



Mental Health Community Living Supports for Refugees

Program information

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Mental Health Community Living Supports for Refugees

The Mental Health Community Living Supports for Refugees (MH-CLSR) program was established by the NSW Ministry of Health in June 2019. It is an enhancement of the Community Living Supports (CLS) program and provides trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, culturally safe and responsive psychosocial supports to refugees and asylum seekers of any age who are experiencing psychological distress, mental ill-health or impaired functioning.

The program aims to improve mental health and wellbeing, increase social participation and prevent acute mental health crises and avoidable admissions to hospital or presentations to emergency departments.

The MH-CLSR program operates in seven Local Health Districts in NSW. Four community-managed organisations have been contracted to deliver MH-CLSR in the following LHDs.

Local Health District	MH-CLSR provider
Mid North Coast LHD	STARTTS and New Horizons
Hunter New England LHD	STARTTS and New Horizons
Sydney LHD	STARTTS and New Horizons
South Western Sydney LHD	STARTTS and New Horizons
Western Sydney LHD	Anglicare Sydney
Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD	Grand Pacific Health
Murrumbidgee LHD	Australian Red Cross

To participate in MH-CLSR, people must meet the following general eligibility criteria:

- Be a refugee of any age within the first ten years of arriving in Australia or an asylum seeker. Exceptions to the ten-year timeframe may be considered in extenuating circumstances or on special recommendation from a mental health professional.
- Experience psychological distress, mental ill-health or impaired functioning from complex and chronic trauma, grief and loss, torture, human rights violations, war/conflict, detention, migration or settlement and establishment, including post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, self-harm and suicide ideation.
- Be regarded by a registered mental health professional (such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or mental health nurse) as being at risk of deterioration in their mental health without psychosocial supports. Priority must be given to those at risk of acute mental health crises, hospital admissions or presentations to emergency departments.
- Have genuinely consented to participate in the program (or, where relevant, have their guardian's consent) and are willing to agree to information sharing between key partners.
- Are willing to engage with psychosocial support services that are culturally appropriate.
- Are locatable by services regularly so that support can be provided with continuity.

WHAT TYPED OF SUPPORTS ARE PROVIDED?

Similar to the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) and Community Living Supports (CLS) programs, people receiving MH-CLSR services can access:

- A support worker from a community organisation
- A clinician of their choice or from a local mental health service
- Opportunity for their family or support people to be involved in the development of their unique support plan
- Family and household support as required.

The level and type of support are different depending on the client's requirements and personal goals. For example, the program can support someone with:

- Daily living skills including shopping, financial management, cooking, transport, medication and attendance to medical appointments.
- Provide a trusted person to talk to about mental health and suicide who can give more support and assistance as needed.
- Support the client to navigate medical appointments and allied health services and support groups.
- Remind the client of health appointments, medications and other important dates and activities.
- Support social interactions in the local community and participating in social, leisure or sporting activities.
- Support the client to learn new skills such as cooking or the English language.
- Support the client to access education, housing or employment opportunities.
- Support parenting practices and children's education and schooling.

SUPPORT THROUGH THE MH-CLSR PROGRAM

The amount of MH-CLSR support a refugee or asylum seeker client can receive is flexible. The level of support can change to meet the client's changing needs.

Support may need to be increased in times of distress or changing circumstances to support the client's mental health journey.

HOUSING AND THE MH-CLSR PROGRAM

Refugees and asylum seekers are not automatically eligible for social or community housing through the MH-CLSR program. Normal application processes, including eligibility criteria for social housing, apply. MH-CLSR support services can assist clients in navigating this process as required.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- South Western Sydney Local Health District
New Horizons: 1300 726 372 or STARTTS: 02 9646 6666
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- Sydney Local Health District
New Horizons: 1300 726 372 or STARTTS: 02 9646 6666
Email: STTS-CLSRintake@health.nsw.gov.au
- Mid North Coast Local Health District
New Horizons: 1300 726 372 or STARTTS: 02 9646 6666
Email: STTS-CLSRintake@health.nsw.gov.au
- Hunter New England Local Health District
STARTTS: 02 9646 6666
Email: STTS-CLSRintake@health.nsw.gov.au
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District
Australian Red Cross: 0478 252 652
Email: nswmsp_riverina_clsr@redcross.org.au
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
Grand Pacific Health: 02 4286 9200
- Western Sydney Local Health District
Anglicare Sydney: 1300 111 278
Email: David.ip@anglicare.org.au

Further information

NSW Health: health.nsw.gov.au

Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors: startts.org.au

Anglicare: anglicare.org.au

Grand Pacific Health: gph.org.au

Australian Red Cross: redcross.org.au