



## OTHER DIVERSION – VOLUNTARY REFERRALS THAT CAN BE FORENSIC

**Did you know that COATS has a Diversion referral (previously NIDS Diversion) form available on the ACSO website? What does this mean?**

The Client Services Unit (CSU) in COATS are dedicated to ensuring your referral forms are processed efficiently in order for you to view client information in Penelope and submit TCAs to receive payment. The online referral form is highly secure unlike faxes. The forms are guaranteed to be sent directly to the relevant staff in the Client Services Unit.

### How do I know if I can use the form?

The Diversion referral is accessible to AOD Service Providers that have a current contract with COATS and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide assessment and/or treatment to clients who are eligible for Diversion funding.

- Are you from one of the catchment-based AOD Intake & Assessment Providers in Victoria?
- Are you from an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) contracted by DHHS and COATS to provide assessment and treatment (including KADW and residential rehabilitation) to clients?
- Are you from a youth specific agency contracted by DHHS and COATS to provide assessment and treatment to clients?

If you answered YES to one of the above questions, please refer to the “AOD Assessment Providers” section under the title “How to use the form”.

If you do not meet the criteria of one of the above categories, please refer to the **NEW** process outlined below for treatment providers:

- Are you a treatment provider contracted by COATS and DHHS to provide treatment to clients, that:
  - received a referral from one of the above AOD assessment providers?
  - used flexible funding to undertake an assessment and have determined the client will require treatment with your service?
- Has the client disclosed during treatment they have current or pending involvement with the Justice system?
- If the client did not disclose their involvement with the Justice system during the assessment, the AOD assessment provider most likely would not have submitted a Diversion referral form to COATS.

- Check with COATS whether this has been submitted. The AOD assessment provider will initiate the referral process and submit the treatment recommendation to your service via the TCA Clinical Outcomes document accessible via the Penelope portal.
- If the assessment provider did not submit a referral form, please refer to the “AOD Treatment Providers” section below under the title “How to use the form”.

Suggestion: Ask your clients if they are reporting to a Justice case manager such as Bail programs, Community Correctional Services or Youth Justice. If so, contact COATS with client consent, who can confirm if they have a current referral.

### How to use the form:

- **AOD Assessment Providers:** The online referral form allows you to indicate whether you have provided assessment services to your client. Select this option and follow the prompts in the referral form, to provide the assessment appointment information.
- **AOD Treatment Providers:** The online referral form allows you to indicate whether you are providing treatment services to your client, without providing COATS with the assessment appointment details first.
  - If your agency provides multiple treatment types and the client is currently engaged in more than one, for example, counseling complex and community residential drug withdrawal; both treatment appointments can be provided.
  - If you are aware your client is attending a different agency outside your consortium for another type of treatment, the other agency will need to submit their own form. Do not submit a referral on another consortium’s behalf.

### How do I know if my client is eligible for Diversion funding?

The purpose of any Diversion program is to divert clients away from the Criminal Justice system. ‘Other’ Diversion referrals are voluntary in the sense that clients are not mandated to attend AOD treatment however they can still be classified as forensic COATS referrals. They are considered to be an ‘informal’ diversion, unlike the formal diversion programs such as Assessment and Referral Court (ARC) List, Court Integrated Services Program (CISP), Credit Bail, Deferred Sentence and Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) Bail.

The agency will need to identify whether the client is eligible for Diversion funding, by asking the client relevant questions relating to possible current involvement in criminal matters. In most cases, clients will have upcoming court dates.

To be eligible for Diversion a client must not be on an existing order with Department of Justice, or on a Caution from Victoria Police; however any of the following sources may refer clients to assessment and treatment:

- CHAD Nurse (Custodial Health Alcohol and Drug Nurse)
- Child Protection Services (this is currently being piloted by DHHS)

- Courts – Magistrates’, County and Koori (Does not include Children’s Court as it has its own independent referral pathway with COATS)
- Drink/Drug Drive Providers
- Family Court
- Police
- Salvation Army Chaplain
- Solicitor

Treatment for non-illicit substances: Diversion is no longer limited to illicit substances therefore individuals who are using non-illicit substances are also eligible to receive Diversion funding for treatment, as well as assessment.

Family Reunification Orders (FROs): Agencies have been provided with additional funding to perform activity related to individuals of a Family Reunification Order. These individuals are ineligible for brokerage unless they meet the eligibility for Diversion referrals as described above.

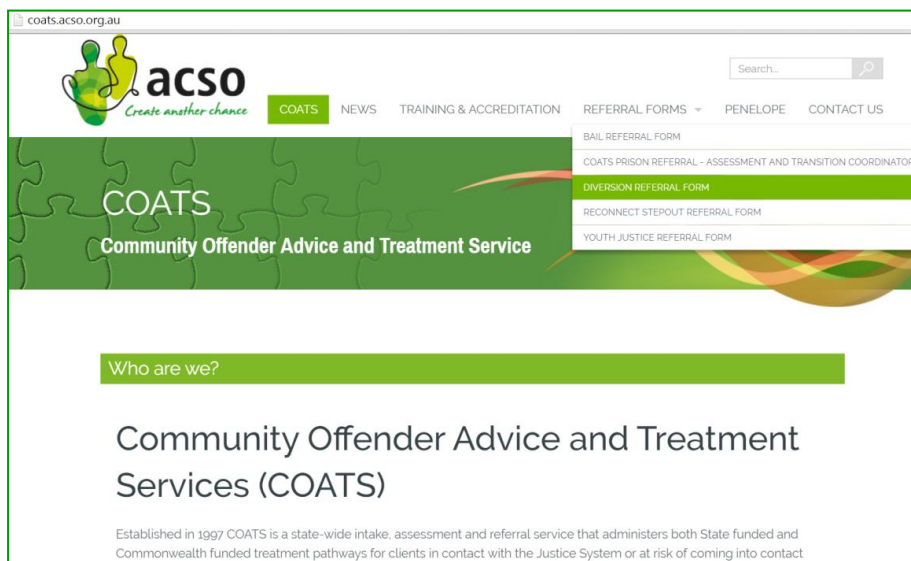
### Where do I find the Diversion referral form?

The Diversion referral form is available on the COATS website via the following link:

<http://coats.acso.org.au/coats-referral-forms/diversion-referral-form/>

The Diversion referral form can also be located by following these steps:

1. Visit the COATS website on <http://coats.acso.org.au/>
2. Click on the Referral Forms drop down menu
3. Select Diversion Referral Form to be directed to the referral



Otherwise, if you happen to misplace the above information, you can also find the Diversion referral form by visiting the ACSO website [www.acso.org.au](http://www.acso.org.au), and entering ‘Diversion’ into the Search bar.

### What happens once the form is submitted?

Once you submit the referral form online, it will provide you with a copy. You can save this electronically (PDF) and even print it. Our Client Services Unit will process the referral form in

Penelope and assign the relevant workers to provide you with access in your portal. If you have any specific requests for portal usernames, please ensure this information is provided on the final page of the referral form.

### **Who can assist me with my queries?**

The Client Services Unit in COATS can be contacted between 9am – 5pm from Monday to Friday. For general enquiries, please email [intake@acso.org.au](mailto:intake@acso.org.au) or phone 03 9413 7196.