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ADHB

TE WHARE AWHINA

# TE WHARE AWHINA

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **Purpose**

This report on Te Whare Awhina was commissioned by Tony O'Connor, the Engagement and Planning Manager at ADHB and forms part of the ADHB "Whānau as Partners in Care Project".

The purpose of this report is to find out from Te Whare Awhina residents and staff how staying at the whare supports their involvement in patient care, and where improvements can be made. This report will inform a potential upgrade of Te Whare Awhina facility to accommodate the projected increase in whānau who may use the facility in the future. This is in line with the aim of Auckland District Health Board which is to support whānau to take a greater role as care partners for ADHB patients.

## **Background**

Te Whare Awhina is an accommodation facility located on the site of Auckland Hospital, which provides temporary accommodation for the whānau of ADHB patients, particularly those living outside of the Auckland region.

Although Te Whare Awhina is a kaupapa Māori service, it provides accommodation for Māori and non-Māori whānau and family members

The kaupapa is underpinned by the values of whānau (family and extended family), manaaki (care, respect and kindness) and awhi (help or support).

## **Referral pathway**

The referral pathway is currently ad hoc. Although some are told of the service prior to arriving in Auckland, others find out about it from staff or other whānau in hospital lounge rooms.

## **Service**

The cost is \$10 per night. There is no time limit on the stay.

## **Value of Te Whare Awhina**

Te Whare Awhina provides more than accommodation. It supports the wellbeing of both patients and residents during an extremely stressful period of their lives.

Staff and residents described Te Whare Awhina as a place of awhi, love, manaaki, care and support, and whānau. They see it as a whānau environment that provided them with respite from the emotional and physical exhaustion they are dealing with on a daily basis.

The staff play a central role within Te Whare Awhina, providing guardianship of the facility and support to the residents.

For whānau and family, the nature or standard of the accommodation was considerably less important than the support it provided. This appeared to be particularly important to Māori and those from small, tight-knit communities or whānau/families who arrived in Auckland without support.

However, one of the greatest contributions Te Whare Awhina appeared to make to the wellbeing of whānau and family is that it allowed residents to share their stories and experiences. Interviewees felt that sharing experiences with others was very reassuring.

### **Areas for improvement**

Residents and staff have made suggestions about how the services at Te Whare Awhina could be improved.

Te Whare Awhina is under pressure with staff having to find accommodation for whānau and family members. Staff reiterated that extra rooms would allow them to accommodate more whānau in need and would mean they no longer had to turn people away.

Residents have asked if more members of the same whānau can be accommodated.

The facility is scruffy and both staff and clients that Te Whare could do with a substantial facelift and refit. This could include thicker curtains to block out the security lights from the hospital grounds.

Staff believe the service to disabled people could be improved significantly, through more rooms incorporating disability-friendly design

Access to the internet would allow residents to connect with family members outside of Auckland in an efficient and cost-effective way, to pay bills and to generally keep in contact with the 'outside world'.

Food is currently sourced through a food bank. A more secure food supply would assist staff to provide the basic food items to residents.

Parking is an issue, and it was suggested that assigned parking for Te Whare Awhina residents would be hugely beneficial.

### **Conclusion**

Overall it appears that Te Whare Awhina provides a safe, supportive and secure environment for whānau supporting patients at Auckland City Hospital and Starship. The value of Te Whare Awhina is that it provides more than just a bed. It is a kaupapa Māori service that caters for Māori and non-Māori. Both Māori and

non-Māori residents describe Te Whare as having a warm and welcoming environment and staff that care for and support them.

The support residents received at Te Whare Awhina is credited with helping them to better support their loved ones. Patients too appear to be reassured that their whānau were safe, secure, being cared for and supported, and close by, and credited this with supporting their healing.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank both the staff of Te Whare Awhina and whānau who have stayed in Te Whare Awhina, who gave their time to help us understand the role of Te Whare Awhina, how it works, and the service it provides.

## **Disclaimer**

All findings and conclusions are those of the authors and are not to be attributed to Te Whare Awhina or the ADHB.

