

ONELINK QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING DECEMBER 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?

This latest report reflects the impact of the ACT lockdown, and subsequent increased demand on the services of OneLink, and other services in the housing and homelessness sector. Data provided in this quarterly report highlighted the increased presentation of service users, as well as the collaboration and responsiveness across the sector. The

upcoming six-monthly report, due at the end of 2021 will further identify the increased demand and impact for both services and service users.

OneLink has experienced significant increase in demand due to its role in providing coordination of COVID-19 related accommodation support. This role has seen OneLink act as the central coordination point for brokered hotel accommodation to support Canberrans who have experienced household breakdown due to the health directives regarding public movement (“Lockdown”). OneLink also provided quarantine accommodation to both the public and SHS services when quarantine hubs were not yet operating.

Temporary Accommodation Program

OneLink accommodated 195 clients in hotels during the span of the COVID-19 lockdown within ACT which began on August 13. The below table shows the demographics of those in hotel accommodation. Note: the numbers represent family units and not the number of actual individuals in hotel accommodation. E.g. a single male is one unit and a woman with two children is seen as one as well.

Gender	
Female	86
Male	109
ATSI Data	
Aboriginal	37
Neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	156
Torres Strait Islander	2
DV presentation	
No DV	130
No DV indication	14
Yes - domestic violence	31
Yes - DV but general allocation	5
Yes - other family violence	8
Yes - perpetrator	7
Household composition	
Couple with child(ren)	5
Couple without child(ren)	9
Lone person	146
One parent with child(ren)	33
Other family	2
Family with Pets	
Families with pets	9
Families with NO Pets	186

During this reporting period, OneLink was still under high demand for both COVID-19 support and business as usual support. At the beginning of October, OneLink had 134 clients in hotel accommodation. This dropped after the 15th of October to 126 due to the lockdown

officially ending. Many of these clients remained as they were unable to or not willing to return to their previous accommodation due to COVID-19 concerns.

The primary focus during the reporting period was linking hotel accommodated clients with support and referrals to accommodation options. Many of these referrals were successful, however it caused an increase on the demand of the sector as a whole. Initially the sector was able to respond as there was capacity for outreach and support for many clients in hotel accommodation.

This decreased as October came to an end as many services, both SHS and non-SHS, had no further capacity to support clients.

OneLink managed to use additional funds under the Client Support Fund in order to request outreach through SHS services. This then allowed the sector to respond to the high demand. OneLink was also able to coordinate referrals to Everyman, Catholic Care and Street to Home for clients who were part of the Rough Sleeper Working Group. This then freed up business as usual vacancies for other clients outside of this group in hotel accommodation.

Many clients left hotel accommodation during this reporting period. The majority of these exits were planned and included SHS, Housing ACT and other longer term or transitional supports. Of the 191 clients, 136 clients exited to the following pathways:

October 2021	
Back to previous housing	14
Interstate	1
Breached hotel rules	6
Personal decision	20
To Ainslie Lodge	1
To CSF Property	5
To Samaritan House	4
To YEAN	2
To Karinya House	1
To Minosa House	3
To MacKillop House	1
To Toora	1
To private rental	2
Total	61

November 2021	
Back to previous housing	9
Interstate	-
Breached hotel rules	2
Personal decision	13
To Ainslie Lodge	3
To CSF Property	13

To Samaritan House	3
To YEAN	2
To Karinya House	-
To Minosa House	-
To MacKillop House	2
To Toora	2
To Axial	1
To private rental	2
To Oaks Estate	1
Total	53

December 2021	
Back to previous housing	3
Interstate	1
Breached hotel rules	3
Personal decision	2
To Ainslie Lodge	1
To CSF Property	4
To HACT property	2
To Oaks Estate	1
To Samaritan House	1
To YEAN	-
To Karinya House	-
To Minosa House	1
To MacKillop House	-
To Toora	1
To Communities@Work property	1
To YWCA property	1
To private rental	-
Total	22

At the end of December 2021, 16 clients remained in hotel accommodation. OneLink are currently working with the sector and Housing ACT to secure alternative accommodation for these clients to move to.

The remaining 43 clients were either short term accommodation requests by Housing ACT, exits into other residential services such as Alcohol and Other Drug Rehabilitation and/or people who disengaged with service provision.

