

ONELINK QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING SEPTEMBER 2020

What is One Link?

OneLink is a central intake and assessment service for human services in the ACT. This means that it conducts holistic and conversational assessments of all requests for assistance (accommodation and support services). It then prioritises people according to their needs and makes referrals based on a triaging process. OneLink maintains active holding to ensure engagement with those clients where an immediate referral is not available.

A key focus of OneLink is the coordination and best use of limited resources in a geographically unique location. To achieve this, OneLink works in a space of constant assessment, reassessment and triaging to ensure that finite resources are utilised in the support of our community's most vulnerable people.

How does it work?

People can access OneLink through a 1800 number (1800 176 468), in person at Nature Conservation House, at Outreach locations or via the Onelink Website (www.onelink.org.au/services) through webchat.

When a person calls or visits OneLink, an Assessment and Support Officer assesses and prioritises the client's needs, provides information about options and, where appropriate, follows up with clients to connect them to support. The Assessment and Support Officer will stay in touch with clients until they have all the supports they need.

At the end of the month OneLink reports on the number of people still waiting to be connected to any service, both accommodation and non-accommodation supports. Some people waiting at the end of the month may have had some service needs met while still waiting for connection to others.

Note: not all people waiting for accommodation are sleeping rough. Most are staying with relatives or friends or in other temporary accommodation (e.g. caravan parks, hostels etc.).

The key functions of One Link include but are not limited to:

- Assessment, triage, and referral
- Monitoring wait list and active holding to maintain engagement with clients
- Provision of brokerage for motel/hotel accommodation and other brokerage support i.e. transportation
- Provision of outreach and weekend service to increase accessibility
- Provision of specialist engagement to support those clients who are not referral ready and requiring additional support before being connected with services
- Working closely with clients and services to explore collaborative housing and support solutions to help clients achieve outcomes
- Implementing initiatives to respond to COVID-19 i.e. Client Support Fund and Accommodation Brokerage program
- Data collection and analysis, and reporting
- Cross sector collaboration, supporting Specialist Homelessness Service sector in advocacy and development.

Collaboration and participation from all Specialist Homelessness Services, Child, Youth, and Family services, and other sectors including mental health, Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD),

justice, and education are critical to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the central intake model in the ACT.

What supports does OneLink connect people with?

Accommodation

- Short term emergency accommodation
- Transitional accommodation

Support services

- Housing support
 - Assertive outreach
 - Access to independent housing
 - Support to sustain tenancy
- Youth and family support
 - Youth support
 - Family and child support
- Other support
 - Aged care support
 - Counselling services
 - Disability support services
 - Domestic and family violence support services
 - Financial counselling
 - Legal services
 - Mental health services
 - Health/medical services
 - Drug/alcohol support
 - Domestic assistance

What does this latest report show?

- OneLink supported a lower number of clients per month (630) in this quarter compared to the previous quarter (693).
- Higher number of new clients (on average 129 new clients per month), higher than the previous quarter (117 during April – June 2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may have attributed to higher new client numbers. New clients represented around 20% of all clients each month.
- Higher number of occasions of one-off assistance (on average 259 occasions of one-off assistance per month in this quarter compared with 218 in the previous quarter and 185 in the corresponding quarter in 2019).
- Client waited for similar time for support services (30.3 days in this quarter compared with 30.3 days in previous quarter) and waited shorter periods for accommodation (31.6 days in this quarter compared with 42.8 days in previous quarter). The lower waiting time for accommodation service reflects additional resources invested through COVID-19 initiatives including the *Client Support Fund*, *Temporary Accommodation Brokerage*, *MacKillop*, *Winter Lodge*, and *Axial* programs to increase capacity for the sector. This result also demonstrates great efforts of and strong collaboration between OneLink and

the sector in continuing to maintain and improve support services to the most vulnerable members of our community during this difficult time.

