



FAQs – Specialist Homelessness Services Collection

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Client Records

Who is a client in the SHS Collection?

A client is any person who receives a direct service from your agency. This service is not limited to accommodation. It can be any service you provide to the client that is aimed at assisting them, or preventing homelessness. However, the service must be direct – any person who benefits indirectly from the service you provide, should not be included as your client.

For example, if a parent receives a food voucher from your agency, that parent would be your client, as they have received a direct service. Whilst children may also get food as a result of the voucher, the children do not become your clients as they are not receiving a direct service.

However, if you provide accommodation for a parent and their children, then the children are your clients, as you are providing a direct service for the entire family.

Further information on what to record in your client management system can be found on the [SHS data definitions page](#) of the AIHW website.

Should a formal assessment process be recorded as a service provided?

A formal assessment is usually undertaken to ensure a person gets the services they need or to allow intake services to refer a person to another service agency. Formal assessments usually involve a significant review of the person's situation and needs and are therefore considered to be a service provided by the agency. In these cases the person should be treated as a client.

How do you record a person who was referred by another agency but did not turn up at my agency?

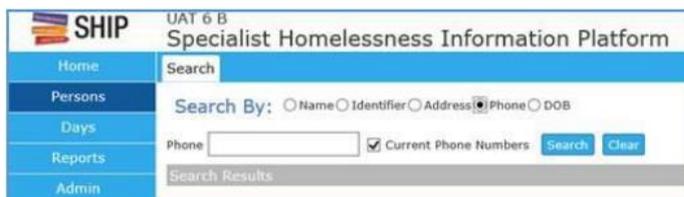
A person who did not show at your agency is not recorded as a client, but neither are they recorded as an unassisted person. These people are out of scope of the SHS Collection from the perspective of your agency.

A person is only a client if the agency provides them with a direct service.

A person is only an unassisted person if they personally seek assistance from your agency, or a guardian parent seeks assistance on their behalf.

How do I search by a client's mobile number in SHIP?

The search functionality in SHIP has been enhanced to allow users to search for clients by their mobile phone numbers.



Can 'Team List' under the Home page be hidden in SHIP?

This list cannot be hidden.



What case plan functions are available?

SHIP Case Plans enable users to:

- Record case plan actions against individual support domains.
- Record Notes, Payments and Tasks within the actions of a Case Plan and save to the client file.
- View Note, Payment and Task records associated with a Case Plan action within the plan and export to XLS or PDF.

A document explaining the case plan functionality can be accessed via this [link](#).

Support Periods

Why is it important to collect a client's housing information?

The SHS Collection includes information about the type of housing where a client is living. This consists of type of dwelling, tenure and conditions of occupancy.

This information is very important and is used to distinguish between clients who are 'homeless' and those who are 'at risk of homelessness'. It is also used to measure the change in a client's housing status between the start of support and at the end of support. This outcome measure shows any improvement in housing status due to the assistance provided by your agency.

When completing the status update each month, please ensure housing information has been completed as much as possible. Note that the housing status at the end of support should record where the client will be living after leaving your agency.

Further information on each of these questions is detailed in the [SHS Collection Manual](#) (pg 59-66).

How to complete the Australian Defence Force (ADF) indicator

If at the time of completing the ADF Indicator, the information is not known, record the Indicator as 'Don't know'. During your next appointment with the client, please seek to clarify this information and update the record for the following month's data submission.

Some agencies may be encountering errors in Validata™ due to the ADF indicator question for clients under the age of 18 years old, being completed incorrectly. ADF status does not apply to a client aged under 18, therefore the default response is 'Not applicable'. Please ensure you do not submit an answer of 'Yes', 'No' or 'Don't know' as Validata™ will return a critical error when validating the extract.

How do I capture the impact of COVID-19 on SHS services?

The AIHW understands the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has the potential to impact already resource-restricted services. To ensure the additional effort and service demand is captured please see the following advice for recording this information:

Clients who receive assistance

If a client is seeking support as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, under Reason for seeking assistance, please select all reasons categories that apply (e.g. Financial difficulties, Employment difficulties, Medical issues) PLUS category 'Other', and record COVID-19 in the free text field.



Unassisted people

If a requested service cannot be provided as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, under why a service(s) was not provided, please select all reasons categories that apply PLUS category 'Other', and record COVID-19 in the Notes field.

System notes have been added to the support period and Unassisted forms in SHIP with this information.

How do I record clients affected by bushfires?

It is possible some agencies will have new clients who have been impacted by bushfires across Australia. Any changes in client numbers due to bushfires is important to measure.

