Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance (EHSSA)

Fact Sheets

Updated February 2017

EHSSA FACT Sheets

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	2		9/1/13	• New Fact Sheet – Initial Assessment & Planning
	3		9/1/13	• New Fact Sheet – Initial Assessment & Planning Tool
	4		9/1/13	• New Fact Sheet – Prioritisation Grid
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Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 1

First Contact

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Purpose

This information is intended to provide Homelessness Support Services (HSS) with an understanding about First Contact principles and practices.

Definition

First Contact is an initial screening for risk and service requirements and determines whether the client needs initial assessment for homelessness assistance. First Contact enables the worker to gather enough information to determine whether the client is in the right place.

Level of Contact

Depending on the Entry Points arrangements, the First Contact function may be performed by the receptionist or the initial assessment and planning (IAP) worker.

All office drop in's and phone contacts are provided with a level of First Contact. The role of the worker is to gather enough information from the client to determine what assistance is needed and whether the service is the appropriate provider.

Process

1. Welcome the client and determine whether they are in the right place. Is the person homeless or at risk of homelessness? Is an interpreter required?

2. Provide housing information and/or assistance as required. Where an appointment is required to discuss homelessness circumstances with an Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) worker explain the likely waiting time and what they can expect from the service.

In principle, client can access whichever opening door they wish. In practice there are often difficulties with this principle due to the limited staffing and funding resources available.

Phone calls from clients:

Opening Doors Intake discuss with clients where they have been living the past month (not just last night) and use this as the main guide for suggesting an opening door to make contact with. Phone numbers are provided after discussion about whether there is a reason not to access this opening door due to safety concerns or whether there has been a recent history with a particular Opening Door.

Clients presenting in person:

Singles and couples without children under 18 will be seen at the opening door they present at, whether they are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The response/outcomes will be the same at all opening doors, i.e. rooming house, private rental, share accommodation, youth refuge etc. For example, funds for rent in advance can be accessed regionally no matter which opening door is being accessed. If clients cannot be seen on the day they present then an alternative appointment/arrangement will be made.

For Families which include children under 18 who are homeless today, the opening door they present at will provide a homelessness response and ongoing interim homelessness support. If the family is not homeless tonight and they are from another part of the region, a phone call will be made by opening door staff to the opening door closest to their previous address so that an appointment can be made for them.

If families have presented at multiple opening doors, there may be discussion required between opening doors to assess which service can provide the most timely regional response.

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 2

Initial Assessment & Planning

Purpose
This information is intended to provide Homelessness Support Services (HSS) with an understanding about Initial Assessment & Planning practices and the role of Initial Assessment Workers located at Entry Points.

Entry Point Functions

Entry Points provide the face to the homelessness service system. Entry Point workers have the role of initial engagement, of identifying the needs of clients, of preventing the need for entry to the homelessness service system where possible and referring appropriately where homelessness support is required.

The following are functions of the five nominated Entry Points in the Eastern Metropolitan Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance (EHSSA) and are undertaken by Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) workers

- Engagement with clients and initial screening
- Undertaking initial assessments
- Providing early intervention responses and active referrals outside the homelessness service system as required
- Providing housing information and assistance
- Best matching of services to client need and assessment of need utilising the Prioritisation Grid
- Prioritisation, including the management of the prioritisation list
- Referral/ allocation to resources in the catchment: support and housing resources to clients (e.g. crisis accommodation and support, transitional housing and support, specialist services, SHASP)
- Work with housing providers in order to facilitate client outcomes.
- Provision of crisis housing responses within staffing, financial and resource capacity.
- Assisting with applications to social housing, public housing, private rental & housing in general
- Provision of Interim Response (monitoring and early intervention) within capacity

Initial Assessment and Planning

Initial Assessment and Planning is a process undertaken in collaboration with a client at an Entry Point. Initial Assessment and Planning involves identifying, assessing and ranking the unmet needs of the client and, in collaboration with the client, developing a plan of action to address these needs.

Once needs have been identified the client is assessed and prioritised for resources and/or referrals to specialist services. Resources may include support, accommodation, financial assistance and or case management, advocacy, material aid or the provision of information.

During Initial Assessment and Planning, Entry Point Workers must carry out a risk assessment with clients. It is crucial that risks are identified and assessed during Initial Assessment and Planning so that strategies can be put in place to maintain client safety. Initial Assessment and Planning may be the only form of assessment and planning carried out, particularly if the housing or other needs can be met immediately. However, if the client is referred to a support or accommodation provider and the referral is accepted, the provider may carry out a more in depth assessment.

Practice Principles

- Address the most urgent needs first
- Tailor the assessment to the individual needs
- Consider the whole range of needs when assessing housing needs,

The level of assessment is decided in terms of:

- The urgency of needs
- The degree of vulnerability to the client or others
- The priority of needs (housing, emotional well being etc.)
- The relative urgency of needs between presenting clients
- How much the client is able to cope with/take on at that time

Process

1. **Introduction**
   - Provide your name.
   - Explain your role and how you can assist.
   - Discuss client consent, rights & responsibilities, confidentiality, privacy and your duty of care.
   - Are they comfortable speaking to you? If possible, try to offer options about the gender, age and ethnicity of the worker.

2. **Complete Assessment**
   - Encourage the client to explain their situation, and what they need, in their own words. Worker to provide prompts to ensure holistic assessment is completed. During the assessment take into account non verbal cues.
   - Determine household composition (including children) and names and ages. Are other dependents or people not present?

3. **Is there potential for harm to self or others, or for harm from others?**

   - Make a collaborative safety plan with the client for known risks and explain that you are concerned for their safety.
   - When assessing safety/risk clear, concise case notes are important for recording the choices made by the worker and the client, and the necessary follow-up work.

4. **Rank needs**
   - What is most important for the clients?
   - What must be done first?
   - What must be done today?
   - Client issues should be ranked, so that the most important can be addressed first. The client should make the decisions about the relative importance and urgency of issues.
   - Ranking needs and planning is used to address needs that cannot be met immediately.
   - Document the outcomes of the initial assessment including the needs and risks, response provided and next step on the Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) Tool on the EHN.

Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA Entry Points

The Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA has 5 visible Entry Points

Anchor Inc.
Contact :Intake Worker or Team Leader
112 Main street, Lilydale 3140
PO Box 103, Lilydale East, 3140
Phone: 9760 6400
Fax: 9735 5047

And

Wesley Mission Vic
Contact: Intake worker or Team Leader
291a Maroondah Highway, Ringwood 3136
PO Box 147, Ringwood 3136
Phone: 8870 4020
Fax: 8870 4099

And

Community Housing (Vic) Ltd
Contact: Intake Worker or Team Leader
26-28 Prospect Street, Box Hill 3128
Phone: 9856 0050
Fax: 9856 0051

UnitingCare Harrison
Contact: Intake worker or Team Leader
Knox Ozone, 1012 Lt Burwood Highway,
Wantirna South 3152
PO Box 4503, Knox City 3152
Phone: 9871 8700
Fax: 9801 3134

And

SalvoCare Eastern
Contact: Intake worker or Team Leader
317 High Street, Kew
Phone: 9853 5680
Fax: 9853 0953

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 3

Initial Assessment & Planning Tool

Purpose

This information is intended to provide Homelessness Support Services (HSS) with an understanding about the use of the Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) Tool.

Initial Assessment & Planning Tool

The IAP Tool is used Statewide to document client assessments.

Apart from a small number of standard fields, the IAP Tool is narrative in format. It is helpful for services receiving the IAPT if the IAPT contains comprehensive information about the full range of life areas. This includes housing history, finance, children's issues, mental health and physical health, disability, drug and alcohol issues, Family/relationships, cultural issues, Legal, Safety issues.

The IAP Tool is not a data collection tool. Data is collected via alternate means (SAMIS or SHIP) therefore only information required for an effective assessment and/or referral is gathered and documented on the IAP Tool.

Who Completes the IAP online Tool?

The IAP online tool is completed by Initial Assessment Planning workers at Entry Points and documents the outcome of the initial assessment discussion with the client. The Initial Assessment Planning (IAP) worker is responsible for ensuring the information contained in the IAP Tool is up to date at the time of referral.

Where a Crisis Supported Accommodation (CSA) provider[1] (excluding FV refuge) but including Young Families In Crisis (YFIC) programs, refers an existing refuge client to a resource (i.e. THM), the CSA service is required to create a new version of the IAP Tool updating information relating to the client's current needs, risks and actions to ensure that services receiving referral are in the best position to match clients appropriately.

Documentation Requirements

Initial assessment and planning is carried out as part of a conversation with a client. This narrative approach is seen as a more effective way to engage clients.

- All relevant information should be included.
- Information should be documented, as much as possible, at the end of the initial assessment and planning process
- IAP workers may find it helpful to refer to a prompt sheet during the assessment process to ensure that the full range of *life areas* has been discussed.

Accessing the IAP online Tool

The online IAP Tool is located on EHN in the top tool bar. HSS workers require a login and password for EHN to be able to access the IAP Tool.

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[1] Gateways, Kirrang Wilam, Casey, Wesley 121, YFIC

Guidelines for completing a Narrative Assessment

Purpose of the narrative assessment
- assess client needs and risks
- to refer to vacancies
- Criteria matching
- Pass on information to support

Information essential to make allocation
- Effective date
- "Response Provided" to detail dates and actions (showing continuous engagement from effective date)
- Legal name of all household members (including full name of children)
- DOB of all household members
- Gender of all household members
- Updates from crisis facilities to be clearly noted

Housing Need – Note if it's High Medium or Low

Housing Situation/History
- Current Situation, past housing history
- Private rental, OOH, THM, Rooming House
- Exploration of short term housing options, family, friends
- Blacklisting, reasons for this
- Access to RIA, bond, etc.