Impact

As a result of the demand, OneLink's business as usual work was not able to be met as efficiently as desired. Many vacancies that were advertised were prioritised for those in hotel accommodation. As a result, clients not in hotel accommodation were waiting slightly longer than usual to be referred to support or accommodation.

During the reporting period, OneLink also saw many staff changes. This included two Assessment and Support Coordinators and the Acting Manager leaving OneLink for other opportunities. Housing ACT supported OneLink by providing 3 staff over a total period of 8 weeks to the team in order to support with phone calls and business as usual work. This provided much needed support for the team.

Sector Challenges:

Homelessness services reported that one of the main challenges of taking referrals was the need to consider how the client would cope when they were needing to be in lockdown with others in the house. They reported higher tensions than usual in the refuges due to service users spending more time together than usual as a result of COVID-19 lockdown.

Services advised that whilst normally they would take clients with mental health or AOD concerns, they needed to be mindful of these concerns as it could impact the dynamics in a "locked down house".

Another challenge for the homelessness sector was the demand for outreach. All hotel accommodated client were linked with support either through SHS outreach, non-SHS outreach or Family Case Management. This created a high demand to which, at first, the sector was able to respond. As time went on, it became more difficult due to program capacity, staff shortages and increased complexity. In some cases, as demand became unsustainable, OneLink was able to utilise CSF funds to assist outreach support. This in turn increased the sector's capacity to take on clients. Towards the middle of November, options for support with SHS were limited due to the sector reaching limits of capacity across multiple programs and organisations. Non-SHS services such as Yeddung Mura, Doorways and St Johns Care began providing increased support to clients which helped allay some of the capacity issues.

During this reporting period a great benefit was the opening of Ainslie Lodge (formally Winter Lodge). With Ainslie Lodge being open for 7 nights' accommodation for single men, OneLink was able to provide many clients with an accommodation option that was not previously available at this time last year.

One of the largest gaps that OneLink has seen within the sector is the ongoing lack of accommodation options for single fathers and people with pets. There has been an increase of single fathers calling OneLink and seeking accommodation for them and their children.

Unfortunately for many, there have been a lack of accommodation options and only support with SHS services can be provided.

Multi-Disciplinary Support – Ragusa Hub

During late November, the Multi-Disciplinary Support Team (MDST) operating as part of the Ragusa Quarantine Facility offered to work with OneLink clients directly. This was possible due to the “winding down” of Ragusa as a quarantine facility and of the dedicated funding for the MDST being available until late December 2021.

- OneLink referred 15 referrals for support sent
- Clients were predominantly women with children. Others were single complex clients, including 1 HACT Tenant who needed support.

The engagement by the MDST resulted in positive outcomes for many of the clients, two examples are

- Mary* was linked with Ragusa and able to access support for DFV she was experiencing and case management to secure accommodation for her and her child. Mary was successfully referred to Toora Women’s Inc and workers at Ragusa supported her to transition there from the hotel.
- Joan* transitioned to Ragusa after contracting COVID. She and her children left DVCS hotel accommodation and were linked with OneLink and the support hub. The Ragusa team helped her to link with multiple options for support. OneLink and the YWCA were able to work together for a CSF option for Joan and her children and she is currently maintaining this tenancy well.

Client Support Fund (CSF):

For October to December 2021, the CSF accommodated **27** new households during this quarter aside from one property, 26 were thanks to additional properties being made available by Housing ACT in response to the critical need of hotel brokered households. It also provided CSF funded support of a further family awaiting a CSF property, seeing a total of **28** households where CSF funded supports were purchased. There were an additional three adults also funded as primary clients.

Primary clients: have their own distinct case plan from their partner/relative. This enables both service users in a household to have individual supports particularly where there are risk factors identified e.g. domestic violence, and where divergent housing and support outcomes are sought. Where a partner/over 16-year-old year old in the household, has supports commensurate to their need in place, the CSF would not be utilised to duplicate case-management.