# INTRODUCTION

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## Background to the Research

Te Whare Awhina is an accommodation facility located on the site of Auckland Hospital, which provides temporary accommodation for the whānau of ADHB patients, particularly those living outside of the Auckland region.

Although Te Whare Awhina is a kaupapa Māori service, it provides accommodation for Māori and non-Māori whānau and family members. The kaupapa is underpinned by the values of whānau (family and extended family), manaaki (care, respect and kindness) and awahi (help or support). The aim of Te Whare Awhina is to provide an environment that supports the healing process of everyone involved (Staff, 2012).

While the Te Whare Awhina building and staff are ADHB-funded, revenue is derived from the resident district health board of the patient whose whānau require accommodation. This is provided through the Ministry of Health Travel and Accommodation Grants contract, which provides support for patients and their whānau who receive ADHB services, but live too far away from Auckland to commute daily. The facility provides accommodation for whānau of ADHB patients, however priority is given to whānau of patients who live out of the Auckland area.

This report on Te Whare Awhina forms part of the ADHB “Whānau as Partners in Care Project”. With a focus on, where appropriate, increasing whānau involvement in patient care, there may be a corresponding increase in the needs of whānau for on-site accommodation and support while their loved ones are in-patients at Auckland City Hospital or Starship Hospital.

The purpose of this report is to find out from Te Whare Awhina residents and staff how staying at the whare supports their involvement in patient care, and where improvements can be made.

This report will inform a potential upgrade of Te Whare Awhina facility to accommodate the projected increase in whānau who may use the facility in the future. This is in line with the aim of Auckland District Health Board which is to support whānau to take a greater role as care partners for ADHB patients.

## Method

This research uses a case study approach. Four staff members and four residents were interviewed. Stories and data were also collected from a cookbook written

by residents, which also contained the thoughts and reflections of some of those staying at Te Whare Awhina.

Patients and staff were asked how staying at the whare helped their involvement in patient care, and where improvements could be made.

## **Whānau journey**

As part of the research, we looked at the journey that whānau/family go through before, during, and after their stay at Te Whare Awhina to better understand their needs, suggestions, and the benefits of the support and service they received.

# FINDINGS

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## How it works

### Prior to staying at Te Whare Awhina

Travelling to Auckland with a seriously ill or injured family member can be a confusing and stressful time. Residents described the deep stress they felt when travelling to Auckland, which for many appeared to be very confusing, highly worrying and emotionally overwhelming. Some had little or no warning of coming to Auckland and arrived with almost no belongings at all.

*“A lot of them come with nothing, absolutely nothing. No change, no nothing.”*

**Staff member**

Others had some warning, but described the emotional ‘rollercoaster’ they had faced in supporting their loved ones during their healthcare journey.

*“We got the phone call at about nine o’clock on Tuesday night and they said ‘right, start making your way to Christchurch’. We got as far as Ashburton and they rang us and said to hold off because the transplant team couldn’t make it to the donor patient because of the weather. So we had to wait ‘til the morning. I dropped him off at Christchurch Airport at about 3:30am in the morning. He got all the way up to Auckland and at about 6:30 in the morning they sent him home because the organ had deteriorated overnight.”*

**Family member**

In addition to feeling deeply concerned about the health of their loved ones, the interviewees described how they felt when they arrived in Auckland, an unfamiliar city, with no idea where they would stay or how long they would be away from their home, families and friends. Most had no family or friends in Auckland. Many were concerned about the costs of accommodation and the financial burden of supporting their family member for an extended period of time.

For Māori with whānau at Auckland Hospital, there was also the consideration of accommodating numerous family members who may have travelled to support the ill patient.

### Referrals to Te Whare Awhina

Residents find out about Te Whare Awhina in a range of ways.

Many do not know Te Whare Awhina prior to arriving in Auckland.

*“Yeah, I didn’t know about this. No one in Kaitaia even told me, I just thought I’d be finding my own place to stay.”*

**Resident 2**

One interviewee spent his first night at Auckland Hospital on a couch, with no idea what was happening to his family member.

Some, however, were told of the service prior to their arrival in Auckland, by National Travel Assistance coordinators under the Travel Assistance Scheme or by social workers.

