

ONELINK QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING JUNE 2021

What is OneLink?

OneLink is the central intake and assessment service for human services in the ACT. The service 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.

How does it work?

People can access OneLink through 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 may be 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 the 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 similar number of service users per month (498) in this quarter compared to the previous quarter (556).
- Lower number of new service users on average 103 new service users per month. This is lower than the previous quarter 142 during January – March 2021. New service users represented around 21% of all service users each month.
- Higher number of occasions of one-off assistance on average 396 occasions of one-off assistance per month in this quarter compared with 379 in the previous quarter and 218 in the corresponding quarter in 2020.
- Service users waited for longer times for support services 26.6 days in this quarter compared with 24.3 days in previous quarter and waited shorter periods for accommodation (16.2 days in this quarter compared with 40.5 days in previous quarter).

A decrease in the waiting times for service users to be connected to accommodation services can be attributed to the capacity of accommodation service providers. Having fewer vacancies to refer to across the quarter is reflected in this data.

- There was higher number of service users placed into accommodation and lower number of service users provided with support in this quarter. 107 service users were

placed into accommodation and 222 provided with support services in this quarter compared with 76 and 259 respectively in the previous quarter.

The increase in the number of referrals made for accommodation this quarter is reflective of our higher volume of service users, combined with a decreased accommodation vacancy rate across the sector. OneLink refers clients to accommodation providers the same day a vacancy is advertised.

Referrals to support services have increased, as OneLink has connected service users to assistance such as assertive outreach while awaiting a suitable accommodation placement. Almost half of the connections made to support services were to providers of housing support.

- Lower number of service users on the wait list for referral in this quarter. An average of 228 service users were waiting at the end of each month in this quarter compared with 252 in the previous quarter and 357 in the corresponding quarter in 2020.

Continuing with the themes above, this data reflects the higher volume of services users presenting to OneLink in this quarter and the reduction in available referral pathways, specifically to accommodation service providers. It is important to note, that while service users may still be waiting to connect to identified specialist homelessness services providers, their Assessment and Support Coordinators maintain regular and ongoing contact to ensure any changes to circumstances are captured and potential additional linkages are identified

- Client Support Fund (CSF): OneLink continued supporting individuals and families through the Client Support Fund. As at 30 June 2021, the CSF has supported 59 families or individuals. This includes a combination of families/individuals receiving tenancy and/or case management support. Not all CSF is linked to a property head leased from Housing ACT.

OneLink will continue to work closely with service providers to ensure the CSF program is responsive and flexible to sector and service user need. All specialist homelessness providers across the ACT will have the opportunity to access this funding and OneLink are actively seeking feedback from the sector on their participation in the program in future. In addition to this, the program is being reviewed and will take on board lessons learned over the first 12 months. Operational guidelines, processes and reporting accountabilities will be included in this review.

During this reporting period, service users participating in the program were able to transition to long term, sustainable housing options including private rental properties and affordable housing tenancies.

- Accommodation Brokerage Program: During this quarter, the program spent \$13,782, a decrease from the previous quarter \$16,733 to provide temporary accommodation at a motel/hotel for 19 individuals and families (a decrease from 14 individuals/families in the previous quarter).

OneLink has clear processes and guidelines around the use of this brokerage. One of the definitive required outcomes for a service user to be brokered into hotel accommodation is that there is a clear exit strategy upon vacating the accommodation. Examples of adequate exit strategies include a transitional property becoming available within a certain time period, or a placement within a refuge becoming available for a specific service user within a number of days. These processes and guidelines are crucial as funding is not infinite. The reduction in the amount spent on accommodation

brokerage, and the reduction in the number of service users placed into accommodation can be a reflection of the lack of appropriate exit pathways for service users.

- *Response to Domestic and Family Violence:* Data for this reporting period again reflects that people experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) continue to be the largest group who seek support (28.8% of new service users). OneLink saw a slightly lower number of service users presenting with DFV as their primary issue in this reporting period, compared to the last (31.4%).

OneLink has worked closely with the specialist DFV providers in the sector including the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, and the YWCA's Domestic Violence team to link service users to the most appropriate supports.

