

CHOICES GROUP PROGRAM

'Choices' is an Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) group education program 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 behavior
- Develop strategies to identify levels of risk and reduce impacts and consequences
- Identify strategies and interventions for self-monitoring and relapse prevention

Which clients are eligible to access group programs?

As of 1 December 2016, any offender meeting the following criteria will be referred to the 'Choices' program:

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

Information from endorsed providers

The program delivery will begin on 16 January 2016.

Based on information provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), agencies must provide COATS Client Services Unit (CSU) via brokerage@acso.org.au with a schedule (**3 months in advance**) of group sessions planned for delivery.

Details provided to CSU must include:

- Contacts and email address for group facilitators or designated contacts so that CSU can notify agencies of referrals or any updates
- Your group program session dates, times, locations and vacancies (if there is a cap per group).

COATS CSU will use this information to create a booking schedule with the Penelope system to allocate clients to available sessions, and update an online calendar with shared visibility, accessible to agencies. Agencies will be able to view the client's referral information provided by CCS and appointment details, via the Penelope portal.

Referral and booking process

1. CCS case managers will submit referrals to COATS at referral@acso.org.au, which will specify the *low LSI* score.
2. COATS Intake will book the client into the next available session closest to the client's location, or most convenient for the client. Note: these clients will not undertake COATS assessment prior to their referral into the Choices program.
3. COATS Intake will send an email to the group program facilitators (or designated contacts) to advise of the booking, and will also add the appointment to the shared online calendar applicable to your agency (this calendar will not include client names). Please refer to section below *How do agencies access the shared calendar?*
4. COATS will send the client an appointment letter and SMS with details of the booking. The appointment details will also be emailed to the nominated CCS case manager, who will also receive a copy of the appointment letter.

How do agencies access the shared calendar?

The shared calendar is available for viewing only via the following link: <https://bit.ly/COATSSharedCalendar>

A password is not required to view this link.

Agencies will be able to view all available vacancies at each of the providers of the Choices program, and you have the option to view the calendar by day, week or month. COATS CSU will allocate a client to a vacancy in the calendar, and change the status to BOOKED from VACANT. Client names will not be entered into the shared calendar, however the *Event ID* also known as the TCA ID will be entered for your use.

What type of client information will providers receive from COATS?

COATS will provide all client information received from CCS to the nominated agency via the Penelope portal. This information generally includes: client demographics, sentencing details (including type of offence and dates of CCO), information regarding substance use and mental health, and if there are any appointment preferences.

Agencies will also be advised if the client requires an interpreter. It is the responsibility of the agency to arrange the interpreter, which also applies to individual-based treatment.

COATS will save this information under *Attachments* in the client's *CHOICES Program service event in Penelope* (refer Fig 1.) Please note, a forensic assessment report will not be available for these clients as COATS will not be undertaking a forensic assessment.

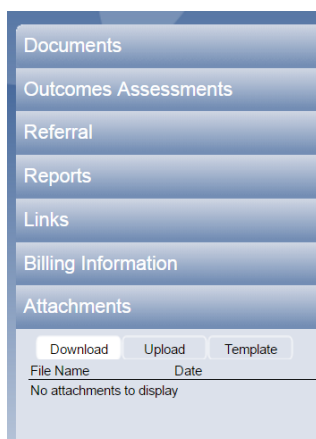


Fig 1.

Completing TCAs

When a session has been delivered, agencies must submit one (1) Treatment Completion Advice (TCA) for each client booked into the Choices program. COATS will provide a modified version of the current TCA form for this purpose. The TCA document will be located from the AOD – CHOICES Program *service event* in Penelope (which is where TCAs are currently located). Please note that for this service only, **there is only one TCA to complete**. The TCA – Payment document is not required as the completed session will automatically include the payment per client. Please refer to the section ‘Funding’ on *page 3* for further details.

The TCA will include the following information:

- Date of the Choices group session
- Agencies are required to submit the TCA for each client within 48 hours of completion of the program for clients that attended and did not attend the program
- The TCA will allow you agencies to indicate whether the client provided a reason for their non-attendance
- Clients requiring assessment and ongoing treatment (see below)

Facilitators can recommend forensic assessments for clients identified during the program as requiring additional support or treatment. To recommend a client for assessment, the TCA will need to include:

- Reasons for recommendation
- Confirmation of the client’s consent for COATS assessment.

COATS will then book an assessment appointment at the most suitable COATS office. **This assessment is not considered as mandatory**; therefore, COATS and agencies will not need to notify the CCS case manager of the appointment date.

If the client is recommended to treatment, COATS will make a referral to a treatment provider. Again, this is not considered mandatory however **treatment will still contribute towards your forensic targets**. Agencies are not required to inform CCS prior to exiting clients from treatment. **When you complete the treatment TCA, you will need to select *Treatment Service (Referrals including Voluntary etc)***.

- 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)

Clients cancelling or not attending

For any client who does not attend the session the agency must complete the TCA. If the client was provided with the next available session using the shared calendar, these appointment details must be provided to COATS in the TCA document who will book the subsequent appointment and advise CCS. The booking confirmation process will be repeated with confirmation to the agency, a letter and SMS to the client and copy to CCS case manager.

Agencies will need to advise COATS if the client has contacted them and cancelled their attendance prior to the session so the client can be re-booked.

In some instances, (ie when a client is nearing the end of their CCO) CCS can provide travel tickets for clients who are required to travel to other areas to attend an available session. This will be at CCS’ discretion.

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

Funding

DHHS will provide information on the number of group programs to be delivered by each agency. In 2016-17 this figure will be pro rata from 16 January 2016. COATS will also be provided this information.

Each group program costs \$650.83. Each agency will need to invoice COATS this amount multiplied by the number of sessions specified by DHHS to be delivered. This amount will be paid to your consortium lead (if relevant) as a 'prepayment', from the COATS Brokerage funding.

For each client that completes a group session, \$100.00 (or 0.138 DTAU) will be paid upon TCA submission to COATS via the Penelope portal.

Feedback?

The 'Choices' program is a new a program. ReGen who have developed the program will be seeking feedback from facilitators and clients on their experience of the program. Any additional feedback or questions on the information provided in this document or the processes described can be forwarded to COATS Client Services Unit management team on 03 9413 7000.