*“The social worker (said) ‘is there anywhere in Auckland to go?’ They kind of took over and that’s why I’m here. They kind of did it for me.”*

**Family**

These residents said that they found this reassuring as it was “one less thing to worry about” prior to their arrival in Auckland.

Some whānau members are referred to Te Whare Awhina by medical and support staff, including doctors, nurses, receptionists and kaiawhina. Staff in Auckland City Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit and Coronary Care Unit, for example, appear to be familiar with the service and regularly refer residents.

*“The ward receptionist over in Coronary Care asked me if I had somewhere to stay. I said ‘no’, so she rang here and told me I needed to be here at four o’clock.”*

**Resident**

Other medical staff have also referred guests.

*One of the surgeons ... looked at me and goes ‘how are you feeling’, and I burst into tears. He said ‘are you okay?’, and I said ‘I’m lonely for whānau’. He said ‘where are you staying?’, and I told him at the Lodge. He goes ‘have you not heard of the other place down the way in the hospital?’*

**Family**

Word of mouth also appears to be a common referral pathway, with some whānau who were not aware of the service finding out about it while chatting on the wards or in whānau rooms/patient lounges from other Te Whare Awhina residents.

*“Anyone can make a referral in this hospital, so we get anyone referring to us.”*

**Te Whare Awhina staff**

## Costs

It costs whānau \$10 a night per person to stay at Te Whare Awhina. Those interviewed did not identify cost as a barrier to accessing this service. In cases where cost was a barrier, staff have assisted whānau to apply for funds (for example through Work and Income) to ensure that residents were able to stay and receive the support they needed.

## Duration

Residents stay at Te Whare Awhina for a few days through to a few months. There is no time limit on the stay. As long as people have a patient they support in the hospital, they are allowed to stay.

## Capacity

Te Whare Awhina currently has 16 rooms. On a medium to long term basis the facility can provide 41 beds and comfortably fit 16 families (3 members per whānau). At full capacity Te Whare Awhina can provide 58 beds and cater to a maximum of 21 families on a short term basis, as there is an option of dividing two of the bigger rooms into single-sex rooms. Another option is to offer 58 beds to 6 families on a short term basis if there are larger whānau groups.

Residents from out of Auckland and those who are supporting patients in intensive care are prioritised.

Due to space constraints and the demand for the Te Whare Awhina service, there are not always enough rooms for everyone who needs one. The staff deal with this by creating shared rooms, in order to help as many people as possible. This means that even the single rooms are shared during times of high demand.

Staff limit sharing to no more than four people in a room in order not to overcrowd them. When space runs out and there is no room for new whānau members, Te Whare Awhina staff utilise local marae. Failing this, they will refer people back to the social worker or the hospital, who can help them find alternative accommodation.

Staff acknowledge that sharing a room is not an appropriate option for all residents. Some arrive tremendously stressed with very ill family members and for those people staff try to provide single rooms, if space is available.

Once guests have settled in, they often moved from single rooms into shared rooms, to ensure that residents who urgently need their own space can have it.

## **The value of Te Whare Awhina**

Te Whare Awhina was seen by the residents as providing more than accommodation, a bed or a place to stay. It supports the wellbeing of both patients and residents during an extremely stressful period of their lives. It provides practical support, like having a cup of tea and food available for the guests along with emotional support. It does this in a number of ways.

## Kaupapa

Staff and residents described Te Whare Awhina as a place of awahi, love, manaaki, care and support, and whānau. Those interviewed said that Te Whare Awhina was a place that felt like home.

They described it as a whānau environment that provided them with respite from the emotional and physical exhaustion they are dealing with on a daily basis. One contributor to the *Te Whare Awhina Whānau Thoughts, Reflections and Recipes* book described it as a “people-centred fortress filled with generosity, empathy, understanding, sharing, caring, laughter, and tears – not to mention hot showers and warm beds.”

*I came to this place where love surrounds, encircles, and embraces all who have the code to ‘Te Whare Awhina’”.*

***Whānau Thoughts, Reflections, and Recipes, 2012.***

## Staff

The staff play a central role within Te Whare Awhina, providing guardianship of the facility and support to the residents.

