

# Access to the Homelessness Service System

## Protocol for Local Area Service Networks and Youth Justice Services

Young people exiting Youth Justice centres

2014-2015

## Glossary

DHS	Department of Human Services
HEF	Housing Establishment Fund
HSS	Homelessness Service System
IAP	Initial Assessment & Planning Workers
IR2	Interim Response Level 2
LASNs	Local Area Service Networks
THM	Transitional Housing Management Program
THM-YJ HPI	THM-Youth Justice Housing Pathways Initiative
SHIP	Specialist Homelessness Information Platform
SHSC	Specialist Homelessness Services Collection
YJ	Youth Justice
YJC	Youth Justice Centres
YJCSS	Youth Justice Community Support Service
YJHA	Youth Justice Homelessness Assistance service
YPB	Youth Parole Board

For further information this document and the full protocol document may be downloaded from the Department of Human Services intranet or the Funded Agency Channel at [www.fac.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.fac.dhs.vic.gov.au)

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# Overview

The purpose of this agreement is to enhance collaborative working relationships between the housing and homelessness Service System (HSS) and the Youth Justice System to improve the response to young people at risk of homelessness when exiting Youth Justice centres (YJC).

As for the adult population, young people without stable accommodation upon exit from custody are at higher risk of re-offending and becoming entrenched in a culture of homelessness and transience. The outcome for young people in such circumstances may be a further progression into the criminal justice system.

Preventative responses for young people in the Youth Justice System require effective planning and coordination of services, and an understanding across the housing, homelessness and support services sectors of the particular vulnerabilities and needs of young people in moving towards achieving their goals for education and employment, safe affordable housing, health and wellbeing.

In recognition of this, the Department of Human Services (DHS) established the Transitional Housing Management - Youth Justice Housing Pathways Initiative (THM-YJ HPI) in 2002. This initiative provides a coordinated housing pathway for young people aged 15 years and over who are exiting YJCs who are at risk of homelessness, or who have previously been homeless.

The THM-YJ HPI has now been integrated into the Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS). The YJCSS requires that organisations partner strategically in each DHS Division to provide a range of services that can be accessed by a single referral point and tailored to meet the individual needs of each young person. The YJCSS provides the following services:

- Intensive case work support; to assist young people to lead non-offending lives to connect to family, education, training, employment and community
- Integrated access and supported referrals; to a wide range of services both within consortia and the broader service system including drug and alcohol, mental health and health services, housing, education, training, culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal specific services
- Transitional housing and support; THM-YJHPI has been integrated into the YJCSS, providing 55 transitional housing properties, assistance and housing outreach support for eligible young people. The primary target group for this housing is young people aged 17+ exiting YJCs on parole. Young people assisted through the initiative will have a history of homelessness and are at risk of homelessness upon exit, and will have the capacity to live independently with varying levels of support as appropriate.

A further key component of the THM-YJ-HPI initiative is the Youth Justice Homeless Assistance service (YJHA). This service is provided by VincentCare and YJHA workers provide specialised housing assistance to young people exiting YJCs, and secondary consultation to YJCs and community based Youth Justice services to explore and develop housing pathways from as early as possible during a young person's custodial sentence. *For further information refer to Appendix 1: Summary of the YJCSS and THM-YJHPI.*

This protocol is designed to assist Local Areas Service Networks (LASNs) and HSS entry points to respond appropriately to the needs of young people involved with the Youth Justice System who are at risk of becoming homeless and who have been homeless. The protocol is specifically designed for young people who may not necessarily meet the criteria for access to THM-YJ HPI, or where this initiative does not have current capacity to assist at a given time.

The practices outlined in this protocol are intended to make access to homelessness and housing services clearer, more equitable in terms of need, best match to meet need, and to inform HSS entry points about the specific issues associated with assisting young people exiting YJCs within the context of significantly limited service resources and supply of appropriate affordable housing.

Young people may exit youth justice centres:

- after being granted a **Youth Parole order**. Parole allows the young person to serve a portion of their sentence in the community with statutory supervision and case management from Youth Justice community based teams. Parole is granted by the Youth Parole Board (YPB) of Victoria.
- on **remissions**; where a young person is released from a youth justice custodial without further supervision in the community and may be released early for good behaviour. Release on remissions, applies to sentences of less than six months and/or to young people who have been assessed as Not Appropriate for Parole by the Youth Parole Board.

- at the expiry of a **Youth Justice Centre order** or **Youth Residential Centre order** without further supervision in the community.
- **after a period of remand.** A young person may be remanded to custody before being found guilty of an offence. They may be released from remand after a court either grants bail, or finalises the court matters through sentencing. This may include young people being sentenced to a period of detention in a Youth Residential or YJC, or being sentenced to a community based order supervised by an area based Youth Justice service.

## 2. Aim of Protocol Agreement

The central aim of this protocol is to establish a response by which LASNs, the YJHA service, YJCs and the area based Youth Justice service can work together to improve responses that will reduce homelessness amongst young people involved with the Youth Justice System. Other aims include:

- Improve the transitional experiences of young people toward appropriate and sustainable housing, capacity to take up educational, training and employment opportunities, and other beneficial lifestyle changes;
- Provide a clear pathway for young people to start to achieve their goals; and
- Collect data on the housing needs of young people to assist with quantifying the extent and range of housing needs of those involved with the Youth Justice System.

**This protocol is designed to improve access for young people involved with Youth Justice to the homelessness and broader housing and allied service systems, not to replace the THM-YJ HPI.**

## 3. Context - Opening Doors Framework

HSS entry points offer the opportunity to improve access to homelessness and housing services for individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness.