- Higher number of clients placed into accommodation and similar number of clients provided with support in this quarter. 158 clients were placed into accommodation and 237 provided with support services in this quarter compared with 121 and 238 respectively in the previous quarter. This higher number of clients accommodated can be attributed to the implementation of the *Client Support Fund* and other COVID-19 initiatives.
- Lower number of clients in the wait list in this quarter. An average of 272 clients were waiting at the end of each month in this quarter compared with 357 in the previous quarter (357) and 313 in the corresponding quarter in 2019.
- *Client Support Fund (CSF)*: After its implementation on 11 May 2020, this reporting period has seen OneLink continue delivering the CSF in collaboration with five participating specialist homelessness services. During this quarter, the program spent \$185,000 to provide 12 individuals/families with both accommodation and support or support only services. CSF has been successfully delivered with several points of focus:
 - creation of exit points into accommodation other than social housing, taking pressure off an already overloaded system
 - responding to women, children and individuals experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) through COVID-19, associated isolation, ongoing service restrictions and barriers to accessing supports under business as usual delivery
 - facilitation and coordination of collaborative and innovative practice to deliver tailored responses to individuals after a robust assessment and exploration of other viable supports
 - early intervention and support for families and individuals for whom their first engagement with the service sectors was prompted by COVID-19. CSF aims to allow these clients to move through COVID-19 with supports and re-establish their independence from the support sector. Again, this is motivated by a desire to reduce social housing applications and demand for finite resources
- *Accommodation Brokerage program*: the Accommodation Brokerage program has allowed OneLink to provide an initial, safety focused response to COVID-19 related housing crisis. During this quarter, the program spent \$18,233 to provide temporary accommodation at a motel/hotel for 20 individuals/families.
 - Where appropriate, the program has been delivered alongside CSF to ensure an end-to-end support crisis response through to provision of transitional housing and/ or intensive supports, while proactively working toward long-term housing solutions.
 - OneLink continues to administer accommodation brokerage in line with its established guidelines, including a requirement that brokerage be utilised as an investment in a longer term housing solution rather than a 'band aid', and an expectation of client co-contribution where appropriate and feasible.
- Lower number of clients on the waiting list at the end of each month (on average 272 clients in this quarter). This is lower than 357 in previous quarter.

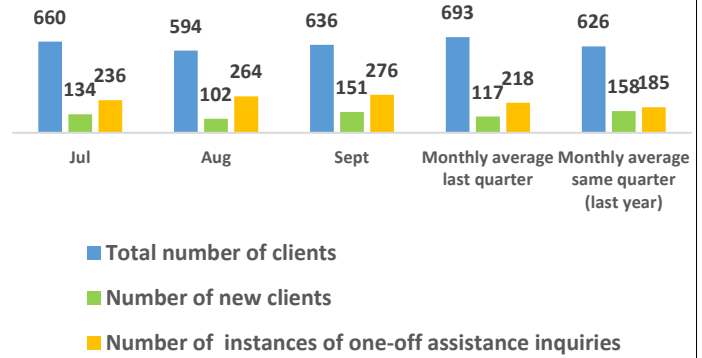
- People experiencing DFV remain the single largest group seeking support. DFV continued to be the biggest contributor in the homelessness sector. OneLink connected multiple individuals and families with specialist DFV support and accommodation services, as well as offering additional support and expertise through the CSF. OneLink received enquiries from interstate clients who were fleeing DFV situations.
- The majority of non-accommodation placements (66.3%) were for those clients seeking housing support (i.e. support to sustain their tenancy, access to independent housing); higher than the proportion in the last quarter (60.2%).
- OneLink Complex: During this quarter, OneLink Complex assessed, referred, and supported 13 clients into CSF. OneLink Complex also supported a further 18 clients who did not access CSF. Of these 18 individuals/families, 11 were single adults, five were single parents with children, one presentation was a couple with children and one was a couple without children. 14 clients presented with no tenure, with only five remaining with no tenure at the end of the reporting period. Eight clients reported DFV as a factor in requiring support, and nine reported the same for mental health. Six identified that medical issues were a barrier to accommodation and four had been recently released from custody.
- Weekend Service: Weekend Service has continued throughout COVID-19 and this reporting period. OneLink has continued to provide services between 12.30 to 5.00pm on Saturdays and Sundays in addition to usual operating hours, from its Woden location.
- Staffing and Structure updates: Throughout the reporting period, OneLink made deliberate decisions around staffing and program structure. These decisions were driven by the continual need to operate in a fast paced, high pressure environment where the service is required to engage with a number of stakeholders at varying levels, and in varying stages of crisis. OneLink takes seriously its role as a conduit to appropriate supports, and recruitment has reflected the high level of skill and resilience required of OneLink staff.

