

AOD treatment initiative for family reunification

Fact sheet for child protection practitioners

What is the initiative?

In the 2017-18 State Budget, the Victorian Government announced a significant funding boost for alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, with a strong focus on harm reduction, treatment and support. This included \$17 million over four years for additional treatment services for parents to help them address their problematic AOD use within the family reunification time limits under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

The objective of this initiative is to enable parents who are required to undergo AOD treatment as part of their children's family reunification order to access treatment as soon as possible after their involvement with child protection, in order to maximise their chances of reuniting with their children in the time frame for family reunification.

The assessment and treatment providers (service providers) chosen to deliver the services in each AOD catchment are listed in the table below. Intake will be delivered by the existing catchment-based AOD intake providers. Services will commence in March 2018 and the service expectations and referral process below will apply from 1 March.

Who is this service for?

This initiative targets parents who must meet a court-ordered condition to undergo AOD treatment relating to their child's family reunification order.

The provision of funding for this target cohort reflects Victoria's AOD Program Guidelines, which provide that parents who require AOD treatment to achieve reunification with their children are one of a select group of clients who must be given priority access to treatment (<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/aod-service-standards-guidelines/aod-program-guidelines>).

What do I need to do?

How do I make a referral?

Following the issuing of a family reunification order with an associated AOD condition for the parent, child protection practitioners will make a direct referral to the relevant catchment-based AOD intake provider. This referral should be as soon as possible after court or, at the most, within seven days after the order is issued. Child protection practitioners must make this referral irrespective of whether the parent chooses to self-refer to intake (this will provide a safety net to ensure the parent connects with the treatment system).

Referral is to be made via telephone to the AOD intake provider servicing the local government area in which the parent resides (please see area-based contact list below). The AOD intake provider may request a copy of the court order and conditions, which can be sent as secure email (refer to [Sending emails securely](#) in the Child Protection Manual).

It is important to document the referral process on CRIS in the 'Referral' tab. The child protection practitioner must also provide the AOD intake provider with their contact details.

How will I obtain consent to refer?

To enable AOD service providers to contact parents to begin treatment, child protection practitioners must:

- discuss this initiative with parents
 - during the course of child protection intervention
 - immediately prior to the family reunification order being made at court
- alert parents that their information will be provided to the AOD intake provider (including their name, address and AOD-related conditions) in order for the AOD intake provider to be able to identify, and refer the information to, the appropriate service provider
- include parental agreement in the AOD condition attached to the order; for example, with wording to the following effect:

“*[Insert parent's name]* must engage in drug and alcohol assessment and treatment as directed by/agreed with DHHS, and allow reports to be provided to DHHS. For the purposes of making a referral, DHHS will provide *[insert parent's name]* contact details to a drug and alcohol intake provider to enable service provision”.

What happens after I refer a parent to an AOD provider?

Following a referral by child protection, the AOD intake provider will:

- refer the parent's information onward to the appropriate service provider funded under this initiative
- contact the parent if more information is required before providing the parent's details to the service provider
- advise child protection of the allocated AOD service provider details, or if they have been unable to make contact with the parent (in order to obtain further information) after a reasonable effort¹ to do so.

The service provider will initiate contact with the parent to commence the assessment and course of treatment. The service provider will advise the allocated child protection practitioner about the outcomes of this process; whether that is to advise about the assessment and treatment plan for the parent, or if they have been unable to contact a parent after a reasonable effort (see footnote). Service providers will also be expected to notify child protection if significant problems arise regarding the parent's treatment progress.

AOD intake and service providers will provide bridging support as required for parents as they would ordinarily do whilst a parent is waiting for assessment or treatment to commence. Child protection practitioners should seek information about this and document it on CRIS, in the child's case plan and court reports as required.

Who can I contact with any questions?

Child protection practitioners are encouraged to speak with their divisional representatives. Queries about this initiative can also be directed to the department's Drug Policy & Reform unit via email at aod.enquiries@dhhs.vic.gov.au (please make sure to include 'family reunification' in the email subject line).