Opening Doors is an area-based service coordination framework with a practice and systems approach to providing timely and effective access to homelessness and social housing services for those seeking assistance.

LASNs are established in all DHS Divisions and Areas. Each of the 17 LASNs has a number of visible entry points through which people who are homeless or those at risk can access the HSS. Initial Assessment & Planning (IAP) workers are located at each entry point and undertake initial assessment, prioritisation and resource allocation for the LASNs.

Initial assessment focuses on:

- assistance to maintain current housing (where appropriate)
- options for housing
- other immediate homelessness related needs and risks
- assessment of immediate and longer term support needs; and
- options for medium and appropriate long-term housing.

It is generally acknowledged that THM-YJ HPI, which is intended as an additional system for a particularly vulnerable group, does not currently have the capacity to meet demand for housing and other forms of assistance. This protocol aims to facilitate improved access to the homelessness services, particularly for those young people with support and housing needs who cannot access or who may not be eligible for THM-YJ HPI.

It is important to acknowledge that this protocol cannot be a mechanism for guaranteeing a young person access to housing and support. It is anticipated that increased awareness amongst homelessness services of

the issues experienced by young people involved with the Youth Justice System will improve opportunities to access homelessness services.

## 4. Principles

The principles underpinning this protocol are:

- a consumer-focused and strengths-based approach
- equity and clarity of access to HSS resources
- support for skilled workers with training and supervision
- collaboration and partnerships between agencies and DHS
- reasonable care to address the risks faced by each young homeless person and
- maximising available homelessness resources.

Key aims underpinning effective service responses are:

- provision of safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing
- provision of resources in a neutral, impartial and non-judgemental manner
- provision of services in a manner which does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, language, ability, religious or political beliefs, sexuality, family status, age, class, background or health status
- upholding service user rights to confidentiality and privacy
- provision of high quality services that maximise opportunities for self-determination and autonomy
- transparency and accountability in relation to prioritisation and allocation of homelessness and housing support resources
- flexibility to respond to complex needs and
- collaboration between entry points, IAP workers, case managers, YJCs and local area Youth Justice teams.

## 5. Terms of Protocol Agreement

This protocol agreement will form part of service standards and guidelines for relevant agencies as outlined in the DHS policy and funding plan. It will be reviewed when practice and policy changes occur within service systems, through the Statutory and Forensic Services Branch and Service Development and Design Branch, Service Design and Implementation Group, DHS.

## 7. Accessing services through entry points

### 7.1. Youth Justice Homelessness Assistance service

The YJHA works with young people aged 15 and over who are exiting YJC, with a history of homelessness, who are not able to access dedicated transitional housing and support through THM-YJ HPI. Workers assist young people with alternative housing and support options through HSS entry points and the broader community service system.

YJHA is a key partner in the YJCSS, complementing services to those provided through the THM-YJHPI. DHS funds 1.5 full time YJHA workers who provide specialist housing assistance to young people as outreach

to the YJC, visiting each centre weekly or as required. Secondary consultation to youth justice custodial and community based workers is provided, including assistance to explore alternative housing and support options for YJCSS clients when there are no available dedicated THM vacancies. YJHA workers have strong local connections for integration with the YJCSS case planning and care-team process. (See Appendix 2 – detailed role description for YJHA).

## 7.2. Referral into Entry Points

A young person involved with the youth justice service presenting at any entry point for assistance must not be:

- turned away on the basis of 'place of origin' (*Refer to Cross Regional Guidelines*)
- referred to a service based on a former address held by the young person
- refused services on the basis that the young person is/has been involved with the youth justice service.

A local response will be provided within available resources (in a young person's preferred area, and where assessed as appropriate). Under this protocol, procedures for referral into the entry point services include the following steps: (*refer to flow chart on following page*).

- YJHA workers fax completed referral forms (IAP common form) to nominated entry points during business hours
- LASNs/entry points will accept initial assessment from YJHA workers 8-12 weeks prior to release and place on the prioritisation list according to priority of need and risks associated with appropriate housing, locations and circumstances of individual each young person
- where there is a Youth Allocation Committee, the referral should be added to the Youth Allocation prioritisation list
- LASNs/entry points will use the notice provided prior to exit dates to actively consider referral for available resources on or after actual exit dates. As much notice as possible needs to be provided to entry points prior to a young person's exit from a YJC
- LASNs/entry points must note that some young people post exit from custody may not have photo identification at the time of initial contact upon exit. Young people in these circumstances should not be excluded from assistance on this basis
- YJHA will inform the entry point of any supports and services attached to the young person on release from custody that may assist in the prioritisation process.

## 7.3. Housing Establishment Fund (HEF)

A young person involved with the Youth Justice System presenting at any entry point for assistance must not be turned away on the basis of 'place of origin', referred to a service based on a former address held by the young person, or on the basis that the young person has been involved with the Youth Justice System.

A local response will be provided within available resources (in a young person's preferred area, and where assessed as appropriate).