OneLink has also implemented a Senior Team to ensure service coverage across a range of focus areas, and to ensure that staff can access a high level of support at any given time. The Senior Team includes a Training Coordinator, Referral and Data Coordinator, Case Coordination and CYFSP Coordinator and a Service Engagement and Weekend Coordinator.

Number of clients

- OneLink supported an average 630 clients each month during this quarter (July, August and September 2020). This is higher than the 626 average for the same quarter in 2019.
- OneLink supported a total of 387 new clients during the July to September 2020 period, lower than 475 in the same period in 2019.
- OneLink provided an average of 259 one-off assistance each month in this quarter, higher than 185 in the same quarter in 2019.

Number of clients, new clients, and one-off assistance (Jul - Sept 2020)

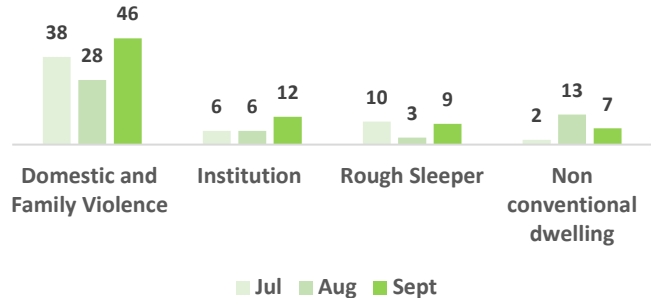


New clients by priority groups

- Of all **new** clients the largest single priority group was those experiencing DFV (on average 28.9% of new clients).

Note this graph is reflective of the top four priority groups and does not capture all new clients.

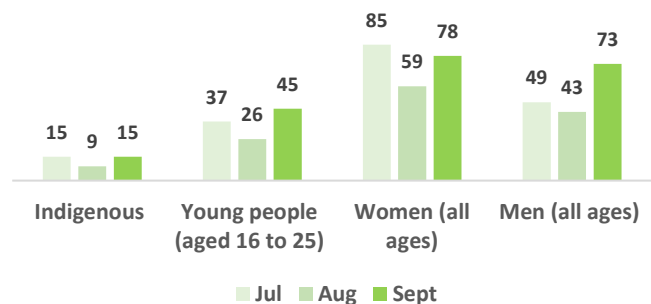
New clients by priority groups (Jul - Sept 2020)



New clients by demography

- There were more new female clients (on average 57.4%) than new male clients (42.6%).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 10.1% of new clients.
- Young people accounted for 27.9% of all new clients.

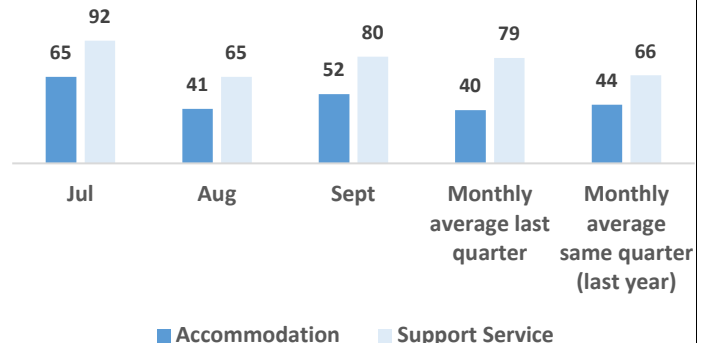
New clients by demography (Jul - Sept 2020)



Number of clients placed into accommodation and support services

- A total of 158 clients were placed into accommodation, with an average of 53 clients placed each month.
- A total of 237 clients were placed into support services, with an average of 79 clients placed each month.