- *Connection with support services:* The majority of non-accommodation placements (55.6%) were for those service users seeking housing support (i.e. support to sustain their tenancy, access to independent housing); higher than the proportion in the last quarter (47.1%). As highlighted above, current capacity within the sector is reflected in these figures.
- *OneLink Complex:* OneLink Complex works with clients who have been declined from typical referral pathways or are unable to be supported within the current support systems. While OneLink Complex has been intrinsically linked to the Client Support Fund since its inception in May 2020, OneLink Complex has continued to provide specialised engagement and collaborative practice for exceptionally vulnerable Canberrans. One Link Complex requires considerable investment in terms of time and human services, to support people to make meaningful and sustained changes in their help seeking, engagement, and broader lives. During this quarter, OneLink Complex has continued to strongly advocate for shared responsibility of working with this group across the sector.
- *Weekend Service:* OneLink has continued to provide weekend services between 12.30 to 5.00pm on Saturdays and Sundays in addition to usual operating hours. During the next reporting period, the hours of operation over the weekend will increase from 4.5 hours per day to 6.5 hours per day.

In the past, weekend service delivery has been provided from the Woden Community Service office located in Corrina Street, Woden. Another suitable location in Woden is being explored and will be included as part of our Engagement Plan for Outreach. In the interim, weekend service delivery will remain at NCH.

OneLink are in the process of analysing data on the volume of incoming calls over the weekend as staff have reported a significant decrease in the number of calls received.

- *In-reach and Outreach:* In-reach and Outreach have been identified as priority areas for OneLink. An Engagement Plan is being developed and will capture the services who are currently participating in In-Reach, and the services we would like to invite to participate in future. In addition to in-reach activities, OneLink is dedicated to a return to having a presence outside of Nature Conservation House (NCH). It is hoped that by being more available within the community, services users who may generally be more hesitant to engage with OneLink might feel more comfortable sharing their stories and registering for support. OneLink acknowledge this rapport building will take some time, and are committed to reinforcing relationships with service providers and building trust with potential service users and community.

A number of services have been providing in-reach in this reporting period and includes Catholic Care, Supportive Tenancy Service, and Conflict Resolution Service. We will also

have representatives from programs at St Vincent de Paul joining the roster in the near future, and the Aged Care Housing Assistance program at Woden Community Services. It has already been noted that in-reach provides a great opportunity for networking and information sharing, and incidental learning. In addition, it provides an opportunity for an integrated response to service user presentations to the Central Access Point (CAP). OneLink are actively encouraging services who would like to take part in in-reach to make contact.

Outreach has recommenced during this reporting period, with the CYPS Liaison Officers having a presence at the Margaret Hendry School in Taylor. The CYPS Liaison Officers are providing information about OneLink, services and connections. CYPS Liaison Officers are also onsite at the Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre on a fortnightly basis. While here they are available for drop in enquiries and to provide information. The team at the Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre book their clients in to meet with the CYPS Liaison Officers while they are on site, and ask CYPS Liaison Officers for information and advice.

OneLink will recommence providing outreach services at both Red Cross Roadhouse and the Early Morning Centre in coming weeks. COVID restrictions have continued to have a small impact on OneLink's ability to effectively engage in these outreach services. However one morning per week OneLink will be onsite at the Early Morning Centre, and one afternoon per week OneLink will be onsite at the Red Cross Roadhouse. This will be actively monitored and our presence adjusted as required. At this time, the Early Morning Centre is not providing a weekend service. While the Red Cross Roadhouse do provide a weekend service, they have identified that their busiest days are currently during the week.

- **OneLink and Housing ACT integration:** OneLink and Housing ACT (HACT) Gateway Services continue to work together effectively, to streamline access and ensure Canberra's most vulnerable receive support. Where it is identified a service user has an urgent need to access social housing, OneLink Complex continues to advocate with the HACT Connections team, and to facilitate case coordination.

OneLink continues to support a high number of service users who present to the CAP at HACT. A more responsive, rather than reactive process has been developed in consultation with Gateway Services and will be rolled out in coming weeks. This will assist Housing ACT staff to appropriately triage presentations to the CAP, and will provide OneLink an opportunity to undertake a quality holistic intake and assessment.