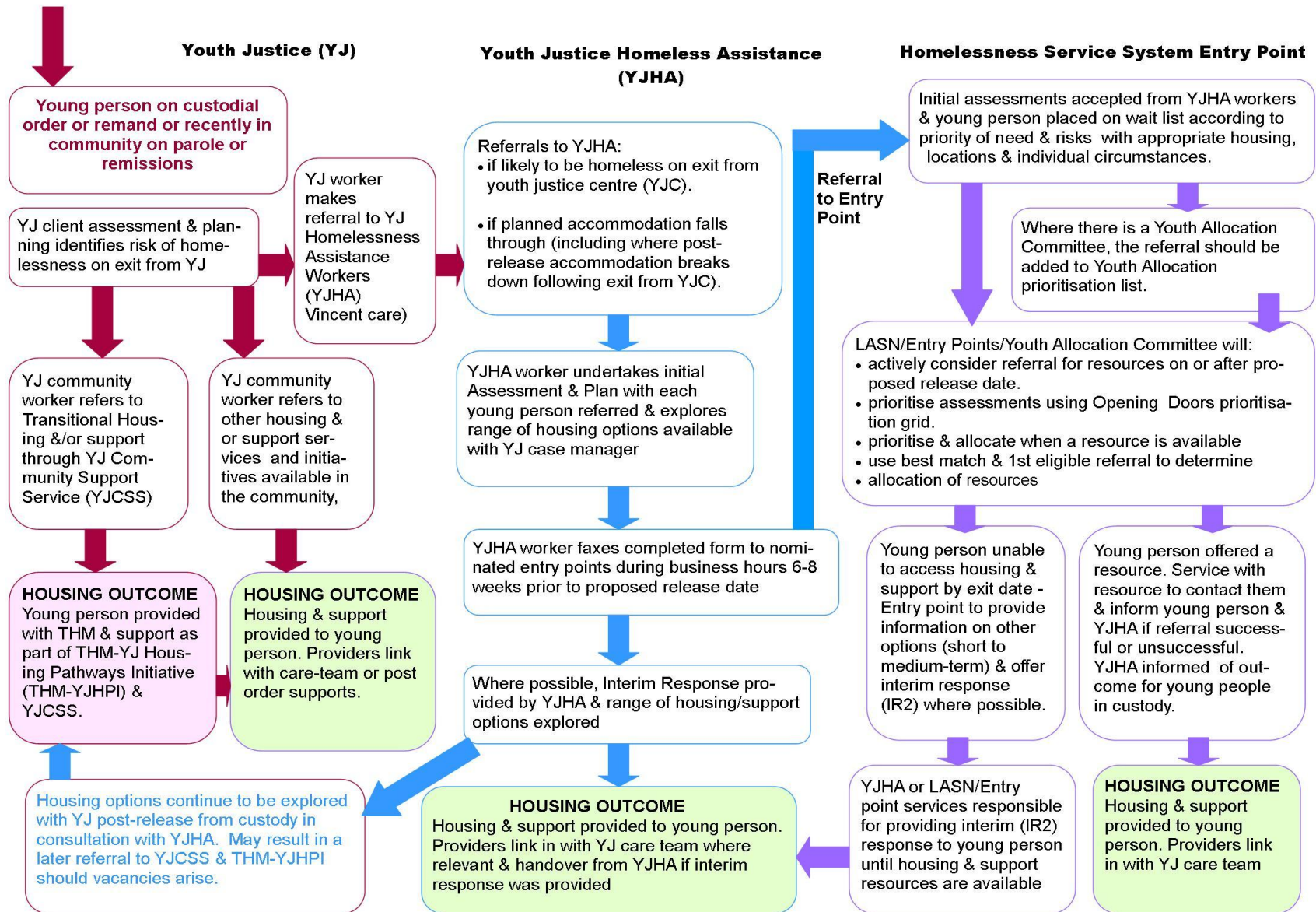
State-wide or multi-area services may assist where a local response cannot be provided, or may add to a HEF allocation within available resources where a top up is required to provide an appropriate response for a client.

All entry points will be required to list available HEF resources on the Resource Register.

Where a state-wide service provides after hours response, that service may forward an invoice for the cost of the accommodation to the local entry point. This practice ensures that payments are made in a timely manner to receiving accommodation services, minimises confusion on the part of accommodation providers and ensures services' HEF resources are replenished and available. Further discussion is required around this point as this practice will vary and be negotiated within each LASN.

*See Appendix 4 for a list of Local Area Service Networks and subregions covered*

Referral flow chart from Youth Justice to Homeless Service System for young people exiting custody at risk of homelessness





## 7.4. Prioritisation process

The prioritisation process for allocating resources should apply the following principles:

- LASNs/entry points will prioritise all assessments using the Opening Doors prioritisation grid.
- LASNs/entry points will prioritise and allocate when a resource is available.
- LASNs/entry points will use best match and first eligible referral to determine allocation of an available resource.
- When an available resource is offered to a young person, the service holding that resource will advise the YJHA.
- The service holding the resource will contact the YJHA and young person and inform them if the referral is successful or unsuccessful.
- If a young person is unable to access necessary housing and support, the LASN/entry point will provide information on other options that may be appropriate for the short to medium term, and where possible within available resources, offer an interim response.
- YJHA may provide an interim response (IR2) response where no other supports are in place and will maintain regular contact with the LASN/entry point for updates prior to release date and post release where required.
- The YJHA or LASN/entry point will be responsible for providing an interim response to the young person until housing and support resources are available.

The summary of information should include:

- identified needs and risks
- housing assistance provided or planned and
- support needed or arranged.

Youth Justice, YJHA, LASNs/HSS entry points, and multi-area services will negotiate the transfer of information based on the process each service has in place. These processes must comply with *The Information Privacy Act 2000*, and *The Health Records Act 2001*.

DHS in partnership with the LASNs will continue to work towards developing an improved system for transferring client information, e.g. an e-referral form. For the interim, fax and phone communications apply.

# 8. Roles and responsibilities

## 8.1. Role of Youth Justice Unit Coordinator

Each unit within custodial centres has a Unit Coordinator who has overall responsibility for case management of the clients within that unit. The Unit Coordinator allocates key workers to each client and ensures that case management tasks are completed and standards met.

It is the Unit Coordinator who will make the referral to the YJHA worker. A copy of the referral should be kept on the client's file as record of the referral having been made. This referral should be made in consultation with the community based Youth Justice worker, who undertakes exiting planning as part of any proposed parole plans.

