



## GUIDE TO SUBMITTING STEPOUT PRISON REFERRALS TO COATS

### 1. What is the name of the referral form?

The StepOut referral form for general prison staff is called COATS Prison Referral – StepOut.

### 2. What is StepOut?

StepOut is a program that aims to assist clients who are serving their full sentence in prison, without parole or other reporting conditions. This is referred to as 'straight release'. These clients can voluntarily elect to attend assessment and/or treatment to address any alcohol or other drug (AOD) concerns. As the client is in prison, the referral is still considered to be 'forensic' despite the voluntary engagement with AOD services, therefore these clients can be referred to COATS for an AOD assessment via the StepOut referral pathway.

Once the referral and appointment details are confirmed with the prison, a COATS assessor will under an AOD assessment on the client and develop a treatment plan. Depending on needs and suitability, COATS will then make a referral to an appropriate service for treatment (in some cases the client may require various treatment modalities). Treatment can include but is not limited to counselling, outreach, residential rehabilitation and withdrawal services.

### 3. Who can use the COATS StepOut Referral Form?

This referral form is available to workers who are involved with the client's transition from prison into the community, such as:

- Case workers
- Prison-based health service
- Housing and residential workers
- Prison staff who are not Assessment and Transition Coordinators (please see Step 4)
- ReConnect Programs provided by the following organisations:
  - Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO)
  - Jesuit Social Services (JSS)
  - Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
  - Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO)
- Thomas Embling Hospital

If you are unsure which referral form to use, or whether you can submit a referral, please contact the Client Services Unit first on 03 9413 7196 or email [intake@acso.org.au](mailto:intake@acso.org.au).

### 4. Where can I find a copy of the referral form?

The StepOut referral form is available on the COATS website via the following link: <https://survey.acso.org.au/index.php/825814?lang=en>

Alternatively, if you happen to misplace the link you can follow these steps:

- a) Visit the COATS website at <http://coats.acso.org.au/>
- b) Click on the Referral Forms tab which is at the top of the page, between the Training & Accreditation, and Penelope options
- c) You will be redirected to the list of 'COATS Referral Forms'
- d) Scroll down to the 'Prison Referrals' and select the referral form titled 'StepOut'

## 5. Who else can refer clients to COATS under StepOut?

Assessment and Transition Coordinators (ATC) are part of Corrections Victoria, and are based at prisons. The ATC can refer clients to COATS under StepOut; and can also refer to COATS if the client has been sentenced to a Community Corrections Order or Parole Order. The ATC will use the COATS Prison Referral – Assessment and Transition Coordinator referral form to refer clients to COATS.

## 6. Do I need consent from my client to refer them to COATS under the StepOut program?

The answer is yes. As a referrer, you must have consent from the client prior to submitting a StepOut referral form to COATS. The first question on the referral form asks the referrer whether consent has been obtained.

- a. If you do have consent, select 'yes' and progress through the subsequent questions.
- b. If you do not have consent and select 'no', the form will not allow you to proceed past the first page. If you selected no in error, click on *previous* to return to the question. +

## 7. When should I send the referral form to COATS?

COATS requires notice of at least 10 business days prior to the client's release from prison. This is to ensure that:

- COATS assessors are available to undertake the assessments
- Sufficient time is provided for COATS to arrange the assessment with the prison, and for COATS assessors to obtain clearance to enter the prison
- COATS are able to arrange treatment with a suitable AOD service provider and notify the client prior to their release

## 8. What will happen with my referral form if it is submitted to COATS with less than 10 business days?

If COATS assessors are available, and the prisons can accommodate, COATS will arrange a video link assessment for the client. However, keep in mind that the treatment appointment provided by the AOD service provider will most likely not occur immediately upon the client's release from custody. If COATS does not have any available assessors or the prison is unable to provide a room or videolink equipment, COATS will notify you to advise the assessment has not been arranged, however this does not mean the client cannot access AOD treatment. Alternatively, the client will be able to access AOD services via the voluntary pathways, once they are released from prison (see Step 11 for details).

