



Communities
& Justice

Specialist Workers for Children and Young People Service Specifications Version 1.1



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Purpose of Specifications

Purpose

The purpose of these Service Specifications is to provide DCJ Departmental staff, NGO service providers and wider stakeholders with clear and consistent information regarding the aims, objectives and scope of Specialist Workers for Children and Young People (SWCYP).

Background

Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women in NSW. In 2020-2021, 32% of women who presented to a Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) in NSW indicated their main reason for seeking assistance was domestic and family violence.¹

In relation to children and young people, in 2020-2021 52% of the children and young people aged 0-17 SHS providers supported had experienced domestic and violence, with 33% of these children and young people identified as Aboriginal.

Homelessness, and particularly chronic long-term homelessness, has significant impacts on the ability of children and young people to access education, maintain physical and mental health and fully participate in society.

DFV stakeholders and advocates made it clear during the 2021 Women's Safety Summit that children and young people need to be recognised as victim-survivors in their own right, and require specialist support to help them recover from the trauma of violence.

In November 2021, the NSW Government announced \$20 million in additional funding for the DFV sector under the Domestic and Family Violence National Partnership Agreement 2021-23. This funding included \$6.55 million for specialist workers to provide trauma-informed support for children and young people in 20 priority refuges.

Program Objectives & Outcomes

The objectives of the SWCYP are to;

- Identify children and young people in priority refuges who require specialist children's support
- Provide direct services to children and young people that are trauma informed, family centred and culturally appropriate
- Support children and young people to access mainstream and specialist

¹ [AIHW Specialist Homelessness services annual report 2020-21 Data tables](#)

services.

The expected program outcomes align with the [SHS Outcomes Framework](#) and may include;

Domains	Core Outcomes	Potential Indicator
Safety	Clients feel safer	Proportion of clients that report they feel safer since engaging with the service
	Clients feel supported to make progress in addressing their needs	Proportion of clients with demonstrated progress in engaging with services to address safety needs and addressing their individual safety needs/goals related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being supported to access information and services to remain safer
Housing	Clients make progress addressing their housing needs	Proportion of specialist homelessness service clients with demonstrated progress in engaging with services to address housing needs and addressing their housing needs/goals related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of housing options • Increased skills in maintaining suitable housing • Completing actions to maximise housing opportunities • Transitioning to safer, more stable living arrangements (return to home, transitional accommodation, tenancy)
		Proportion of clients presenting as experiencing homelessness that are appropriately housed at the end of the support period
	Clients sustain their tenancy	Proportion of specialist homelessness service clients who receive tenancy support from service providers that sustain their tenancy or other accommodation (where that accommodation is appropriate) for the support period, covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early or crisis intervention to sustain an existing tenancy • Post-crisis support to sustain a new tenancy
		Proportion of specialist homelessness service clients who are appropriately housed at the end of the support period
Wellbeing	Clients have improved personal welling	Proportion of specialist homelessness service clients with improved personal wellbeing

	<p>Clients have increased capacity to tackle future challenges</p>	<p>Proportion of specialist homelessness service clients with demonstrated progress in engaging with services to address wellbeing needs and achieving their wellbeing goals in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement with health services • Improved relationship with family (where appropriate) and support networks • Increased connection to community • Increased connection to education & employment.
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The relevancy of each of these outcomes will depend on the age of the child or young person, their personal needs and the needs of their parent/s and family.

Services are not required to specifically report on outcomes as part of the service’s reporting requirements (further detail can be found on page 9). Services may wish to link case studies back to the SHS Outcome Framework when describing how funding has contributed to the achievement of outcomes.

Principles

All activities in this service should be underpinned by the SHS program practice principles. These include;

- Person centred – recognising when working with people that a person’s needs are not static. The service response is built around the needs, circumstances, experiences and choices of the person, rather than a programmatic or predetermined service offering. This includes individually tailoring the intensity and duration of support and the accommodation setting in which support will be delivered. A person-centred response also considers the needs of the family or household in achieving a long-term housing outcome, including building individual and family capacity, skills, resilience, considering the needs of children, and building connections to community.
- Informed choice – all service providers delivering services as part of the SHS program will ensure a commitment to individual informed choice and self-determination.
- Trauma informed and evidence-based services – recognise the impact of trauma on those individuals accessing services, and develop and implement trauma informed policies and practices based on evidence of what works.
- Strengths-based – using a strengths-based approach to service design and implementation focuses on building on individual and family capacity, skills, resilience and connections to community.
- Collaborative – collaborate with other homelessness services, mainstream

service providers, housing providers and community organisations to problem solve, share expertise and resources in order to achieve best outcomes for people. This collaboration is a core part of a person-centred approach and key to preventing and breaking the cycle of homelessness. To be effective, service providers have an important leadership, promotion and collaboration role within the broader homelessness services system.