OneLink are also engaging with HACT Tenant Experience to further develop this working relationship and to ensure existing HACT tenants are responded to effectively and efficiently when they present to OneLink. Activities are being undertaken to strengthen knowledge of resources and pathways within individual HACT business units and within the community services sector. Strategic engagement is being discussed at a high level, in addition to OneLink team members attending Tenant Experience team meetings on a regular ongoing basis.

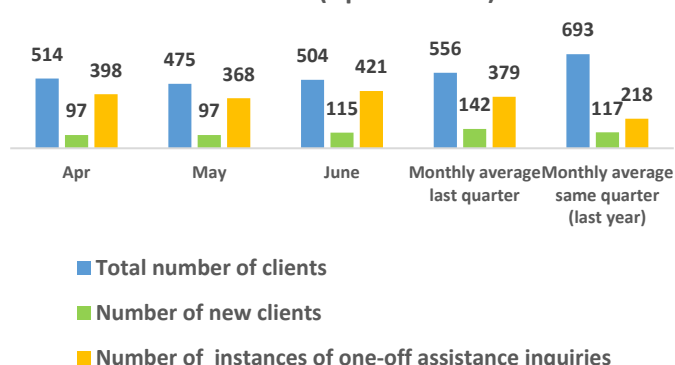
- **Rough Sleeper Data:** OneLink has worked closely with HACT to collect and collate data about rough sleepers presenting to OneLink, Street to Home, and the Early Morning Centre. In the next reporting period this will also include Winter Lodge. Data is collected, collated and analysed on a monthly basis and provided to HACT.
- **Staffing and Structure update:** Toward the end of the reporting period, there was a change to the management and structure of OneLink. One senior team member moved on to another role with the community services sector, and two senior staff retired. The team at OneLink have adapted well to the change in management.

ONE LINK QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING JUNE 2021

Number of service users

- OneLink supported an average 498 service users each month during this quarter (April, May and June 2021). This is lower than the 693 average for the same quarter in 2020.
- OneLink supported a total of 309 new service users during the April to June 2021 period, lower than 352 in the same period in 2020.
- OneLink provided an average of 396 one-off assistance each month in this quarter, higher than 218 in the same quarter in 2020.

Number of clients, new clients, and one-off assistance (Apr-Jun 2021)

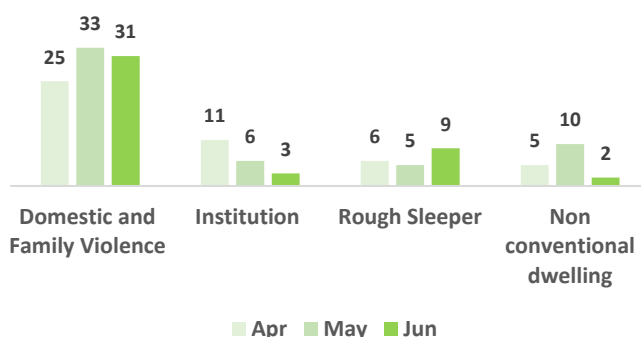


New service users by priority groups

- Of all **new** service-users the largest single priority group was those experiencing DFV (on average 28.8% of new service users).

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

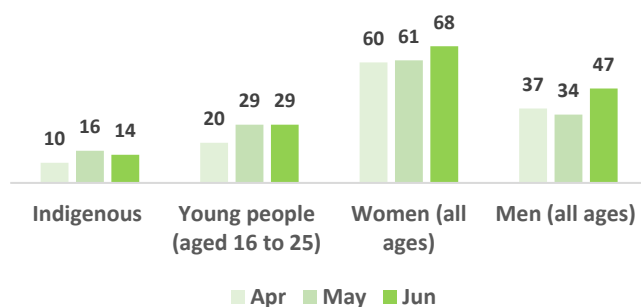
New clients by priority groups (Apr - Jun 2021)



New service users by demography

- There were more new female service users (on average 61.2%) than new male service users (38.2%).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 12.9% of new service users.
- Young people accounted for 25.2% of all new service users.

