

ONELINK QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING DECEMBER 2020

What is OneLink?

OneLink is the 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 service users continues where an immediate referral is not available. Ongoing support needs are continually reviewed in partnership with service users.

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 to support 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 (NCH), 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 Coordinator assesses and prioritises the service user's needs, provides information about options and, where appropriate, follows up with service users to connect them to support.

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 for others.

Note: not all people waiting for accommodation are sleeping rough; the majority are staying with relatives or friends or in other temporary accommodation (e.g. caravan parks or low cost hotels).

The key functions of OneLink include but are not limited to:

- assessment, triage, and referral
- monitoring wait list and active holding to maintain engagement with service users
- provision of brokerage for motel/hotel accommodation and other financial support i.e. transportation to an accommodation option
- provision of outreach and weekend service to increase accessibility
- provision of specialist engagement to support those service users who are not referral ready and requiring additional support before being connected with services
- working closely with service users and services to explore collaborative housing and support solutions to help service users achieve outcomes
- implementing initiatives to respond to COVID-19 i.e. Client Support Fund and Accommodation Brokerage program
- data collection, analysis, and reporting, and

- cross sector collaboration, supporting Specialist Homelessness Service sector in advocacy and sector 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 is 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
- Child, 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
 - Refugee and migration support
 - 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 service users per month (558) in this quarter compared to the previous quarter (630).
- Slightly lower number of new service users (on average 126 new service users per month), than the previous quarter (129 during July – September 2020). New service users represented around 23% of all service users each month.
- Higher number of occasions of one-off assistance (on average 351 occasions of one-off assistance per month in this quarter compared with 259 in the previous quarter and 263 in the corresponding quarter in 2019).

- Service user waited for similar time for support services (30.7 days in this quarter compared with 30.3 days in previous quarter) and waited a slightly longer period for accommodation (32.7 days in this quarter compared with 31.6 days in previous quarter).
- Lower number of service users placed into accommodation and lower number of service users provided with support in this quarter. 129 service users were placed into accommodation and 224 provided with support services in this quarter compared with 158 and 237 respectively in the previous quarter.
- Lower number of service users on the wait list for referral in this quarter. An average of 239 service users were waiting at the end of each month in this quarter compared with 272 in the previous quarter and 301 in the corresponding quarter in 2019. This reflects OneLink's closely management of waiting list.
- Client Support Fund (CSF): OneLink continued supporting individuals and families through the Client Support Fund. As at 31 December 2020, the CSF has supported 57 families or individuals. In the reporting period the CSF commenced support for 19 families and individuals including two individuals placed in a share house. Of these families and individuals, 16 were provided with housing and support and 3 were provided with support only.

During this quarter, CSF has started providing funding to support Street to Home to provide better support to rough sleepers. An innovative share house arrangement with Everyman Australia was implemented for young Indigenous women, and Everyman Australia is providing support including cultural support, Indigenous Elders were involved with this process. Of note YWCA has assisted a number of families to secure alternate housing options in the private and affordable rental market.

- Accommodation Brokerage Program: During this quarter, the program spent \$32,799.46 an increase from the previous quarter \$18,233 to provide temporary accommodation at a motel/hotel for 23 individuals and families (an increase from 20 individuals/families).
- Response to Domestic and Family Violence: People experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) remain the single largest group seeking support. DFV continued to be the biggest contributor in the homelessness sector. OneLink saw an increase in people presenting with DFV as the primary issue and causative factor in their homelessness. OneLink saw continued increase in the severity of DFV with coercive control a significant feature.

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 continues to receive enquiries from interstate service users who were fleeing DFV situations.

OneLink where appropriate has engaged interstate support services to see if a safe and realistic accommodation option can be sourced in the jurisdiction that service users have left. OneLink continues to educate service providers and people presenting from other jurisdictions whose move to the ACT is non-essential, that the ACT has the highest rent rates in Australia and there are limited number of available properties available.

