Vacancy Management System (VMS)

What is the VMS?

The Vacancy Management System (VMS) for homelessness services in NSW enables service providers to search for accommodation and support vacancies as well as maintain vacancy information for their own service.

A basic version of the VMS was introduced on 30 June 2014 as part of the new client information management system (CIMS) for Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS). The VMS has now been upgraded.

Why change the VMS?

The new VMS provides users with improved search functions and access to more detailed information about services.

The enhanced functions include:

- CIMS administrators can now enter and edit their service information
- easy access to detailed service information, including target group and services provided , locality data, and contact and referral information
- improved search criteria across a broad range of fields, including location and client group information, and the capability for multiple search criteria
- the capability to nominate multiple types of vacancy information including crisis, transitional, support, case coordination and brokerage, and allocate measures
- hover-over functionality that displays the resulting vacancy details
- search results in order of services most recently updated
- where addresses are supplied, a link to Google maps to assist with directions and travel
- reporting functionality that shows how often and how recently vacancy information has been updated
- free text fields that allow CIMS administrators to enter important information about their service.

Why do we need a VMS?

The VMS makes it easier for SHS providers to locate accommodation and support vacancies for clients based on their needs and will quickly identify appropriate services that will meet client needs.

Therefore it is critical to have up-to-date available accommodation and support vacancy information on the VMS.

What are the benefits to providers?

Ultimately, as a tool to assist SHS providers, Link2home and the NSW Domestic Violence Line to find services for clients, the VMS:

- provides a quick view of available vacancy information across NSW
- provides detailed information about the type of services each SHS provider delivers, including when and where
- provides the capability to search for crisis and transitional accommodation, support services, and brokerage
- enables users to search for services by locality, district or client group
- reduces the need to call multiple services to determine whether vacancies exist
- assists providers to work out the locality of services and travel arrangements.

When making a referral you will still need to phone the provider to check whether they can accept the referral.

What consultation has there been about the VMS?

The Streamlined Access Practitioner Advisory Group (PAG) was consulted in both the basic VMS and on the upgraded version. Feedback included recommendations that support-only vacancies be listed separately from accommodation with support; crisis and transitional accommodation be listed separately; a 'last updated' column field, after-hours access, and more detailed information about services be added.

How do providers use the VMS?

CIMS users

CIMS users will log in to the CIMS and see a 'Vacancies' tab in the top right part of the screen. The *Searching CIMS Services and Vacancies*, *Vacancy Management*, and *Edit Service Details* quick reference guides explain how to use the system and are available on the GHSH Changes to Practice [web page](#).

Non-CIMS users

SHS organisations who do not use CIMS can still access the VMS. Please contact cims@facs.nsw.gov.au for a login. Once logged in you will land directly on the 'Vacancy Management' screen within CIMS.

How do CIMS administrators enter their service information in the VMS?

CIMS administrators can enter their service information for their workgroup/s by logging in and clicking on 'Admin' (left side of screen) and then the 'Services' button (top right of screen).

This information should be entered as soon as possible to make it easier for other services to find out about your service.

The *Edit Service Details* quick reference guide explains how to enter your service information.

Can extra information be added if necessary?

Free text fields have been added to allow CIMS administrators to add in relevant information about their service. This includes a service description, opening hours, after-hours information, specific referral information, eligibility or ineligibility criteria, and transport details.

There is also a 'Comments and Restrictions' area where you can record brief information that might be useful for other providers at first glance.

How will VMS information be managed?

Providers are required to review their vacancy information on a daily basis and update information as the vacancy situation changes. In order for the system to work effectively, it is essential that all providers keep vacancy information current.

Who will be able to update the vacancy information in the VMS?

All SHS providers that have access to the vacancy tab for their service can update the vacancy information in the VMS.

How will VMS users see when vacancy information was last updated?

On the search screen, the date when the vacancy information was last updated is shown in the last column of the result list. The actual time of the update can be found by positioning the cursor over the last update date.

A new feature is the colour coding of the last update. Green means updated recently, orange means updated within three days, and red signifies the vacancy information is out of date.

Who else will use the VMS?

Link2home and the NSW Domestic Violence Line

Link2home and the NSW Domestic Violence Line also view the VMS.

Link2home, provides callers with information, conducts assessments, and makes referrals to SHS accommodation and support services.

A fact sheet with information about Link2home is available here.

The NSW Domestic Violence Line provides 24/7 telephone crisis counselling, advice, information and referrals for women and same-sex partners who are experiencing or have experienced intimate partner domestic violence.

Where can I go for help with the VMS and CIMS?

Providers can access the VMS quick reference guides here.

A fact sheet with information about CIMS is available here.

For assistance with CIMS login, password and workgroup access issues, ask the CIMS Administrator or Coordinator in your service.

For technical and user support, and to resolve critical errors, first check:

- Online Help
- Frequently asked questions
- Feedback page – to post a question

    or

- Call the **AIHW Hotline** on **1800 627 191** (press option 1).

For help with SHOR reporting, go to www.aihw.gov.au/shsc-resources/ or call the AIHW Hotline on 1800 627 191 (press option 2).

For any other service/CIMS issues contact the CIMS mailbox: cims@facs.nsw.gov.au.