The Unit Coordinator is responsible for ensuring processes are in place to allow appropriate access to the YJHA for unit clients and will liaise with the YJHA workers on their weekly visit to the centre.

The Unit Coordinator should seek advice from the YJHAS worker when there are any indications that a client may be homeless or at risk of homelessness on exit from the centre.

## 8.2. Role of Youth Justice custodial key worker

Each young person has a key worker and back-up key worker who is responsible for implementing all aspects of their case management under the supervision of the Unit Coordinator. The key worker works with the young person to develop and implement a client service plan, including consideration of their post-release accommodation needs.

In relation to the YJHA, the key worker is responsible for:

- identifying young people who may benefit from the YJHA early in their sentence
- discussing potential referrals to YJHA with the community based Youth Justice worker and
- recording any interactions with YJHA on the Client Relationship Information System (CRIS) and in the Client Assessment Plan.

## 8.3. Youth Parole and Youth Residential Boards

The Youth Parole and Youth Residential Board of Victoria (YBP) is an independent authority that exercises jurisdiction over all young people sentenced by a court to a period of custody in a YJC, and other young people transferred by the Adult Parole Board from imprisonment in adult prison to serve sentence in a YJC.

Parole allows eligible young people on YJC orders (15-20 years) or youth residential centre orders (10-14 years) to serve part of a custodial sentence in the community. Not all young people exiting custody are released on parole. Young people serving sentences less than 6 months and those assessed as not appropriate by the YPB may be released on remissions.

## 8.4. Role of community based Youth Justice workers

In the community, Youth Justice teams provide area-based state-wide supervision and case management to young people on statutory court orders, including youth parole orders. Each young person in custody has an allocated worker from an area based Youth Justice team. Prior to a young person appearing before the YPB, the community based youth justice worker (parole worker) is responsible for the preparation of the parole plan.

Parole workers at DHS local areas provide statutory supervision and case-management young people on parole/community supervision orders.

The purpose of parole planning is to provide comprehensive information about the young person's plans for living in the community on parole. The objective of the plan is to identify the type and level of support and supervision that will be necessary to assist the young person gain stability, and minimise the risk of further offending. A suitable accommodation arrangement on release is one of the key components of the parole plan. As part of the Youth Justice Care-team approach, collaborative exit planning with Youth Justice custodial centres, YJHA and post release support providers such as the YJCSS is critical.

# 9. Related program resources

## 9.1. Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS) including the THM-Youth Justice Housing Pathways Initiative (THM-YJHPI)

YJCSS is an integrated approach to the provision of intensive support and services to young people involved with youth justice to complement the statutory case management undertaken by community based youth justice teams. YJCSS support workers provide post release support to young people exiting YJCs based on the individual needs of each young person referred by youth justice, and refined through the care-team process.

The YJCSS provide intensive case work support, including outreach support, integrated access and supported referrals to a broad range of services and housing outreach and support for young people supported in the dedicated THM properties are part of the THM-YJHPI.

Referrals to the YJCSS are made by the community based youth justice worker, and for young people in custody, this can commence as pre-release support as part of the exit planning, to enhance the transition and re-integration back to the community. This includes referrals to the 55 dedicated THM properties and support as part of the THM-YJHPI.

YJCSS support can endure beyond the expiry of a young person's statutory orders with the Youth Justice System, providing post order support and transition to broader community services.

For further information refer to Appendix 1.

## 10. Collecting data – Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC)

As part of their service agreement with DHS, all funded homelessness services are required to collect data to support the information needs of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), service system planning and localised planning for improved responses and targeting to where resources are most needed. Data are collected and submitted monthly to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

As homelessness services submit data the client picture is constantly evolving. The AIHW take data snapshots and focus on the delivery of timely reports. This will occur overtime as the SHSC is a newly introduced system.

The initial assessment and referral form used by THM services is designed to capture information for SHSC during or immediately after the initial assessment and service provision stage. The assessment and engagement process may occur in person or over the phone. IAP workers must ask for the clients' consent to use their information.

The SHSC captures broad information at the program level, with a focus on the client receiving assistance and the nature of assistance received. The SHSC seeks to provide an evidence base for researchers, peak bodies, service organisations and government to understand more about specific issues related to homelessness in Victoria and within an Australia wide context. The following information is gathered:

- number of people assisted by the HSS
- forms of assistance being delivered
- client pathways through the HSS
- geographic areas in which people receive assistance
- resources (inputs) and outputs; and where possible and
- outcomes achieved for clients.

The SHSC will provide the necessary data to demonstrate the level of demand for housing and homelessness services from young people and young people involved with the Youth Justice System, the types of services most commonly required, and access to resources.

Information collected as part of the SHSC will ensure there is a better understanding about the range of needs associated with this group of young people, and the service system's capacity to accommodate these needs. Further, the collection will assist with future planning and allocation of resources.

# 11. Confidentiality and Duty of Care

Legislation related to protecting private information is provided in:

- *The Information Privacy Act 2000*, which applies to the treatment of all personal information collected about clients; and
- *The Health Records Act 2001*, which applies to the treatment of any health information collected about clients.

## 11.1. Acknowledgement of Confidentiality of information relating to clients

All service organisations acknowledge and will be fully compliant with *The Information Privacy Act 2000*, and *The Health Records Act 2001*.

All information collected should be with the client's informed consent about how this information will be used. Clients should be asked about providing consent for the use of their information at the end of the initial conversation with the client, which includes consent for referrals (using the common referral and consent forms).

Clients should always be asked how much detail to include in the referral as there may be certain information clients do not wish to be passed on. A signed copy of the consent form must accompany any information being transferred between services.