Manaakitanga<sup>1</sup> is a central tenet. Residents are warmly welcomed, and residents say that staff are experienced, skilled and highly attuned to their needs. For some this care is about simple things such as making a cup of tea or a bowl of soup. For others it is about providing them with the space they need, or someone to talk to.

Residents describe how staff do not intrude. They found the staff to be understanding, supportive and “available when you needed and wanted to talk to them.”

*Te Whare Awhina guardians (staff) who each have the gift of giving to each of us here just the right amount of support, space, and time. Never intruding but always available to us, their transient guests. It is obvious that your work at Te Whare Awhina is not a “job” but a way of life and I, like many others before and the many to come, am very appreciative of the work you do.”*

***Te Whare Awhina”***. ***Whānau Thoughts, Reflections, and Recipes, 2012.***

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<sup>1</sup> Manaakitanga is the Maori term for hospitality, kindness

The support is intentional and aimed at easing the burden for guests. Staff are very aware that doing these simple things for the guests takes a huge weight off their shoulders.

Many of the residents described the emotional connection they felt towards staff, and their gratitude for the way staff treated them in their time of need.

*Just having friendly faces every time you come down. Even if you're just having a coffee, everyone says 'hello' and they've always got a smile on their face. And you know there's always someone to talk to if you need to. It's great".*

Resident

### More than a bed

For whānau and family, the nature or standard of the accommodation was considerably less important than the support it provided. This appeared to be particularly important to Māori and those from small, tight-knit communities or whānau/families who arrived in Auckland without support.

*"I was so lonely (in Domain Lodge), I cried. I felt deserted, isolated, nobody knew me, I was a stranger in this big town, you know. I come from the rural sector and even though it was very plush and lovely, I found myself crying at night, you know, for whānau, for someone to share what I was feeling. I had all these feelings of anxiety inside me that I couldn't express to anybody. I was lonely."*

Family

### Shared Experiences

Te Whare Awhina was said by one guest as "the house of coming together". Residents described it as strangers becoming friends over a cuppa and kai (food), each on a journey, each with a burden. This included not only staff, but other guests.

The guests support one another with basic things, like showing new arrivals where they can find food or milk. However, the greatest contributions Te Whare Awhina appeared to maketo whānau and family is that it allowed residents to share their stories and experiences.

Interviewees felt that sharing experiences with others was very reassuring.

*"We are all here for the same reason, so it's calming to know others are so kind."*

Whānau Thoughts, Reflections and Recipes, 2012

Some interviewees said that realising there were families worse off than themselves and feeling empathy and compassion for others helped them to

better cope with their own situations. Others described how knowing others were facing similar experiences helped them feel less isolated and kept them 'sane'.

*"You think 'all these people and no one cares'. Sometimes I get like that in my heart. I don't show it, but in my heart I'm feeling all these people and no one cares, no one knows me. But knowing these guys are down here, I know I can ring. If I'm feeling lost or I'm feeling, you know, emotionally on that verge, I know I can ring someone and say 'can I come back for a cuppa?' or 'are you fellas gonna be down there? What time are you gonna be there?' So you've got someone to connect with."*

Family

*"To all the families we met during our stay you have all been wonderful, helpful, and kept us sane."*

Whānau Thoughts, Reflections and Recipes, 2012

Others felt that these connections provided them with the 'whānau' support they felt they needed.

*"I've got family but they're all looking after the home, our place, while we're away. I'm rapt that I don't have to worry about that, but it means they can't be here with us. So you kind of need that other connection here, so yeah, this place is awesome for that".*

Family

## Food

Eating and sharing food is another aspect of care underpinned by awahi and manaakitanga. Staff say they look out for residents, remind them to look after themselves and their whānau, and make sure they keep their strength up by eating regularly.

Meals are often cooked and shared. Some commented that the best part of eating together was that everyone sat around the table sharing both food and stories.

*"[It is] somewhere to empty your mind and fill your puku"*

Whānau Thoughts, Reflections, and Recipes, 2012.

Again, whānau and family reiterated how the shared meals and coffees reduced feelings of isolation, and gave them an opportunity to talk about their day, worries and concerns with others sharing their experiences.