Total Clients Supported October – December 2021

Total Newly Accommodated Primary Clients in this quarter:	Ongoing Accommodated from previous quarter/s	TOTAL
27 households, 30 primary clients	44 households, 48 primary clients	78 primary clients in 71 households
Total New Support Only:	Ongoing Support Only from previous quarter/s	
2 primary clients	18	20 primary clients
TOTAL New CSF Clients this quarter: 32	Total Ongoing Clients from Previous Quarter 66	Total CSF Clients 98

Client Support Fund New Service Users Demographics: October – December 2021

Number of all individuals/families funded CSF support commenced in this quarter: October – December 2021	32
Individual lone household member	17
Non-binary CSF funded service user	0
Families including one couple without children and one adult father/adult daughter	11
Single father families	3
Single mother families	3
Couples pregnant	3
Men who are funded CSF service users	21 (66%)
Women (including transgender woman) who are CSF funded service users,	11 (34%)
LGBTI	1
Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander primary client	12 (37%)
People from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse background	0
Children (minors)	19
Rough sleepers	13 (40%)
People experiencing DFV	4 (12%)
Total people accommodated in this quarter under the CSF	50 (60% primary clients)

Positive Outcomes under CSF:

There have been a number of successes during this period, notably accommodating 13 rough sleepers, predominantly due to the increased capacity created through hotel for services to connect and support rough sleepers brokered into hotel accommodation. The hotel

accommodation was pivotal in both accessing this service group to further assess and then facilitate connection to CSF service providers for accommodation and support. The case study below exemplifies the life-changing gains which were in part enabled by the ACT Governments Covid 19 emergency response during the during the lock down.

CASE STUDY

Robbie had been homeless for most of his adult life (several decades). Some of that time he lived in homelessness services. Each accommodation period would invariably break down due to his anger management issues and drug use. A lot of the time he slept rough. Eventually Robbie was banned from all homelessness accommodation services in the ACT.

Robbie has a significant history of trauma, poor mental health and used drugs for several decades to try and dull his pain. He also had a long incarceration history. During the recent lockdown, Robbie was brokered in hotel accommodation by OneLink as part of the ACT Government's emergency response to homeless individuals. This was the first time that Robbie had secure accommodation, control over his environment that meant he did not have to share. It also had a support service in place.

Robbie was then accommodated under the CSF in a property provided by Housing ACT. He remains drug free and is working towards a range of goals that he has set with his service provider. He lives in a one-bedroom property and has complete control of his living environment and this meets Robbie's needs very well. With the trust he has established with the support service, coupled with complete control of his property, Robbie continues to engage well, is linking to specialist services and completing a Housing ACT application.

Challenges under the CSF:

Stock offered to OneLink's CSF program whilst highly appreciated and well utilised, was not suitable for a large number of hotel-accommodated service users. There were limitations regarding trauma informed practice and client matching to often hard to let stock. That being said, OneLink have highly appreciated the additional properties provided to the CSF and they are well utilised.

The time and associated impacts of the pandemic on OneLink generally, and including an almost doubling of CSF stock, had resourcing impacts. Sector partners were also impacted regarding staffing and case work requirements during the lockdown. This coupled with the at times chaotic and complex presentations of many service users impacted:

- timeliness in responded to the draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) held with Housing ACT, particularly rough sleepers whose engagement is more likely hampered through lack of working phones, poor mental health and trust issues particularly where there is a history of statutory engagement, and
- the review of the CSF was carried over.

Importantly both OneLink and sector partners responded far beyond usual capacity to the unprecedented demands for service. OneLink thanks the services who partner in the CSF and we look forward to further consolidating the hard work undertake together. This

demand has been exacerbated by the lack of exits available to clients residing in the CSF Program, 26 previously accommodated clients remained housed under the CSF despite exceeding the 12-month time limit of the program. This largely represents clients who have a priority housing determination already made by Housing ACT but have not received an offer of housing during the past 12 months.

A significant gap emerged regarding the lack of headlease organisation which work with male headed households, who are also identified as a significant sector service gap. In response OneLink has expedited discussions with Yeddung Mura to achieve funded support services, and plans to approach the Salvation Army's Doorways program. Both of these services are already strong support services within the CSF program, often picking up unmet needs of service users where there was a gap in SHS service availability. More will be discussed in the six-monthly report. including an analysis of SHS sector responses during this period.

General Observations about OneLink and Demand in the SHS

- OneLink supported a higher number of service users per month (607) in this quarter compared to the previous quarter (501). This is an increase from the previous quarter and shows that OneLink are still experiencing a high demand of service users contacting for support and accommodation.
- The similar number of new service users on average 108 new service users per month. This is the similar as the previous quarter 103 during July – September 2021. New service users represented around 18% of all service users each month.
- Higher number of occasions of one-off assistance on average 804 occasions of one-off assistance per month in this quarter compared with 572 in the previous quarter and 351 in the corresponding quarter in 2020. This reflects the increase in demand on the OneLink service as a result of Covid 19 in the ACT.
- Service users waited for longer times for support services 25.4 days in this quarter compared with 24.1 days in previous quarter and waited longer periods for accommodation (35.9 days in this quarter compared with 21.1 days in previous quarter).
- Much lower number of service users placed into accommodation and lower number of service users provided with support in this quarter. 126 service users were placed into accommodation and 135 provided with support services in this quarter compared with 238 and 204 respectively in the previous quarter.