For these clients, please select the 'Unable to return home due to environmental reasons' category as one of the responses in the 'Reasons for Seeking Assistance' question. This category is used for bushfires and other environmental impacts. A note covering this has been added to SHIP (above the 'Reasons for Seeking Assistance' question) to remind users.

Note for SHIP/CIMS/SRS users: A Disaster Response Intake profile is available in SHIP/CIMS/SRS. Please note that if you use this profile to record details about a person receiving services covered by SHS funding, you also need to record these services in a support period, the same as other SHS clients.

How do I complete 'reasons for seeking assistance'?

It is important to note the specific definitions associated with each answer for 'reasons for seeking assistance'. The response 'Housing crisis (e.g. eviction)' refers specifically to a client being formally evicted from a property, or asked to leave by another member of the household. The response 'Housing affordability stress' refers specifically to clients being unable to meet payments for their property.

For further information, please see the [SHS data definitions page](#) on the AIHW Website.

How do I record Care and Protection orders?

Care and protection orders are legal orders or arrangements that give child protection departments some responsibility for a child's welfare and only apply to clients under the age of 18. If the client is on a care or protection order then record the details of the arrangement.

For all clients who are aged 18 years or over, the response to this question must be 'Not applicable'. This includes parents of children who are on a care or protection order. Any other response for clients aged 18 years or over will cause a validation error when the data is sent to the AIHW.

Further information on what to record can be found on the [SHS data definitions page](#) of the AIHW website.

How do I record a client's main income source?

In addition to the March 2020 changes to Centrelink welfare payments, the Government announced several stimulus measures to support individuals and businesses that have been impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.



- Clients reporting JobSeeker payment as their main source of income, should be recorded as 'Newstart allowance'. A message has been added to SHIP to assist users.
- For clients reporting they are beneficiaries of the COVID-19 stimulus measure, the JobKeeper payment, record 'Employee income' as their main source of income. The JobKeeper payment is designed to help businesses affected by the Coronavirus cover the costs of their employees' wages, so that more employees can retain their job and continue to earn an income.

How do I record Centrelink payments since the March 2020 changes?

As of 20 March 2020, Centrelink made changes to their payments. These changes include:

- Introduction of a new payment – JobSeeker Payment. This will be the new working age payment.
- Newstart Allowance ceased. Existing recipients will be automatically transferred to the new JobSeeker Payment.
- Sickness Allowance was closed to new entrants. Existing recipients will continue to receive the payment until their current medical certificate expires.
- Bereavement Allowance, Wife Pension and Widow B Pension all ceased.

People who are receiving any of the payments that cease were automatically transferred to the new JobSeeker Payment or Age Pension depending upon their circumstances.

Actions required to record 'Client's main source of income' in the SHS Collection

- From 20 March 2020, if a client reports they are receiving 'JobSeeker Payment', record it under the existing 'Newstart allowance' category.
- All other payments should be recorded following current practices. SHS collection data definitions for 'Client's main source of income' can be found on the [SHS data definitions page](#).

Why is a person who is contributing informally to rent in a couch surfing arrangement recorded as being "Rent free"?

"Rent" relates to a situation where there is a legally binding rental agreement in place. Other informal arrangements should be recorded as "rent free".

Are you able to close and subsequently re-open the support period for someone who is not the presenting unit head?

No. If a presenting unit member's support period is closed off, it cannot be reopened. You will need to close the presenting unit head's support period, and reopen both members.

Can you link a support period, which has been opened for an individual, to a family?

No, this support period will need to be either closed or deleted, and a new linked support period will need to be created.



If a note is linked to a family member, and that family member is subsequently removed from the presenting unit, does the note get deleted?

No, this note will remain even if there is no connection between the two people.

Information on Language selections

The SHSC utilises the full ABS Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL 2016). Previous language options allowed users to select regional level Indigenous language groups beginning with 'Indigenous –', which returned an invalid language code '8000' in the extract. These options were removed when the language code was updated to ASCL 2016. Agencies with these invalid selections in their previous client records will need to select an appropriate language from the 'Australian Indigenous Languages' list for the affected clients and re-extract, re-upload and submit their data.

Family and Domestic Violence

How do I record services provided for Family and Domestic Violence?

As part of the new data items introduced on 1 July 2019, a new tab was added to the 'Notes' section in SHIP. This new tab, titled 'FDV', is where support for Family and Domestic Violence can be recorded. This tab replaces the option 'Assistance for family/domestic violence', which was previously listed under the general tab.

The 'FDV' tab has two options - 'Assistance for family/domestic violence - victim support services', and 'Assistance for family/domestic violence - perpetrator support services'. Specific definitions for these services can be found in the [Collection Manual](#) and in the [Summary of the New Data Items](#). An e-learning module covering the new FDV items can be found [here](#).