*"Some true friendships have been formed at the Whānau kitchen tables of Te Whare Awhina!"*

Whānau Thoughts, Reflections and Recipes, 2012.

Tea and coffee, along with basic food items are provided.

## Finding their way

Staff help residents with basic information, such as where to park, where to find cheap places to eat, how to get around, and where to find places. Having someone provide you with basic information was considered very helpful.

*“Well really they’ve just been very supportive with everything. If I ever needed to know something, they’re always there to help. I had no idea around Auckland at all, but if I want to find somewhere, I know I can ask a staff member and they’ll quite happily tell me which way to go, and where not to go (laugh)”.*

Family

Residents were particularly grateful as many found the hospital system extremely difficult to navigate, communication to be poor, and felt that they did not have to face the additional burden of finding their way around an unfamiliar city.

## Patients

It appears that providing whānau and family members with accommodation and support is also reassuring to patients and reduces their anxiety. Some patients, despite their own health conditions, are deeply concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their whānau and family members.

*“My husband was quite worried about my safety, yeah ... he didn’t really know where I was going... He rang me at one o’clock in the morning asking if I was safe, if I felt safe, and I said yes. But he didn’t quite understand what was involved.”*

Resident

*“The facility Te Whare Awhina has been instrumental in my recovery. It has allowed my wife ...her sister ... to be on hand to care for me, (care not given by the busy nursing staff). They have supported me through the ups and downs of painful surgical procedures. They have prepared special meals (at Te Whare Awhina) to entice my appetite. To know that they were close (I can see the window from my ward window) was very comforting. I would like to thank the team for looking after them. Without (my wife) here by my side day and night I know I would have been very disheartened in the slow progress of my recovery.”*

Whānau Thoughts, Reflections and Recipes, 2012.

## Enables whānau to support their loved ones

The residents believed that their support was central to their patient’s care and wellbeing. Families saw themselves as partners in patient care, better

understanding the patient's needs and demands, and helping to make patients feel comfortable and safe.

*"Whānau can motivate their own whānau to do things that they won't do for nurses. For example my husband would go 'oh no, you're not touching my willy, no, I'm fine, I'm fine'. And he'll wet himself before he lets a nurse touch him. As soon as I'm there, honey do you need to go to the toilet, 'yes please'. No trouble. 'Are we gonna walk there?' 'Yes we are.' That sort of thing. It's not just the care, or having somebody available to do the care, it's the right people as well. It motivates them to try, you know."*

**Resident?**

## Location

Both staff and residents believe that having Te Whare Awhina on the same site as Auckland City Hospital and Starship adds significantly to its value.

Staff said that whānau and family are often called in the middle of the night to help settle their loved ones. Similarly the proximity means that residents are able to leave the hospital and rest as they know they are only minutes away from their loved ones should they be called back.

## Safety and security

Sometimes Te Whare Awhina guests are called back to the hospital at night to see their loved one. For some of the interviewees, the safety aspect of walking between Te Whare Awhina and the hospital at night was not an issue, as the hospital site is built up, with buildings close by and cars and people passing by. One whānau member, however, acknowledged that she felt fortunate when she met someone to walk with. She felt there was 'sort of' security on the walk to the hospital, and guests could always ask someone for assistance if they needed to.

*"I also know I can come back here and still feel secure. You know, I'm a person that didn't like walking at night time, but I just walk across and it's alright."*

**Family**

Others felt less secure, ensuring that they carried their mobile phones when going to the hospital or distracting themselves from being anxious.

*"I gotta say I did have a little bit of icky feelings coming down that long corridor, when a whole lot of guys followed me back last night. You know, they could grab me by the backpack here, you know, there's only me here. I just take my mobile, and make sure I'm carrying my mobile and if I feel icky then look like I'm having a conversation."*

Family

*“I just know when I get to the door, when I come in, there’s a sense of relief when I get inside.”*

Resident

The staff mentioned that security staff are very good at supporting whānau members to get up to the hospital in the middle of the night. Occasionally staff will assist Te Whare Awhina guests to visit patients at night if security is not available.