¹ What constitutes a 'reasonable' effort is left to clinical judgement as there is no formal guidance. The department's consultations in developing this initiative suggest that, at a minimum, the first call to the parent should be made within 48 hours of receiving a referral, and at least three attempts should be made to contact the parent by phone in the first ten business days.

Table: AOD treatment initiative for family reunification – key intake provider, service provider and child protection contacts

Local government area (DHHS area/s in brackets)	AOD catchment	INTAKE		ASSESSMENT/TREATMENT		CHILD PROTECTION	
		Intake provider	Intake contact number/s	Funded service provider (consortium name, with lead agency in brackets)	Lead agency contact number/s	Nearest DHHS office location/s with child protection on site	DHHS office number/s
Bayside, Glen Eira, Kingston, Port Phillip, Stonnington (Bayside Peninsula)	Bayside	Bayside Integrated Services	1800 229 263 9690 9778	Bayside Alcohol and Other Drug Partnership (TaskForce Community Agency)	Primary contact: Fiona Mulligan – email: fionam@taskforce.org.au	Cheltenham	8585 6000
Frankston, Mornington Peninsula (Bayside Peninsula)	Frankston- Mornington Peninsula	Frankston and Mornington Drug and Alcohol Services (FaMDAS)	1300 665 781	Stepping Up Consortium Frankston Mornington Peninsula Partnership (TaskForce Community Agency)	Secondary contact: Anna Murru – email: annam@taskforce.org.au	Frankston	9784 3100
Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong (Southern Melbourne)	South East Melbourne	South Eastern Consortium of AOD Agencies (SECADA)	1800 142 536	SURe (EACH)	Contacts: Amy Youl – Program Manager Community Services, amy.youl@anglicarevic.org.au Stephanie Bortignon – Team Manager, stephanie.bortignon@anglicare.org.au Robert Watson – Project Manager Reunification Program, robert.watson@anglicarevic.org.au	Dandenong	1300 555 526
Boroondara, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse (Inner Eastern Melbourne)	Inner East	Eastern Health Turning Point AOD Consortium	1800 778 278	SURe (EACH)	Contacts: Amy Youl – Program Manager Community Services, amy.youl@anglicarevic.org.au Stephanie Bortignon – Team Manager, stephanie.bortignon@anglicare.org.au Robert Watson – Project Manager Reunification Program, robert.watson@anglicarevic.org.au	Box Hill	9843 6000
Knox, Maroondah, Yarra Ranges (Outer Eastern Melbourne)	Eastern Melbourne	EACH SURe Consortium	1300 007 873	SURe (EACH)	Amy Youl – Program Manager Community Services, amy.youl@anglicarevic.org.au Stephanie Bortignon – Team Manager, stephanie.bortignon@anglicare.org.au Robert Watson – Project Manager Reunification Program, robert.watson@anglicarevic.org.au	Box Hill	9843 6000
Melbourne, Moonee Valley (Western Melbourne); Moreland (Hume Moreland); Yarra (North Eastern Melbourne)	Inner North	UnitingCare ReGen and Odyssey House Victoria	1800 700 514	North and West Metro AOD Service (UnitingCare ReGen)	Primary Contact: Donna Ribton Turner – email: DRibton-Turner@regen.org.au ; Telephone: (03) 9384 8830;	Footscray Preston	1300 360 462 1300 664 977