Support Need – Note if it's High Medium or Low

Financial:
- Income
- financial commitments
- debts
- fines
- savings
- budgeting
- gambling

Work/Education:
- work history
- school/training history
- literacy
- numeracy
- future plans

Supports:
- Agencies/workers involved
- friendship networks

Family/Relationships:
- current supports
- boy/girl friend
- DV/Family violence/other safety issues
- gender issues
- pets

Children:
- full names and D.O.B
- access/custody arrangements
- parental details
- school/childcare details
- health/developmental issues
- Family violence
- Child protection/Child First
- other services

Cultural Issues:
- Country of Birth,
- time in Australia
- visa status
- proficiency of English,
- cultural supports
- religious considerations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait status

Legal:
- intervention orders
- previous/pending court matters
- bail/parole/office of corrections conditions
- legal representation

Health:
- illnesses
- injury
- diagnosis
- medication
- doctors
- recent medical check
- hospital admissions
- pregnancy (including expected due date)
- health concerns
- lifestyle issues

Disability:
- Physical
- intellectual
- learning disability
- acquired brain injury
- living skills
- required modifications

Mental health:
- diagnosis
- present/past history
- medication
- admissions to hospital
- doctors/services/community treatment order
- suicidality
- self harm
- challenging behaviour
- anger management
- personality disorder

Alcohol and Other Drugs:
- current/past use
- use of counseling/detox/rehab
- current pharmacotherapy
- related health issues
- details of specific use

Current Safety Issues:
- DV/family violence
- neighbors
- unsafe areas
- risk factors

Checklist
- Does the referral meet the criteria for prioritisation?
- How many bedrooms do they require?
- Are details provided for all household members
- Is the effective date clearly noted and evidenced?
- Has the referral been checked by a senior/team leader?

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 4

Prioritisation Grid

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Purpose

This information is intended to provide Homelessness Support Services with an understanding about prioritisation and use of the prioritisation grid.

Prioritisation Principles

The following outlines the principles for resource allocation and prioritisation as taken from the *Opening Doors Framework*:

- Match the available resource to the person whose needs are best met by that particular resource
- Plan capacity to respond to people with high and complex needs, and those requiring early intervention
- Regularly review prioritisation policies using unmet demand as a key indicator to maximise services' capacity to match available assistance to need
- Take steps to address service exclusion practices within the network
- Ensure that prioritisation policies are consistently understood and applied by all participating agencies and workers
- Make prioritisation policies transparent for clients, other agencies and networks

Prioritisation Criteria

The *Opening Doors Service Coordination Guide* provides guidelines for prioritisation and describes the interrelated criteria of:

- Current accommodation
- Other housing options
- Stated and/or observed support needs
- Professional support available
- Assessment of an individual's situation and level of vulnerability

These guidelines comprise two tables with the criteria for assessing housing and support needs. (Refer Attachment)

Prioritisation Framework

Assessing housing need
The level of assessed housing need (high, medium and low) reflects the clients current housing circumstances, and the range of other housing options (if any) available to them. When prioritising, include all household members, adult and child.

Assessing support need
A person's level of need in relation to their support issues (high, medium or low) reflects an assessment of their stated and observed support needs, as well as the level of professional support they currently receive. When prioritising all household members, adults and children are included.

Level of Personal Vulnerability
A person's level of vulnerability depends on their individual capacity to cope with risks posed to their wellbeing. As an example, a person with a particular mental illness may have increased vulnerability in that they would be more susceptible to exploitation by other residents in a congregate setting. Intimately connected to an assessment of risks and

vulnerabilities is the identification of a person's strengths and supports. Factors such as a close supporting family, the ability to access and utilise a range of professional supports and resources will influence the way homelessness will affect an individual and will change the amount and type of support required.

The inclusion of vulnerabilities in the prioritisation assessment process recognises that people experiencing the same objective circumstance of homelessness can have very different subjective experiences, which will in turn affect the level of risk and associated need for a particular individual. It is important to be aware that an understanding of how vulnerabilities influence the prioritisation so that any assumed or formalised understanding of vulnerability hierarchies are made explicit and therefore open to evaluation. In addition to the subjective understanding of vulnerabilities there is also an agreed EHSSA list of vulnerabilities that will be considered when consideration is made about a person's Housing Prioritisation level.

Exemptions

Assessing and Ranking Client Need
Clients presenting with primary homelessness or clients living in a family violence situation at immediate risk of injury to self and/or children who are supported by crisis HEF funding for the purpose of short term assistance (such as motel style accommodation); and where no other reasonable accommodation options are available be assessed as a high priority.

This practice acknowledges that crisis HEF funding is a temporary intervention and is not a reasonable housing option or appropriate housing outcome.

Exits from Crisis Supported Accommodation Services
Clients exiting Gateways, Youth Refuges and YFIC Properties continue to be considered a high priority in terms of allocation to transitional properties where other appropriate accommodation options are not available.

Prioritisation Grid

Prioritisation for a specific resource takes into account all members of a household, including accompanying children. Specialist expertise may be required to better understand the needs and circumstances of particular client groups.

Housing Need

Level of housing need	Current Accommodation	Other housing options

High	Client experiencing primary homelessness (sleeping rough, on trains, in car, squatting).
	
	Client, living in a family violence situation at immediate risk of injury to self and/or children (possibly with Child Protection Order to leave violent partner or have children removed)
	
	NOTE: Clients presenting with primary homelessness who are supported by crisis HEF funding for the purpose of short term assistance (such as motel style accommodation); and where no other reasonable accommodation options are available are assessed as a high priority in the Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA
		Client has no other reasonable accommodation options:
		
		• Client cannot access HEF
		and/or
		• Accommodation cannot be sourced due to multiple bans from accommodation providers
		and/or
		• Accommodation cannot be established because the health or wellbeing of the client would be seriously compromised in HEF purchased accommodation, for example:
		  o Client has recently suffered physical attack within a rooming house setting, and it could be reasonably assessed that further accommodation in a similar setting would increase the clients experience of trauma
		  o Client experiencing severe health problems could reasonably be expected to be worsened by rooming house accommodation, but does not require

		hospitalisation o Client assessed as particularly vulnerable to exploitation or violence in a rooming house environment-for example, frail aged and families.
Medium	Client in current temporary accommodation assessed as detrimental to clients wellbeing: • Temporary accommodation with friends or family, with negative impact on client or • Client facing imminent discharge from institution (hospital, psychiatric inpatient unit, prison). **NOTE**: Clients exiting crisis supported Accommodation are assessed as a 'high 'priority in terms of allocation to transitional properties where other appropriate accommodation options are not available.	Client has no other more appropriate accommodation options available: • Client not able to access HEF from any source or • Client can access HEF, but the available HEF-funded accommodation options are likely to be detrimental to client's wellbeing.
Low	• Client in current temporary accommodation, ending soon or • Client currently has no accommodation, but is able to access suitable accommodation	Client has other suitable accommodation options available: • With family or friends And/or • Client eligible for HEF, and HEF-funded accommodation is deemed suitable for the short term

Support Need

Level of support need	Stated and/or observed support needs	Professional support available

High	• Client has one or more significant support needs currently having a major impact on clients functioning and/or wellbeing
	and/or
	• Client has multiple or complex support needs requiring intensive assistance
	and/or
	• There is significant risk of harm to client or others, due to:
	  o Major physical or mental health issues
	  o Vulnerability to violence (including domestic violence), exploitation or abuse from others
	  o Potential for self-harm/suicide risk.
		Client currently has no active support in place:
		
		• Previous support links may have broken down
		• Client may be resisting support
		or
		• Client has some support in place, but the support relationship is tenuous or likely to break down in the near future.
		• There is involvement from Crisis Services such as Child Protection or CATT Team which indicates there is significant support needs/gaps.

Medium	• Client has one or more significant support needs.	At least one support worker actively providing ongoing support to client. Level of support may be insufficient.
Low	• Client has minor support needs.	• Appropriate supports in place or • No supports in place • Client has not stated need for support

Priority Grid

EMR Prioritisation	Housing Need	Support Need/Risk
High	High	High
Medium	High	Medium
	Medium	High
	Medium	Medium
Low	Low	Medium
	Medium	Low

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA
FACT SHEET No 5

Prioritisation List

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Purpose

This information is intended to provide Homelessness Support Services (HSS) with an understanding about the principles of the Prioritisation List and its use.

Definition

The Prioritisation List is an online tool that enables Entry Points to manage demand and best match resources to client need.

Principles

Based on the Opening Doors framework, the Prioritisation Lists will:

- Make a commitment to equitable consideration of consumer need in relation to the allocation of resources
- Avoid consumers having to go from agency to agency seeking resources that are not available
- Avoid consumers being referred for the same resource by multiple agencies
- Keep all consumers with a need for a particular resource in consideration when that resource becomes available
- Assist service planning by developing a more accurate understanding of the quantity and nature of unmet demand.

A Prioritisation list will be held and managed by each Entry Point in the EHSSA. All clients assessed and prioritised for a resource will be included on the prioritisation list. The First Service Contact Date is the date that the client *actively* became engaged with the homelessness sector. Where there is no contact with the client for 30 days, the client will no longer be considered active. Should the client recontact the service, a new Initial Assessment Tool will be completed and the First Service Contact Date will be the date of the new assessment.

Access and Prioritisation

The Prioritisation List enables Entry Points to prioritise referrals to resources published on the Resource Register. Entry Points will prioritise referrals giving consideration to the client's preferences, links to area and advertised criteria.

When a referral is made to a single (non shared) vacancy the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date is considered first for a published resource. The length of time a client has been in primary homelessness also needs to be taken into consideration.

As the matching and compatibility of clients in multiple tenancy properties or congruent living arrangements is an important consideration, a client with a later First Service Contact Date may be considered over a client with an earlier First Service Contact Date in these circumstances.

Process

1. Access the *Client Search* function in the Assessment Tool menu on the EHN

2. Enter the criteria from the available fields to identify clients that will best match the available resource. The available search fields are:

   - Gender
   - First Service Contact Date
   - Unsafe Areas for clients
   - Person(s) receiving Assistance – Household Type
   - Number of person(s) requiring assistance
   - Number of Accompanying child/ren
   - Housing need
   - Support Need
   - Prioritisation
   - Existing links to Local Government Area

   The search result will identify IAP Assessments which meet the search criteria. The Prioritisation List will be sorted from the earliest First Service Contact Date to the latest.

3. Select the most appropriate client for referral to the resource and assign the IAP Form via the *Assign* command on EHN.

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Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance. Version 7.0

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Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA
FACT SHEET No 6

Exclusionary Practice

Purpose

To outline the agreed process to seek endorsement to publish a housing resource on the Resource Register that identifies client exclusions.

Background

When an accommodation vacancy is published on the Resource Register, details about the vacancy are recorded, including age, gender, disability access, suburb, shared, single etc. Client restrictions (or exclusion practices) such as mental health status, drug and alcohol and education[2] status are not endorsed as it is strictly against THM program and policy intent.

