Introduction

'Ereferral' refers to an enhancement to the referral tab on SHIP that enables SHIP and SRS users to send, receive and respond to referrals from other SHIP/SRS users electronically.

The aim of this enhancement is to reduce time taken processing referrals and improve of the security of client information that has is currently being transferred by email/fax.

Implementation of the Ereferral function

The implementation of the Ereferral will occur in two phases to enable the Department of Health and Human Services (the department), specialist homelessness services and other stakeholders to identify potential issues and strategies before it is rolled out to all SHIP/SRS users in full.

The department has provided protocols to promote consistent use of function across Victoria. Some specific protocols applicable to Phase I are outlined below.

Phase I

The enhancement be active on 1 July 2018. From this date, all SHIP/SRS users will be able to *receive* and *respond* to Ereferrals, however, **only Initial Assessment and Planning workers (IA&P workers) will be able to *send* Ereferrals**. SHIP/SRS workgroups have been configured to accommodate this restriction.

If the IA&P service from which you typically receive referrals does not use SHIP or SRS, then the Ereferral function is unlikely to relevant to your service until Phase II.

The Ereferral send function is restricted in Phase I to enable users and the department to identify issues and develop strategies to manage them. We encourage all workers to identify issues via surveys provided. Two surveys will be sent out; the first will be provided at the beginning of implementation and due midway through Phase I, a second survey will be provided following this, that will be due towards the end of Phase I.

Webinar training will be provided by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare on June 22 and 28.

Phase II

It is anticipated that Phase II will see all homelessness services able to send, receive and respond to referrals electronically on 1 November 2018.

The implementation of Phase II will take into consideration feedback and issues identified through the 'Issues Log' from the roll-out of Phase I. Non SHIP and SRS based agencies will be engaged regarding the implementation of Ereferral in June 2018.

Ereferral Protocols

An example of a typical Ereferral process is as below:

1. A SHIP/SRS user identifies a vacancy/service and selects a client to refer. The referring agency contacts the agency that holds the vacancy to confirm the vacancy, before sending the Ereferral.

2. The referring SHIP/SRS user would complete an Ereferral by populating fields in the Ereferrals tab, attaching relevant information to the referral, selecting a service to refer to[1], and sending the referral.

3. The service receiving the referral will receive a SHIP notification plus an email notification informing them of the referral.[2]

4. The service (SHIP workgroup) receiving the referral will respond to the referral by acknowledging, accepting or declining the referral. Their response is visible to the referring SHIP workgroup so that referring agencies are able provide clients with an information about the progress of referral.

The following are protocols applicable to use of Ereferrals:

i. *When do I send an Ereferral?*

> In Phase One (1 July – 31 October 2018), only IA&P workers will send Ereferrals

- Ereferrals should only be sent when a vacancy is identified and confirmed by the agency. The vacancy may be known through the Opening Doors Resource Register or other communication. If a vacancy is identified outside of the Resource Register, the sender should directly confirm the vacancy with the agency holding the resource before sending the Ereferral. This helps prevent unnecessarily processing of Ereferrals.

- SHIP/SRS users are encouraged to use the prioritisation list to identify clients for referral.

ii. *What should I know about sending Referrals?*

> *From 1 July to 31 October 2018, only SHIP and SRS users will be able to send and receive Ereferrals

- If the agency with the vacancy does not use SHIP/SRS, the referral cannot be sent electronically. A little notification will pop up to say this. In this scenario, please save referral as PDF and send to agency via fax/email as per current practice.

- The list of external services available to refer to is informed by Service Seeker, managed by InfoXchange. If you are having issues identifying the relevant service via SHIP, please contact relevant service to confirm their name in this service directory. If there are other issues, please note them in the surveys provided.

- It is essential to state in 'Program/Group' field which program the client is being referred to. This is because workgroups can be shared between different programs within one agency which means Ereferrals can be viewed by workers outside the program being referred to.

- Ensure that you attach a consent form to every Ereferral in addition to selecting consent tick box at the bottom. Also ensure that 'consent form attached' is stated in comments section. Ensure that client consent is provided for any attachments are sent. If in doubt about any attachment, it is best to ask the client for their permission.

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[1] Available as per Organisation ID and Service Seeker description

[2] SHIP workgroups can nominate email addresses to Infoxchange that will receive email notifications regarding incoming Ereferrals.