Are DVOs recorded in SHIP? Are they collected as part of SHSC?

DVOs are not recorded as part of the collection, only child protection orders are included in the SHSC.

Unassisted Persons

Why is it important to collect names for unassisted person?

Currently, only half of Unassisted Persons have a valid Statistical Linkage Key (SLK). Valid SLKs are important as they help the AIHW understand how many Unassisted Persons become clients at a later date and how many never receive any assistance from agencies.

The SLK consists of the 2nd and 3rd letters of the given name and the 2nd, 3rd and 5th letters of the family name, together with the sex of the person and their full date of birth. The most common cause of an invalid SLK is an incomplete date of birth.

Please review your current practices for collecting this information and ensure it is collected for as many Unassisted Persons as possible.



Validata™

If a Validata™ account is locked, what messages are displayed, and how can I unlock it?

Validata™ will now display a message “Your account is locked. It will be unlocked in 30 mins.” on the UI to all external users after 5 incorrect username or password attempts.

The user will be able to reset their password during this time, however while the password will update correctly, the account will remain locked until the 30 minute timer expires.

If the user has an urgent need to access Validata™ for e.g., to meet submission deadline, ICT service desk can be contacted to unlock the account before 30 minutes.

Rules to remember in Validata™

Validata™ has some basic rules that MUST be followed in a timely manner to eliminate the possibility of encountering load sequence issues later and to minimise the chances of uploading duplicate extracts multiple times.

Rule 1 – If a previous collection period is re-submitted then all subsequent months’ extracts up to the current collection period will also need to be re-submitted to ensure data quality is maintained.

Rule 2 – Upload process is not complete until the extract is submitted by pressing ‘Submit’ via the ‘Actions’ button in Validata™.

Rule 3 – The ‘Refresh grid’ button must be pressed every time an extract is uploaded to Validata™. This is necessary for the transaction to appear in the Organisation activity table on the Upload tab. Please be patient with this process as sometimes the updates do not appear immediately.

What happens to the data collected by SHS agencies?

As well as creating agency statistical summaries each quarter, the AIHW produces numerous annual reporting products at the national and state/territory level.

National SHS web report

At the national level, the Specialist homelessness services web report describes the characteristics of clients of specialist homelessness services, the services requested, outcomes achieved, and unmet requests for services during.

Individual state and territory SHS fact sheets and infographics

Individual state and territory level fact sheets and infographics summarise information on specialist homelessness services delivered.

Each fact sheet highlights jurisdictional-specific information about the clients of SHS agencies who were assisted in, the services requested, the support received, and outcomes achieved.

Each infographic provides a snapshot of the number of clients and support provided on any given day in.

These reports are available on the [AIHW website](#).



COVID-19

A new client is seeking assistance due to COVID-19 issues.

If a client tells you that one of the reasons for seeking assistance is due to the impact that the COVID19 crisis has had on them:

1. Under 'Reason for seeking assistance', record all reasons categories that apply (e.g. Financial difficulties, Employment difficulties, Medical issues) and record 'Other'.
2. Record 'COVID-19' in the free text field.

My agency cannot provide services to someone due to COVID-19 issues that have impacted on the agency.

If your agency cannot provide some services to an ongoing client as a result of the COVID-19 crisis:

1. Update the 'Reasons for seeking assistance' and record 'Other'.
2. Record 'COVID-19' in the free text field. If 'Other' has already been recorded, add 'COVID-19' at the beginning of the free text field.

If your agency cannot provide ANY services for someone seeking assistance as a result of the COVID-19 crisis:

1. Create an Unassisted Persons form.
3. In the question asking why services could not be provided, record all reasons that apply and also select the 'Other' category.
4. In the Notes field, record 'COVID-19'.
 - a. If your client management system does not have a Notes field on the Unassisted Persons form, skip this step.

I have to close a client's support period due to reasons related to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

If you close a client's support period due to the COVID-19 crisis:

1. Record 'Reason support period ended', choosing the category that best describes the situation, e.g. Service withdrawn from client and no referral made, Client referred to a mainstream agency.
2. Update the 'Reasons for seeking assistance' and record 'Other'.
3. Record 'COVID-19' in the free text field. If 'Other' has already been recorded, add 'COVID-19' at the beginning of the free text field.

An existing client requires additional or different services due to COVID-19 issues.

If a client requires services or services have to be provided differently due to the COVID-19 crisis:

1. Record those services normally.
2. Update the 'Reasons for seeking assistance' and record 'Other'.
3. Record 'COVID-19' in the free text field. If 'Other' has already been recorded, add 'COVID-19' at the beginning of the free text field.