Unacceptable and Discriminatory Exclusion Practices

The following description of unacceptable and discriminatory exclusion practices is provided for use by local area service networks as an aid in making local agreements and protocols that avoid these practices. (Opening Doors State wide Service Coordination Guide July 2008)

Violent or aggressive behaviour—actual or feared

Clients who behave aggressively towards workers are sometimes banned from an agency or local area.

Worker/agency perceptions of client behaviour and intention vary widely—one may be able to cope with the sort of behaviour that another could not tolerate.

A cross-target agency working with a woman leaving a violent partner may refuse to work with the male partner because they assess that his presence in the agency poses a risk to the woman. However, if there is no other homelessness service in that area, the man must travel for assistance or go without.

An agency that provides shared housing may refuse to house a person who poses a risk of violence to other clients. The perception of risk may be very broad, such as all people with a mental health diagnosis or all people with a serious drug or alcohol issue, or may be based on past experience with that person.

Good practice signpost
All homelessness workers, particularly at entry points, should be trained in managing aggressive behaviour, and need to have access to high quality supervision. Give people the benefit of the doubt and base decisions on actual events rather than possible problems.

Intoxication

People who are intoxicated (alcohol or drug) might be evicted or asked to leave housing—especially shared housing, such as refuges and crisis accommodation—and may be banned from coming into some agencies. This is usually because of an assessment of increased risk of violence. Sometimes this arises through a value judgment by workers, for instance, that the person should be trying harder to abstain from using drugs and alcohol. Some people with mental health problems may be caught up in this exclusion if their behaviour is perceived to be due to intoxication.

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[2] With the exception of SFYPTRC and Foundation for Homeless Youth Properties

Good practice signpost
Drug and alcohol issues are frequently presenting issues within the homeless population, especially before people settle into housing. Agencies should have policies that include, rather than exclude, people with these issues as far as possible. If a person is intoxicated to the extent that they cannot manage the interview, they should be followed up when they are sober.

Criminal behaviour such as drug dealing, assault, theft
People might be evicted from shared accommodation if they commit crimes. Others may be excluded if they have a criminal record, especially of sex offences against children.

Good practice signpost
It should not be general practice to ask a person about their criminal record. If there are known risk factors, safety planning should take these into account. Where shared accommodation is not suitable, other options should be sought. Evictions should only occur for breaches of the Residential Tenancies Act.

Specific target groups
An agency may add an extra condition to access for a highly sought-after resource. This is often in the belief that it will mean a better outcome from the use of that resource. For example, an agency might only nominate young people who are still at school into their youth-designated THM properties, even though this is the only THM property available. Young people who are out of school may only have access to the lower quality accommodation options of caravan parks or rooming houses.

Good practice signpost
Local area service networks decisions on resource targeting must be based on increasing, rather than constraining access. Resource targeting should be based on evidence and care should be taken not to leave another part of the client group without an option.

Being from outside the area
Proof of a 'link' to the region has sometimes been important when assessing for resource eligibility, in the belief that local resources should be targeted to local people, and/or that people have a greater risk of failing if they are housed in unfamiliar surroundings. However, many homeless people have no connection to any particular area, and others may be looking for a new place to make a fresh start away from old trouble.

Good practice signpost
Provide a service regardless of area of origin and, when possible, check which other agencies may already be working with the client so that work is not duplicated or confused.

Failure to accept support
This is also called 'failure to engage'. A condition of being housed can be that the person agrees to work with a support agency, and that they continue to do so. This is because better outcomes are generally achieved by supported tenants, and sometimes because supported tenants are usually 'better behaved' tenants.

Good practice signpost
Effort needs to be made to understand why someone refuses support, because they may have very good reasons—which can be addressed. There are also a range of strategies to use to encourage engagement. Please follow up with your Team Leader/Supervisor for internal agency supports. Everyone has the right not to have a support worker, even if this seems unwise. Local area service networks and agencies should consider ways of offering housing options to homeless people who do not want the accompanying support.

Unwilling to work on support issues

Similarly to the above comments, a person may be excluded from homelessness assistance accommodation if they do not demonstrate their willingness to address the problems that the assessing agency believes has caused their homelessness.

Good practice signpost

Some homeless people may fall into this category, but they are all eligible for services. Some people may seem more amenable, personally likeable and ready to change, but this cannot be the basis for choosing or refusing. There are a range of strategies to use to encourage engagement.

Support needs assessed as too high

Agencies may refuse to support a person whose needs they assess as so high that they feel unable to work effectively with them. This may also be due to a feeling that the person is more rightly a client of another system—mental health, drug and alcohol, and so on.

Good practice signpost

Homelessness workers may have to initiate co-case management with relevant support providers so that the client can receive a fuller range of the services they require and so that the homelessness worker can concentrate on the housing aspects of the client's needs and risks. Local area service networks, in this region known as the EHSSA (Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance) can assist by developing protocols with commonly overlapping services. On rare occasions there will be no appropriate accommodation for people with high needs. In these situations your Manager may choose to alert DHS.

Exemptions

On the rare occasion that an exemption is required for special circumstances such as a detox program, multiple occupancy arrangements etc. approval from DHS must occur. Please follow up with your Supervisor/ Manager prior to contacting DHS.

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET NO 7

Exceptional circumstances for direct referrals to Transitional Housing/Support from Entry Points

Purpose

To outline the exceptional circumstances for referrals direct from Entry Points into transitional housing/support.

Context

In the Eastern metropolitan EHSSA the primary pathway for clients is entry Point to Crisis Supported Accommodation to Transitional Housing/Support.

To provide flow through within this pathway, clients exiting crisis supported accommodation (Gateways, Kirrang Wilam Youth refuge, Wesley 121 youth refuge, Casey, Young Families in Crisis (YFIC)) have an initial 24 hour priority access to all transitional housing/support resources. An Entry Point can only refer direct to a transitional housing/supporting vacancy (within the initial 24 hour priority access period) when the client meets exceptional circumstances.

There is no expectation that all clients exiting crisis supported accommodation will require transitional accommodation, or that all transitional housing/support vacancies will be filled with clients exiting crisis supported accommodation.

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Principles for Referral
• Referrals require completion of assessment and prioritisation
• Access is based on prioritisation, i.e. the client with earliest First Service Contact Date is first considered for the vacancy, with consideration given to length of time in primary homelessness.
• It is not a crisis response and workers making referrals need to consider carefully the individual clients suitability for a transitional housing/support response
• The primary pathway remains as Entry point *to* Crisis Supported Accommodation *to* Transitional Housing/support.

Direct Referrals to Transitional
Entry Points can make a direct referral into non shared Transitional Housing/Support where:

• Referral to a Crisis Supported Accommodation (CSA) is deemed inappropriate because the CSA is located in an unsafe area and the placement would put the client at risk
• The TH/S vacancy has been open for more than 24 hours and there are no referrals from a Crisis Supported Accommodation
• The accommodation is deemed to be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of a person's existing ongoing critical medical condition

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 8

Interim Response

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Purpose

This information is intended to provide all homelessness support services (HSS) with an understanding about interim response practice and referral processes.

Background

Interim Response has previously been referred to as 'follow-up' and is not a new function. The term formalises practices that are already being undertaken by all homelessness support services, i.e. the day to day provision of advice and support to assist clients to access resources and explore options.

Interim response is a temporary intervention which allows the homelessness support service to stay in contact with clients who have been assessed and are awaiting housing and/or support services. Interim Response helps to monitor a client's situation for changes and/or assists at-risk persons to prevent homelessness.

Interim Response is case co-ordination (not case management) which provides service continuity to clients seeking assistance when there are no appropriate or available resources.

Interim Response Categories

Interim Response is provided to two groups of clients:

- *Primary homelessness[3]*
- *Secondary homelessness[4]*

Interim Response for clients presenting at Entry Points who are experiencing primary homelessness will be managed by the Entry Points.

Clients presenting at Entry Points and/or contacting Entry Points who are experiencing secondary homelessness will be referred to non-Entry Point HSS for Interim Response.

Level of Support

The length and intensity of Interim Response may involve up to four hours of contact per week, for a maximum of two weeks. This will be followed with a reassessment by the service at the end of the contact period.

Contact may be a combination of telephone support, office-based face to face support and/or outreach support.

All clients requiring interim response will be provided with at least an office based support which may consist of calling the client once a week to update their circumstances and inform them of available resources. This aligns with the description of interim response tasks in the Opening Doors Framework.

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[3] People without conventional accommodation; living on the streets, in deserted buildings, parks etc (Office of Housing Homelessness Assistance Program Guidelines and Conditions of Funding 2006-2009)
[4] People moving between various forms of temporary shelter; friends, emergency accommodation, refuges, hostels and boarding houses (Office of Housing Homelessness Assistance Program Guidelines and Conditions of Funding 2006-2009)

Interim Response Tasks

Interim response involves exploring options with the client. These will vary depending on the client's demographics, i.e. whether young/single/family, and their personal circumstances. Interim response activities may include (but not be limited to) one or more of the following tasks:

- Accessing family violence bond and access to Family Violence Private rental brokerage
- Accessing financial assistance through material aid or negotiating with Centre link and debtors
- Acting as a contact point for messages and correspondence
- Assistance with Office of Housing bond debt repayments
- Clarifying with person(s) to look at their next options
- Determining HEF eligibility for rent advance
- Engaging with schools
- Following up on the outcomes of referrals made
- Identifying alternative accommodation locations out of the region including country regions
- Investigating private rental options other than real estate agents e.g. private landlords
- Listing people for case-managed support and transitional housing as they become available
- Making referrals as required to services such as legal, health, counselling or family support
- Providing assistance to sort belongings
- Providing assistance with new or existing housing applications
- Providing information on the homelessness service system and the realities of housing options available
- Resourcing the person(s) to access real estate agents
- Reviewing immediate needs
- Safety planning
- Staying in contact with people temporarily housed in purchased emergency accommodation (i.e. caravan parks, motels and rooming houses)
- Supporting connections with family and friends

Interim Response Providers

- All EHSSA Entry Points (Primary Homelessness)
- Regional Family Reconciliation staff
- Creating Connections
- Non Entry Point HSS - Connections, Family Access Network, Ngwala, SHIFT
- The Regional Interim Support Team

Where persons experiencing secondary homelessness are referred via an Entry Point, the Non-Entry Point HSS service will lead the interim response, in partnership with the Entry Point services. This will be done with an understanding that if the housing circumstances deteriorate, Entry Point service will not relinquish the case coordination role for the client.