- Rapid re-housing – re-house people as quickly as possible to prevent further breakdown of connections, routines and relationships.
- Stable housing options – support people into sustainable, independent living from crisis or transitional accommodation arrangements as early as practicable, while recognising a lack of exit options may require flexibility around timing. Ensuring that the housing options are affordable for the person.
- Stability for people with complex needs – stabilise accommodation for people with complex needs as a priority, so that interventions to address other areas, such as mental health, can be more effective.
- Coordination of supports – identify the need for, and coordinate, multi-disciplinary support early in the support process, to build sustainable change.
- Reintegrate – maintain, establish or re-establish family, community, education, training and employment connections where practical and appropriate to do so.
- Risk mitigation – recognise and manage the risks associated with transitions and the process of change, in order to support people through change.
- Client voice – ensure people accessing SHS are able to express their views in the design, delivery and continuous improvement of services, through a range of appropriate mechanisms, including direct consultation.
- Continuity of care – the program recognises the importance of continuity of care as a key factor in creating trusting, respectful and positive relationships between the person and the service. This means that a program participant should be able to access the same support worker, or where more than one service is involved, it is well organised and coordinated.
- Culturally safe – service delivery will consider the Aboriginal or culturally and linguistically diverse needs of the person as part of the overall support planning approach. The service must be culturally sensitive and provide culturally appropriate services.

Program Description

Program Overview

This program aims to break the cycle of disadvantage and improve client outcomes for children and young people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and who have been impacted by DFV. Service providers are required to utilise funding to provide direct, client centred and trauma informed services to children and young people.

In Scope

Below is a list of service components that may be provided, noting this list is not exhaustive.

- Assessing client's needs, developing a case plan and providing case management.
- Providing specialist services such as mental health support and counselling.
- Referring and supporting clients to engage with other services, including those that may provide long-term and step down support after the family leaves the refuge.
- Ensuring that children, young people and families are connected with education/training, community, culture, family and country.
- Facilitating one-to-one and group sessions with parents and children to provide support to children, discuss their needs and address their concerns.
- Providing advocacy assistance to children and parents and to act as a linker between the child and other support services.
- Providing specialist practice guidance to build staff capacity.
- Collaborating with the local service system to ensure wrap around services are available to families.

Out of Scope

This funding cannot be used for brokerage or accommodation costs such as head leasing. Where services such as counselling are required, service providers are able to directly employ specialist workers to meet this need, but this funding cannot be used to purchase professional services through a third party practitioner or organisation.

Target Group

SWCYP is designed to provide direct services to accompanied children and young people living in a refuge and who are experiencing, or who have experienced, DFV.

Where capacity exists, children and young people of an accompanying adult who have experienced domestic and family violence, who are receiving outreach support from the refuge are also eligible

Reporting requirements

All funds must be expended by 30 June 2024. Providers will be required to acquit the funding as a part of the annual financial acquittal process.

Service providers are required to meet the data collection requirements outlined in their Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) contract and the [Specialist Homelessness Services Program Specifications](#).

DCJ has provided a specific flag in CIMS which services must use to identify the child or young person receiving a service under this program.

Each service provider is required to submit two case studies to DCJ on a quarterly basis highlighting how the funding has contributed to the achievement of outcomes. A case study template has been provided by DCJ.

DCJ will be reporting regularly to the Commonwealth Government on the achievements of this program. The program will also be evaluated.

Support and advice

Service providers delivering the SWCYP can get advice and support by emailing the Youth Homelessness Pathways team at Youth.homelessness@dcj.nsw.gov.au.

If you are reviewing a printed version of this document, please email Youth.homelessness@dcj.nsw.gov.au to confirm that you are reviewing the most recent version of the Service Specifications. Following any subsequent reviews and approval these Specifications will be uploaded to the internet and/or intranet and all previous versions removed.