## 11.2. Use and disclosure of information with client consent

Clients should be advised that their personal information can be used or disclosed for the primary purpose for which it was collected, or for a directly related secondary purpose which the client would reasonably expect. When a worker considers whether or not to disclose information they should consider the following factors:

- when clients have given consent (verbal or written), consent forms will be used and made available by the referring services
- the sensitivity of the information
- the client's best interests
- whether the information contains personal information about a person other than the client (such as the client's children) and
- potential risk to the client or others.

## 11.3. Use and disclosure of information without client consent

The client should be advised that the release or disclosure of client information can also occur without consent where there is a purpose to lessen or prevent:

- a serious or imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare and/or
- a serious threat to public health, public safety or public welfare

In addition, the release or disclosure of client information can occur where the use or disclosure of information is part of an investigation into unlawful activity.

When consent is not given for the transfer of information, the assessing service will advise clients of how they can contact specific services and advise of other options available.

## 12. Dispute Resolution

Service organisations are required to develop their own dispute resolution protocols or develop protocols that apply the following principles:

- As a first step, dispute resolution is the responsibility of the relevant service organisation managers.
- As the second step, dispute resolution is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officers.
- Each party agrees to raise any issues quickly and the other to respond quickly.
- Disputes may be raised with the LASNs/entry points when state-wide or multi-area services are represented on those LASNs/entry points, but only when the above steps have been followed.
- During the term of any dispute, the parties will continue to meet their obligations under this protocol.
- The dispute may be referred to relevant DHS Area when not able to be resolved at the service level.
- Learnings and issues raised during a dispute resolution process should be reviewed by the relevant LASNs/entry points.
- All parties to this Protocol will be open to receiving client grievances and will make every attempt to resolve them according to organisational policy.
- While one party to the Protocol may act as an advocate for a client making a complaint, parties will make every attempt to work together to respond to and resolve the grievance.

For local queries in relation to the protocol please contact the Homelessness Networker in your area.

For policy enquires related to this protocol please contact Jill Macqueen in the Access and Eligibility unit on 9096 9779.

# Appendix 1

## The Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS) and Transitional Housing Management Youth Justice Housing Pathways Initiative (THM-YJHPI)

The Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS) is an integrated approach to the provision of intensive support and services to Youth Justice clients to complement the statutory case management undertaken by Youth Justice units. The service has been developed recognising that Youth Justice clients present with a range of complex and varied needs that require an individualised service response.

The YJCSS is designed to ensure that service access and service delivery for Youth Justice clients is provided in an integrated and coordinated manner at a local level with a high level of collaboration and a 'care-team' approach between Youth Justice and community service organisations.

### Key features of the YJCSS

The YJCSS requires that organisations partner strategically in each division to provide a range of services that can be accessed by a single access point tailored to meet the individual needs of each young person referred. The YJCSS provides the following services:

- Intensive case work support; to assist young people to lead non-offending lives to connect to family, education, training, employment and community
- Integrated access and supported referrals; to a wide range of services both within consortia and the broader service system including drug and alcohol, mental health and health services, housing, education, training, culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal specific services
- Transitional housing and support; The Transitional Housing Management - Youth Justice Housing Pathways Initiative (THM-YJHPI) has been integrated into the YJCSS, providing transitional housing properties, assistance and housing outreach support for eligible young people. This program was developed to assist particularly vulnerable groups of people to with pathways to achieve long term sustainable housing outcomes.

### Target group

The target group for the YJCSS is made up of two sub-groups. A young person involved with youth justice may be referred as part of either or both of these sub-groups.

### Youth Justice clients requiring intensive support services

The YJCSS is funded as an intensive service response to support Youth Justice case management primarily for young people assessed as requiring a high to intensive level of intervention. This includes young people supervised by youth justice on the full range of community based orders (probation, youth supervision order, youth attendance order) and those exiting custody requiring post release support (parole or remissions). In some circumstances, the department may determine that pre-sentence clients may be appropriate to be referred to the YJCSS due to their unique needs and lack of alternative support options.

### Youth Justice clients requiring transitional housing and support through the THM-YJHPI

The target group also includes young people assessed as eligible for transitional housing and support as part of the THM-YJHPI. The primary target group for the THM-YJ HPI is young people aged 17 and over leaving youth justice centres on parole. To be eligible for the THM-YJ HPI, young people must have a history of homelessness and/or be at risk of homelessness, and have the potential to live independently. Other young people outside the primary target group may also be eligible for accommodation and support as per nomination guidelines.

Due to the complexity of needs, transitional housing may not be an appropriate option for all young people involved with youth justice requiring accommodation. However, in some instances, the YJCSS provides the capacity to support more vulnerable young people into transitional housing through the provision of additional support that is more intensive and holistic than previously provided through the THM-YJHPI model,

strengthening the capacity for more complex young people to access this part of the service and to be supported to live independently.

Processes for the prioritisation and eligibility of clients operate within each local area, providing flexibility and responsiveness to individual needs of the young person and local demands.

### Referral process

Referrals to the YJCSS are initiated by the community based youth justice worker as part of the case planning process. The Youth Justice worker discusses the nature of the referral with the young person and gains their consent to refer the young person to the program. All referrals to the YJCSS must be endorsed by the relevant local area Youth Justice team manager (or delegate) before proceeding.

### Referral pathway for youth justice custodial services staff to local service areas

Communication between Youth Justice community based and custodial workers must occur when considering referrals to community services.

Young people in custody requiring post release support (including parole eligible, remissions and remand clients) will be identified for referral to the YJCSS through the Youth Justice case planning and parole planning process, with the custodial unit coordinator discussing the case with the allocated community based Youth Justice worker. If appropriate, the community based Youth Justice worker will then initiate the referral to YJCSS as prescribed by each local area.