Referrals from Entry Points to Non Entry Point Housing Support Services

1. Non entry point HSS to regularly assess their capacity to provide Interim Response

2. Non Entry Point HSS to publish vacancies for interim response capacity on the Resource Register under the Resource Category *Interim Response* and Resource Type *Interim Response*

3. Initial Assessment and Planning workers at Entry Points to refer prioritised client by assigning the Initial Assessment & Planning (IAP) Tool on the Eastern Housing Network (EHN) to the adverting HSS

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 9

Purchased Crisis Accommodation

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Purpose

This information is intended to provide homelessness support services (HSS) with an understanding of purchased crisis accommodation processes and limitations.

Context

The Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) has a number of HSS funded crisis supported accommodation facilities which provide immediate short term supported accommodation.

When there are no crisis supported accommodation vacancies or options available, Entry Points may purchase crisis accommodation using HEF or other types of brokerage funding.

Purchased crisis accommodation is defined as any overnight accommodation option that is arranged by the Entry Point such as hotels, caravan parks or boarding houses.

Funding Assistance

The Housing Establishment Guidelines provide guidance on the purpose and use of HEF. Historically, the EMR has divided the EMR HEF allocation into two distinct functions:

Crisis HEF:	For the purpose of overnight crisis accommodation
Preventative HEF:	For the purpose of housing establishment (rent in advance) and rent in arrears, etc.

Entry Points place clients in emergency accommodation during business hours either through HEF, other funding sources or through the agencies own funds. Funding for emergency accommodation is limited.

Access

Entry Points allocate a purchased crisis accommodation placement after ascertaining that the client cannot safely stay with friends or relatives and no alternative accommodation options are available. Entry Points should also check with state-wide services for vacancies as appropriate (see over)

If there is no option other than purchased crisis accommodation, ascertain if the client can contribute towards the cost.

There is no defined limit to the number of nights a person can be assisted HEF purchased crisis accommodation in one episode, nor is there a limit to the number of episodes of HEF purchased crisis accommodation in any given year.

Process

1. Check that the client can make their way to the purchased crisis accommodation.

2. Advise the client that the arrangement is overnight or weekend only and that they will need to re-present at the Entry Point the next working day.

3. Next working day Entry Points check both crisis and transitional vacancies on the Resource Register. Make referral(s) as appropriate.

4. In addition to looking at regional Crisis or Transitional Housing/Support vacancies, there may be other appropriate housing outcomes for the client and these would normally be explored by Entry Points.

5. If there are no regional vacancies, check with state wide services as appropriate. Note that it is **not** best practice to merely give phone numbers of these services to clients.

6. It is considered Best Practice for workers to phone State wide services on behalf of a client and make a warm referral which includes all relevant information.

7. It is not considered Best Practice to merely give phone numbers of State wide services to clients. It is acknowledged however, at times of high demand, particularly late in the day, clients may be given an agency list of phone numbers which may include:

    *   Melbourne Youth Support Service
    *   Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria
    *   St Kilda Crisis Centre (Provides 24 hours statewide afterhours service)
    *   Hanover Southbank
    *   Flagstaff
    *   Ozanam

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 10

Transitional Outreach Support (without Housing)

Purpose

This information is intended to provide homelessness support services (HSS) with an understanding of transitional support processes and alternative options.

Definition

Transitional support (without housing) has previously been referred to as Outreach Support in the Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

Transitional outreach support provides assessment and referral and case managed support beyond crisis, which may include counselling, crisis resolution, personal care, life skills, training, information, and advocacy and/or assistance with accessing appropriate long term housing and training and employment opportunities.

Transitional support may be provided to a client living in the community and who is experiencing homelessness and/or family violence. The living situation could be varied and include the person's own home, marginal accommodation, living temporarily with family or friends, or sleeping rough. HSS workers will need to check the criteria for each transitional support agency.

Transitional support may include outreach to clients in transitional housing (Fact Sheet 11)

Circumstances where it may be appropriate to link a client with transitional support include:

- The client is in 'housing stress' and is seeking assistance with a range of issues to stabilise the situation; or
- The client is experiencing family violence but is not under immediate threat.

In other circumstances transitional support might be the only response an Entry Point can offer and facilitate.

Generally transitional support cannot provide the immediacy and intensity of response that a Crisis Supported Accommodation service can provide. Good practice suggests clients are advised as to the limitations and expectations of transitional support.

Process

1. All transitional support vacancies must be published on the Resource Register by the service providing the support.

2. It is generally expected that an Entry Point making a referral to transitional support will have completed an IAP assessment. If more than one referral is being made and the transitional support service has limited capacity then the general principle of prioritisation applies, that is the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date is processed.

3. If a client has been referred through an Entry Point and picked up for transitional support, the situation deteriorates or escalates and the client requires access to other forms of homelessness assistance it may be appropriate for the IAP assessment to be updated. The referring Entry Point will complete an updated IAP and follow up with further referrals as appropriate.

FACT SHEET No 11

Transitional Housing with Support:

Purpose

The following is the agreed process for referrals direct from Entry Points to Transitional Housing Management (THM) services for referral to transitional housing/support services. This process is in relation to vacancies advertised on the Resource register, and not when an agency has nomination rights to specific properties. **Nomination rights refer to the exclusive right of an agency to place clients into a property and support them without the need to advertise the properties on the Resource register**. Clarification regarding nomination rights to properties can be obtained from DHS and the relevant Transitional Housing Manager.

Background

Transitional Housing Management (THM) services are responsible for coordinating referrals to transitional housing/support vacancies for single tenancies. Transitional Support Services are responsible for coordinating referrals to transitional housing/support vacancies for multiple tenancies.

This document outlines the process for:

1. Single Tenancies – Youth, Adults and Families
2. Multiple Tenancies – Youth, Adults and Families

1.0   Single Tenancies – Youth, Adults and Families

Process

1. Transitional Housing/Support vacancies are posted on the Resource Register directly by the THM.

2. When a vacancy occurs, the THM will initiate contact with the Transitional Support service to determine the level of prioritisation attached to the incoming tenant. The THM service will identify aspects relating to the suitability of the prioritisation with regards to tenancy history (i.e. neighbourhood fatigue) and the Transitional Support service will provide advice upon the suitability of client support needs giving consideration to existing case mixes.

   The THM service and the Transitional Support service will agree to publish the resource on the Resource Register with a high, medium or low need giving consideration to notional regional prioritisation splits of 70% high, 20% medium and 10% low.

   THM's will specify the prioritisation of the housing need and the support need in the Considerations field of the Resource Register. For example a Medium Priority may be published with either high housing/medium support or medium housing/high support or medium housing/medium support.

3. Referrals are coordinated according to the 3.00pm cut-off time, and are referred to the respective THM service as indicated on the Resource Register. All single tenancy vacancies will be published on the Resource Register with **a minimum three hour referral window.**

4. Where a vacancy remains unfilled, the general principle of the 3.00pm cut off time remains for whatever day the first referral is received. For example if the vacancy is

posted Monday and the first referral is received Tuesday morning, the THM service will wait until 3.00pm Tuesday to allow other potential referrals to be made.

5. Referrals need to include the full IAP assessment. The Initial Assessment Worker is responsible for ensuring the information contained in the IAP Tool is up to date at the time of the referral.

    Where a Crisis Supported Accommodation (CSA) provider[5] (excluding FV refuge) refers an existing refuge client to a THM, the CSA service is required to create a new version of the IAP Tool updating information relating to the client's current needs, risks and actions to ensure that services receiving referral are in the best position to match clients appropriately.

6. The THM services are required to advise the referring agency electronically or verbally when a referral has been unsuccessful.

7. THM services advise the Transitional Support service of the intended acceptance of the client and an indication of the sign up time.

8. As soon as a referral starts to be processed, the THM service will unpublish the vacancy from the Resource Register.

9. Where a referral does not proceed, the referral with the next earliest First Service Contact Date will be considered with consideration given to the length of time in primary homelessness.

10. At the point the THM service accepts the referral, the THM service advises and confirms with the Transitional Support service regarding the take up of support.

11. The THM service confirms with the Transitional Support service the client sign up date and time. It is not necessary for the support worker to be present at sign up provided the THM service has the name of the team leader/support worker, and a commitment from the Transitional Support service that the allocated support worker will contact the client within 48 hours of the sign up being finalised.

Access and Priority

The referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date is considered first with consideration for the length of time in primary homelessness.

Where multiple referrals have been received for a vacancy, the THM service advises referring Entry Points and/or Crisis Supported Accommodation services of the status of the referral through the EHN. This information needs to be given the same day that referrals are made.

2.0   Multiple Tenancies – Youth, Adults and Families

Process

1. Transitional housing/support vacancies are posted to the Resource Register by the Transitional Support service.

2. Referrals are coordinated according to the 3.00pm cut-off time, and are forwarded to the Transitional Support service that is 'allocated' to support the tenancy. Please note that for multiple tenancies it is the Transitional support service, not the Transitional housing management (THM) service which decides on the vacancy. This is in order for client compatibility issues to be assessed.

3. Where a vacancy remains unfilled, the general principle of the 3.00pm cut off time remains for whatever day a referral is received. For example if the vacancy is posted

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[5] Gateways, Kirrang Wilam, Casey, Wesley 121, YFIC

Monday and the first referral is received Tuesday morning, the Transitional Support service will need to wait until 3.00pm Tuesday to allow other potential referrals to be made.

4. Referrals need to include the full IAP assessment. The Initial Assessment Worker is responsible for ensuring the information contained in the IAP Tool is up to date at the time of the referral.

   Where a Crisis Supported Accommodation (CSA) provider[6] (excluding FV refuge) refers an existing refuge client to a THM, the CSA service is required to create a new version of the IAP Tool updating information relating to the client's current needs, risks and actions to ensure that services receiving referral are in the best position to match clients appropriately.

5. Transitional Support services are required to use the electronic 'non-acceptance or qualified acceptance of referrals' form for all referrals that fall into these categories.

6. It is anticipated referrals will be processed as soon as possible. Referring services need to be aware that the process could take a maximum of two weeks depending upon the processes of the Transitional Support service.

7. As soon as a referral starts to be processed, the Transitional Support service will unpublish the vacancy from the Resource Register.

