



## Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

### **Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022** **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

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Asked by Mr Mark Parton MLA to the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services

Reference: Homelessness Strategy Research

In relation to: Homelessness strategy OneLink and Live Experiences

Date (Question Lodged by Member): 10/11/2022

Date (Question Sent to DLO): 01/11/2022

Date (Answer due): 08/12/2022

**Regarding the lived experiences stories it was evident that whilst some constituents were happy with different service areas there are major barriers to accessing and achieving an outcome with Homelessness services.**

- (1) What changes have occurred to ensure a better face to face interaction can occur with constituents?**
- (2) What supports are available to ensure a permanent way out of homelessness and housing services to sustain long term stability?**
- (3) How many Housing ACT or OneLink staff are specialised to support Indigenous clients?**
- (4) How many Housing ACT or OneLink staff are specialised to support Domestic violence escaping clients?**
- (5) What training is occurring to improve communication between staff and clients?**

*Mark Parton MLA*

Minister Vassarotti: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

(1) In 2022, OneLink has worked closely with the ACT Government to implement a new, high volume phone management system. This phone system provides detailed client management capability for the service as well as multiple engagement options for clients. This builds on the work of OneLink and the positive experience of OneLink clients reported in the recent Evaluation.

In addition, OneLink has been collaborating with specialist homelessness service partners to increase the capacity of both in-reach and outreach services. Although this collaborative practice was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to social distancing requirements, this has recently been re-established with OneLink staff currently providing face-to-face outreach activities at the Early Morning Centre and Yeddung Mura. Outreach at the Red Cross Roadhouse will recommence in early 2023.

(2) The ACT Government funds a wide range of services that provide accommodation and/or holistic support services, including intensive case management, wrap around support, general services (i.e., financial information, employment assistance etc.) and specialised services (i.e., specialist counselling services etc.) to people experiencing homelessness and/or at risk of homelessness.

OneLink works with all service providers to source available and appropriate accommodation. These services work closely with the client to assess their needs and develop a case management plan and transition plan to assist them to achieve their housing and other wellbeing outcomes.

(3) OneLink does not operate identified positions, however, currently employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

In addition, all staff receive regular training in culturally aware and competent practice.

OneLink also engages strongly with several Aboriginal led and owned services in the ACT to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Canberra can be connected with an appropriate cultural support service as well as the support provided through the expertise of OneLink staff.

Housing ACT staff complete core Cultural eLearn training modules. Please find below number of staff that have completed these training modules:

| <b>Cultural Training - eLearn</b>                                |                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                                                  | <b>Number of Staff Completed</b> |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awareness (SBS) e-learning | <b>120</b>                       |
| Core Cultural Learning – 11 Modules                              | <b>197</b>                       |

(4) All OneLink's assessment and support coordinators are skilled in dealing with clients escaping or experiencing family and domestic violence. Whilst specialist positions are not part of OneLink's service model, the service works closely with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the YWCA Canberra to ensure clients impacted by violence are linked with the necessary supports in a complimentary and coordinated approach between services.

Woden Community Service's Manager, Housing and Homelessness, completed a Winston Churchill Fellowship into family violence which examined innovative models and international policy transfer, and uses this expertise to assist in the coordination of support for clients impacted by family violence.

All OneLink staff receive ongoing training with specialist providers in Domestic and Family Violence support as part of their core capabilities.

All staff at Housing ACT are required to attend mandatory face to face ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Training that is provided by subject matter experts from Domestic Violence

Crisis Service (DVCS). Additionally, Housing ACT staff complete mandatory online Domestic and Family Violence training that provides them with skills and knowledge specific to this subject.

Housing ACT staff in Tenant Support and Community Coordinator Officer (TSCCO) and Housing Practitioner (HP) roles, plus Senior Client Engagement Officers and Team Leaders provide specialist support to clients who are experiencing Domestic and Family Violence. These staff members are the key contact points for both the clients and their service providers to ensure consistency of information and to reducing any ongoing trauma in the client having to continuously share their stories.

As of 6 December 2022, 209 staff had completed the 4-module Domestic and Family Violence Foundation Training and 26 managers (SOGC to SOGA) had additionally completed the 5-module Domestic Violence Manager Training.

(5) OneLink clients report a positive experience regardless of whether accommodation can be provided through the service. This is a testament to the skills, compassion, and professionalism of OneLink staff and the work of our specialist homelessness service partners.

Staff receive ongoing training in client support and interaction as well as training to support the management of vicarious trauma.

A coordinated engagement training program is in place to ensure that staff are not only providing informed services and support but also have a clear understanding of how an individual's diversity, background, and life experience impact their experience and outcomes in their housing journey.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature: 

Date: 8/12/2022

By the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services, Minister Rebecca Vassarotti MLA