

EVALUATION OF QUEENSLAND HEALTH'S ADULT STEP UP STEP DOWN SERVICES | PROJECT SUMMARY

Genevieve Smith, Angela Sunley, Dr Zoe Papinczak, Annika Luebbe, Hannah Roovers, Danielle Postorivo, Prof Harvey Whiteford, Kate Gadenne and Dr Zoe Rutherford (2024)



QCMHR
Queensland Centre for
Mental Health Research

1. What is a Step Up Step Down service?

Queensland Health's Adult Step Up Step Down (SUSD) services offer a mental health recovery program in a home-like environment for people going through a tough time mentally. These services aim to provide a supportive place for people whose mental health is declining so they can avoid hospital (step up) and those leaving hospital to help ease them back to home and the community (step down).

At SUSD, residents develop a plan for their recovery. They are supported by peer workers (staff who have lived experience), community mental health staff and clinicians through individual chats and group programs.

2. Why were the Step Up Step Down services evaluated?

We evaluated SUSD services to see if they were working well and to get ideas for how the services could be improved in the future.

3. What did the researchers do?

- The Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research worked together with SUSD staff, people who have stayed at a SUSD and their support people to develop this evaluation.
- We visited five SUSD sites and talked to a total of 32 people who had stayed at a SUSD or supported someone who had, 30 SUSD staff, 7 hospital staff and 7 community mental health staff. They shared with us their experiences with the service and ideas for making it better.
- We also looked at anonymous information about the people who had stayed at a SUSD to understand who is accessing the service and whether it is helping them.

"... it has been really, really good. It's helped me tenfold.....I've got nothing but positive about this place..." **SUSD Visitor**

"It's so recovery focused and that's what I like" **SUSD Staff**

"...it was just really beautiful and a very welcoming place. There was no uneasy feelings about anything for either of us and I could leave comfortably knowing that he was safe." **Carer**

4. What are the main findings?

2,295 SUSD Visitors from 2021 to 2023

55%	Female	14%	Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander
45%	Male		
19%	18-24 yrs	22%	25-34 yrs
22%	35-44 yrs	20%	45-54 yrs
13%	55-64 yrs	3%	65+ yrs

- Most people who stayed at a SUSD were happy with the service and found it helpful. They valued the supportive staff and the safe and welcoming environment.
- Most people who stayed at a SUSD said they learnt new information and skills during their stay which were useful for their personal recovery and mental health.
- Most family and carers valued the support provided by the SUSD and learnt new information and skills that helped them as a carer.
- The service is helping to improve people's mental health and life skills.
- The service is helping to reduce the number of times people need to visit the Emergency Department or stay at hospital for mental health care.
- More information about SUSD is needed in hospitals and community services to increase the number of people who go to SUSD.
- More feedback needs to be collected from family and carers who support people staying at a SUSD to find out about their experience.
- More information needs to be collected to find out if the improvements gained at a SUSD last long term.

5. How can these findings be useful in the future?

The findings contribute to the research on SUSD services and will be used to improve current and future SUSD services.