

External Provider Policy Summary

This document provides a summary of key policies, including changes and new policies, which have been included in the new Open Arms Veterans & Families Counselling (Open Arms) online Policy Hub. The summary has been written specifically for External Providers; including Outreach Program Counsellors (OPCs), Group Program Facilitators and Clinical Supervisors.

Any questions regarding the content of the policies, and their interface with the Outreach Provider Notes, should be discussed with your existing Outreach Program Regional Liaison point of contact, before being directed (if required) to the Open Arms Policy and Quality Team at openarmspolicy@dva.gov.au

Feedback on individual policies can also be provided directly through the Policy Hub via the *'Provide feedback on this policy document'* link which is located in the top right hand corner of every policy and procedure page on the Policy Hub. Feedback submitted via this link will automatically identify the policy that is being discussed.

A summary of all user feedback provided on the policies can be found in the [Policy Feedback Log](#) which can be accessed via the [Policy Hub landing page](#). The link to the Policy Feedback Log is currently located at the bottom of the Page Tree on the left side of the landing page.

All External Providers are encouraged to read this summary, review relevant policies as part of Open Arms business, discuss the policies with regional contacts as required, and provide feedback through appropriate channels.

Policy Summary Table

Policy Area	Content
Provider Notes 500-06/CD1 Outreach Program Provider Notes	PDF version of the Outreach Program Counsellors Provider Notes, dated December 2019. This is the same version that has been provided to all Outreach Program Counsellors.
Client Information and Records Management Procedure 101-01 Client Information and Records Management Procedure 101-01/02 VERA Manual – Outreach	Comprehensive information about client records content, management, storage, security and destruction. Para 14 relates specifically to Outreach Counsellors. This policy includes 101-01/02 VERA Manual – Outreach as a subordinate instruction. The PDF version is the same as the manual available in VERA.
Privacy and confidentiality 100-02 Privacy and Confidentiality Procedure	Privacy and confidentiality related policy and procedures have been significantly updated based on legal advice to properly reflect changes in the Privacy Principles and to allow for increased communication when a client is at risk. Reflects changes in information sharing that have been taking place for some time.

<p>Release of Information (ROI) 101-02/02 APP12 Release of Information (ROI) Instruction</p>	<p>Release of Information (ROI) has been significantly revised to reflect legal advice and the new role Client Assist Contact Centre (Client Assist) will have in processing ROI requests.</p>
<p>Response to Disclosure of a Crime 101-02/07 Response to Disclosure of a Crime Instruction</p>	<p>This instruction provides a guide for when Open Arms staff and providers become aware that a client may have engaged in a criminal activity, or where a criminal activity is planned. This includes instructions regarding family and domestic violence disclosures and war crimes.</p>
<p>Client Rights and Responsibilities 101-03 Client Rights and Responsibilities Procedure</p>	<p>This policy details what clients can reasonably expect of the service, privacy and confidentiality requirements, and access to records regarding them. It also includes information clients are entitled to know about the expectations Open Arms has of them as clients of the service. These have been updated but are essentially similar to the previous policy.</p>
<p>Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect 101-04 Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Procedure</p>	<p>This procedure describes the obligation to report suspected child abuse and neglect, subject to relevant mandatory reporting obligations in all Australian states and territories, including Open Arms' obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act).</p>
<p>Clinical Audits 102-07/01 Clinical Audits Instruction</p>	<p>Clinical audits are an integral component of clinical governance and continuous quality improvement. This instruction provides information about the conduct of clinical audits by Open Arms. Annual audits, based on a sample proportionally representing outreach and centre-based cases and regional representation, are undertaken annually. The instruction is yet to be finalised and published.</p>
<p>Adverse event review 102-05 Adverse Event Review Procedure</p>	<p>The adverse event review procedure is a significant reformulation of the Open Arms response to adverse events involving a client or former client. It details an investigative process grounded in the continuous improvement of organisational systems and service-related procedures and processes, and is aimed at supporting the best possible outcomes for clients.</p>
<p>Client Feedback Management Procedure 102-06 Client Feedback Management Procedure</p>	<p>The Client Feedback Management policy has been significantly updated to align with changes to the DVA Client Feedback Management System (CFMS) and includes management of complaints and compliments.</p>
<p>Eligibility 201 Eligibility Policy</p>	<p>Eligibility Policy has been updated to align with what is now generally understood, with some further clarification around boundary issues such as WW2 family eligibility. This policy clarifies information already in circulation about the eligibility criteria. Includes a summary matrix of client eligibility requirements.</p>
<p>Services to Minors 201-01 Services to Minors Procedure</p>	<p>The Services to Minors Procedure had been updated to reflect legal advice and Gillick Competency in consent by a minor. The updated procedure strengthens the Open Arms process for determining consent by a minor.</p>
<p>Carer Engagement 201-02 Carer Engagement Procedure</p>	<p>This procedure describes Open Arms' commitment to working with carers to support clients, with the client's consent.</p>

