

FACT SHEET – ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT FUND

On 20 April 2020, the ACT Government announced \$3 million in funding to support people facing homelessness or domestic and family violence arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding will allow the specialist homelessness sector and domestic and family violence services to expand their operational capacity and relieve the pressure of additional need during COVID-19 and throughout winter.

Accommodation Support Fund

Funding of \$832,000 has been allocated to provide both emergency and long-term accommodation for men, women and children who face the challenge of physical distancing in shelters, self-isolation when needed and potential quarantine.

Questions and Answers about the Accommodation Support Fund

What does the Accommodation Support Fund target?

The Accommodation Support Fund responds to areas where there was evidence of a clear increase in demand and to accelerate projects that will provide critical additional physical capacity in the homelessness sector. The Fund targets:

- expansion of OneLink to respond to increased referrals for temporary accommodation
- upgrades to existing public housing for crisis and shelter accommodation
- targeted accommodation support for rough sleepers, men, and women with children.

What has OneLink been funded to provide?

OneLink has been allocated \$150,000 under the Accommodation Support Fund to increase its existing capacity to coordinate referrals for temporary accommodation options such as, hotelling, including for service providers of congregate living accommodation where a client needs to self-isolate or quarantine. Access to this support through OneLink will be available from Monday 11 May 2020.

How can service providers access the OneLink component of the Accommodation Support Fund?

To access this temporary accommodation for self-isolation or quarantine, service providers should contact OneLink in the first instance. However, service providers should note that they remain responsible for client support and management including their return to their previous accommodation arrangements.

In addition, where providers cannot provide meals, OneLink will arrange meals or food hampers as part of its intake and placement service.

What is the allocation for upgrades to public housing for crisis and shelter accommodation?

Under the Accommodation Support Fund, \$305,000 has been allocated to furnish and upgrade existing public housing to be made available as crisis and shelter accommodation.

What additional support under this funding targets rough sleepers?

Under the Accommodation Support Fund, \$100,000 has been allocated for CatholicCare to fast track the Axial Housing pilot as the preferred and primary option to house rough sleepers during COVID-19.

The [Axial Housing pilot program](#) is based on Housing First principles and provides housing solutions that include the wrap-around supports needed to sustain a tenancy and not result in exits to homelessness after COVID-19.

We know that all not all of Canberra's entrenched rough sleepers are ready or willing to engage, but this program has already successfully managed to house ten rough sleepers, including some entrenched rough sleepers who have previously been unwilling to engage.

This is Housing ACT's preferred model over temporary placement in motels or hotels which are unlikely to be able to offer the client supports needed and are likely to result in exits back into homelessness.

What if a service provider is already in contact with a rough sleeper?

Where a service provider can build a relationship with a rough sleeper who wants to be – and can be – assisted to navigate the current systems, then the usual emergency and crisis accommodation system can cater for this situation and the provider should contact OneLink.

What additional support under this funding targets men?

Under the Accommodation Support Fund, \$127,000 has been allocated to upgrade and operate the Winter Lodge for temporary accommodation for men experiencing homelessness during COVID-19.

What is the Winter Lodge?

The Winter Lodge is an 18-bed facility located within the Ainslie Village grounds, previously known as 'The Lodge' and is managed by Argyle Housing. This funding component is particularly critical given Safe Shelter's recent announcement that it will not open this winter.

While OneLink is the primary intake, referrals can be received from crisis accommodation, community agencies, police, Legal Aid and Community Law. Clients can also self-refer.

Key Winter Lodge service points:

- Referral and applications can be emailed through to: winterlodge@argylehousing.com.au
- There are limited beds and the service is available on a first come, first served basis
- Clients can be referred to the Winter Lodge up to 5:00 pm each day.
- This is an overnight service although there is the potential to stay up to a maximum of 7 days. Argyle Housing staff will assist them in finding appropriate long-term housing if required.
- All men entering Winter Lodge will adhere and sign an agreement to stay under the existing Ainslie Village Social Code of conduct.

When will the Winter Lodge open?

The Winter Lodge will open on Monday 11 May 2020.

What additional support under this funding targets women with children?

Under the Accommodation Support Fund, \$150,000 has been allocated for CatholicCare to set up and operate Mackillop House in response to the growing need for safe supported housing for women with or without children who are experiencing homelessness during COVID-19.

What is Mackillop House?

Mackillop House is a property that belongs CatholicCare and is not currently in use. The funding is to help furnish and appropriately establish the property to be used as a shelter for women with or without children. The property will add to the existing sector capacity for supported accommodation.

When will Mackillop House be open?

Housing ACT is still working with CatholicCare to finalise details but can confirm that referrals to Mackillop House will be coordinated through OneLink's central intake service.

More information

For more information on COVID-19 support for Canberrans facing homelessness or domestic and family violence, please email quality@act.gov.au.