in place. Just because these residents are not openly
 living on the streets or in public spaces, that are still experiencing homelessness.
 Homelessness Australia uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistical definition of
 homelessness. "When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives, they are
 considered homeless if their current living arrangement:
 - is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
 - has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
 - does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations".
 - Supported accommodation, also known as boarding house accommodation, is classed as tertiary homelessness (Mackenzie and Chamberlain, 1992). Tertiary homelessness is experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards (e.g. boarding housing and caravan parks).
- I would like to see homelessness outreach programs be extended into residential supported
 accommodation spaces to support people to apply for public housing, including support to
 complete their applications, gather the required paperwork and documents and advocate on
 their behalf if required.

I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry.



Photos of pillow given to resident on arrival at

Examples of food provided at









