

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

'CHOICES' is an Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) education program delivered via group or individual sessions designed to help low risk offenders identify and address the harms associated with their AOD use. 'CHOICES' aims to:

- Increase awareness of the relationship between AOD use and offending
- Identify the range of potential harms associated with alcohol and different types of drugs and methods of use
- Understand the short and long-term effects of use on physical and mental health
- Identify the drivers and patterns of use and the interrelationships with other issues
- Improve knowledge of concepts of cravings, tolerance, dependence and withdrawal
- Understand the stages of change and how to plan for changing behaviour
- Develop strategies to identify levels of risk and reduce impacts and consequences
- Identify strategies and interventions for self-monitoring and relapse prevention

Clients eligible for CHOICES

1. **Low-Risk** of reoffending as assessed by Community Correctional Services (CCS) using the Level of Service Inventory: Revised-Screening (LSI: R-SC) risk assessment tool;
2. On a Community Corrections Order (CCO), CCO Imprisonment Order, or interstate order such as Bond or Probation which includes an **AOD condition**.

DELIVERY OF CHOICES

There is a maximum of two providers in each catchment. It is the responsibility of all providers to work with the other providers in their catchment (as applicable) to ensure sessions are provided as per the designated frequency (eg. monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, 1:1) – **See Attachment 1**.

If there are any issues with a provider's ability to deliver the number of sessions allocated, this must be flagged with ACSO and discussed with the provider's Divisional DHHS contact.

Scheduling of programs

All information must be emailed to choices@acso.org.au.

Groups

Providers must advise ACSO's Client Services Unit (CSU) of scheduled group sessions **3 months in advance** (where possible) and provide the following information:

- Contacts and email address for group facilitators or designated contacts so that CSU can notify providers of referrals or any updates
- Session dates, times and locations

ACSO will allocate clients available to attend group sessions through the Penelope portal, and update an online calendar <https://bit.ly/COATSSharedCalendar>

Individual

The CHOICES coordinator will email a referral list of individuals to providers. Individual session appointment details are to be provided to the client and to ACSO upon receiving the referral list.

Where possible, please provide 2 months' notice to allow clients to make arrangements to attend session e.g. work, or childcare commitments.

Flexible delivery in 2020-21

In the last financial year 2019-20, the CCS recalibrated the LSI/RNR tool, as a consequence it is expected that referral numbers for the CHOICES program may increase in some areas. This will mean that providers scheduled to provide only 1:1 sessions may find the need to run groups, and those currently running groups may find the need to run additional groups.

Requirements:

- Regional areas have 10 plus referrals within a four-week period
- Metro providers have 20 plus referrals within a four-week period
- Clients nearing the end of their order must be scheduled into a 1:1 session rather than being held over into a group.

Process:

- Provider must contact ACSO to make the request – choices@acso.org.au
- ACSO will contact central staff at DHHS
- Central staff at DHHS will review and decide as soon as practicable, advising the provider and Divisional DHHS contact and ACSO
- Provider will notify ACSO of the group date/time of program to be added to the ACSO/CCS shared calendar.

Consortia lead agencies should then follow directions for [invoicing for additional groups](#).

Online calendar

CCS and AOD providers can view all available programs and vacancies for each scheduled session by day, week or month. When a vacancy has been filled, ACSO will update the calendar to clients booked up to a cap of **20-25** attendees.

Client names will not be entered into the shared calendar, however, the *Individual Profile ID & Event ID* also known as the Treatment Completion Advice (TCA) ID will be entered.

The online calendar is available as per the link on page 1.

Number of participants per program

CHOICES programs will be 'overbooked' to allow for a proportion of non-attendance. Each program will be booked with 20-25 participants with an expected 15 attendees per session.

A range of factors are considered in allocating each client to a particular CHOICES Group, including:

- Preferences listed on clients' referral (children, interpreter, work commitments etc)
- Accessibility of site via public transport (may not be nearest site to client's location)
- Session availability and client's order expiry, as well as urgency of intervention

The program will **close** for bookings **one week** prior to scheduled program.

Clients not suitable for group setting

In a small number of instances, clients may be referred to CHOICES who are identified as not suitable for participation in a group program. For example, those:

- requiring a translator
- with cognitive impairment
- significant social anxiety issues
- or as identified by CCS.

This information should be flagged by CCS in the referral information. In these instances a 1:1 session should be considered. If the client requires an interpreter, it is the responsibility of the provider to arrange an interpreter. This can be done through Credit Line <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/populations/cald-health/language-services-credit-line>.