Clients placed into accommodation and support services (Jul - Sept 2020)



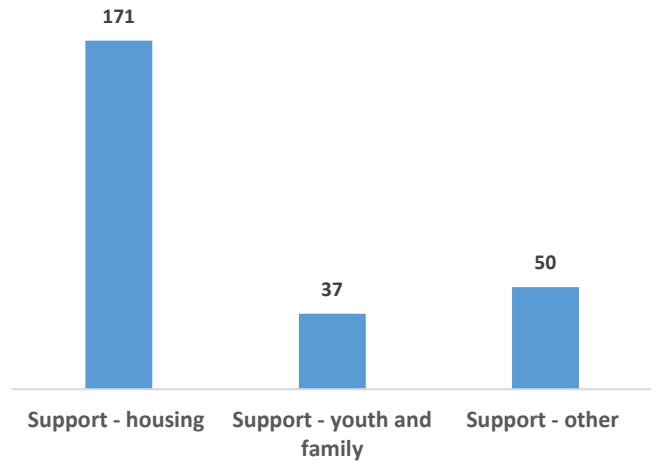
Placement by Support Service

During this quarter, there were a total of 258 placements into support services:

- 66.3% (171) provided by housing support services, which provide tenancy support, assertive outreach, access to independent housing.
- 14.3% (37) provided by youth and family support services.
- 19.4% (50) provided by other support services including legal, mental health, DFV, financial assistance, disability support, counselling services, and drug and alcohol services.

Note: number of clients and number of placements are different; some clients are provided with more than one placement to meet their different needs.

Number of placement by type of support service (Jul - Sept 2020)

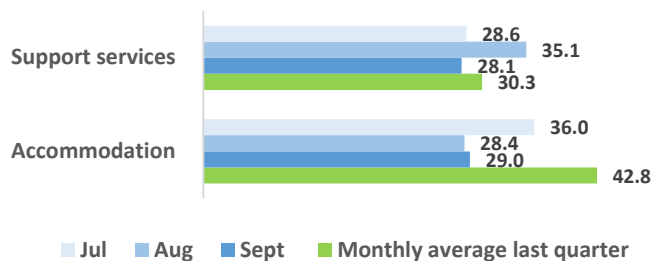


Waiting time for accommodation and support services

During this quarter, clients waited on average 30.3 days for support services (30.3 days in the last quarter), and 31.6 days for placement into accommodation (42.8 days in the last quarter).

Note that 'waiting for accommodation' does not necessarily equate to rough sleeping. Many people are staying with friends or relatives or in other temporary accommodation.

Waiting time (days) for accommodation and support services (Jul - Sept 2020)

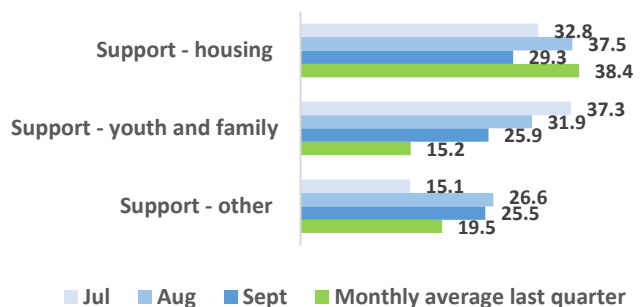


Waiting time by type of support service

During this quarter, clients waited on average:

- 33.1 days for placement into housing support (38.4 days in the last quarter).
- 30.7 days for youth and family support (15.2 days in the last quarter).
- 20.1 days for other support (19.5 days in the last quarter).

Waiting time (days) by type of support services (Jul - Sept 2020)

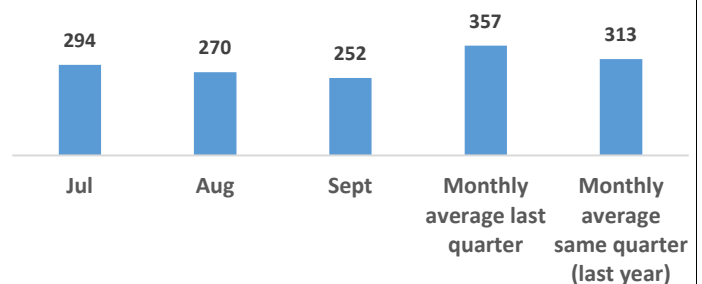


Waiting list

- At the end of September, 252 clients were waiting for accommodation and/or support services.
- This is lower than the average of over the 3-month period.

