

## Commissioning Conversations

Welcome to the third instalment of commissioning conversations.

### **Commissioning Roadmap**

We continue to engage with the sector regarding the Commissioning Roadmap released in August. If you have not yet fed your thoughts back to your relationship managers, we encourage you to do so. In addition to this general feedback, we are focussing on several areas. These are:

Multi-funded organisations – sessions have been held to bring together organisations funded through more than one funding stream across the Community Services (CSD) and ACT Health (ACTHD) Directorates. These discussions highlighted the challenges of being involved in multiple commissioning processes and worked through strategies which could support participation. This is a potentially complex space and there are still several unknown timeframes. We will feed back to the sector what we learnt during these sessions.

Cross-cutting organisations – we are compiling a list of organisations or networks that represent a particular demographic or cohort of the community. Our aim is to work with these organisations/ networks to ensure that the needs of the groups they represent are considered in the commissioning of numerous funding streams. We recognise that participating in many commissioning processes may be overwhelming and frustrating and are keen to understand how we can ensure these voices are heard while minimising duplication and effort. If you are one of these stakeholders, we would welcome you reaching out to connect with us on this issue. Please email us:

[CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au](mailto:CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au) and [HealthCommissioning@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthCommissioning@act.gov.au)

Peaks funding – as flagged during the August webinar, CSD and ACTHD are keen to commission peak services early. This will provide stability for this part of the sector and enable them to continue to support and represent their industry or consumer sub-sectors. An initial paper, setting out a proposed approach to commissioning Peaks has been provided to peak organisations and will shortly be available on the commissioning website.

### **COVID-19 and Commissioning**

We have heard from the sector that while capacity to engage has been impacted by COVID-19, commissioning should not completely halt during this time. While some sessions have been delayed, we are continuing to progress several strands of work.

### **Next CSD Sector Update Forum**

The next forum will take place on Tuesday 26 October 2021. An update on commissioning will be provided.

## Evaluation of Commissioning

Thanks to everyone that has participated in discussions about the evaluation of commissioning itself. This was a topic raised by ACTCOSS in its position paper earlier in the year – we need to know whether the process of commissioning is making a difference. Recognising that the commissioning of each sub-sector will include a focus on outcomes for the community broadly, vulnerable people and service users; the initial focus of an evaluation of commissioning will be on the experience of participating in the process. In particular:

- Have we gone about it in a way that is consistent with the definitions, principles and priorities established in the Approach to Commissioning?
- Has it led to a greater focus on outcomes, provided increased certainty for organisations and led to improved practices for service users?

Overtime we intend to draw on the outcomes of the various funding streams to inform understanding of the impact of commissioning on the wellbeing of our community.

## Other Commissioning news

The Commissioning website now has a tab for commissioning in progress. It will provide a place where people can find out about commissioning activities underway across various sub-sectors.

### S&CY

The funding of an ongoing Safe and Connected Youth program was announced as part of the recent ACT Budget. This follows the very successful pilot project undertaken by several sector organisations and evaluated by the Youth Coalition. A paper on the strategy for this commissioning is now available on the [Commissioning website](#).

### CASP

Work has begun on the commissioning of community health services funded through the Community Assistance Support Program (CASP). Views about the proposed approach to CASP commissioning were invited on 29 September at a forum comprising executives from each of the CASP service providers. There was support for the approach, which will commence with a discussion paper (November 2021) followed by a Roundtable in early 2022. Providers were advised at the forum that to facilitate a comprehensive and genuinely collaborative commissioning process, CASP service funding agreements (SFAs) would be extended to June 2023, with the possibility of some minor amendments to 2022-23 SFAs. The amendments would be agreed in close consultation with all providers, and their purpose would be to facilitate an incremental shift in the focus of CASP from outputs to outcomes.

### Homelessness

- Following the COVID-19 lockdown in the ACT on 12 August 2021, the specialist homelessness sector has experienced a significant increase in the number of requests for immediate accommodation and assistance from people who have been directly impacted by the COVID19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown.
- Over the last eight weeks since the lockdown, Homelessness Service (HS) team, Housing ACT has been working closely with OneLink to respond to the increased demand. Additionally, the HS team has been working with Argyle Community Housing to support

the organisation and residents (approximately 153) at Ainslie Village, as it was identified as an exposure site and closed from 28 August to 26 September 2021. It has also supported Havelock Housing Association and other organisations with shared accommodation sites.

- HS has also assisted with the design, contractual arrangements and establishment of the ACT Quarantine Facility, Ragusa. This work was undertaken in a commissioning style process with close consultation and collaboration with the service providers, ACT Health and across CSD.
- During this period HS has developed three business cases to seek additional funding for COVID19 lockdown and post lockdown initiatives to support the sector with its increased workload.
- HS has developed and finalised the Terms of Reference for a joint sector and government steering committee (joint steering committee) in consultation with the Chair of Joint Pathways and the CEO of the ACT Shelter.
- The Expression of Interest process to select members of the steering committee has been impacted by increased workload for the JP Executive and is expected to be completed by late October 2021.
- Evaluation of the central intake service, OneLink, is an integral part of the commissioning process. The findings of this evaluation will be used to inform the service design workshops. The draft Statement of Requirements (SOR) has been approved by Minister Vassarotti. HS is in the process of consulting with the Joint Pathways Executive team to refine the SOP before submitting the final version to the Minister. It is expected that the evaluation will begin in November 2021.
- HS has continued analysing qualitative input that is collected by the team from the latest six-monthly performance reports, and from regular conversation with homelessness services; as well the latest quantitative data for 2020-21 to provide findings to inform the needs assessment and service design workshops to be organised in a near future.
- In parallel with supporting the sector with crisis responses at this critical time, HS has continued implementing the homelessness commissioning/strategic partnership process, however, the COVID19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in August 2021 has slowed down the progress of this. HS will review the timeline and adjust it when and where appropriate in consultation with the Joint Steering Committee.

#### Step Up for Our Kids

- The *Stage 2 Listening Report and What We Know Overview* is planned for release via the *YourSay* web platform in the coming weeks.
- The development of a sourcing strategy to inform the services for the next out of home care Strategy is underway.
- Meetings will be scheduled with Funded Agencies during November 2021 to outline the policy intent for the next out of home care Strategy.
- Regular updates on the progress of *A Step Up* will be available for interested stakeholders on the Community Services Directorate (CSD) website and the *YourSay* web platform.

## Useful Links

Joint ACT Government [Commissioning website](#)

For additional information on **ACT Health Directorate** commissioning health services in the community visit [Commissioning health services in the community | Health \(act.gov.au\)](#)

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