8. Where a referral has been processed but does not proceed, the Transitional Support service will contact the Entry Points to gain access to previous referrals. The referral with the next earliest First Service Contact Date and /or the referral taken for the length of time in primary homelessness will be considered.

9. At the point the Transitional Support service accepts the referral, the Transitional Support service advises and confirms with the THM service regarding the take up of the vacancy and the date and time for the sign up.

10. The Transitional Support service confirms with the THM service the client sign up date and time. It is not necessary for the support worker to be present at sign up provided the THM has the name of the team leader/support worker and a commitment from the Transitional Support service that the allocated support worker will contact the client within 48 hours of sign up.

Access and Priority

Generally the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date is considered first. However as the matching and compatibility of clients in multiple tenancy properties is an important consideration, a client with a later First Service Contact Date may be considered over a client with an earlier First Service Contact Date.

Where multiple referrals have been received for a vacancy, the Transitional Support service advises referring Entry Points and/or Crisis Supported Accommodation services of the status of the referral, - that is, being considered or not considered. This information needs to be given the same day that referrals are made.

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[6] Gateways, Kirrang Wilam, Casey, Wesley 121, YFIC

FACT SHEET No 12

Families and Adult Responses:

Purpose

To provide an outline of available responses for families or adults.

Crisis Supported Accommodation

Gateways provide a Crisis Supported Accommodation service to single adults and families, including families under 25.

Gateways vacancies are published on the Resource Register by Gateways staff. A number of vacancies occur after hours. Entry Points list prioritised clients on a daily basis for After Hours vacancies on the After Hours Priority Table on the EHN website.

Referrals to Gateways from Entry Points are coordinated at 12.00 pm and 3.00 pm during business hours. Resources advertised during business hours will have a minimum two hour referral window.

The Young Families in Crisis (YFIC) Program provides crisis housing and support to families where the parents are under 25 years of age. YFIC vacancies will be published by the support agency, (not the THM) during business hours.

Transitional Housing/Transitional Support

People assisted with emergency accommodation can be referred either to Gateways or YFIC (If under 25) or to a Transitional Housing/Support vacancy.

Referrals to Transitional Housing/Support for families and single adults can be made direct from the Entry Point. The client does not necessarily have to be a Gateways or YFIC client for a referral to a transitional vacancy to be made. This can be because:
* The vacancy has been published more than 24 hours (as indicated on Register listing);
* Exceptional circumstances (refer FACT Sheet 7)

Referrals direct to a Transitional Housing/Support vacancy work towards the 3.00pm cut off time. Referrals can also be made by Gateways and YFIC for the same vacancy.

Referrals direct from Entry Points to Transitional Housing/Support vacancies are coordinated by the THM if it is a single tenancy and by the support service if it is a multiple tenancy. All referrals need to come with the IAP Tool and be prioritised using the Prioritisation Grid.

Prioritisation principles remain for all referrals, that is, the referral with the highest priority is processed first, one referral per Entry Point, one Gateways referral and one from YFIC.

Other Crisis Supported Accommodation services may be able to assist with a service response. It is not appropriate to provide the client with a list of phone numbers or redirect clients to these services. Contact should be made via the Entry Point. These are:
* Hanover Southbank
* St Kilda Crisis Centre After Hours
* Flagstaff
* Ozanam

Other Options
Support can also be provided to access Private Rental, Boarding House & Caravan Park options. Assistance can be provided to apply for Public & Social Housing.

FACT SHEET No 13

Youth Responses

Purpose

This information intends to provide Homelessness Support Service (HSS) in the EHSSA and Melbourne Youth Support Service (MYSS) with an understanding of service coordination responses for young people.

Crisis Supported Accommodation

The four Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA youth Crisis Supported Accommodation services are:

- Anglicare Kirrang Wilam youth refuge;
- Wesley 121 youth refuge;
- CASEY (Crisis Accommodation & Support for Eastern Youth).
- Young Families in Crisis (YFIC)

Gateways provide a Crisis Supported Accommodation response to families of any age including families where parents are under 25.

Entry Points and Melbourne Youth Support Service (MYSS) can refer directly to youth crisis vacancies.

Referrals to youth crisis services from Entry Points and MYSS are coordinated at 12.00 pm, and 3.00pm for Casey vacancies and Kirrang Wilam and the first appropriate referral for Wesley 121. Young Families in Crisis Vacancies referrals should be made by 3pm.

Each Entry Point can prioritise one referral per vacancy. Generally the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date is considered first, and the longest period of time in primary homelessness but is subject to the considerations of client mix and impact upon existing residents and vice versa.

Receiving services are requested to provide written feedback for qualified acceptance or non-acceptance of referrals via the electronic Referral Table.

Transitional Housing/Transitional Support

Referrals to Transitional Housing/Support can be made direct from Entry Points, that is, the client does not necessarily have to be in a Crisis Supported Accommodation service to access a transitional vacancy. This can be because:

- The vacancy has been published more than 24 hours (as identified on the Resource Register); or
- Exceptional circumstances

Referrals direct to Transitional Housing/Support vacancy work towards the 3.00pm cut off time. Referrals can also be made from Crisis Supported Accommodation services for the same vacancy.

Generally referrals direct to Transitional Housing/Support cannot be considered as a Crisis response both in terms of immediacy and intensity of support.

Prioritisation principles remain for all referrals, that is, the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date is processed first, one referral per Entry Point and one referral per Crisis Supported Accommodation service.

Referrals need to include the full IAP assessment. The Initial Assessment Worker is responsible for ensuring the information contained in the IAP Tool is up to date at the time of the referral.

Where a Crisis Supported Accommodation (CSA) provider[7] (excluding FV refuge) refers an existing refuge client to a THM, the CSA service is required to create a new version of the IAP Tool updating information relating to the client's current needs, risks and actions to ensure that services receiving referral are in the best position to match clients appropriately.

Each Entry Point can prioritise one referral per vacancy. Generally the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date is considered first, but is subject to the considerations of client mix and impact upon existing residents and vice versa.

Receiving services are requested to provide written feedback via the electronic Referral Table to the referring service or verbal feedback via telephone for qualified acceptance or non-acceptance of referrals.

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[7] Gateways, Kirrang Wilam, Casey, Wesley 121, YFIC

Attachment: Additional Youth service information

Melbourne Youth Support Service

In recognising that MYSS also operates as a youth specific state-wide Entry Point, DHS and MYSS have agreed that MYSS work co-operatively with the EMR Entry Point trial. MYSS will:

• Work towards the same principles and timelines as for regional Entry Point referrals; and

Subject to capacity MYSS will be able to offer transitional support to young people from EMR when all regional options have been exhausted.

MYSS has limited capacity to provide crisis accommodation and generally Eastern Metropolitan Entry Points should not refer clients to MYSS for this type of service response. Best practice requires that entry points phone MYSS to advise them of clients referred.

MYSS will complete an IAP Tool for one youth crisis vacancy only.

It is not preferred practice for youth crisis services to decline a referral from MYSS on the basis that it is an out of region referral, however it is noted that frequently young people wish to return to their region of origin and frequently the refuges experience difficulties referring young people back to their region of origin. Youth crisis services may negotiate to accept out of region referrals on the basis that the region of origin will agree to continue to refer the young person to options within the region.

Family Reconciliation Services

Family Reconciliation services are a vital component of the service system and are a means of linking young people with a service that can be effective in maintaining the young person within the family structure (provided it is safe) and keeping the young person out of the cycle of homelessness.

The Family Reconciliation services are based at:

•	Anchor Community Care	9760 6400
•	UnitingCare Harrisons	9871 8700

Transitional Support

If Family Reconciliation services are not appropriate there may be benefit in referring a young person to transitional support. All outreach support is published on the Resource Register.

Creating Connections

Entry Point staff may access services and resources under the Creating Connections YHAP 2 program for young people accessing Entry Point services. These services are also able to be accessed by agencies outside of the homelessness service system. Vacancies are published on the Resource Register and on Harrison Community Services website www.harrison.org.au

The following services are available:

1. Private Rental Brokerage
2. Intensive Case Management Service
3. Life and Living Skills
4. Youth Housing and Support Placement

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 14

Entry Point Referrals to Crisis Supported Accommodation Services – Youth, Adults & Families

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Purpose

To outline the agreed process for referrals direct from Entry Points to Crisis Supported Accommodation Services for Youth, Adults and Families.

Vacancies

In the Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA, Youth, Adults & Families crisis supported accommodation sites are Gateways, Kirrang Wilam, Wesley 121, Casey and YFIC.

Vacancies for Crisis Supported Accommodation (CSA) services are published at least daily on the Resource Register (can be more frequent if vacancy occurs after hours).

Vacancies at Gateways and Casey will be published on the Resource Register with a minimum three hours referral period. Kirrang Wilam and Wesley 121 close the vacancy once the first appropriate referral has been made. YFIC closes for referrals at 3pm.

One referral per vacancy per Entry Point is allowed.

CSA Services are responsible for publishing all available resources for their service on the Resource Register. Resources are published under the Resource Category **Housing** and the Resource Type **Crisis Supported Accommodation**.

Access and Prioritisation

Generally the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date & length of time in primary homelessness is considered first. However as the matching and compatibility of clients in multiple tenancy properties is an important consideration, a client with a later First Service Contact Date may be considered over a client with an earlier First Service Contact Date.

Process

1. Explain the CSA service to the client; outline the expectations and limitations before the referral is made. For example is there a curfew, will the client have to share a bathroom etc.

2. Assign the IAP Tool via the EHN to the CSA. This will update the colour coded status indication for the IAP Tool to yellow which indicates that the IAP has been referred.

3. The receiving CSA service receives all referrals made. This will update the colour coded status indication for the IAP tool to purple. The receiving CSA service processes the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date (considering also the length of time in primary homelessness) – that is the client who has actively been waiting the longest for a resource.

4. As soon as a referral starts to be processed, the CSA service will unpublish the vacancy from the Resource Register.

5. Once the referral is accepted, the CSA service advises ALL referring Entry Points of the outcome via the EHN with the colour coded status indication being green for acceptance and red for non-acceptance. Alternatively the CSA advised services of the outcome via telephone.

6. If the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date requires additional information the CSA will make contact with the Entry Point to gain further information.

7. If the referral is not accepted, the CSA service advises the referring Entry Point via the electronic feedback report and then looks at the referral with the next earliest First Service Contact Date, considering also the length of time in primary homelessness.

