

# Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) 2011-12

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# Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) 2011-12

## Identifying and definitional attributes

**Item type:** Data Source

**METEOR identifier:** 560303

**Description:** The Specialist Homelessness Services National Minimum Data Set (SHS NMDS) aims to provide quality information about people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness and who are seeking services from specialist homelessness agencies.

This collection is intended to obtain information about clients receiving ongoing or short term support as well as people who are seeking assistance but did not receive any services. Data collection includes basic socio-demographic information and the services required by and provided to each client. Details about accompanying children are also recorded. Additionally, information is obtained about the client circumstances before, during and after receiving support.

The base unit of this collection is a person who present to a Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) agency requesting a service or services. A person becomes a client once they receive a service or services. The period of time a client receives assistance from a SHS agency is commonly referred to as a support period. It relates to the provision of assistance and/or supported accommodation. A support period is considered finished when the relationship between the client and the agency ends or the client has reached their maximum amount of support.

During a support period there are, in most cases, a series of service episodes or assistance, other than supported accommodation, provided to the client by the SHS agency. For the purposes of the Specialist Homelessness Services NMDS, assistance also includes contact with a client, or work on behalf of a client.

The SHS NMDS has three 'views' for collection purposes, they are: Unassisted person, Client and Specialist homelessness agency.

An 'Unassisted person' in the context of this collection is any person who seeks assistance from an agency and is not successful in obtaining that assistance. A 'Client' is a person or group who receive services either directly or indirectly from an agency. A 'Specialist homelessness agency' is an organisation which receives government funding to deliver a specialist homelessness service to a client. If clients present collectively information is collected for each client but the group is referred to as a 'Presenting unit'.

The SHS NMDS has been developed to support the collection of data under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations for Homelessness. It will replace the existing Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) collection as from 2011. The SHS NMDS reflects the new outcome based performance framework described by the COAG Reforms and White Paper. Some of the major changes to homelessness data collection, include:

the development of an implementation plan to establish client-based collection (includes specification of client-centred data collection; specification of collection system to meet COAG timelines; specification of administrative data collection from jurisdictions.

The SHS NMDS addresses the first change - the development of an implementation plan to establish client-based collection (including specification of client-centred data collection. It provides evidence based statistics regarding clients of specialist homelessness agencies and the services they receive. The second change - specification of administrative data collection from jurisdictions - commenced development in mid – 2010.

The SHS NMDS data collection will be vital for reporting, policy design and evaluation, as well as service improvement and monitoring of specialist homelessness services in Australia.

## Collection and usage attributes

**National reporting arrangement:** Annual

**Implementation start date:** 01/07/2011

**Implementation end date:** 28/06/2012

## Source and reference attributes

**Reference documents:** AIHW 2012. Specialist Homelessness Services 2011-12. Cat. no. HOU 267. Canberra: AIHW. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129542549>