As outlined in sector challenges, this reduction in support reflects the impacts of the Lockdown period and the extensive demands placed on the Specialist Homelessness Sector during this time. The reduced support availability is a direct result of the impacts of COVID-19 on Community Sector Organisations; the demand placed on services to respond to community need; and, a lack of ability to upscale workforces rapidly due to the need for more suitably qualified and skilled staff across specialist sectors in the ACT community sector.

- Higher number of service users on the wait list for referral in this quarter. An average of 250 service users were waiting at the end of each month in this quarter compared with 237 in the previous quarter and 239 in the corresponding quarter in 2020.

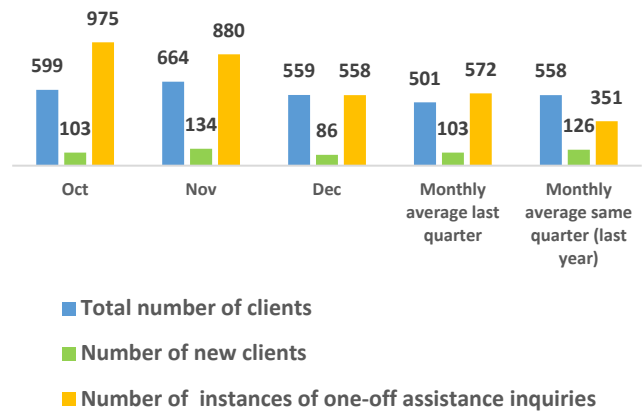
- Accommodation Brokerage Program: During this quarter, the program spent \$548,602.77, an increase from the previous quarter \$488,857.28 to provide temporary accommodation at a motel/hotel for 134 individuals and families.

ONELINK QUARTERLY REPORT DATA ENDING DECEMBER 2021

Number of service users

- OneLink supported an average 607 service users each month during this quarter (Oct, Nov, Dec 2021).
- OneLink supported a total of 323 new service users during the Oct to December 2021 period, lower than 378 in the same period in 2020.
- OneLink provided an average of 804 one-off assistance each month in this quarter, higher than 351 in the same quarter in 2020.

Number of clients, new clients, and one-off assistance (Oct-Dec 2021)

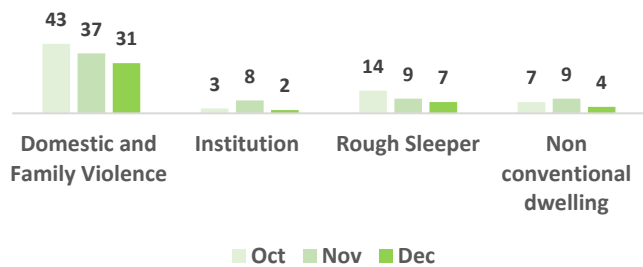


New service users by priority groups

- Of all **new** service-users the largest single priority group was those experiencing DFV (on average 34.4 % of new service users).

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

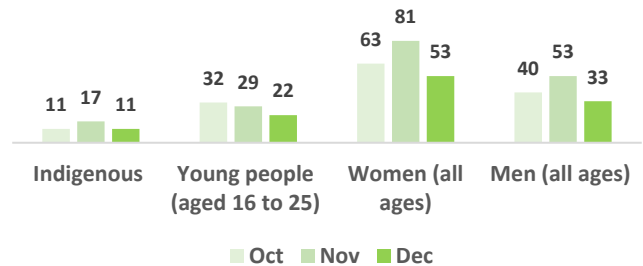
New clients by priority groups (Oct-Dec 2021)



New service users by demography

- There were more new female service users (on average 61.0%) than new male service users (39.0%).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 12.1% of new service users.
- Young people accounted for 25.7% of all new service users.