8. If the client does not arrive at the service or upon arrival decides not to take up the place the CSA Service should inform the referring Entry Point and then look at the referral with the next earliest First Service Contact Date considering also the length of time in primary homelessness.

**Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA**

FACT SHEET No 15

Out of Region Referrals to Entry Points

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Purpose

This information is intended to provide Homelessness Support Services (HSS) with an understanding of out of region referral processes.

Background

The EHSSA Entry Point model requires that all clients entering the eastern metropolitan (EMR) service system require an IAP assessment to be completed.

Referrals from out of region can be for any reason. The client does not need to have a link to EMR for an assessment to be completed.

Referrals can be for:

• Crisis Supported Accommodation;
• Transitional Housing with Support; or
• Transitional Support (without housing) (Transitional Support cannot be provided beyond EMR).

Access and Priority

To ensure equity of access, prioritisation works the same for out of region referrals as inter regional referrals. That is, the assessment and prioritisation is completed and the prioritisation determines access to an eastern metropolitan service response.

In the Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA the referral with the earliest *First Service Contact Date* is considered first for a single (non shared) resource, with consideration given to the length of time in primary homelessness. That is the client who has been active the longest. However as the matching and compatibility of clients in multiple tenancy properties is an important consideration, a client with a later First Service Contact Date may be considered over a client with an earlier First Service Contact Date for a shared resource.

It is not appropriate to reject an assessment because there are no current resources available. In other words undertaking an assessment is based on need and client preference, not on available resources.

If the referring service believes they have additional client information, a request can be made to an Entry Point for a revised assessment. Completing or revising an assessment is at the discretion of the Entry Point and prioritisation is the sole determinant of a service response.

Process

1. Good and effective communication is integral to assisting out of region referrals. Before commencing an assessment, explain the Entry Point process and the limitations to a service response. Key points for communicating to referring services to are:

    • Indicate a timeline for completing an assessment;
    • Once completed the assessment will be prioritised;
    • Prioritisation does not guarantee a service response; and
    • Even if the prioritisation is high, it may be that a service response cannot be facilitated due to the high demand.

2. Out of region services use the IAP Referral Tool to make a referral to the Entry Point. This form incorporates the IAP Assessment. This can be faxed or emailed to an Entry Point which can then update the IAP Tool based on the information provided. Alternatively the out of region service (or client) can contact the Entry Point directly for them to complete the entire assessment.

3. Out of region services (other than Melbourne Youth Support) cannot access the eastern metropolitan Resource Register. Services have to first make the referral and then the Entry Point will facilitate an appropriate service response. Out of region services are able to contact **ANY** Entry Point for an assessment to be completed.

CSA Services are responsible for publishing all available resources for their service on the Resource Register. Resources are published under the Resource Category **_Housing_** and the Resource Type **_Crisis Supported Accommodation_**.

Access and Prioritisation

Generally the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date & length of time in primary homelessness is considered first. However as the matching and compatibility of clients in multiple tenancy properties is an important consideration, a client with a later First Service Contact Date may be considered over a client with an earlier First Service Contact Date.

Process

1. Explain the CSA service to the client; outline the expectations and limitations before the referral is made. For example is there a curfew, will the client have to share a bathroom etc.
2. Assign the IAP Tool via the EHN to the CSA. This will update the colour coded status indication for the IAP Tool to red.
3. The receiving CSA service processes the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date – that is the client who has actively been waiting the longest for a resource.
4. As soon as a referral starts to be processed, the CSA service will unpublish the vacancy from the Resource Register.
5. Once the referral is accepted, the CSA service advises ALL referring Entry Points of the outcome via the EHN.
6. If the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date requires additional information the CSA will make contact with the Entry Point to gain further information.
7. If the referral is not accepted, the CSA service advises the referring Entry Point via the electronic feedback report and then looks at the referral with the next earliest First Service Contact Date.
8. If the client does not arrive at the service or upon arrival decides not to take up the place the CSA Service should inform the referring Entry Point and then look at the referral with the next earliest First Service Contact Date.

**Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA**

FACT SHEET No 16

Entry Point Referrals to Crisis Supported Accommodation Services – Women Escaping Family Violence.

Purpose

This information is primarily intended for intake/assessment staff at Entry Points for referral to appropriate Family Violence Support Services.

Definition of Family Violence

Family violence is the repeated use of violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour by an individual against a family member(s), or someone with whom they have, or have had, an intimate relationship. (Full definition can be found on page 11 of the Code of Practice for Specialist Family Violence Services for Women and Children)

Client Group

Women's Refuge services support women for whom domestic/family violence places them in circumstances that seriously threaten or adversely affect their safety and security.

Women's Refuge Services aim to provide safe and secure accommodation and support to women, with and without children, who experience family violence and are in need of relocation from where they usually reside to enhance their safety. Services aim to assist women to address issues they face and their experience of family violence.

Women requiring Refuge Services need to contact WDVCS on 1800 015 188

Where a woman does not want to enter a women's refuge or is not eligible but is in need of relocation she should be actively referred to a generalist crisis housing service in her area AND referred to the family violence outreach service in her local area that can provide practical support, information and case management.

For many women who present at an Entry Point family violence will be a factor contributing to their homelessness. IAP workers need to explore this in the initial assessment to ensure an appropriate safety response and referral is made. It is best practice to use the CRAF (Common Risk Assessment Framework).

Eligibility Criteria

The primary eligibility criterion of domestic/family violence specialist services is women with and without children who are seeking practical assistance, information or support in relation to their experience of family violence.

Services providing crisis entry accommodation/support (crisis, refuge services) may have the additional criteria:

- *Women who are assessed (via common risk assessment) as being at imminent risk and who identify the need for accommodation to increase their level and feelings of safety*.

Attachment A

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 17

Referrals to the Private Rental Exit Program (PREP) – Community Housing (Vic) Ltd

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Purpose

The objective of this referral pathway is to provide transitional housing and support options for households who have been prioritised with low support needs and are likely to obtain private rental as their housing outcome.

As all tenancies offered are 60 days lease only, it is imperative that referrals being nominated for PREP properties have all aspects of private rental readiness explored so as to not disadvantage clients.

Nomination Process

The vacancies will be published on the Resource Register the same as other vacancies. The vacancies will be identified as PREP with an explanation in the 'Conditions' column.

Entry Points and Crisis services will be able to refer directly to these vacancies. All referrals are to be made directly to Community Housing (Vic) Ltd (CHL).

Nominations must consist of a completed IAP tool outlining the client's previous rental history and an attached PREP Assessment form to demonstrate private rental readiness.

PREP Assessment Form Demonstrating Likelihood of Private Rental

- Prioritised as low support need
- No Rental Blacklisting
- Financial:
  - o No significant debts
  - o No large / multiple debt repayment agreements in place
  - o No OoH debts / Agreement(s) in place to repay debts
- Eligible for Bond Loan Scheme/ HEF
- Provide rental history & rental references
- Desirable to have a vehicle to attend property inspections
- Rental ready:
  - o Realistic rental price range
  - o Rental affordability

Connection to the Area Where the Property is Located

Clients with connection to the area where the property is located will be preferred. Referrals must identify the household's connection to locality. This requirement exists to maintain community linkages and ensures that the private rental property search will be easier to undertake, requiring less travel.

Additional HEF Funding Assistance

Where a tenant is approved for private rental within the first lease period and is eligible for HEF, CHVL may be able to assistance with additional HEF funding.

PREP Assessment form

Please email/fax this checklist with the IAP Tool when referring a client for a PREP property.

Clients Name: _____

Rental Blacklisting	YES / NO
Significant debts / financial difficulties	YES / NO
Multiple debt repayment agreements in place	YES / NO
Do they have an Office of Housing (OoH) debt? Amount of OoH debt $ _____	YES / NO
Eligible for Bond Loan Scheme & Housing Establishment Fund?	YES / NO
Do they have a rental history?	YES / NO
Do they have rental references?	YES / NO
Do they have a motor vehicle?	YES / NO
Level of support required – Low / Medium / High (Please circle)	

Are they rental ready? (I.e. they have a realistic rental price range & their rent vs. income ratio is affordable – preferably less than 40%) 40% of household income including rent assistance is $ _____ p/w	YES / NO
What areas are they looking to secure a private rental property? List areas: _____ _____ Are there properties in their price range in these areas?	YES / NO

Signature of Client: _____
Name of Agency making referral: _____
Name of Agency Worker: _____
Date: _____

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FACT SHEET No 18

After Hours Entry Point Referrals to Gateways Supported Crisis Accommodation Services

Purpose

To outlines the process for After Hours referrals to Gateways Supported Crisis Accommodation Services by Entry Points.

Background

A number of vacancies for Gateways (families of any age and single adults 25 years and over) occur after hours. The following process ensures that vacancies are filled and equity of access is maintained.

Access and Prioritisation

Generally the referral with the earliest First Service Contact Date and length of time in primary homelessness is considered first. However as the matching and compatibility of clients in multiple tenancy properties or congruent living arrangements is an important consideration, a client with a later First Service Contact Date may be considered over a client with an earlier First Service Contact Date.

Process

1. All clients who have a completed assessment (IAP Tool) and who need crisis supported accommodation and who are experiencing primary homelessness can be prioritised for a vacancy that may become available after hours.

2. An Afterhours Priority Table is located on the EHN Website. Entry Point Workers can prioritize clients on the Afterhours Priority Table and must ensure the Table is maintained and updated with accurate information on a weekly basis (each Friday). Each prioritised client appearing on the Table is considered a current priority.

3. Each Entry Point identifies the most highly prioritised client according to different household configurations. These are:

   - Single adult – Male 25yrs +
   - Single adult – Female 25+ yrs.
   - Family- 1 bedroom
   - Family- 2 bedroom
   - Family -3 bedroom

   - Couples

4. When an After Hours vacancy occurs, Gateways looks at the online Table and selects the client with the earliest First Service Contact Date and downloads the IAP assessment.

5. If the client with the earliest First Service Contact Date is not considered by Gateways as appropriate, the client is not contactable, (or the clients does not accept the offer) the client with the next earliest First Service Contact Date to that category is then considered.

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 19

After Hours Referrals to Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre

Purpose

This information is intended to provide Homelessness Support Services (HSS) with an understanding about the state wide After Hours Referral Service operated by The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre.

Hours of Operation

The hours of service are 5pm- 9am Monday to Friday and operate on a 24 hour basis on weekends and public holidays. The contact details are 1800-825-955 or 1800- 626- 727.