Note: clients at end of month may be connected to some services but are waiting connection to others.

Number of clients waiting



Key terms explained

Client	A client refers to any person who directly receives a service. For example, if a mother and three children require accommodation, and OneLink only has contact with the mother, then the mother will be the only client for OneLink, with other family members not directly assisted. If referred to a service that then accommodates the family, then that service provides direct service for the mother and the children and that service will count each member of the family as clients.
One-off assistance <i>*people receiving one-off assistance are not counted as client</i>	Provision of immediate support, including providing information and clarification, where there is no need for continued assistance at the time of the enquiry.
Active holding	OneLink maintains contact with clients while clients are waiting for OneLink to connect them with appropriate accommodation and/or support services. Active holding is to ensure OneLink's assessment of the client's needs and situation is up to date.
Rough sleeper	A person who is living on the streets, sleeping in parks.
Non-conventional dwelling	A person who is a squatter or who is living in an improvised dwelling (tent, car etc.)
Assistance to access independent housing	Provision of support to clients to obtain an independent tenancy, including private, community and public housing. Services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive Tenancy Service – housing options • ASSIST (Catholic Care) • Youth Housing Support Service (Catholic Care) • St Vincent de Paul's (SVDP) Family Service and Young Parents Program • Everyman Australia • YWCA Canberra • Karinya • Northside Community Service • Ted Noffs Take Hold
Tenancy support	Provision of support to clients to maintain an existing tenancy (e.g. Supportive Tenancy Service – tenancy support).
Short term or emergency accommodation	Short term accommodation with support to help address any issues leading to homelessness and seek an independent tenancy. Services are targeted to particular population groups or needs, including single men (e.g. Samaritan House, CatholicCare Minosa), young people (Youth Emergency Accommodation Network (YEAN)), women and families (Toora) and women leaving domestic violence (e.g. Beryl, Doris).
Transitional accommodation	Medium-term accommodation with limited support focussed on finding long-term accommodation, for people who have the capacity to maintain a tenancy. Funded transitional accommodation includes SDVP's Family Service, YWCA

	Canberra's Housing Support Unit, Banardo's Our Place and Friendly Landlord programs, Everyman, Northside Community Service and Karinya.
Assertive outreach for rough sleepers	Outreach services to assist people who are sleeping rough or in non-conventional dwellings, to assist in connection to services as needed (e.g. SVDP's Street to Home program).
Financial assistance/material aid	Emergency relief, such as food, clothing or assistance with expenses (e.g. SVDP, Salvation Army and Uniting Care Kippax).
Domestic/family violence support	Support specifically around responding to the experience of DFV e.g. Domestic Violence Crisis Services; note other services (including Beryl, Doris, YWCA Canberra and Toora Women) provide DFV violence support as part of emergency accommodation.
Youth Support	Support for young people, up to 25 years of age e.g. Youth Engagement Teams and YouthCARE Canberra.
Family/child support	Support for families and/or children, including family case management services.
Disability support (including NDIS)	Support for people living with a physical or intellectual disability, including services under NDIS or CASP other than domestic assistance – excludes psychosocial disability.
Domestic assistance/CASP	Support for domestic assistance or through CASP, which provides assistance to people who do not qualify for or have not yet obtained NDIS support (domestic assistance is often provided through CASP).
Aged care support	Support for older people (generally 65 years or older), including through My Aged Care.
Health/ medical services	Medical support e.g. through General Practitioners, Winnunga.
Mental health services	Support for people living with a psychosocial disability, including through NDIS, as well as other specific mental health services.
Counselling services	Professional assistance to promote mental health and wellbeing, enhance self-understanding, and resolve identified concerns (e.g. Relationships Australia).
Drug/alcohol support	Support for people dealing with addiction to alcohol or other drugs (e.g. Directions ACT, Karralika).
Legal issues/court support	Legal advice or assistance through legal processes (e.g. Canberra Community Law, Tenants Union, Street Law, Legal Aid).
Financial counselling	Information, support and advocacy to assist people in financial difficulty (e.g. Care Financial).
Other	Support not covered in other categories, including general support for specific population groups (e.g. MARSS).