Referrals to the YJCSS for young people in custody should be initiated in a timely manner as part of the exit planning process, to ensure that young people can, where possible, establish links with post release support services prior their release from custody.

### Youth Justice clients not receiving support through YJCSS

The YJCSS is funded as an intensive service response, with set targets per consortium. If a case is not assessed as appropriate or prioritised for YJCSS service, alternate service provision will be considered as per case management and case planning processes. This may involve Youth Justice workers making direct referrals to the broader service system and other funded services.

### Youth Justice clients in need of homelessness assistance

For young people who cannot access the dedicated transitional housing and support through the THM-YJHPI, consultation with the Youth Justice Homeless Assistance service (YJHA) can be utilised. This service is managed by VincentCare and YJHA workers provide specialist housing assistance to clients and secondary consultation to Youth Justice centres and community based Youth Justice workers in order to explore and develop early housing pathways whilst young people are in custody.

Further information on YJCSS can be located online at: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/programs/youth-specific/youth-justice-community-support-service-fact-sheet>

## Appendix 2

### The role description of the Youth Justice Homelessness Assistance Workers (YJHA)

The YJHA is a service of VincentCare. YJHA workers provide an outreach service to each of the Youth Justice centres (YJCs)—generally visiting each Youth Justice weekly or as required. The YJHA can assist Youth Justice workers to explore alternative accommodation and support options should properties in the THM-YJHPI not be available.

#### Target Group for YJHA Referrals

Young people aged 15 years and over, exiting YJCs, with a history of homelessness, who cannot access dedicated transitional housing and support. YJHA workers assist young people exiting YJCs who are not eligible for, or who are eligible but cannot access the THM-YJ HPI properties and support. While not part of regional YJHA consortia, the YJHA is a key partner in the Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS), complementing services to homeless clients

#### Referrals to YJHA workers

The YJHA workers will receive referrals:

- through the Youth Justice client service planning process, if it is determined that a young person is likely to be homeless on exit from custody
- when a young person in the targeted client group is due to leave one of the YJCs, if the accommodation option outlined in their client service plan falls through
- if post release accommodation for a young person in the target group breaks down following exit from a YJC and the YJHA worker is notified and
- from remand units to assist young people to access accommodation, often at short notice.

#### The YJHA workers' responsibilities include the following.

- Providing assistance, advice and secondary consultation to young people and their Youth Justice caseworkers to access other accommodation including transitional housing in the broader youth sector.
- Providing advice, secondary consultation or assistance to young people and their Youth Justice caseworkers to access transitional homelessness support in the broader youth sector.
- Providing advice, secondary consultation or assistance regarding other housing and homelessness service options to young people and their Youth Justice caseworkers.
- Providing assistance to stabilise or maintain existing housing for young people who are on short sentences.
- Providing advice on public housing eligibility, including the segmented waiting list application process.
- Assisting Youth Justice workers to identify young people with a history or substantial risk of homelessness for whom housing expertise is required. This could involve providing an Initial housing-needs assessment on admission or in the early stages of a young person's custodial sentence.
- Completing initial assessments and completing referrals for young people in custody to nominated entry points.
- Maintaining a good working knowledge of housing and homelessness assistance options for this group.
- Participation in regular meetings, including client service planning meetings and YJCSS case coordination meetings, with YJCs, regional Youth Justice units, YJCSS consortia and the housing sector as required.
- Advocating on behalf of the client group and develop and maintain professional links with existing housing networks, THMs and support agencies.
- Collecting relevant data, as per DHS requirements.
- Provision of secondary consultation on housing issues such as public housing eligibility.
- Assisting with access to Housing Establishment Funds.
- Gate-keep and prioritise referrals for the Youth Justice foyer pilot.



## Appendix 3

### Homelessness Service System Responses to Young People

#### Homelessness Service System entry points

Opening Doors aims to provide integrated and coordinated responses for people accessing Specialist Homelessness Services. At the Homelessness Service System entry points, people seeking assistance will meet with an Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) worker who will assess their housing and support needs.

People requiring homelessness assistance can call 1800 825 955 and they will be directed to the entry point that is closest to them. There are also some specialist entry points for example, Melbourne Youth Support Service at Melbourne City Mission and specialist entry points for women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

#### Youth Outreach Support

Youth Outreach Support for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness assists them towards independence through a case managed outreach response. Support is mainly provided to young people in Transitional Housing Management (THM) accommodation, as well as in other settings.

#### Creating Connections

Through *Creating Connections*, youth focused homelessness support services provide case management and a range of interventions and links to appropriate responses to improve outcomes for young people aged 16-25 years who are homeless. *Creating Connections* Youth Hubs are an area based partnership approach to service delivery offering the following services:

- education, training and employment (one-on-one support and group programs)
- private rental access (advocacy, support and brokerage)
- intensive case management (young people with complex needs)
- life skills development (structured, skill development program)
- housing and homelessness support.

#### Creating Connections Youth Focused Housing Placement

The *Creating Connections* Youth Focused Housing Placement service enhances the response to young people in crisis when they first present to the Homelessness Service System. This response intersects with entry points (youth specific or general) and delivers IAP and interim response activities.

#### Creating Connections Education Employment Program (CEEP)

CEEP brokerage packages provide young people with practical support and pathways into study, training and work and opportunities to achieve long term vocational goals.

#### Youth Refuges

Youth refuges provide immediate accommodation and support to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a key role in supporting young people to avoid and move beyond homelessness.