State wide After Hours Practice

1. The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre will assess calls to determine whether the caller is in need of homelessness assistance. If so, The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre will provide a crisis response.

2. HEF is allocated on a needs basis and the assessment for use of these funds is targeted towards individuals and families who are contacting in a vulnerable state. After hours HEF is limited to the number of nights until the next business day. Clients will be advised to contact their regional Entry Point from 9am the following day to follow up accommodation needs.

3. The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre will confirm with the client that referral to an Entry Point does not guarantee next day assistance for HEF or crisis accommodation.

4. The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre will provide the caller with the details of the entry point nearest their last known address within the eastern metropolitan region.

5. The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre will complete the IAP Tool and forward to the local Entry Point. (with consent from the caller)

6. Where accommodation has been arranged, The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre to fax confirmation of the booking to the private accommodation provider. A Salvation Army cheque will be posted the following day.

7. The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre is responsible for delivery of state-wide after hours response within the annual allocated budget.

8. If needed, further follow up can be made via phone contact with The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre and the local Entry Point the following day.

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET No 20

State-wide Resource Register

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Purpose

This information is intended to provide all homelessness support services (HSS) with an understanding of the state wide Opening Doors Resource Register usage and processes.

Background

The state wide Opening Doors Resource Register provides a consistent and open approach to the allocation of resources. The Resource Register is a shared on line tool which is used to advertise resource vacancies. The Resource Register replaces the Vacancy Register previously accessed via EHN website.

Advertised Resources

The following HSS funded resources will be published to the resource register by the agency funded to provide the service:

- Programs/Courses such as Children, Living Skills, Mentoring, Parenting
- Housing – Transitional accommodation and Crisis supported accommodation
    - General THM vacancies to be published by THM
    - Shared THM vacancies to be published by service providing transitional support
- Crisis supported accommodation to be advertised by crisis support service. For example Gateways, Wesley 121, Kirrang Wilam, YFIC.
- Interim Response
- Crisis Support
- Transitional Support (previously referred to as outreach) including Creating Connections
- Brokerage
- Material Aid

Joint Initiative THM vacancies will not be published to the Resource Register e.g. Drug & Alcohol, Juvenile Justice, Corrections, DV, Youth, Mental Health, etc.

Access the Opening Doors Resource Register
The Opening Doors Resource Register is accessed via Department of Health and Human Services *eBusiness* application at www.dhs.vic.gov.au. To access, go to *popular links* at the bottom of home page and click *eBusiness Portal.* If already registered, users can log in with their user name and password.

To register click on *I want to register.* Then click on *Opening Doors PRD* and fill in personal registration details. Then submit your request. You will be notified when your registration has been approved

Enquiries 1300 799 470 or email IT.ServiceCentre@dhs.vic.gov.au

Functionality
The following information provides an explanation about the functions of the Resource Register. Please refer to the Resource Register Training the Trainer Manual for step by step instructions about data set up, publishing and viewing resources.

Data is entered into the Resource Register in two main stages:

Initial data setup: Involves adding the Agency Details, assigning Resource Types, adding new resources and their relevant data

Publishing & viewing: Involves advertising resources to other services and searching available resources

Manage Agency Details

An Agency manager is responsible for updating details about their service in the Resource Register. Some of the details are brought from e-business into the Resource Manager automatically. These fields are greyed out and can only be updated by the Organisational Authority of the service.

Resource Categories and Types

Services assign different Resource Types to themselves within the Resource Register. The Resource Types are published by category to make it easier to find the appropriate Resource Types. When adding Resources, only the assigned Resource Types are available to choose. (Refer Attachment for description of Resource Categories and Types)

Assign Agency Resource Types

Agency Managers are responsible for ensuring that all of their resources are published on the Resource Register. Other agencies cannot see your resources unless they have been published as available. The first step in listing resources is to select which resource types you have for each Resource Category.

Link a Resource to Multiple Entry Points

For some agencies, resources will be able to be published to a number of different entry points, both within their own Region and/or LASN, and within other Regions and/or LASNs. Which regions, entry points and LASNs are available to be used is set up by the System Administrator based on the Memorandums of Understanding that are in place for that agency. The Agency Manager should have an understanding of which other entry points are relevant for each of your resources.

Add a new Resource

Once all relevant Resource Types have been assigned, you can start adding new resources. Search for the resource first to ensure that it is not already entered into the Resource Register, then add the new resource.

Add data for a new resource

The type of data that needs to be added for a new resource varies depending on the type of resource being added.

Search for a Resource and view details

When resources have been added to the Resource Register, they will appear in the search results when you search for them. When a resource is added to the Resource Register, it is assigned a unique ID number. This number can be used later when searching for the resource. Resources will not appear to other agencies until they have been published.

Edit Resource Details

To edit the details of a resource, first search for the resource, then use the edit link to change the details for that resource.

Delete a Resource

When an Agency no longer has a particular resource to advertise, the resource can be deleted.

Publish a Resource

When a resource becomes available, edit that resource and tick the check box next to Published. This makes the resource visible to other Agencies within the EHSSA.

Unpublish a Resource

Once a client has been matched to a resource, services need to unpublish it on the Resource Register immediately.

Access Documents

The Resource Register contains a Document Manager, which gives all users of the Resource Register ready access to any documents placed on the system by the System Administrator. The Opening Doors Resource Register User Guide is located in the Document Manager. Any documents in the Document Register can be downloaded by any user state wide.

Run Reports

The Resource Register currently has the ability to deliver Vacancy and User Usage reports. These reports are separate from the current data collection tools funded agencies must enter client data onto in order to meet their funding and services agreement.

The Vacancy Report has been incorporated into this online tool to assist agencies to access real time robust data in regards to supply, that can then be matched to specific EHSSA/entry point demand. The information provided by the reporting functionality can be used to access gaps in service delivery. This may inform future resource allocation based on a best match to locally based demand data. This includes providing recommendations to DHS in regards to allocation/reallocation of resources to address gaps, or recommendations in regards to deploying new resources to address demand/client need.

User Usage reports indicate the number of times a Resource Type was assigned or removed from an Agency, the number of searches performed for a Resource Category and the number of searches performed for a Resource Type.

Target Group - A targeted area of service delivery designed to meet the specific needs of a defined population group/cohort. Target Groups within the Resource Register include:

- Aged
- Cross Target
- Disability
- Families
- Family Violence
- Indigenous
- Justice
- Mental health
- NESB (CALD)**
- Single Men
- Single Women
- Women and Women with Children
- Youth

**Where a vacancy is advertised as a multicultural or CALD vacancy, and in the absence of an appropriate referral, the usual target group of *people who were born outside Australia and have a first language other than English* will be extended to, but not be limited to, the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander population, Indigenous Maori and South Pacific Islander population. The Transitional Housing Management (THM) and Transitional Support Service will discuss the suitability of each referral.

Attachment 2 Resource Category Definitions

Resource Category: Housing
The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Housing (OOH) provides a range of housing assistance programs to Victorians, including direct tenure public rental housing, community-managed housing, financial assistance to people in the private rental sector and home ownership assistance. Responsive, affordable and adequate housing assistance is provided, for low income Victorians.

Resource Types available for Housing are:

- Crisis Supported Accommodation - Immediate short-term accommodation that is provided within a SAAP funded crisis accommodation facility that the director of Housing owns or head leases. Length of stay is generally no more than six weeks and provision of support is generally more intensive than support provided through other homelessness service models.
- Short Term Accommodation - Immediate short-term accommodation that is purchase by service outlets and provided by private establishments such as hotels, caravan parks or boarding houses. Length of stay is generally no more than a few days.
- Transitional Accommodation - The provision of accommodation for transition towards independent living or towards returning home. The accommodation is generally more stable and provided for longer than crisis accommodation (that is six months to two years), and is linked to external support through another agency.
- Long term community housing - Refers to housing where the tenancy management functions are undertaken by a community provider and a principle of the community provider is to provide long-term tenure to tenants.
- Long Term other (see conditions) - Other housing types exist that are not published above, such as shared supported accommodation for people with disabilities, and properties not owned or leased by the Office of Housing. This detail can be recorded via the "Conditions" in the details section when publishing resource.
- Rooming House - A bedroom within a boarding house (also referred to as a rooming or lodging house) that is not self-contained, and usually shares a common kitchen and/or bathroom. Boarding house bedrooms are usually accessed via a common entrance such as a foyer or hallway.

Resource Category: Transitional Support
General transitional support provides assessment and referral and case managed support beyond crisis, which may include counselling, crisis resolution, personal care, life skills training, information, and advocacy and/or assistance with accessing appropriate long term housing and training and employment opportunities. Transitional support is provided, irrespective of clients" living situations, e.g. rooming houses, transitional housing, squats, informal arrangements.

Creating Connections is funded/published under Transitional Support Category and provides additional resources for agencies working with Young People to access.
Young people aged between 12 and 25 are the single largest group assisted by the homelessness service providers in Victoria. Creating Connections provides an opportunity to for service-providers to strengthen their capacity to meet the needs of homeless young people. Resource types that relate to Creating Connections are all found under the Transitional Support Resource Category

Transitional Support cont.

Resource Types available for Transitional Support are:

- Transitional Support
- Intensive case management
- SAAP Family/relationship support or Family reconciliation
- Long Term Tenancy Support - Indigenous Tenancies at Risk Support (ITARS)
- Long Term Tenancy Support - Private rental
- Family Violence Outreach Support
- Creating Connections Family Reconciliation
- Creating Connections Housing and Homelessness Support / Living Skills
- Creating Connections Intensive Case Management
- Creating Connections Linking to the Private Rental Market
- Creating Connections Links to Education, Employment and Training
- Creating Connections Support for Young People That Really Counts
- Creating Connections Supporting Young Parents
- Creating Connections Young People Leaving Care
- Creating Connections Youth Focussed Housing Placement

Resource Category: Crisis Support

There is only one Resource Type under Crisis Support, which is also called Crisis Support. It is the provision of intensive short-term case managed support that is provided by a HSS funded crisis service. Length of support is on average provided for a six week period and the provision of support is generally more intensive than support provided through other homelessness service models.

Resource Category: Interim Response

The main functions of Interim Response are remaining engaged with the individual/households who have been assessed and are awaiting housing and/or support and to monitor their situation for any changes and/or assisting at-risk clients to prevent homelessness.

