

New intake and assessment arrangements for alcohol and other drug services

Information for the Victorian alcohol and other drug workforce

What changes are happening?

In December 2016, the Victorian Government announced changes to the alcohol and other drug system to make accessing treatment simpler and easier for clients.

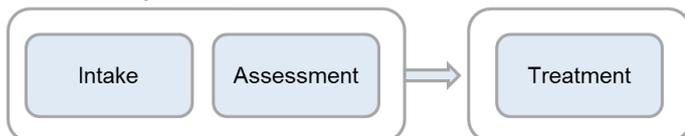
Consistent with directions identified in the *Independent review new arrangements for the delivery of mental health community support services and drug treatment services* (the Aspex Review) and following extensive sector and community consultation, responsibility for conducting comprehensive assessment and treatment planning for voluntary clients will move from intake providers to treatment providers (see Figure 1 below). Treatment services will also now deliver bridging support to clients from the point of assessment.

Catchment-based intake services will continue to deliver triage and screening, brief interventions and bridging support up until the client's assessment. They will also continue to provide catchment oversight and monitoring, with treatment services providing completed assessment information and information about client referrals to intake providers to support this.

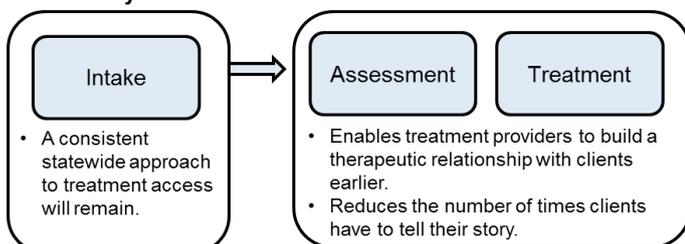
The new funding and service delivery arrangements commence on 1 July 2017. The Department of Health and Human Services is working closely with all affected providers and peak bodies on the transition, and will provide advice and support throughout the change.

Figure 1 – Assessment will move from intake providers to treatment providers

Before 1 July 2017:



After 1 July 2017:



The department is undertaking a number of activities to support you and the wider alcohol and other drug sector workforce to transition to new intake and assessment arrangements on 1 July 2017.

Read on to find out about learning and development opportunities, communications and planning taking place over the transition period, and where you can go for more information.

What are the benefits of the change?

A key reason for transitioning to the new arrangements is to ensure that accessing alcohol and other drug treatment is simple and easy, no matter which pathway a client chooses.

Under the new arrangements, the initial intake and triage is expected to be more streamlined than under the current arrangements.

Further, the new assessment arrangements will allow drug treatment providers to develop therapeutic relationships with clients earlier. This will improve the client's experience by improving engagement and reducing the number of times they have to tell their story.

Retaining catchment-based intake will ensure greater oversight of options for treatment, providing clients with clear choices and greater capacity for a high-quality, joined-up service response.

The changes present an opportunity for the alcohol and other drug workforce to refresh or broaden their skills to support clients. To support a smooth transition to the new arrangements, the department has invested in a range of workforce development activities, detailed overleaf.

How will I be supported through the changes?

The department is undertaking a number of activities to support you to transition to the new intake and assessment arrangements.

Communication and sector engagement

The department is committed to strong, ongoing communication with the sector during this transition period. It will provide regular updates on the transition, and other projects underway that support these changes, via a range of media including the health.vic website, newsletters and VAADA E-News.

New [Alcohol and other drugs program guidelines](#) were released in April 2017. They consolidate and refresh existing advice from the department in three parts:

- *Part 1 - overview* outlines the broad approach the department takes in relation to prevention, harm reduction and treatment.
- *Part 2 - program and service specifications* outlines the service specifications for particular programs and services.
- *Part 3 - quality, reporting and performance management* outlines key regulation and reporting requirements.

The guidelines have been updated to describe the objectives and functions of the treatment system under the new intake and assessment arrangements. Further information about the guidelines, including download links, can be found on the department's website.

The Adult Community-Based Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Reference Group will continue to meet in 2017 to oversee ongoing progress in responding to the Aspx Review, including providing ongoing feedback to the department about the transition process.

Service providers are also encouraged to provide feedback to operational division contacts about their experience of the transition process and to discuss any adjustments that can be made at a local level to support the change. If you have any questions or feedback about the new arrangements, you are encouraged to speak with your manager.

More information about the transition, and the wider response to the Aspx Review, is available on the department's website <www2.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/aod-treatment-services/community-based-aod-treatment/adult-community-based-aod-service-review>.

Training opportunities

The department has contracted Turning Point to provide statewide training to the alcohol and drug sector, with the aim of increasing clinicians' confidence and skills through the transition.

One-day workshops will run in metropolitan and regional locations from June to August 2017.

The 'intake' session will focus on:

- introducing the refreshed intake tool
- supporting clinical judgment to inform decision-making and referral
- the role and types of brief interventions and bridging support.

The 'assessment' session will focus on:

- the refreshed assessment tool, highlighting changes and improvements
- using the comprehensive assessment to ensure treatment needs are adequately assessed and recorded.

See Turning Point's website for more information <<http://www.turningpoint.org.au/education/Professional-Development/Intake-and-Assessment-Workshops--New-Model--20171.aspx>>.

Workforce planning

While Victoria's [Alcohol and drug workforce framework: strategic directions 2012-22](#) remains current, work on a new workforce strategy consistent with the recommendations of the Aspx Review commenced in April 2017.

The development of the new strategy will involve strong sector engagement and be representative of the strategic needs of the workforce following the realignment of the sector.

The department will also release the results of the latest workforce survey determining the size, distribution and features of the sector, including skill levels and qualifications and the factors that influence work satisfaction in the sector.

The survey results will be used to build local ownership and responses to workforce issues, and support catchment planners with local-level identification of workforce availability and skill needs.

Communities of practice

The department supports a collaborative alcohol and other drug workforce in Victoria, funding sector-led communities of practice.

The Change Agent Network led by Turning Point meets every two months to unite existing and emerging alcohol and other drug sector leaders committed to developing and sharing leadership knowledge and expertise. Regular updates on the network's activity can be found at

<<https://www.changeagentnetwork.net/>>.

Connect and Learn is an open community of practice for Victorian alcohol and other drug workers, facilitated by Turning Point in Melbourne. The focus of each meeting is determined by community need, with the aim to provide a supportive and safe environment to enable development and learning opportunities.

Information about upcoming meetings and resources including recordings of previous events are available from Turning Point's website

<<http://www.turningpoint.org.au/education/Communities-of-Practice.aspx>>.

During transition, the department will look to harness these existing forums to aid the flow of information.

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Available at www2.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/aod-treatment-services/community-based-aod-treatment/adult-community-based-aod-service-review