ACSO can only reimburse the cost of interpreters where no other funding is available for this purpose.

Repeated non-attendance

Clients who have not attended three (3) bookings will be flagged with their CCS case manager for further follow up as required.

In some instances, (i.e. when a client is nearing the end of their CCO) a client may need to travel a greater distance to attend a session prior to their order ending. CCS can provide travel assistance to those who are required to travel to other areas, however this is at CCS' discretion.

Client referral information

Referral information as provided by CCS and appointment details is available via the Penelope portal.

This information generally includes the following as known by CCS:

- client demographics
- sentencing details (including type of offence and dates of CCO)
- information regarding substance use
- mental health (including significant social anxiety issues)
- cognitive impairment
- location preferences
- interpreter needs
- additional needs

This information is available in the Penelope portal *Attachments* in the client's CHOICES program service event (refer Fig 1.)



Fig 1.

AOD providers must enter client information from the referral into their own Client Management System to fulfil the requirements of the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Collection (VADC).

In most instances a client presenting to CCS with significant AOD use and/or significant mental health issues will not have a low LSI score and therefore not be referred to CHOICES.

In some instances, CCS may have need to increase a client's LSI score after they have been booked into a CHOICES program. CCS will advise ACSO and that client will be removed from the booking and re-directed to ACOS for a COATS assessment.

AOD provider review/screen prior to group

Bookings for each program will close one week prior. Those who require a 1:1 session should have already been directed to this delivery format. However, this week provides an opportunity for facilitators to review and undertake a brief screen from the referral information for participants booked into the group session.

This review / screen can allow facilitators to check those who require a 1:1 session have been referred. It can also help facilitators prepare for the group session and determine what content may require greater focus and how to manage the group dynamics.

Facilitators may wish to consider the following in participant referral information:

- Primary drug of concern
- Previous AOD treatment experience
- Forensic/offence history
- Mental health issues
- History of violence

There is an opportunity to increase the likelihood of participants attending the program by contacting the participant and using a collaborative practice approach with CCS.

Participant and facilitator feedback

Facilitators are asked to ensure they provide their participant feedback forms, as well as any facilitator feedback, to Uniting Regen (RPiscitello@regen.org.au) at the end of each session. This information assists in program content and delivery improvement.

Facilitators and provider organisations are also encouraged to provide feedback on their experience of the program and report any suggestions or concerns to ACSO on (03) 9413 7000 or via choices@acso.org.au.

Reporting

In 2020-21, there was an intention that the CHOICES program transition from block funding to activity-based funding and contribute to a service provider's overall Drug Treatment Activity Unit (DTAU) target. Due to workflow for VADC specification changes being reprioritised, this was not completed in 2019-20. Therefore, service providers are

required to report activity for this program by submitting Treatment Completion Advice (TCA) to ACSO. The department will include the ACSO COATS data for this program in its end of year monitoring of overall service provider performance.

Treatment Completion Advice (TCA)

Treatment Completion Advice (TCA) are to be submitted to ACSO through Penelope.

A modified TCA form is used for CHOICES and is available in the AOD – CHOICES Program *service event* in Penelope. It needs to include the following information:

- Date of the CHOICES group session
- Reasons provided if non-attendance
- Clients requiring assessment and ongoing treatment (see below).

AOD providers must submit one (1) TCA for each client booked into the CHOICES program within 48 hours of the completed group or Individual session. This includes those who attended and those that did not.

Please note that a TCA payment document is not required as the completed session will automatically include the payment per client.

Clients that do not attend may be contacted by the AOD provider and booked into next available session using the shared calendar, these appointment details must be provided to ACSO in the TCA document.

ACSO will re-book the clients that did not attend and advise CCS. The original booking confirmation process will be repeated with confirmation sent to the provider, a letter and SMS to the client and copy to CCS case manager.

Referring participants for assessment post-session

Facilitators can recommend a client identified during the session as requiring additional support or treatment be referred for a comprehensive assessment by the COATS program.

To recommend a client for a COATS assessment, the TCA will need to include:

- Reasons for recommendation; and
- Confirmation of the client's consent for ACSO assessment.

Upon completion of a CHOICES session, a client's AOD condition on their order is met and they are no longer a 'mandated' client. This means that the client must consent to the referral to ACSO for COATS assessment. This consent must be provided to ACSO for COATS to accept the assessment referral.

If consent is provided, ACSO will book an assessment appointment at the most appropriate ACSO office. As this assessment (and any subsequent brokered treatment) is 'voluntary', ACSO and providers will not need to notify the CCS case manager of future assessment or treatment appointment dates. The client at this point is considered 'voluntary' and any treatment provided will contribute to overall targets, not forensic targets.

