ACT Specialist Homelessness Services Sector Shared Practice Framework

ACT Common Assessment Tool (CAT) for intake, initial assessment and referral

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CENTRE for SOCIAL IMPACT | Flinders University

Acknowledgement of Country

The Centre for Social Impact at Flinders University acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which its campuses are located, these are the Traditional Lands of the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South East, First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kaurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders and Custodians past and present.

The Centre for Social Impact at Flinders acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as Traditional Custodians of the lands now known as the Australian Capital Territory and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We honour their Elders and Custodians past and present.

Centre for Social Impact

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) is a national research and education centre dedicated to catalysing social change for a better world. CSI is built on the foundation of four of Australia's leading universities: UNSW Sydney, The University of Western Australia, Flinders University and Swinburne University of Technology. Our **research** develops and brings together knowledge to understand current social challenges and opportunities; our postgraduate and undergraduate **education** develops social impact leaders; and we aim to **catalyse change** by drawing on these foundations and translating knowledge, creating leaders, developing usable resources, and reaching across traditional divides to facilitate collaborations.

Report acknowledgements

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CSI Flinders Shared Practice Framework development team

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ACT Common Assessment Tool (CAT) for intake, initial assessment and referral

The * symbol indicates an AIHW minimum data set requirement question

Note: This assessment form is only one component of the broader assessment process. Workers are required to first establish the client record in SHIP by completing the Minimum Data Set (MDS), including all mandatory demographic information. The assessment outlined below will then provide additional information about the client and is to be copied into SHIP's case notes/assessment section or the relevant section of a case management system. The ACT Common Assessment Tool (CAT) should be used flexibly. While the initial screening questions should be completed first, there is no prescribed order for the remaining sections. Topics can be explored in a sequence that is natural to the conversation, allowing the assessment to expand or contract depending on the client's needs, circumstances, and presenting issues. assessment.

ASSESSMENT DATE:

WORKER NAME:

Consent and information

(NAME) consented to FIRST Canberra collecting their personal information as per privacy and confidentiality policies

(NAME) consented to FIRST Canberra sharing their information with relevant services for the purpose of referrals and coordination of support.

Consent provided was verbal/written (select one)

Limitations on information sharing:

Client details

NAME (including preferred name and pronouns):

DOB:

FAMILY MEMBERS NAMES AND DOB IF APPLICABLE:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

ACCESSIBILTY CONSIDERATIONS:

Communication plan

Preferred contact method and contact times:

Interpreter or language needs:

Communication supports or adjustments required:

Approved support person/contact:

Safety considerations for communication:

Other communication preferences:

Presenting issues

Why is this person contacting First Canberra?

What are their main concerns right now?

What immediate help are they seeking and is it as an individual or as a household? Is anyone that is seeking housing, pregnant? If so, do they know the expected due date? Do they need support accessing pregnancy services?

Do they need information for material aid? (vouchers, showers, free meals etc)

Do they have any preferences regarding housing location? (e.g. need to remain near school, family or culture)

History

How long has this person lived in the ACT?

If they are experiencing homelessness, what has happened to disrupt their ability to access safe and stable housing?

Have they had any previous engagement with FIRST Canberra or other services?

DFSV/safety screening

Screening questions

Has their partner or ex-partner ever put them down, humiliated them, called them bad names or tried to control what they can or cannot do?

Have they been hit, slapped or hurt in other ways by their partner or ex-partner?

Are they ever frightened by their partner or ex-partner?

Are they worried that their partner or ex partner might know where they are or may be looking for them?

Where DFSV is identified or suspected, workers should:

- ask have they been connected to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service/ Canberra Rape Crisis Centre or ACT Policing? and seek to with consent make referrals to DFSV services.
- ask whether the person using violence is present in their life (either by choice or by the person using violence refusing to leave them alone)
- ask whether there is currently a family violence order, charges or bail conditions in relation to family violence
- ask the client whether they currently feel safe or what might increase their sense of safety, ask whether the client has a plan of what to do if they are feeling unsafe.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural considerations

Does the person identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

Are they connected to Country, community, family, Elders or cultural organisations?

Are there cultural supports they would like involved?

Would they prefer referral to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation?

Are there cultural obligations that may impact housing, support needs or relocation decisions?

Other cultural, religious and community considerations

Do they identify with a particular cultural, ethic, linguistic, faith or migrant community?

Are there cultural or religious practices that should be considered in housing or support planning?

Are there community, faith or faith connections that are important to maintain?

Would they prefer referrals to culturally specific services?

Are there any cultural safety considerations that services should be aware of?

Housing

What are their current circumstances – type of residency (renting/couch-surfing) current and in week preceding*?

How long have they been in this situation?

If they are currently experiencing homelessness, where was their last safe and stable place to be? Roughly how long has it been since they lived in the same place for more than 3 months?* (Suburb, state and/or facility name required)

If they are currently housed, is the person staying somewhere they feel safe? Can they remain there beyond the next 7 days? Are they at risk of their current arrangement breaking down?

