Hutt St Centre
Adelaide, Australia

"Penelope enables us to have a single point for data collation and collection."

Summary
Each year Hutt St Centre serves over 40,000 meals and offers professional case management support services to nearly 2,000 people experiencing homelessness with housing, health, and an array of other issues.

Their many services include the Eastern Adelaide Homelessness Program, Aspire - the first homelessness Social Impact Bond in Australia, an aged care program working with people over the age of 50 years, a pathways to employment, education and training program, showers, laundry facilities, visiting health professionals, recreation activities and outings, legal aid, and nursing assistance through RDNS.

These are all services provided to the 200-plus homeless people who visit and access Hutt St Centre services each day.

Reasons Penelope was chosen
- Cloud-based database that provides a single source of truth for an organisation offering multiple services
- Recommended by other not-for-profits already using it
- Athena founders' background in social services

Benefits from Penelope
- Records now stored in one secure system that provides overview of clients and access to data reporting
- Improved real-time access to key client information and service history tracking
- Ability for teams to collaborate and communicate across multiple services and locations

Introduction

Founded in 1954 by the Daughters of Charity not-for-profit organisation, Hutt St Centre is dedicated to providing equal opportunities to nearly 2,000 homeless people in Adelaide each year.

Hutt St Centre's services help homeless people access education and employment opportunities, affordable housing, legal aid, and health care, while providing daily essentials such as shelter, laundry and shower facilities, and healthy meals. In 2017, the organisation chose Penelope case management software to replace a mixture of client information systems, paper, and spreadsheets.

We recently contacted **Hutt St Centre CEO Ian Cox** to learn more about how Penelope has helped organize the organization's data collection and service tracking in one secure and configurable system.

Why did Hutt St Centre choose Penelope?

Hutt St Centre had developed the first homelessness Social Impact Bond in Australia, and we had always wanted one database for our client case management system.

Penelope was designed by social workers in Canada, which certainly appealed to us, and it was also highly recommended by two leading not-for-profits in Adelaide.

What was your organisation using to track client information prior to choosing Penelope?

We were using multiple client information databases and systems, online portals, and things like Microsoft Access and Excel to track outcomes, which created a mess at times and we couldn't extract the information we often required.

What was your deployment experience like?

It was a long process, but well thought through internally. Because it was a staggered deployment across all of our programs, it enabled us to work out any issues with programs as they were happening in real time.

It was a steep learning curve but embraced by the team, and we were fortunate in that we could contact the other organisations in Adelaide using Penelope to help guide us.

Hutt St Centre provides food and shelter to hundreds of homeless people each day, while also providing them with access to legal aid, and education and employment opportunities.

What are the pain points that Penelope is solving for Hutt St Centre?

Penelope enables us to have a single point for data collation and collection, and also helps us to understand what people are using in our services.

We can now tell whether someone accesses meals in real time, whether someone is or has been connected with our service before, and any potential updates or emergencies related to a client.

We have moved from an output-based service to an outcomes-based organisation with data becoming a real solution.

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How is Penelope used by your staff? What has their experience been like using the software?

Penelope is used by all of our case management staff and program leaders, and their experience varies depending on the program they work in, previous experiences, and understanding of computer systems work and data management.

We are still learning about the capabilities of both Penelope and the data capture amongst our staff group.

What are some of the benefits you've seen from using Penelope?

Penelope has supported Hutt St Centre to capture better data access in real time, and across all of our programs, in one place.

We can see when a client walks through the door and find out who their case manager is, whether they have any appointments upcoming, and how they are going.

The data captured has helped us shape people's stories and helped teams work together across buildings. It has helped Hutt St Centre, through the data capture, take a leadership role in the homelessness sector.

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Do you have any recommendations for other organisations who are considering Penelope?

Give it time and once people understand the system and can see the impact it is making, they will be able to provide their Board and staff group with confidence.

Would you recommend Penelope to other organisations?

Yes, definitely.