



# Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Program - Prioritisation of service delivery

## Purpose

This document outlines essential and secondary (non-essential) homelessness services to guide and support DCJ Districts and SHS providers in planning, responding and delivering services during the COVID 19 situation.

The content represents guidance current at 12 August 2021, which is subject to review in line with relevant amendment to Public Health Orders and/or changing status of the COVID 19 situation.

## Essential and non-essential services

It is critical to keep delivering essential services that support those most in need. Where required, SHS providers can redirect resources from non-essential services to support continuity of essential services.

SHS providers are to discuss proposed changes to service delivery with their DCJ District contract manager. Agreed reductions to non-essential service delivery arrangements are to be communicated to clients and other key stakeholders, including the role and responsibilities of services and clients in the context of the COVID-19 situation. Changes to service delivery that are outside the scope of the provider's existing SHS contract parameters will need to be formalised via a Letter of Variation.

Subject to Public Health Orders, secondary (non-essential) homelessness services are still able to be delivered where resources allow, provided these services are not delivered face-to-face. It is expected that these services be delivered by alternate means, such as on-line or over the phone.

DCJ acknowledges that many people will need ongoing support, particularly those with complex needs. How this support is provided will need to vary, subject to Public Health Orders, for the safety of clients, staff, visitors and the public.

## Prioritisation of homelessness services

Tables 1 & 2 provide a summary of essential and secondary (non-essential) homelessness services. The tables are not an exhaustive list of all SHS services. SHS providers should contact their DCJ contract manager should they have questions or concerns about the list.

The content only applies to authorised workers who are employed or engaged by DCJ to provide homelessness services and are not engaged in prescribed (cleaning or trade, building, maintenance and repair) work. The content is subject to change, in line with amendments to Public Health Orders and the evolving COVID 19 situation.



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Table 1 - Summary table: Prioritisation of homelessness services (Essential Homelessness Services)

<b>ESSENTIAL HOMELESSNESS SERVICES</b>
<p>Essential services are to be prioritised during COVID stay-at-home orders. Providers must ensure these services are delivered in a COVID safe way and managed in line with Public Health Orders, including the use of appropriate PPE/masks and the mandatory testing requirements for workers from affected areas. Social distancing requirements must be adhered to at all times and any other necessary service modifications implemented to ensure a safe environment for clients and staff.</p>
<p><b>Service examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Congregate crisis accommodation facilities (decanted to enable physical distancing)</li><li>• Women’s refuges/ safe houses/ women’s shelters</li><li>• DVRE funded accommodation</li><li>• Youth refuges, including services receiving YCAE</li><li>• Emergency accommodation provided by SHS</li><li>• Any other crisis accommodation/ on-site staffed accommodation services</li><li>• Accommodation and support provided through transitional housing, including Transitional Housing Plus and transitional housing delivered through DCJ’s Community Housing Leasing Program.</li><li>• Moving clients into long term or transitional accommodation</li><li>• Food delivery services</li><li>• Assertive outreach with a focus on supporting people experiencing homelessness into emergency accommodation with support plans for ongoing assistance</li><li>• All services working directly with people sleeping rough, including but not limited to Together Home, STEP/ STEP Link</li><li>• Case management/ support services for clients in crisis and or with complex needs</li><li>• Homelessness entry points / ‘shop fronts’ where services cannot be provided over the phone and where physical distancing requirements can be maintained.</li><li>• Access to brokerage.</li></ul>



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Table 2 - Summary table: Prioritisation of homelessness services (Secondary Homelessness Services)

<p><b>SECONDARY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES</b></p> <p><b>Secondary homelessness services should be delivered by alternative means, including for example via on-line platforms or telephone. Where feasible, these services are to be delivered by SHS staff, from home.</b></p> <p>If required, resources for secondary homelessness services can be redirected to essential homelessness services.</p> <p>Face-to-face delivery of secondary homelessness services can resume under the easing of Public Health Orders.</p>
<p><b>Service examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Congregate/ community drop-in services/ Open access centres</li><li>• Congregate day meal programs (contactless pick up/ delivery of food parcels can continue)</li><li>• Family restoration/ mediation</li><li>• Group work</li><li>• Case management with people not residing in SHS accommodation service, should be conducted remotely</li><li>• Post crisis support and follow-up</li><li>• Advocacy</li><li>• Mentoring support</li><li>• Referrals to mainstream and specialist services to be conducted remotely</li><li>• Living skills support, including tenancy education</li><li>• Personal and emotional support</li><li>• Consumer groups</li><li>• Participation in community networks and events that support cross-sector approaches.</li></ul>