Additional resources funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness are allocated across Department of Human Service (DHS) divisions, supplementing existing refuge funding to strengthen the crisis response to young people to prevent them transiting from youth to adult homelessness. Refuges now provide brokerage funds and an enhanced model of service delivery in eight youth refuges that focuses on specialist support, family reconciliation and follow up support.

#### Youth Foyers

Youth foyers focus on supporting young people by providing medium term stable accommodation with personal support services, reconnection to learning and skills development and work experience and access to jobs. In order to be eligible for Youth foyer, a young person must be willing and have the capacity to engage with education, training and employment as part of their participation in the program.

Youth foyers are located in Melbourne, Ballarat and Warrnambool with a foyer in Shepparton in development.

### Support for Young People That Really Counts

This program provides accommodation with linked support to young people who are motivated to engage in education, employment and training. The service provides a bridge between youth crisis refuge accommodation and more independent living arrangements such as transitional housing or supporting young people in private rental. Assistance when required is available locally, in close proximity to the housing, as well as training and employment opportunities and other local amenities. *Support for Young People That Really Counts* providers are located in Lilydale, Berwick, Thomastown and Melton.

### Step Ahead

*Step Ahead* provides a foyer-like model located in inner Melbourne to assist young people to make the transition to greater independence. It provides an integrated package of accommodation, living skills, casework and access to employment, education and training opportunities, with support linked to a range of other services.

### Ladder Hoddle Street

Ladder is an integrated supportive housing service for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Based on the foyer model, the program provides accommodation, support, employment, education and mentoring services for young people to help them develop independent living skills and community connections and to move on to independent lives.

### Young People Leaving Care

Young People Leaving Care (YPLC) Housing & Support Initiatives are provided in each DHS division and responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Loddon Mallee, northern, western and southern metropolitan areas. These initiatives form part of the Regional Leaving Care Alliance response in each division and provide housing and support to young people to develop the appropriate living skills and connections to move toward independent living.

### Family Reconciliation Responses

Family Reconciliation and Mediation Program is an early intervention approach to strengthen the capacity of homelessness services to work with young people to improve relationships with their family, and where possible, facilitate a return home or to extended family. It provides a state-wide brokerage service to funded homelessness service providers to purchase family reconciliation and mediation services from private practitioners, group work and other local supports, assisting over 200 young people per year.

Family reconciliation positions are located in youth and family homelessness services. The positions provide a direct service to young people aged 16-25 who are at imminent risk of homelessness, or who have recently left home, or who are accommodated in a homelessness support service and are assessed as having unresolved family issues which are contributing to their homelessness.

### Supporting Young Parents

This program delivers intensive support over a six months period to young people who are pregnant or parenting and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Five programs operate in three DHS rural areas. The program connects young parents to relevant health and welfare services, provides parenting and living skills, connects to education, employment and training opportunities, promotes social inclusion and access to stable housing.

### Homeless Youth Dual Diagnosis Initiative (HYDDI)

This program is funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. DHS has formed a partnership with the Department of Health and implemented a dual diagnosis service response in place within the youth homelessness service sector of each DHS division. This service is being delivered by nine specialist dual diagnosis clinicians and provides for both direct and incidental engagement of young people, increasing the opportunity for a young person to receive support with drug or alcohol and mental health issues and move closer to resolving their homelessness.

## Appendix 4

### Factors Impacting on Young People Exiting Youth Justice Centres

Young people involved with the Youth Justice System and young people in general face the ongoing challenge of accessing appropriate short, medium and long term housing options, clients, especially those exiting Youth Justice centres (YJCs), frequently have difficulty securing accommodation and stable living arrangements. Young people who also have multiple or complex needs, an offending history, and exhibit high risk behaviours have fewer housing options available.

It is estimated that young people aged 16-25 account for up to 40 per cent of clients using the Homelessness Service System in Victoria. Research shows that being homeless can create a situation in which people are more likely to engage in offending, be arrested or incarcerated. Access to secure and stable accommodation can develop the client's independent living skills, community connectedness and self confidence. This may minimise risks that contribute to continued homelessness, re-offending and return to YJCs.

Whilst the Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS) supports in excess of 100 young people exiting YJCs per year through intensive support and case management, there are only 55 transitional properties allocated for a housing response as part of the Transitional Housing Management - Youth Justice Housing Pathways Initiative (THM-YJHPI). As with many other people accessing transitional housing, the turnover is limited by low availability of affordable exit options and significant waiting times for public housing, where assessed as appropriate for individuals or young families.

### Considerations for IAP workers when assessing young people exiting youth justice centres

Initial Assessment & Planning (IAP) workers should consider the following issues when assessing young people exiting YJCs:

- Independent living skills and ability to live independently with the level of support available
- The client's age and developmental stage
- Shared accommodation may not always be appropriate. Shared housing post exit from YJCs may be unsuitable due to the client's behaviour/ability to share a house, and independent living skills, as well as the institutionalisation following periods in custody.
- Fulfilling parole/ supervision requirements
  - Young people on Youth Parole orders and or statutory community based order issued by the courts have a number of conditions, including special conditions. For example, obligations to attend supervision appointments with their Youth Justice worker, notify of any change of address within 48 hours. Special conditions may mandate for example, drug and alcohol counselling or to attend or reside as directed condition.
- The type of offences committed, particularly arson, sex and violent offences
  - The Department of Human Services has non-delegable obligations to take reasonable care of statutory clients. The department also has responsibility regarding community safety. Where it is known that a client has a significant and recent history of arson, sex and/or violent offences, and the client is being accommodated by a THM service or public housing office, the Youth Justice worker has an obligation to inform the service provider of these offending behaviours.
- Mental health and alcohol and drug addiction issues
  - Many young people involved with the Youth Justice system have diagnosed mental illness and /or alcohol and drug addiction related issues.
- Financial hardship
  - Young people are the most disadvantaged in terms financial hardship given the low level of Centrelink entitlement and lower end wages if entering employment. Housing affordability is a major issue for young people living independently in the community
- Connection/disconnection with family
  - There are many reasons why a family member may be disengaged or disconnected from a young person, such as exhaustion, personal suffering, limited skills or an avoidant coping style. Further, young people may have experienced harmful family relationships and many young people involved with Youth Justice have history of involvement with child protection services, and have histories of child abuse and/or neglect.
  - Even if the relationship is not harmful and rebuilding the relationship in time is likely to be beneficial for the young person, now may not be the right time to begin direct contact.
  - A family member may be more willing to re-engage in their relationship with the young person if they have some new strategies for doing so, and appropriate support.