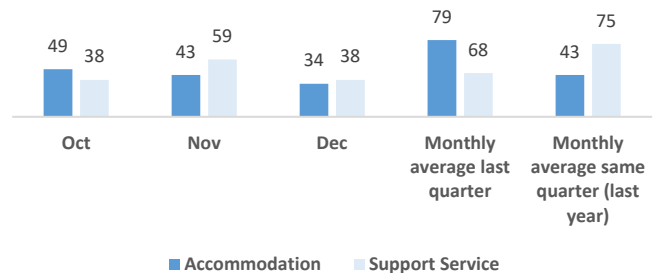
New clients by demography (Oct-Dec 2021)



Number of service users placed into accommodation and support services

- A total of 126 service users were placed into accommodation, with an average of 42 service users placed each month.
- A total of 135 service users were placed into support services, with an average of 45 service users placed each month.

Clients placed into accommodation and support services (Oct-Dec 2021)



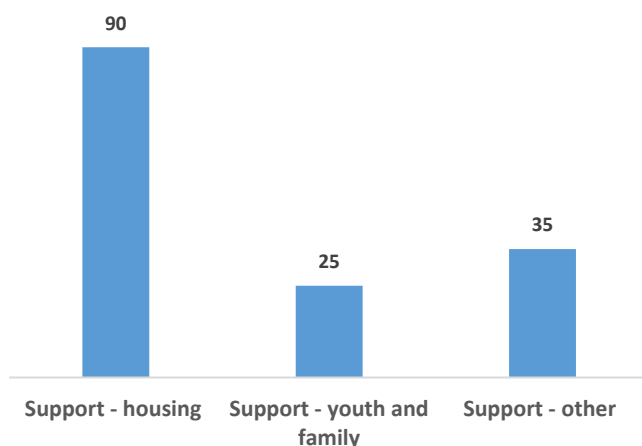
Placement by Support Service

During this quarter, there were a total of 150 placements into support services:

- 60.0% (90) provided by housing support services, which provide tenancy support, assertive outreach, access to independent housing.
- 16.7% (25) provided by youth and family support services.
- 23.3% (35) 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 2021)

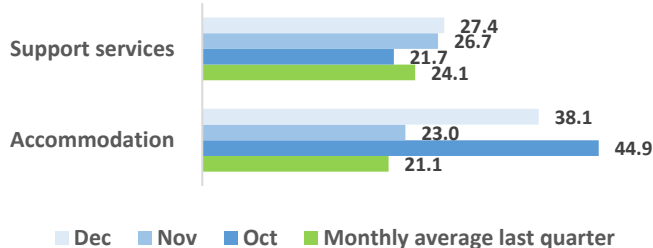


Waiting time for accommodation and support services

During this quarter, service users waited on average 25.4 days for support services (24.1 days in the last quarter), and 35.9 days for placement into accommodation (21.1 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 2021)

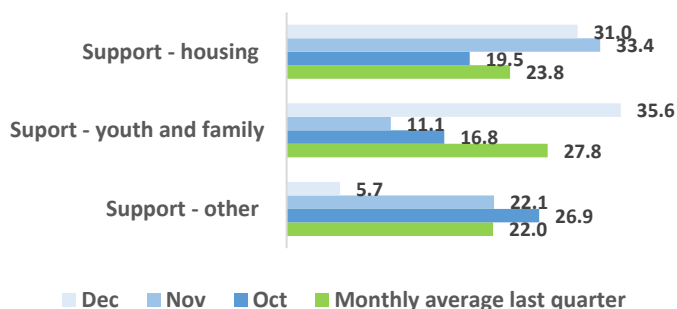


Waiting time by type of support service

During this quarter, service users waited on average:

- 29.0 days for placement into housing support (23.8 days in the last quarter).
- 19.1 days for youth and family support (27.8 days in the last quarter).
- 20.9 days for other support (22.0 days in the last quarter).

Waiting time (days) by type of support services (Oct-Dec 2021)

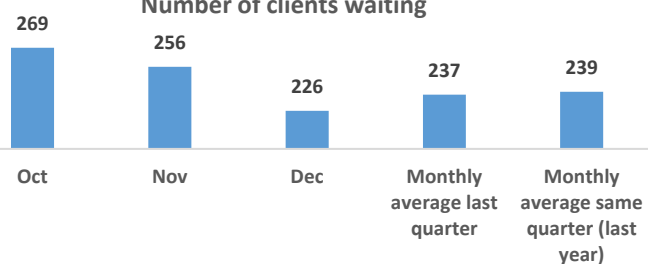


Waiting list

- At the end of December, 226 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



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).