- Connection with support services: The majority of non-accommodation placements (55.9%) were for those service users seeking housing support (i.e. support to sustain their tenancy, access to independent housing); lower than the proportion in the last quarter (66.3%).
- OneLink Complex: During this quarter OneLink Complex worked specifically with the Client Support Fund. Moving forward, with OneLink being very well positioned regarding staff skill set, OneLink Complex will be shared across most of the team supported by one senior with dedicated focus on specialist engagement.
- 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.

In December 2020, the ACT Government changed the phone system from Jabba to Webex which rendered OneLink laptops unusable for phone calls. During December and across the Christmas period OneLink delivered the weekend service from Nature Conservation House (NCH).

- In-reach: OneLink has recommenced in-reach project which invites colleagues and services from a range of sectors to be co-located with OneLink in the Central Access Point (CAP) as part of a planned roster. Through the in-reach project, OneLink aims to create a dynamic service hub to be accessible to both community members and our peers in community services. The in-reach roster offers opportunities for networking and information sharing, incidental learning and training and, importantly, integrated responses to service user presentations in the CAP. The in-reach roster includes services which traditionally sit outside, but alongside housing/ homelessness and Child, Youth, Family Service Program (CYFSP) supports. Examples include agencies which offer assistance with NDIS and disability supports and the Conflict Resolution Service.

During 2021 OneLink outreach will recommence and will complement OneLink's communication and relationship building strategy. Equally outreach will have a community engagement focus and will be linked closely with OneLink Complex's specialist engagement approach. To this end, the locations of outreach will be carefully considered.

- OneLink and Housing ACT integration: In this reporting period, the Housing ACT Gateway Team has worked with OneLink to streamline processes for applicants who require either an urgent response or additional case coordination and negotiation of referral pathways. This has included early stage development of a shared triaging tool to identify service users who present with significant risk and where the usual application/ assessment process can be modified for better responses to that risk.

OneLink Complex and the Housing ACT Connections Team continue to work closely to progress urgent Housing ACT applications as quickly and smoothly as possible. OneLink Complex routinely takes a case coordination role and seeks to connect prospective tenants to the supports required to both meet Housing ACT assessment thresholds, as well as provide the applicant with the best chance of success in their tenancy. The Connections team now participates in a rotating roster to make a Connections specialist available in the CAP space for joint interviews/ assessments with OneLink where appropriate.

- Participating in research: Another initiative during this period has been collaboration with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute and ACT Shelter, to contribute

to research which will enhance understanding of the costs of social housing. OneLink has contributed with deidentified case studies to assist in demonstrating the range of experiences and journeys of community members accessing social housing support.

- Staffing and structure updates: As of December 2020, the OneLink team is comprised of 19 staff including staff working full-time and part-time.
 - OneLink has a total of more than 60 years of experience working with the community and another 60 years of working for the Government.
 - OneLink staff have previous experience working with a broad range of support needs that present to OneLink including mental health, domestic and family violence, child sex offenders, juvenile justice, drug and alcohol, youth work, disability, NDIS, migrant and refugees, and supporting clients from Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander community, and clients from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse community.
 - OneLink staff speak 17 languages including Polish, German, Azeri, Persian, Farsi, Dari, Turkish, Swahili, Tamil, Sinhala, Russian, Mandarin, Cantonese, 3 local languages from Ghana, and English.
 - OneLink staff include representatives from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse community, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community.

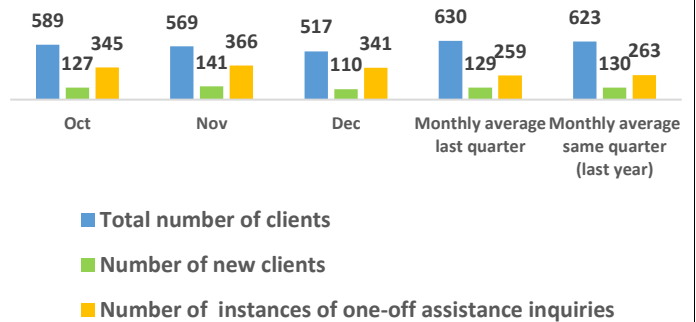
OneLink continues to operate in a manner which places the service user and their experience at the centre of everything we do. OneLink has ongoing commitment to proactive and meaningful engagement of stakeholders, innovation, collaboration and continually improving practice. As a service, OneLink commits to outcomes for Canberra's most vulnerable. As a team, we deliver them. The team's comradery, team spirit and genuine respect for all people perfectly positions OneLink for 2021.