### Feels like home

Residents described how Te Whare Awhina is like a home and how it has everything they needed.

*Just having all the means of a home pretty much. You’ve got a kitchen, you’ve got a laundry, you’ve got beds. Everything just to make you feel at home, and it does.”*

Resident

### Overall

Some residents described how the experience of Te Whare Awhina had touched their lives and supported the healing process.

*When I leave this place it will be with a new understanding of myself (my strengths and weaknesses), a greater appreciation and love for my sister who supported me here, a revised understanding of emotional and material generosity, a deeper appreciation of whānau in the widest sense, and a gratefulness beyond words for Te Whare Awhina and its people for allowing me the ability to be available to my husband at a time when he needed me most. Haere-ra my friends.*

Whānau Thoughts, Reflections and Recipes, 2012

## Areas for Improvement

Residents and staff have made suggestions about how the services at Te Whare Awhina could be improved.

### Capacity

Te Whare Awhina is under pressure with staff having to find accommodation for whānau and family members. Staff reiterated that extra rooms would allow them to accommodate more whānau in need and would mean they no longer had to turn people away.

Increasing the capacity would also allow Te Whare Awhina to better cater for extended families that travel to Auckland and need a place to stay together. Currently staff can only accommodate three members of any one family due to capacity issues. Māori and Pasifika families in particular place high value on the support of the whole family when a loved one is in hospital, and therefore more than three people would need a place to stay. The staff regretted that they often had to turn family members away.

Staff suggested that rather than occupy just two floors of the current building and having 16 rooms, Te Whare Awhina could take over the entire building, allowing it to offer an additional 40 rooms to accommodate approximately 120 more whānau members and offer a better service to disabled residents. Taking over the whole building would require enlarging the kitchen facilities as well.

### Whānau room

Some asked Te Whare Awhina to accommodate more members of the same family and have special rooms for them to sit and talk together.

*“One of the other things I thought of was maybe a larger whānau facility, like they have the wharenuī at a lot of other hospitals for whānau that are terminally ill. Because I was thinking about it the other day, everybody wants to come because Papa’s sick, you know, a family member’s sick. But what if they were terminal, you know. What if we were told he’s gonna die, you know, he’s only got tomorrow or whatever. Honestly, you’d have sixty people that wanted to be here. Where are they gonna sleep? It would be great if there was a facility that could accommodate [this].”*

Family 2

Staff acknowledge that the current space does not accommodate those needs.

### Quality

Although residents preferred Te Whare Awhina to the more ‘plush’ accommodation options such as motels, it was noted by both staff and clients that Te Whare is scruffy and could do with a substantial facelift and refit. Both staff and clients believe that the building needs a paint job, new curtains, blinds, new furniture, and a bigger TV for the TV room. Moreover, there are parts of the building, such as a makeshift BBQ area, which are currently difficult for whānau to access.

### Disabled residents

Staff believe the service to disabled people could be improved significantly, through more rooms incorporating disability-friendly design. Currently, there is only one room suitable for someone with a mobility disability.

### Whanau helpline

One resident suggested a family help line.

*"I even thought maybe being able to make contact here, if whānau had a helpline they could ring here. Some of mine are too whakama [shy or embarrassed] to ring the hospital. You know I say 'all you have to do is ring the ward and ask how he is'. 'Oh no, we're not ringing there.' Especially his mother. I'm like, I'm sick of all these calls. I know it's all part of being here and supporting him, but it would be great if there was an update person here that could do that. You know, like maybe they have access through internet here so that whānau could ring in here and you could look up and say 'right, he's doing this, that or the other'."*

Resident

### Internet Connection

Access to the internet would allow residents to connect with family members outside of Auckland in an efficient and cost-effective way, to pay bills and to generally keep in contact with the 'outside world'.