Clients who have completed CHOICES may also access Catchment based intake services for referral to assessment and treatment, should they prefer.

TCA's for client's receiving treatment 'voluntarily' are categorised as "*Treatment Service (Referrals including Voluntary etc) as below* (refer Fig 2.)

- Justice Case Manager (do not use)
- Treatment Service (Referrals including CISP / CREDIT / ARC / NJC / CCO / PAROLE / DTO / YJ)
- Treatment Service (Referrals including Voluntary / Other Div / KADW / DDAL / StepOut)

Fig 2.

FUNDING

DHHS have advised the designated the frequency and the total number of sessions to be delivered per AOD catchment (**Attachment 1**).

Although funding for CHOICES is not yet designated as a Drug Treatment Activity Unit (DTAU). Delivery of CHOICES per participant will still and vary depending on group or individual delivery and will be acquitted by ACSO against the Consortium’s forensic counselling target at the rates noted below.

- The group weighting per client is 0.85 DTAU.
- The individual weighting is 0.470 DTAU (equivalent to a DDAL intervention).

Please refer to the COATS Payment Guideline for current funding details <http://coats.acso.org.au/finance/>

Invoicing ACSO for additional group program payments

Some consortia have received funding in their service agreements for a set number of groups this year (see **Attachment 1** for schedule) and do not need to invoice ACSO for these groups. For any additional groups to what was specified, consortia lead agencies must make a request to ACSO prior to running the group. Once approved, consortia lead agencies need to invoice ACSO for the amount, using group DTAU x number of participants multiplied by the DTAU value (for 2019-20 it is \$820.99). Consortia leads are instructed to ensure this payment is provided to the member organisation that has delivered the program.

TRAINING

For training session information please refer to <https://www.choicesdrugprogram.com.au>. Use your agency login provided by ReGen to access all areas.

If you work for a service that delivers the program and need to undertake training, please contact Rita Piscitello at Uniting ReGen or Aston Elliot at ACSO.

CONTACTS

Enquiries	Contact	Email
Administration	Michelle Harris	Choices@acso.org.au
Training	Aston Elliot	AElliot@acso.org.au
	Rita Piscitello	RPiscitello@vt.uniting.org
Funding	TCA Team	TCA@acso.org.au
Website	Rob Biviano	RBiviano@acso.org.au

Attachment 1: Delivery as per Consortia Arrangements

Catchment	Consortium	Lead Agency	Regularity by Catchment	Proposed Sessions 2020-21
Barwon	Barwon AOD Consortium	Barwon Health	Quarterly	2
Barwon	Stepping Up Barwon Consortium	Odyssey House Victoria		2
Bayside	Bayside Alcohol and Drug Partnership	Taskforce AOD Service	Quarterly	2
East Melbourne	SURE Consortium	EACH	Quarterly	4
Frankston Mornington Peninsula	Frankston and Mornington Drug and Alcohol Services (FaMDAS)	Peninsula Health	1:1	As required
Gippsland	Latrobe Community Health Service Consortium	Latrobe Community Health Services	1:1	As required
Goulburn Valley	Goulburn Valley Alcohol and Drug Service	Goulburn Valley Health	1:1	As required
Grampians	Grampians Alcohol and Drug Consortium	Ballarat Community Health	Quarterly	4
Great South Coast	ACSO	ACSO	1:1	As required
Hume/Ovens Murray	Gateway Health	Gateway Community Health Service	1:1	As required
Inner East Melbourne	Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre (Inner East Melbourne)	Turning Point	1:1	As required
Inner North Melbourne	Salvation Army - STAR	The Salvation Army (Vic) Property Trust	Quarterly	2
Inner North Melbourne	Uniting - Odyssey House	Uniting ReGen		2
Loddon Mallee	Bendigo Community Health Consortium	Bendigo Community Health Services	1:1	As required
North Melbourne	Caraniche	Caraniche	Quarterly	2
North Melbourne	Uniting - Odyssey House	Uniting ReGen		2
North West Melbourne	Odyssey House – Uniting	Odyssey House Victoria	Quarterly	2
North West Melbourne	Salvation Army - STAR	The Salvation Army (Vic) Property Trust		2
South East Melbourne	EACH	EACH	Quarterly	2
South East Melbourne	SECADA	Windana		2
South West Melbourne	North and West Metro AOD Service - Odyssey House	Odyssey House Victoria	Quarterly	4

Attachment 2: Client referral pathway flowchart