The level or type of services able to be provided to a client is affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

If the level of services or the type of services able to be provided to a client is impacted by COVID-19 issues:

1. Update the 'Reasons for seeking assistance' and record 'Other'.
2. Record 'COVID-19' in the free text field. If 'Other' has already been recorded, add 'COVID-19' at the beginning of the free text field.

A client says their main source of income is the JobKeeper payment.

If a client tells you their main source of income is the JobKeeper payment:

1. In the client's 'Main income source' record 'Employee income'.

The JobKeeper payment is designed to help businesses affected by the Coronavirus cover the costs of their employees' wages, so more employees can retain their job and continue to earn an income. The JobKeeper payment is made to businesses not individuals.

Reports and Lists

SHIP Reports and tables of interest

Memo Report

Agencies can output customised SHIP data collected via the Persons>Memo tab in a report with aggregated data tables, saving them the need to manipulate this data in Excel.

Statistical Profile Report (SHS) updated to run by Program

Some SHIP agencies have set up the Programs option to identify and report on specific agency programs. They will be able to output this very useful report by specific Programs within their workgroup.

Additional table for 'Needs Identified, Services Provided and Referrals Arranged' table

A new table has been added that counts whether a service has been recorded once per support period. This will match the criteria used by AHIW to create this same table in the quarterly statistical summaries that can be downloaded from SHOR. This new table is located in two places: Table 41a in the Statistical Profile Report (SHS) and Table 1 in the Contact History Report (SHS). The original report has been retained and it reports on intensity of support, counting every instance a service was recorded under the Notes tab.

SHIP Cluster reports

In SHIP every Workgroup belongs to a Cluster. A Cluster can contain multiple Workgroups. Organising SHIP Workgroups into a Cluster enables agencies to be linked together allowing case workers to share client information across workgroups, a feature that is particularly useful when clients transition from one Workgroup within an agency to another.

SHIP's latest enhancement allows agencies, organised into clusters, to run SHIP reports for clusters in addition to workgroups. Cluster reports



will enable agencies to extract aggregated data for every workgroup within a Cluster or, for a given selection of workgroups pre-selected by the agency worker/manager.

Cluster reports are available for:

- SHS Statistical Profile Report (SHS)
- Support Period Report (SHS)
- Contact History Report (SHS)
- Status at end of Collection Period Report (SHS)
- Status at end of Support Period Report (SHS)

How to run a Cluster Report

1. Go to Reports Page>Reports tab
2. Select one of the reports listed above from 'Report type' (Figure 1)
3. 'Select Workgroup' field will appear (Figure 1)
4. Select workgroups to be included from drop down list of available workgroups (Figure 2)
5. Select period of interest then,
6. Click 'Generate Report' and view results on Results tab

If two workgroups of a cluster have the same program, how will a 'Program report' display client numbers?

The report shows in the heading that the data is coming from multiple workgroups; however, the report doesn't contain data from multiple workgroups. Multiple workgroup (cluster reports) are only accurate if generated by all programs.

Further Information

What are the security arrangements in place to protect SHIP data against hackers?

SHIP is hosted by Infoxchange in secure data centre facilities meeting the strict security requirements of AIHW, including compliance with the Commonwealth Information Security Manual, the Commonwealth Protective Security Policy Framework; and the Privacy Act 1988.

All SHIP users have a unique username and password identifying the type and level of access to the system.

All access to the system will be logged and monitored. Users are timed out of the system if the session is inactive for a period of time.

SHIP provides a secure web-link for every session. All data transmitted to and from SHIP is encrypted using 128 bit SSL encryption to ensure data security and privacy (the same level as most Internet banking facilities).

Infoxchange Australia is also required to monitor intrusion attempts and to periodically test SHIP to ensure that the system is safe from viruses and external unauthorised access.

SHIP is hosted on Infoxchange servers located at a secure hosting facility in Australia. Comprehensive backup and disaster recovery facilities are in place at a second secured site to minimise disruptions to agency business



processes. The data are further protected by maintaining the servers in facilities where the minimum standard security levels are: 24-hour security guards; electronic surveillance and entry; secure access protocols in place including photo ID and pre-authorisation of entry; and, battery and generator backup.

Where can I look for help in SHIP?



The book icon is located on the notes and support period tabs and will take you to SHSC data definitions page on the AIHW website. This link can assist with definition related enquiries. You can also download the SHS collection manual from this link.



The question mark symbol is on every page and tab in SHIP. It provides a step by step guide on how to enter data in SHIP. This link also contains information about frequently asked questions on SHIP.

[AIHW website.](#)

A link to AIHW website is available on Support period Health tab and it will take you to a page with detailed information about questions relating to client's long term health condition.