<p>Care Policy and Principles of Care 202 Open Arms Care Policy</p>	<p>This policy brings together the Principles of Care which have been informing Open Arms practice for some time now; such as recovery-oriented, person-centred and multidisciplinary.</p>
<p>Clinical Assessment and Treatment Planning 202-02 Clinical Assessment and Treatment Planning Procedure 202-02/01 Completion of Treatment Plans</p>	<p>This policy describe the requirements for clinical assessments and treatment plans (referred to in Open Arms as Care Plans) for clients accessing Open Arms counselling and treatment services. It also includes information about case review, exit planning and case closure.</p>
<p>Psychometric Instruments 202-02/02 Open Arms Psychometrics Instruction</p>	<p>The purpose of this instruction is to provide guidance on the use of psychometric instruments by mental health professionals within the context of assessment, formulation, treatment and review of Open Arms clients. It contains a non-exhaustive list of evidence-based measures that may be considered.</p>
<p>Counselling 202-03 Counselling Procedure</p>	<p>The Counselling Procedure and its subordinate policies provide detailed direction on the provision of counselling and treatment services to clients.</p>
<p>Clinical Notes 202-03/01 Completion of Clinical Notes</p>	<p>This instruction provides direction on the completion of Clinical Notes.</p>
<p>Online Video Counselling 202-03/02 Online Video Counselling & Support Instruction</p>	<p>Online Video Counselling and Support has been added. The new policy for this was promoted as part of COVID19 preparations.</p>
<p>90 Minute Sessions 202-03/04 Approval of 90 Minute Sessions Instruction</p>	<p>The instruction provides updated guidance and information on the approval and use of 90 minute sessions for trauma focussed therapy exposure work.</p>
<p>Assistance Animals 202-03/03 Assistance Animals Instruction</p>	<p>There is now guidance for the presence of Assistance Animals at sessions or groups, following input from regions.</p>
<p>Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) 202-06 Crisis Accommodation Procedure</p>	<p>Crisis accommodation is available to any person with eligibility for Open Arms services who is in crisis and in need of alternative, brief accommodation. Crisis accommodation enables access to care coordination, creates a period of time for management of factors contributing to the crisis situation, and is protective through reducing exposure to risk situations.</p>
<p>Group Programs 202-04 Treatment Group Programs Procedure</p>	<p>The Group Program policy has been significantly redeveloped to align with the new approach to group treatment groups. The policy is currently in use. Information about individual groups can be found on the Open Arms website.</p>

<p>Mental Health Training Workshops 202-05 Mental Health Training Workshops Procedure</p>	<p>A new Mental Health Training Workshops policy has been developed to provide clear differentiation for mental health and suicide prevention workshops that are not treatment programs. The policy reflects the current approach to mental health training workshops. Information about individual workshops can be found on the Open Arms website.</p>
<p>Psychiatric Referrals 202-07/01 Psychiatric Referrals Instruction</p>	<p>The Psychiatric Referrals procedure has been significantly updated to include broader eligibility matching general Open Arms eligibility, and a clearer statement of services included. The broader eligibility has been in place since 2019.</p>
<p>Defence Referrals 202-08 Defence Referrals Procedure</p>	<p>The Defence Referrals Procedure has been rewritten to reflect the new agreement between Defence and DVA – the Joint Support Services Agreement (JSSA). The JSSA has not been finalised however the policy has been written to reflect the updated agreement with Defence. JSSA-related policy and procedures will be released after the new Agreement has been signed by all parties. Until then, it will be business as usual under the existing Agreement for Service (AfS). The Defence Referrals Procedure in the Policy Hub can still be used, reading JSSA as AfS, noting that Appendices C and F (referred to in the policy) will not be accessible until the JSSA is signed.</p>
<p>Care Coordination 202-09 Care Coordination Procedure</p>	<p>Care Coordination has replaced Complex Needs Client Support as the case management model for Open Arms; featuring a stepped, universal approach to care for clients and their families who have complex circumstances and needs.</p>
<p>Safe Zone Support 202-10 Anonymous Counselling Line (Safe Zone) Procedure</p>	<p>This policy describes the Anonymous Counselling (Safe Zone) Procedure that has been developed to support the new anonymous counselling service being provided by Client Assist for veterans who do not wish to identify themselves.</p>
<p>Community and Peer Program 202-11 Community Engagement Procedure 202-12 Peer Support Procedure</p>	<p>New policies have been developed to support the Community Engagement Program, including the new Peer workforce and Community Engagement Teams. Clients are able to receive peer support from Veteran and Family Community and Peer Advisors, who have lived experience of ADF service and mental health challenges and recovery, and are trained consumer and carer Mental Health Peer Workers.</p>
<p>Risk Management and Assessment 203 Clinical Risk Management Policy</p>	<p>This policy explains the new SafeSide Risk Management Framework, including replacement of the Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) with the Open Arms Risk Assessment (OARA). External Providers will be introduced to the SafeSide Framework and OARA in the near future. Until then, OPCs should continue using the RAMP but also be mindful of the content of this policy in regard to general management and assessment of client risk. Questions and feedback regarding this policy should be directed to Outreach Program Regional Liaison contacts.</p>

<p>Clinical Escalations 203-04 Escalations Procedure 203-04/01 Client Liaison Pathway Instruction</p>	<p>A new clinical liaison policy and Clinical Liaison Pathway have been developed to reflect regional and Client Assist Contact Centre needs in relation to escalation and other client liaison tasks; including liaison with DVA. The pathway has been in operation for some time now.</p>
<p>Flexible Delivery 401-04 Flexible Delivery Procedure</p>	<p>This policy is mainly aimed at Open Arms staff; but includes information on Home Visits, Hospital Visits and After Hours Support; which may be of relevance to Outreach Providers</p>
<p>Professional Supervision (for Open Arms staff) 401-02 Professional Supervision Procedure</p>	<p>This policy applies to the provision of professional supervision for Open Arms clinicians and peer workers. It is included in this policy summary for the information of external Clinical Supervisors.</p>