

The Specialist Homelessness Sector Transition Plan (2018-2022)

Strengthen consumer service pathways

The Specialist Homelessness Sector Transition Plan (2018-2022) outlines 15 goals. Action tables have been developed to provide more specific detail on what each goal means, why it is important, future vision, relevant literature, good practice examples and helpful resources.

The action tables are designed to be a useful reference and a good starting point for organisations or individuals wanting to action any of the 15 goals in the SHS Transition Plan.

All 15 action tables can be found at: chp.org.au/shs-transitionplan18/.

6. Strengthen consumer service pathways	
What we mean	Identifying good practices and service coordination activities which help consumers receive necessary services in an integrated and accessible manner. Building consistent tools which can be used across different service settings, which reduce the need for consumers to repeat their stories. Centrally managing and effectively sharing information to improve service coordination and integration activities.
Why is this important	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasingly frequent complex consumer presentations require multiple and coordinated service responses• It is important that health and human services provide holistic and integrated responses to individual presenting needs• We want a service system that is easy for consumers to access and navigate.
Future Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 'no wrong door' approach to providing services where information is respectfully shared• Consumers find access to the range of services they need more easily• Practice approaches across different service types and sectors are consistent and understandable to consumers.
Literature	There is literature considering access barriers for chronic and highly vulnerable homeless populations, but much less available literature on the 'newly homeless' or those at risk of homelessness ¹ . There are consistent findings about access to services for people experiencing homelessness ² :

¹ Black, C. and Gronda, H. (2011). Evidence for improving access to homelessness services, Australian Housing and Research Institute (Research Synthesis Institute), Melbourne.

² Black, C. and Gronda, H. (2011). Op. cit.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People experiencing homelessness face significant barriers to accessing both mainstream services and specialist homelessness services, with fragmentation and complexity a key criticism of both service systems • Poor visibility of existing homelessness services is a common complaint from people experiencing homelessness, with a lack of knowledge of availability of services being one of the major barriers to service usage • The initial experience of homeless services is crucial in determining service usage, with negative experiences likely to mean consumers withdraw from active help-seeking • While there are common barriers across the entire homeless population, there are also specific barriers and access issues faced by different target groups • Given the complexity and diversity of need across the entire homeless population, access points must incorporate high quality assessment and referral processes to enable an adequate response to be provided • Incorporating consumer perspectives into service model design and practice is likely to assist in developing more accessible and effective services. <p>Structural, capacity and eligibility barriers for consumers need to be considered when developing more streamlined access to services.^{3,4} There is limited evidence for effective strategies to improve service access and the area is constrained by a lack of evidence based program evaluations⁵.</p>
<p>Good practice examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Sites Framework – which articulates the need for better integrated responses for people experiencing homelessness • The Rough Sleeping Initiative - an assertive outreach program working to connect people sleeping rough with available housing and support • Victoria’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan⁶, in particular the assertive outreach component.
<p>Helpful Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Brisbane Homeless Service Centre. Case Study - Improving Consumer Pathways • Black, C. and Gronda, H. (2011). Evidence for improving access to homelessness services. Australian Housing and Research Institute (Research Synthesis Institute), Melbourne.

³ Burt, et al. (2010). Strategies for improving homeless people’s access to mainstream benefits and services, prepared for US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington.

⁴ Burt, et al. (2002). Evaluation of Continuums of Care for Homeless People, prepared for US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, The Urban Institute, Washington.

⁵ Black, C. & Gronda, H. (2011). Evidence for improving access to homelessness services, Australian Housing and Research Institute (Research Synthesis Institute), Melbourne.

⁶ DHHS. (2018). Victoria’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan. Accessed March 2018 at: [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan](#)