Interim response work includes:

- Staying in contact with people temporarily housed in purchased emergency accommodation (for example, caravan parks, motels and rooming houses)
- Assistance with housing applications and transfers
- Assistance to sort belongings
- Acting as a contact point for messages and correspondence
- Financial assistance through material aid or negotiating with Centrelink and debtors
- Referral as required to services such as legal, health, counselling or family support
- Listing people for case-managed support and transitional housing as they become available.

Interim response has a dual function of:

- Assisting at-risk consumers to prevent homelessness
- Providing short-term support to consumers assessed as requiring crisis or transitional housing and case managed support, but cannot access these services for a range of reasons

There is only one Resource Type available for Interim Response which is Interim Response.

Resource Category: Housing Establishment Fund - HEF

The Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) is a Victorian Government initiative that aims to address and prevent homelessness by providing financial assistance to individuals and families who are homeless or in housing crisis. HEF is a critical component of the Homelessness Service System (HSS).

HEF aims to:

- Provide people who are homeless or at risk with direct assistance in accessing private rental housing and securing private tenancies at risk;
- Assist people who are homeless to access appropriate and safe overnight/emergency accommodation and related services where no other option is available;
- Promote exit points out of the HSS and into long-term affordable housing;
- Target resources to those in greatest housing need;
- Complement other services to individuals and families in housing crisis; and
- Increase understanding of the extent and nature of housing crisis through a comprehensive data collection system.

Resource Types available for HEF are:

- Short term emergency accommodation
- Private rent in advance
- Private rental in arrears
- Private rental bonds
- Private rental brokerage
- Retrieval/storage of personal belongings
- Furniture/white goods
- Transport (e.g. bus, train fare)
- Other - see conditions

Resource Category: Brokerage

Brokerage is the provision of additional funding aimed at supporting people who are homeless or at risk to engage, maintain and sustain pathways into safe, secure and appropriate accommodation and to assist access to education, employment and training opportunities. Resource Types available for Brokerage are:

- Education, employment and training
- Men's family violence
- Other (please specify in conditions)
- Private rental family/domestic violence
- Private rental other
- Private rental youth

Resource Category: Material Aid

Material Aid is non monetary assistance or monetary assistance (e.g. retrieval/storage of personal belongings or utilities) from funds other than HEF.

Resource Types available for Material Aid are:

- Bedding/Linen
- Care packs
- Clothing
- Food
- Furniture/white goods
- Retrieval/storage of personal belongings
- Transport (e.g. bus, train fare)
- Utilities

Resource Category: Program / Courses

Program/Courses resources are those that give clients access to training in various areas.

- Resource Types available for Programs /Courses are:
- Children
- Education, employment and training
- Living Skills
- Mentoring
- Other – see conditions
- Parenting

Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA

FACT SHEET 21

Eastern Homelessness Network (EHN) Online Tool

This resource is restricted to workers completing or referring IAP's, or for agencies that advertise crisis, transitional or support vacancies throughout the Eastern Region. The EHN Online Tools is protected by a number of security measures. All agencies/workers have given an undertaking to conform to these.

Access to the EHN Online Tools

To gain access to the EHN Online Tool workers must first register on the home page of the EHN online Tools website at www.ehn.net.au

Individual Username and Passwords

All staff that require access to the online tools need an individual user name and password which is linked to an individual email address.

Retrieve login details

Login details can be retrieved by clicking on the link under the login box on the EHN Online Tools page. Individual's details will be emailed to them automatically.

IP Protection

The online tools site is protected by the organisations IP address. Therefore users can only log in at the work place associated with their account details. If a user's workplace changes their IP address (which is common) all users from that site will be unable to log in. To fix this issue you can call the EHN Networker / or EHN Admin assistant on 8870 4011 or email EHNNetworker@wesley.org.au

Tracking Users

There is a system in place called "Track Users". This enables the Website Administration to view a detailed list of the pages that a user viewed whilst they were logged in to the Online Tools Website.

**Homelessness Support Services
Eastern Metropolitan EHSSA**

FACT SHEET No 22

Homelessness Temporary Emergency Accommodation for Office of Housing Tenants

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Purpose

To outline the agreed process for communication and referrals between Office of Housing (OoH) staff and the Homelessness Service Sector (HSS) staff regarding temporary emergency accommodation for OoH tenants that are temporarily unable to reside in the OoH property.

This Fact Sheet is developed in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between OoH and HSS.

Background

This Fact Sheet and the associated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have been developed to clarify and formalise the referral process to ensure continuity of service for the tenant, through collaborative partnership between both EMR HSS and EMR OoH.

In some instances, OoH property sustains considerable damage, which requires the tenant to move out of the property in order for the necessary emergency works/maintenance to be undertaken. Example of this include when electrical fires have caused significant damage to the OoH property.

This MOU provides greater clarity around efficient communication, service delivery obligations and effective referral practices in instances where tenants require temporary accommodation due to damage to their OoH property.

Scope

This MOU relates only to those instances where the OoH tenant is deemed homeless or at risk of homelessness due to significant damage sustained to the OoH property that requires the tenant to temporarily relocate whilst the necessary works are undertaken.

The purpose of this MOU is to outline the operational arrangements for referral to EMR HSS' by the EMR OoH. This MOU is implemented to ensure a high level service response by avoiding the unplanned presentation of OoH tenants, in the above circumstances, presenting at an EMR HSS Entry Point without prior communication between both parties.

This MOU is the outcome of consultation and negotiation between EMR OoH and EMR HSS Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance (EHSSA).

This MOU has been instigated following enquiries from the EMR HSS for formal protocol to enhance service delivery for OoH tenants and is facilitated by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Homelessness Services Eastern Metropolitan Regional office.

Context and Limitations

This Fact Sheet and the associated MOU does not guarantee that the OoH tenant will be provided with emergency accommodation. The needs of the OoH tenant will be considered within the context of the needs of others requiring temporary accommodation and the demand on existing HSS resources. Resources are prioritised based upon an informed assessment of need, vulnerability and risk.

This Fact Sheet and the associated MOU is intended to establish understanding, clear communication pathways, and client focused referral practices.

Overview of the principles of the MOU

1. Incident occurs and OoH deems accommodation as inhabitable.

2. OoH places tenant in motel overnight and/or contacts the Department of Health Human Services Emergency Management Team.

3. OoH calls the nearest Homelessness access point to arrange an appointment for the OoH tenant.

4. HSS assess the OoH tenant's needs and considers placement in crisis accommodation in accordance with others in need on the organisations waiting list.

5. OoH ensure any further vacancies to OoH stock are offered to the OoH tenant as temporary accommodation option, until the tenant's OoH housing is habitable. To facilitate this, OoH will not forward a letter of offer to another prospective tenant of the vacant OoH property, until such time as the OoH tenant's housing is repaired and they have returned to their substantive OoH housing.

6. Where HSS have prioritised the OoH tenant for crisis accommodation, HSS should explore opportunities to place the tenant into a transitional housing until repairs to the OoH property have been completed. This will involve communication with the regions THMs to gain priority placement into the THM. This arrangement will avoid costly crisis accommodation for any length of time.

7. If the incident occurs after business hours, the attending emergency service can arrange emergency accommodation via the Red Cross.

Roles and Responsibilities (note, not linear process)

Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) Office of Housing (OoH) staff will:

- attend all serious incidents (where access is permitted) to assess both property damage and tenants accommodation needs,

- place and fund the tenant in overnight/weekend motel accommodation if no alternate accommodation options are available and/or contact the Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Management Team (refer to section 5.1) if the OoH property is deemed inaccessible and/or uninhabitable by the tenant.

- Call the nearest EMR Homelessness Entry Point to advise of the incident and arrange an appointment for the tenant for consideration to crisis accommodation. Due to

demands upon Homelessness Entry Point, it is not appropriate, nor client focused for the tenant to be sent to the service without prior notice.

- Refer to the Ooh tenant to the Domestic Violence Crisis Line where family violence is an issue, and the tenant requires refuge.

- Advise the Homelessness service of realistic timeframes for repair to the OoH property. In the event HSS can provide appropriate temporary accommodation, timely and accurate information regarding the length of repair can impact significantly on the type of temporary accommodation that can be offered. Each of the 5 HSS entry points have funding of $130 per day to respond to persons in crisis, therefore it is not possible for HSS entry points to fund a tenant for any length of time in motel accommodation.

- Consider transfer to another OoH property, and coordinate removalists etc. if the OoH property requires major upgrade.

- Lead negotiations with the OoH tenant to ensure they return to their substantive OoH property in a timely manner.

- Update the HSS entry point in a timely manner if circumstances change or further relevant information comes to light.

- Disclose to the HSS entry point any relevant, known information regarding the client (i.e. risk factors; behaviours of concern; licit and illicit drug use, safety due to family violence etc.) and act under standard duty of care principles.

- Provide to the HSS entry point at the point of referral, contact details for the tenants OoH Tenancy Manager to provide a contact point for further communication required regarding the tenant.

Eastern Metropolitan Local Area Service Homelessness services will:

- Provide emergency/crisis accommodation to those most in need. The needs of clients will be assessed within the context of the needs of others, and resources will be prioritised accordingly. The most commonly accessible emergency/crisis accommodation options are motels or rooming houses.

- Contact OoH to verify and confirm details of the OoH tenant, in the event the OoH tenant contacts a HFD entry point without OoH knowledge.

- Explore opportunities to place the tenant into a transitional housing until repairs to the OoH property have been completed where HSS have prioritised the OoH tenant for crisis accommodation. This will involve communication with the regions THMs to gain priority placement into the THM. This arrangement will avoid costly crisis accommodation for any length of time.

Appendix of Abbreviations:

CSA: Crisis supported accommodation

Casey: Crisis Accommodation and Support for Eastern Youth

CHL: Community Housing Limited

EHN: Eastern Homelessness Network

EHSSA: Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance (Formerly the LASN)

EMR: Eastern Metropolitan Region

HEF: Housing Establishment Fund

HSS: Homelessness Support Service

IAP: Initial Assessment and Planning

IAPT: Initial Assessment and Planning Tool

LASN: Local Area Services Network

MYSS: Melbourne Youth Support Service

OOH: Office of Housing

Opening Door: Same as homelessness entry point or access point

SFYPTRC: Support For Young People That Really Counts

THM: Transitional Housing Manager

YFIC: Young Families in Crisis Program