## Appendix 5

### Local Area Service Networks

<b>LASN</b>	<b>Local Government Areas in Catchment</b>	<b>DHS Division &amp; Area</b>
Barwon South West-Barwon	Greater Geelong, Colac Otway, Surf Coast, Queenscliff	West Division Barwon Area
Barwon South West-South West	Warrnambool, Corangamite, Moyne, Southern Grampians, Glenelg	Western District
Grampians- Central Highlands	Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool, Hepburn, Pyrenees	Central Highlands
Grampians- Central/Wimmera	Horsham, Ararat, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack	Western District (Ararat- Central Highlands)
North and West Metropolitan Western Sub Regional	Melton, Brimbank, Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Wyndham and Melbourne (Kensington, North Melbourne, West Melbourne, Flemington, Port Melbourne)	Melton Brimbank Western Melbourne
North and West Metropolitan- North Sub Regional	Hume, Moreland, Glenroy, Whittlesea, Nillumbik, Darebin, Banyule, Whittlesea, Yarra, Melbourne (Carlton, Parkville, East Melbourne, CBD, Southbank and South Yarra)	North Division Hume Moreland North East Melbourne Western Melbourne (West Division)
Loddon Mallee- Loddon	Bendigo, Mount Alexander, Macedon Ranges, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon	Loddon
Loddon Mallee- Mallee	Mildura, Swan Hill, Ganawarra, Buloke	Mallee
Eastern Metropolitan	Maroondah, Knox, Yarra Ranges, Yarra Valley, Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Boorondara	East Division Outer Eastern Melbourne Inner Eastern Melbourne
Hume- Wodonga	Wodonga, Indigo Towong	Ovens Valley
Hume- Wangaratta	Wangaratta, Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Moira (Yarrowonga/Cobram), Strathbogie (Violet Town/Euroa)	Ovens Valley Goulburn
Hume- Shepparton	City of Greater Shepparton, Moira Shire(Nathalia/Numurkah/Barmah)	Goulburn
Hume- Seymour	Seymour, Mitchell Shire Council, Murrindindi Shire, Strathbogie (Nagambie)	Goulburn
Gippsland- West Gippsland	West Gippsland, Latrobe Valley, South Gippsland, Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Wellington	South Division Inner Gippsland Outer Gippsland
Gippsland- East Gippsland	East Gippsland	Outer Gippsland
Southern Metropolitan- Inner/Middle	Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Bayside, Kingston	Bayside Peninsula
Southern Metropolitan- Outer/Peninsula	Frankston, Casey, Cardinia, Dandenong, Mornington	Bayside Peninsula Southern Melbourne

## Appendix 6

### Homelessness Service System Entry Points

State-wide Entry Point contact: 1800 825 955

	ENTRY POINTS							
	General	Youth	Indigenous	Indigenous Youth	Family Violence	Indigenous Family Violence	Mental Health	TOTAL
<b>General services</b>								
Salvation Army Crisis centre (after hours)	1							1
Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service					1			1
Melbourne Youth Support Service		1						1
Women's Housing Ltd					1			1
<b>Areas</b>								
Barwon	5	2						7
Central Highlands (Grampians) and Western District	5							5
Northern and Western Melbourne	7							7
Goulburn and Ovens Valley	7	2			2			11
Outer and Inner Gippsland	10	1		1				12
Inner and Outer Eastern Melbourne	5							5
Loddon and Mallee	12	1	5		3	1	2	24
Southern Melbourne and Bayside Peninsula	6		1					7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>82</b>

# Appendix 7

## Youth Justice Homelessness Assistance Service – Contacts

Phone: 9304 0100

Fax: 9304 0102

Email: [yjha@vincentcare.org.au](mailto:yjha@vincentcare.org.au)

Name: Tregan Spiteri	Name: Nicole Ford
Position: Youth Justice Homelessness Assistance Worker, VincentCare	Position: YJHA Worker, VincentCare
Phone: 9304 0834 Mobile: 0408 634 227 Fax: 9304 0102	Phone: 9304 0815 Mobile: 0419 983 820 Fax: 9304 0102
Email: <a href="mailto:tregan.s@vincentcare.org.au">tregan.s@vincentcare.org.au</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:nicole.ford@vincentcare.org.au">nicole.ford@vincentcare.org.au</a>

Name: Rachael Fry	Name: Stephen Penaia Teo Position: Team Leader, Young Adult Services (YAS), Vincentcare
Position: YJHA Worker, Vincentcare	Position: Team Leader, Young Adult Services (YAS), Vincentcare
Phone: 9304 0816 Fax: 9304 0102	Phone: 0428 313 489/ 9304 0830
Email: <a href="mailto:Rachael.f@vincentcare.org.au">Rachael.f@vincentcare.org.au</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:Stephen.p@vincentcare.org.au">Stephen.p@vincentcare.org.au</a>