Whittlesea, Darebin, Banyule, Nillumbik (North Eastern Melbourne)	North Melbourne	North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service	1800 700 514	North and West Metro AOD Service (UnitingCare ReGen)	mobile:0403266277 North Catchment Manager: Marlyn Gavaghan – email mgavaghan@regen.org.au ; mobile: 0418 630 924 Family Reunification Coordinator for Uniting ReGen Gippsland and Grampians: Keryn Ralph – email: KRalph@regen.org.au (phone contact details to be advised). General enquires can be made to North and Inner North intake: North intake – email: Nintake@regen.org.au ; telephone: (03) 9420 7677; Clinical Nurse Consultant: Simone Hogan Inner North intake – email : InnerNorthIntake@regen.org.au telephone: (03) 9420 7686; Clinical Nurse Consultant: Linda Coventry Pool. Contact for Uniting Grampians: Ivan Thorne – email: ithorne@ucare.org.au ; telephone: 0438661296 Contact for Uniting Gippsland: Tracey Donaldson – email: tracey.donaldson@ucgipps.org.au ; telephone: (03) 5144 7777	Preston	1300 664 977
Bass Coast, Baw Baw, LaTrobe, South Gippsland (Inner Gippsland); East Gippsland, Wellington (Outer Gippsland)	Gippsland	ACSO	1300 022 760	Uniting AOD Services Grampians (UnitingCare ReGen)		Bairnsdale Leongatha Morwell Sale Warragul	5150 4500 5662 4311 5136 2400 5144 9100 5624 0600
Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool, Pyrenees (Central Highlands); Hindmarsh, Horsham, North Grampians, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack (Western District)	Grampians	ACSO	1300 022 760	Uniting AOD Services Grampians (UnitingCare ReGen)		Ballarat Horsham	5333 6530 5381 9777
Brimbank, Melton (Brimbank Melton); Hume (Hume Moreland); Maribyrnong (Western Melbourne)	North West Melbourne	North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service	1800 700 514	North and West Metro AOD Service (Odyssey House)	Primary Contact: Mark Gordon, Counselling Coordinator: email: mgordon@odyssey.org.au ; telephone: (03) 8391 6705; mobile: 0404 144 733 General enquiries: nw.intake@odyssey.org.au	Footscray	1300 360 462
Hobsons Bay, Wyndham (Western Melbourne)	South West Melbourne	North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service	1800 700 514	North and West Metro AOD Service (Odyssey House)	Primary Contact: Victor Bilous, SW Catchment Manager: email: vbilous@odyssey.org.au ; mobile: 0466331146	Footscray	1300 360 462

					General enquiries: sw.intake@odyssey.org.au		
Colac-Otway, Greater Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast (Barwon)	Barwon	Barwon AOD Consortium	1300 094 187 Colac area: 1300 763 254	Stepping Up Consortium Barwon Partnership (Odyssey House)	Primary contact: Bryn Williams – email: bwilliams@stepping-up.org.au ; mobile: 0466 380 726. Secondary contact: Shelley Cross – email: scross@stepping-up.com.au ; mobile: 0408 559 642	Colac Geelong	5234 2804 52264540
Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga (Ovens Murray)	Hume	ACSO	1300 022 760	Gateway Health (Gateway Health)	Primary contact: Maryanne Donnellan – email: maryanne.donnellan@gatewayhealth.org.au ; mobile: 0428 901 863	Wangaratta Wodonga	5722 0555 6055 7777
Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogie (Goulburn)	Goulburn Valley	ACSO	1300 022 760	North and West Metro AOD Service (Odyssey House)	Primary Contact: Kevin Shanks, Manager, People & Programs Development: email: kshanks@odyssey.org.au ; telephone: (03) 9420 7667; mobile: 0401 826 097 General enquiries: (as a temporary measure, use Kevin Shanks' email: will advise ASAP of a more specific program email address).	Seymour Shepparton	5771 1600 5832 1500
Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander (Loddon); Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura, Swan Hill (Mallee)	Loddon-Mallee	ACSO	1300 022 760	Northern Victoria Alcohol and Other Drug Services (Salvation Army)	Primary contact: Juanita Davis – email: juanita.davis@aus.salvationarmy.org ; telephone: (03) 5440 8451; mobile: 0428 045 004 General enquiries: Jemma Lamb – email: jemma.lamb@aus.salvationarmy.org ; telephone (03) 5440 8411; mobile: 0438 836 319	Bendigo Mildura Swan Hill	5434 5555 5022 3111 5032 0100
Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians, Warrnambool (Western District)	Great South Coast	ACSO	1300 022 760	Great South Coast Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services Consortium (Western Region Alcohol and Drug Inc.)	Primary contact: Geoff Soma – email: geoffs@wrad.org.au ; telephone: (03) 5564 5710	Hamilton Portland Warrnambool	5551 3299 5523 9999 5561 9444