Current rent/board payments? Does the person have any rental arrears/bond owing?

Previous engagement with Housing ACT? Current Housing ACT application in place?

HACT application number and the details of Assessing officer if known:

Previous or current tenancy issues?

Family/Children

Full names and DOB of children/family members

Information regarding care arrangements/custody orders if applicable

Names/locations of schools/care centres – are there any concerns around school attendance?

Any previous/current CYF involvement?

- What is their understanding of the reasons CYF are involved?
- What supports/referrals have CYF put in place for them?
- What has CYF asked them to partake in as part of the Care Plan recommendations? (i.e. mental health, AOD, parenting programs, urinalysis, etc)
- If children are not in parents care, it would be beneficial to understand what Orders are in place? (i.e. Interim Orders, 2 year Orders, 18 Year Orders)
- What is the name of the CYF practitioner/worker?

How is the family functioning together day-to-day? How are the children coping with their situation?

Do any of the children have any support needs that services need to know about? (examples include disability support, general health, mental health)

What supports are in place/needed to meet their family's needs?

Have the children's views or wishes been considered where appropriate?

Are there any concerns about children's emotional wellbeing?

Do they have any pets?

Gender and sexual diversity

Are there identity considerations affecting housing safety?

Are there services they would prefer to be connected with?

Finances/Employment/Education

Are they currently working or looking for work? Full time, part time etc.?

What is their main source of money?* When will they be paid next?

Do they have a job network provider?*

Are they currently registered for (but waiting to receive) Centrelink payment?*

Are they currently going to school, studying or in training? If so, what capacity/where?

Do they have their own transport?

Have they experienced any negative impacts from gambling at any point in their life? Is there anyone (past landlord, business, personal, govt agency etc.) that says they owe them money?

Do they have a bank account, or do they need help getting one?

Do they need help applying for/accessing any ID documents?

Health

Mental health

Is there anything that might be helpful for us to know about their mental health?

Have they been diagnosed with any mental health issues? If so, how does that impact their daily life?

Do they have supports/helpful strategies? Do they take any MH medication?

Are they currently on a Psychiatric Treatment Order (PTO) for medication or mental health support?

Would they like us to know about any triggers/things that might make them feel particularly unsafe/stressed/uncomfortable/angry etc.?

Physical health

How is their physical health? Do they have any allergies, illnesses, diseases etc. that impact their life?

What supports do they have/need around this?

Disability: Do they have a disability (diagnosed or undiagnosed) that impacts their day-to-day life or what property type will be suitable for their needs?

Are they currently taking any prescription medications? Do they need support accessing these?

Alcohol and other drugs (AOD)

In their life, which drugs and/or alcohol have they ever used? In the past three months how often and how much have they used the substances they mentioned? When was the last time that they used these substances?

Have they ever needed to put harm minimisation or substance use reduction strategies in place in their life? If so, what has helped, or what support would feel useful now?

Are they currently reducing or seeking to abstain from using any substances?

Will substance use make it difficult for them to stay housed or pay their rent?

Have they received AOD counselling/support from an AOD service in past or currently? Ask for name of counselling/support person.

Have they previously participated in detoxification or rehabilitation programs? If so which one/s and how long were they there?

Note: If AOD use is identified, workers should monitor for immediate health or safety risks (e.g. intoxication, withdrawal, overdose risk, unsafe environment, or impaired capacity). Where risks are present, prioritise safety—this may include seeking urgent medical care, rescheduling a time to complete the assessment, or ensuring the person is safe and supported before proceeding.

Legal

Do they have any legal issues (upcoming court dates, orders, violence or protection orders etc.) that might be helpful for us to know about/that they need support with?

Do these legal orders have any location restrictions as part of the order?

History of incarceration? If so, seek consent to liaise with their Justice/Corrections supports where relevant, and record details of any relevant bail/parole orders/conditions.

Immigration/visa type*

- Are they on a visa? If so, what visa type is it?
- Do they need support to connect with an immigration lawyer?

Other supports

Do they receive support from any other organisations/workers?

- If so, do they mind sharing who, what role they play in their life, contact details etc?

Is there anyone in their personal life (a friend, a family member, a partner etc.) who is a good support person for them?

Life skills/strengths

Have they lived by themselves before?

How do they go taking care of things like cooking, cleaning, budgeting etc.? Do they need any assistance with general life tasks?

Do they have any interests/activities/hobbies that they enjoy? Do they have any strengths that they are proud of? Any goals for the next few months?

Goals

From what we have just discussed are there any areas they want to focus on? (financial, MH, AOD etc)

What do they think will make their overall goal (housing etc) achievable?

What's something they feel ready to work on right now?

Next steps

Is there anything else that they want to tell us or anything that we have missed that they feel would be useful for us to know?

Are there specific services being sought through FIRST Canberra? Have they consented to sharing information with these services?

Advise/record what FIRST Canberra will do now (e.g. initiate referrals to specific agencies, email the person information/links to services)

Advise what the person can do now (e.g. present to Housing ACT office, apply for Rental Bond Loan etc)