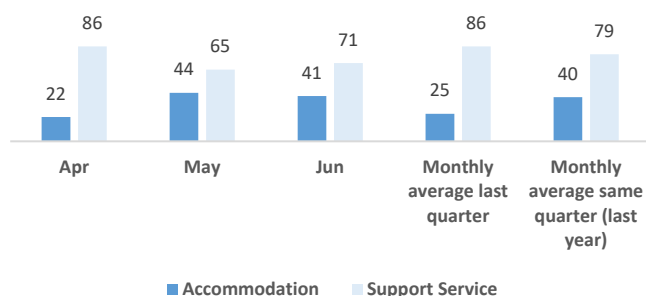
New clients by demography (Apr - Jun 2021)



Number of service users placed into accommodation and support services

- A total of 107 service users were placed into accommodation, with an average of 36 service users placed each month.
- A total of 222 service users were placed into support services, with an average of 74 service users placed each month.

Clients placed into accommodation and support services (Apr - Jun 2021)



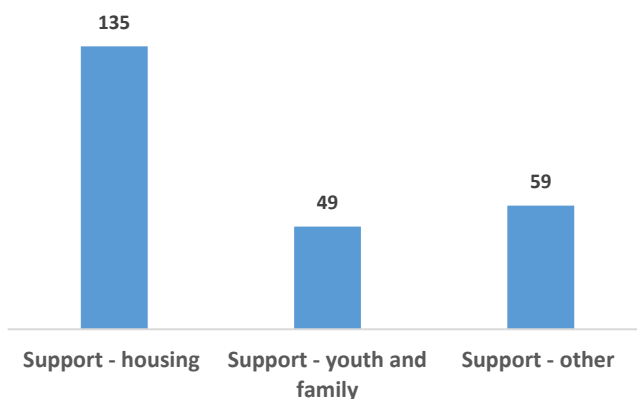
Placement by Support Service

During this quarter, there were a total of 243 placements into support services:

- 55.6% (135) provided by housing support services, which provide tenancy support, assertive outreach, access to independent housing.
- 20.2% (49) provided by youth and family support services.
- 21.3% (59) 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 (Apr - Jun 2021)

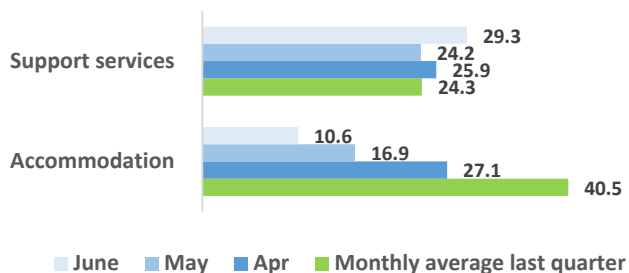


Waiting time for accommodation and support services

During this quarter, service users waited on average 26.6 days for support services (24.3 days in the last quarter), and 16.2 days for placement into accommodation (40.5 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 (Apr - Jun 2021)

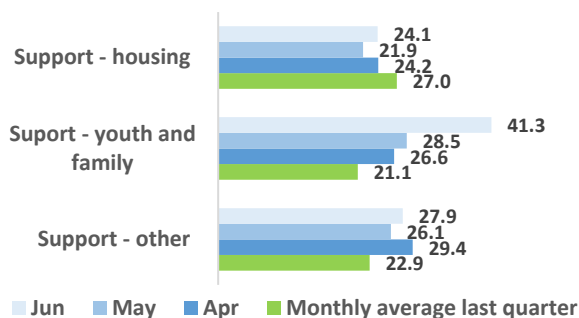


Waiting time by type of support service

During this quarter, service users waited on average:

- 23.5 days for placement into housing support (27.0 days in the last quarter).
- 33.4 days for youth and family support (21.1 days in the last quarter).
- 27.9 days for other support (22.9 days in the last quarter).

Waiting time (days) by type of support services (Apr - Jun 2021)

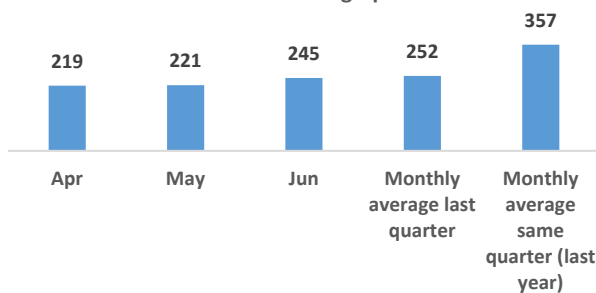


Waiting list

- At the end of March, 245 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 clients waiting April-June 2021



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, Barnardos 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).