- There are three free-text fields in Ereferrals for sharing client information; 'Presenting issues', 'Additional Information', and 'Comments'. Please complete these fields as follows:
  - **Presenting Issues**: As we are unable to add additional fields, please provide client information on following themes:
    - Housing,
    - Presenting/Risk issues
      - Support required, and
    - Action taken.
  - **Additional information**: Any relevant information regarding referral, please state that 'client consent is attached'.
  - **Comments**: Please include contact information of relevant worker/s for further queries.
- Attachments provide SHIP/SRS users an opportunity to attach exports of different tabs in SHIP to save time they would have spent duplicating information from SHIP into a referral form. When attaching information, it is important to ensure that it is clear to provide some context as to why certain information is being included. This can be provided in free-text fields.
- SHIP/SRS users are encouraged to complete the 'client profile' and other profiles available on SHIP and attach these to Ereferrals. This may reduce time spent copying and pasting information from different areas into the Ereferral fields however there may still be a need to write certain information in free-text fields that cannot be attached.
- SHIP/SRS users are able to select whether they want to provide notes for a client within a specific time period of their choice. Given the nature and sensitivity of information that is often shared in client notes, it is recommended that notes are never attached - except in special circumstances.
- A SHIP/SRS user can only send one referral for one client to one agency. Sending referrals for a household needs to take into account the information available and consent that is provided by other members of the household. A SHIP/SRS user should identify that the referral is for a household in the relevant free text fields.
- Referrals should be responded to as soon as possible (maximum 12 business hours). The onus is on agencies receiving referrals to respond to referrals, however it is encouraged that agencies sending referrals should also check 'sent list' of referrals regularly to identify whether referrals have received a response.

iii.   *What should I know about sharing client information?*

<u>Legal advice</u>

Specialist Homelessness Services are required to comply with Victorian privacy legislation, the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*. Service Agreements between DHHS and contracted service providers provide that the contracted service provider is bound by the Information Privacy Principles (IPP) with respect to any act done or practice engaged in by the contracted service provider for the purposes of the Service Agreement.

It would be expected that the service provider was informed of, and received advice about, its obligations under Victorian privacy legislation at the time of entering into the Service Agreement. Accordingly, each agency using the Ereferral function of the SHIP system should already be aware of its obligations under Victorian privacy legislation. These obligations have not changed because of the Ereferral functionality of SHIP.

<u>Using Ereferral</u>

The Ereferral enhancement enables easier transfer of sensitive client information via SHIP/SRS, particularly through attachments. With this in mind, it is encouraged that agencies are cautious about not sharing information unintentionally via SHIP and that client information, including attachments are shared purposefully in adherence to IPP and relevant legislation.

iv. *How do I respond to an Ereferral?*

When an agency receives an Ereferral, they have three response options.

i) Acknowledge – An Ereferral is acknowledged when it is determined that sufficient information has been collected to assess referral and the file is being reviewed.

*Advice from other states and jurisdictions has been that agencies should strive not to keep a large list of acknowledged referrals. If this is unavoidable, a separate spreadsheet should be developed to enable agencies to monitor client list.

ii) Accept – An Ereferral should be acknowledged when the agency/program accepts to take on client. In situations where a client has refused the service or disengaged following the acceptance of referral, a support period should not be created and unassisted record can be created.

iii) Decline – An Ereferral should be declined if client is not appropriate, the vacancy has been filled, or if client has refused service. Ensure that the reason why the referral has been declined is indicated in the fields provided.

v. *What should I know about receiving and processing referrals?*

- If an agency receives an Ereferral for a client that has been previously engaged with that SHIP workgroup, it is important NOT to add them as a new client. SHIP will ask if you want to add them as a new client. Adding client will create a duplicate for that client in that workgroup. Rather, click on the 'link/chain' icon beside their name.

- If a duplicate occurs, you can have this resolved by contacting SHIP helpdesk. It is important to try not to create duplicates as this will impact data integrity.

- SHIP workgroups that receive referrals are required to provide a response to referring agencies within 12 hours of receiving Ereferral. It is therefore important that Services monitor incoming referrals regularly.

- Each service can nominate a worker/s to receive notifications and EReferral updates via email as an additional means of tracking referrals.

- A common issue identified by other states and territories is that it is not possible to make amendments to Ereferrals once they have been acknowledged in SHIP/SRS. The department recommends that agencies ensure that prior to acknowledging, accepting or declining a referral, they determine whether information provided is sufficient to make an assessment. If more information is required, they can request referring agency to 'recall' referral and make amendments. Ereferral will not allow changes to be made if a referral has been acknowledged, accepted, or declined.

- If your agency has chosen to accept the referral, do not create a support period for the client until they have accepted to participate in the program. If they have chosen not to participate, you can enter an 'Unassisted Record' for that client.