## 9. Who is responsible for processing my referral?

Once the StepOut referral form is submitted, it will be sent to a shared mailbox monitored by the Client Services Unit (CSU) within the COATS program. CSU will process the StepOut referral form within 24 hours of receiving it and enter the referral details into Penelope, which is ACSO's Client

Management System (electronic database).

#### **10. Who organises an assessment for my client?**

CSU will notify the Allocations Unit within COATS. The Allocations Unit will arrange an assessment in custody for the client, by coordinating with the relevant prison.

#### **11. Where else can my client access AOD assessment and treatment?**

There are various Intake and Assessment providers, or youth and Aboriginal specific services that individuals can access across Victoria to access assessment and treatment. If your client does not consent to partaking in StepOut or your referral was not sent to COATS within the required time frame, your client can attend any one of these services as required. A list of Intake and Assessment providers can be found on pages 4 - 5. For contact details of youth or Aboriginal specific service providers, please email COATS CSU [intake@acso.org.au](mailto:intake@acso.org.au) or phone 03 9413 7196.

#### **12. Who can assist me with my questions?**

If you email [intake@acso.org.au](mailto:intake@acso.org.au) or call 03 9413 7196, CSU can assist you with your queries. If your question is out of the norm or requires management approval, the team might direct your query to a manager.

**Good luck and don't forget you can also print the referral form once you've submitted it, or export to PDF which will allow you to save it!**

## VICTORIAN ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Catchment	Local Government Area	Service Provider	Phone Number
Barwon	City of Greater Geelong Shires of: Colac-Otway, Surf Coast Borough of Queenscliff	Barwon AOD Consortium	1300 094 187 1300 763 254 (Colac)
Bayside	Cities of: Port Phillip, Glen Eira, Bayside, Stonnington, Kingston	Bayside Integrated Services	1800 229 263
Eastern Melbourne	Cities of: Knox, Maroondah Shire of Yarra Ranges	Sure Consortium	1300 007 873
Frankston-Mornington Peninsula	City of Frankston Mornington Peninsula Shire	FaMDAS	1300 665 781
Gippsland	Shires of: Bass Coast, South Gippsland, Baw Baw, Wellington, East Gippsland City of LaTrobe	ACSO	1300 022 760
Goulburn Valley	Shires of: Moira, Strathbogie, Mitchell, Murrindindi City of Greater Shepparton	ACSO	1300 022 760
Grampians	Shires of: Moorabool, Golden Plains, Pyrenees, North Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack, Hepburn Rural Cities of: Ararat, Horsham City of Ballarat	ACSO	1300 022 760
Great South Coast	Shires of: Glenelg, Southern Grampians, Moyne, Corangamite City of Warrnambool	ACSO	1300 022 760
Hume	Rural Cities of: Wodonga, Wangaratta, Benalla Shires of Indigo, Towong, Mansfield, Alpine	ACSO	1300 022 760
Inner East Melbourne	Cities of: Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse, Monash	Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Consortium	1800 778 278
Inner North Melbourne	Cities of: Moreland, Moonee Valley, Melbourne, Yarra	North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service	1800 700 514

## VICTORIAN ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Catchment	Local Government Area	Service Provider	Phone Number
Loddon Mallee	Rural Cities of: Mildura, Swan Hill Greater City of Bendigo Shires of: Buloke, Gannawarra, Loddon, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander, Macedon Ranges	ACSO	1300 022 760
North Melbourne	Cities of: Whittlesea, Darebin, Banyule Shire of Nillumbik	North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service	1800 700 514
North West Melbourne	Cities of: Brimbank, Hume, Maribyrnong, Shire of Melton	North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service	1800 700 514
South Eastern Melbourne	Cities of: Greater Dandenong, Casey Cardinia Shire	SECADA	1800 142 536
South West Melbourne	Cities of: Hobsons Bay, Wyndham	North and West Metro Alcohol and Other Drug Service	1800 700 514
Statewide Intake and Assessment Service	All	Directline	1800 888 236
Statewide LGBTI Intake and Assessment Service	All	Victorian AIDS Council	1800 229 263