ONE LINK QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING DECEMBER 2020

Number of service users

- OneLink supported an average 558 service users each month during this quarter (Oct, November and December 2020). This is lower than the 623 average for the same quarter in 2019.
- OneLink supported a total of 378 new service users during the October to December 2020 period, lower than 390 in the same period in 2019.
- OneLink provided an average of 351 one-off assistance each month in this quarter, higher than 263 in the same quarter in 2019.

Number of service users, new service users, and one-off assistance (Oct - Dec 2020)

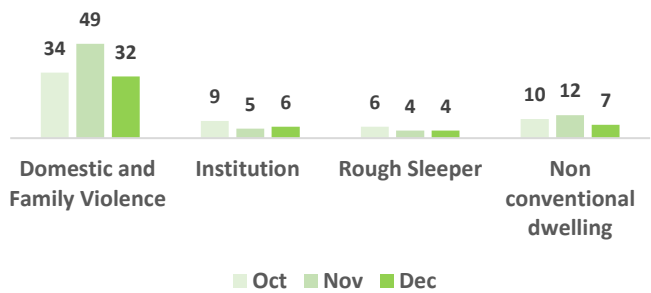


New service users by priority groups

- Of all **new** service users the largest single priority group was those experiencing DFV (on average 30.4% of new service users).

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

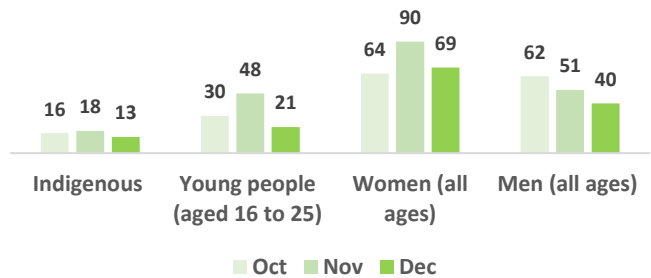
New service users by priority groups (Oct - Dec 2020)



New service users by demography

- There were more new female service users (on average 59%) than new male service users (41%).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 12.4% of new service users.
- Young people accounted for 26.2% of all new service users.

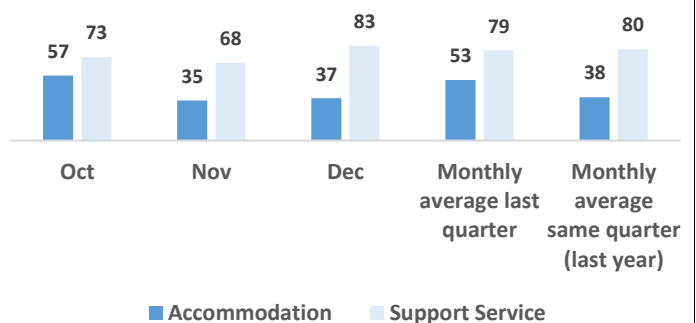
New service users by demography (Oct - Dec 2020)



Number of service users placed into accommodation and support services

- A total of 129 service users were placed into accommodation, with an average of 43 service users placed each month.
- A total of 224 service users were placed into support services, with an average of 75 service users placed each month.