*"I find since I've been here, our telephone bill has been so high. You know, even if you could set up somehow to have internet here and monitor it so it's not being used and abused. You know, I don't care if you have to pay a koha for it or whatever."*

Family

*"A wireless internet connection so that whānau can pay their bills while they're so far away. And the possibility of emailing whānau. Honestly, I must field about thirty calls a day on my mobile that I have to answer back to. If I could just sit down at the end of the day and do my emails, flick them off, that's the end of it".*

Family

### Heavier curtains

Residents noted that it can be difficult to sleep near the bright security lights that are on 24 hours a day as the thin curtains in the rooms don't stop the light from brightening the bedrooms. One interviewee suggested that heavier curtains would keep light out of the rooms and make it easier to sleep.

## Medical support for whānau

One resident felt that being able to access medication such as sleeping tablets through Te Whare Awhina was also raised as a helpful idea.

*“Once you get your family member settled in at the hospital ... sometimes you might need some sort of sleeping tablet. I don’t know if you could access a nurse to get some, because your whole routine is out as well. I just find sleeping so hard.”*

Resident

## Food and supplies

The food offered (which is supplied by a food bank<sup>2</sup>) does not always satisfy everybody’s needs as it is very basic, such as pasta and white bread. The staff would like to offer a wider variety but they do not have the financial resources to do so. The supply of food changes every fortnight and staff mentioned that they can never guarantee whether they can or cannot provide their residents. Regardless of this, guests are very grateful for the food they receive and some donate and share food they purchase.

## Parking

Parking is an issue, and it was suggested that assigned parking for Te Whare Awhina residents would be hugely beneficial.

## Security

As acknowledged elsewhere in this report, some clients do not feel secure walking between the hospital and Te Whare Awhina at night. Although the security service is offered, residents appear to be reluctant to use it. The barriers to accessing the service may need to be further explored so that the service can be more widely utilised by those who need it.

## Conclusion

Although the sample size is limited, it appears that Te Whare Awhina provides a safe, supportive and secure environment for whānau supporting patients at Auckland City Hospital and Starship. Accommodation options, such as motels, are available; however the value of Te Whare Awhina is that it provides more than just a bed. It is a kaupapa Māori service that caters for Māori and non-Māori. Both Māori and non-Māori residents describe Te Whare as having a warm and welcoming environment and staff that care for and support them.

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<sup>2</sup> The foodbank Te Whare Awhina gets supplies from has always been shared with the Ronald McDonald House. Much of the food they get is outdated and needs to be checked carefully by the staff before it is offered to the residents.

Shared facilities, such as the shared kitchen and living areas, support residents interacting with others facing similar experiences. Residents considered other residents to be a key source of support. This appears to be particularly true of those struggling with feelings of isolation, such as those who did not have friends or family in Auckland, or who came from tight-knit or supportive families and communities.

The support residents received at Te Whare Awhina is credited with helping them to better support their loved ones.

Patients too, noted, that they felt reassured that their whānau were safe, secure, being cared for and supported, and close by, and credited this with supporting their healing.

A key strength of the service is that it is located at the hospital site. This enables whānau members to leave their loved ones, knowing that they are only minutes away if needed. The ward also value being able to refer whānau to Te Whare Awhina and families can come back to the wards on short notice.

Both staff and whānau members have identified a number of ways of further improving services They suggest that there are opportunities to:

1. Refer more patients to Te Whare Awhina prior to their arrival in Auckland as this would remove much of the stress whānau feel when they reach Auckland.
2. Improve Te Whare Awhina communications materials. Patients are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their family members while staying at Te Whare Awhina. Offering more detailed photos and information on the Starship website and in the Te Whare Awhina brochure would help alleviate this.

*“Even though you had your little brochure, there were no pictures on there to say that this is where we’re staying. I just had to describe everything to him basically.”*

**Resident**

3. Extend the capacity of Te Whare Awhina to accommodate more whānau members. If Te Whare Awhina occupied the building it could offer an additional 40 rooms to accommodate approximately 120 more whānau members, and offer a better service to disabled residents.
4. Provide a wharenuī either at the hospital or in Te Whare Awhina facility.
5. Upgrade the facilities (such as those identified on page 20 of this report) which are in need of a makeover.
6. Extend the number of rooms accessible to those with a mobility disability.
7. Provide internet access and, possibly, a phone for whānau members

8. Find other suppliers of food so that a wider variety of food can be offered to residents.
9. Scope the extension of services, such as parking and medical support available to family members.