

Early and Forced Marriage Program Fact Sheet



Are you aware of a girl or young woman who has left an early or forced marriage, or who is at risk of entering into one?

Is she homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

Would she benefit from having culturally appropriate, 24/7 therapeutic care in a welcoming family-style home?

Referrals

For further information or to make a referral please contact:

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“At Lighthouse we are all like family; inside the house but also in the office, everyone comes to talk to me. I feel free. I can go everywhere ... do anything I want to do. At the beginning, I didn't think I could be happy any more, but since I came here I feel so happy living in this house.”

Esin, 18, Lighthouse EFM Therapeutic Home resident

Seeking referrals for Victoria's first early and forced marriage care home

Lighthouse Foundation is actively seeking referrals for our Early and Forced Marriage (EFM) Therapeutic Home in Melbourne.

Established in 2018 with start-up funding from the federal Department of Social Services, this is Victoria's first care home dedicated to supporting girls and young women who have experienced early or forced marriage.

When there is no safe home to return to

Forced marriage – when a person is coerced, threatened or deceived into marrying without giving their free and full consent – is a crime in Australia. It is widely recognised as a global human rights abuse and a practice of gender-based violence and slavery.

Early, or child, marriage is a union where one or both of the partners are younger than 18 years of age and therefore are considered too young to give their free and full consent.

Girls and young women leaving, or unwilling to enter into, early or forced marriage are often faced with having to give up their family, community, culture and friends. They usually have no safe home to return to in this country or – for those who are sent to Australia as brides – back in their homeland.

These young people are at grave risk of becoming homeless and experiencing further violence, abuse or exploitation.

A light on the horizon

Lighthouse Foundation provides home and a holistic program of support for these vulnerable young people. We give them a safe, comfortable place to live, therapeutic care, and support to gradually reclaim their lives.

Lighthouse operates other homes across Melbourne for homeless young people from backgrounds of long-term neglect and abuse. We give them a sense of family and around-the-clock therapeutic care that is proven to work.

We are Australia's leading provider of home-style residential accommodation and trauma-informed therapeutic care for homeless young people.

To date, we have successfully supported over 900 young people to break the cycle of homelessness.



How the Early and Forced Marriage Program works

Our Lighthouse Model of Care is a treatment program that draws on over 60 years of empirical research into human development across the fields of psychology, psychiatry, trauma and neurobiology.

The efficacy of the model has been demonstrated through independent evaluations and more than 26 years of practical application through our Lighthouse care homes. Each young person in this home benefits from wrap-around multidisciplinary support from a team of qualified staff.

The EFM Therapeutic Program includes:

<p>A home</p>	<p>All Lighthouse homes are designed to be typical family homes where residents feel welcome and safe. Our EFM Home is a confidential home in an established, leafy Melbourne suburb. This home has additional, unobtrusive security measures due to its residents' special circumstances.</p> <p>The home accommodates up to five young women who each have their own room. The residents cook and do activities together, and also receive support from the wider Lighthouse family.</p>
<p>24/7 culturally appropriate therapeutic care</p>	<p>The home is staffed 24/7 by therapeutically trained carers who support the young women with everyday tasks and settling into their new environment.</p> <p>For example, if a young woman is new to Australia, the carers will teach her how to use public transport and help her attend appointments.</p> <p>Our carers have access to interpreters whenever needed.</p>
<p>Case management</p>	<p>Each young woman has a dedicated case manager who supports her as she establishes herself within her new community. This includes helping sort out visa status, finances, legal matters, learning English, education and vocational training, and addressing other cultural and basic needs.</p>
<p>Financial support</p>	<p>Young people enter the home with varying levels of financial capacity. For this reason, all food, bills and basic needs are catered for regardless of each person's ability to contribute.</p> <p>Where feasible, a modest financial contribution is sought to give each resident a sense of ownership over household necessities.</p>
<p>Therapy and clinical governance</p>	<p>Each young woman is matched with a Lighthouse Psychologist who offers weekly individual therapy. The allocated psychologist provides clinical governance for the young person throughout her stay. This includes facilitating reflective practice groups and supervising her care team.</p> <p>In some cases, a psychologist or therapist who speaks the woman's birth language will also be arranged.</p>
<p>Duration of stay</p>	<p>The program requires a minimum three-month stay. Then a tiered model of care is provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - residents who wish to move out into independent living; - those who would like to move to a less-intensive form of support; and - those who may need to stay with Lighthouse for a few years

Contact Us

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