Service users placed into accommodation and support services (Oct - Dec 2020)



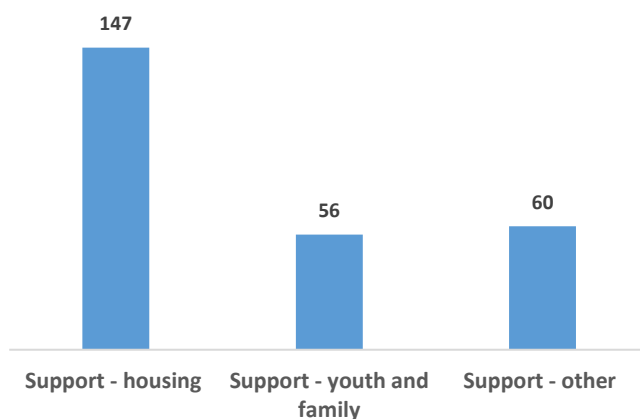
Placement by Support Service

During this quarter, there were a total of 263 placements into support services:

- 55.9% (147) provided by housing support services, which provide tenancy support, assertive outreach, access to independent housing.
- 21.3% (56) provided by youth and family support services.
- 22.8% (60) provided by other support services including legal, mental health, DFV, financial assistance, disability support, counselling services, and drug and alcohol services.

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

Number of placement by type of support service (Oct-Dec 2020)

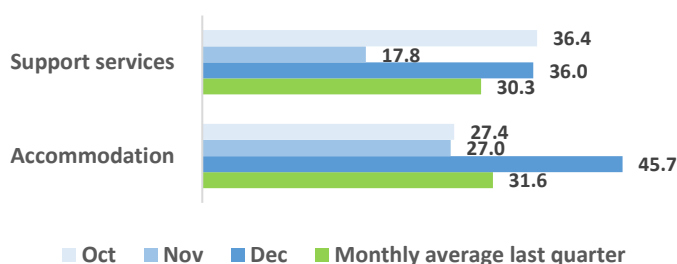


Waiting time for accommodation and support services

During this quarter, service users waited on average 30.7 days for support services (30.3 days in the last quarter), and 32.7 days for placement into accommodation (31.6 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 (Oct - Dec 2020)

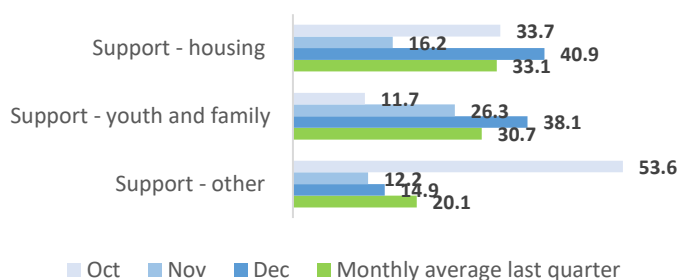


Waiting time by type of support service

During this quarter, service users waited on average:

- 31.8 days for placement into housing support (33.1 days in the last quarter).
- 27.8 days for youth and family support (30.7 days in the last quarter).
- 30.9 days for other support (20.1 days in the last quarter).

Waiting time (days) by type of support services (Oct - Dec 2020)

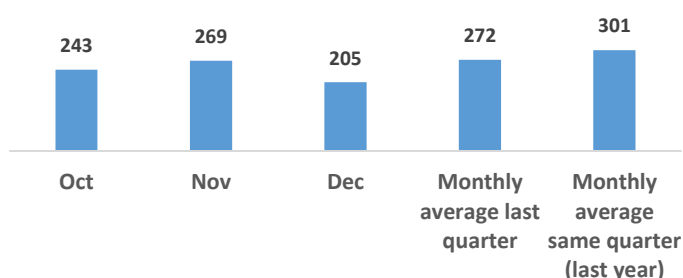


Waiting list

- At the end of December, 205 service users were waiting for accommodation and/or support services.
- This is lower than the average of over the 3-month period.

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

Number of service users waiting



Key terms explained

Service user	A service user 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 service user 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 service users.
One-off assistance <i>*people receiving one-off assistance are not counted as service user</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 service users while service users are waiting for OneLink to connect them with appropriate accommodation and/or support services. Active holding is to ensure OneLink's assessment of the service user'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 service users 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 service users 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).