

What is a 'Serious Mental Illness' (SMI)?

F-SOCS aims to assess CCS clients who appear to be experiencing symptoms or disturbance that indicates they may have a serious mental illness or disorder. It is anticipated these clients will need treatment by an AMHS. The DHHS target group for Adult Specialist Mental Health Services is primarily:

"people with serious mental illness or mental disorder who have associated significant levels of disturbance and psychosocial disability due to their illness or disorder.

Commonly these will be people with a diagnosis of a major mental illness, such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, but will include some people with severe personality disorder, severe anxiety disorder, or those who present in situational crisis that may lead to self-harm or inappropriate behaviour towards others. The distinguishing factor is the level of severity of the disturbance and impairment."

Clients with a serious mental illness/disorder may have co-morbid personality disorder, cognitive impairment or drug and alcohol related disorders. This level of complexity contributes to difficulties in engagement and treatment.

How do you determine if someone has an SMI?

The following indicators will assist in determining whether a person appears to have a serious mental illness and whether AMHS assessment should be considered.

- Bizarre or unusual thinking
- Hallucinations
- Significant changes of mood, such as pronounced depression, pronounced anxiety or pronounced elevation in mood
- Restless, agitated and disorganised behaviour, or marked decrease in activity
- Significant impairment of social, educational and/or occupational functioning
- Significant impairment in self-care
- Suicidal thoughts or acts of self-harm
- Destructive or high risk behaviour
- Significant memory impairment
- Confusion and disorientation

About Forensicare

Forensicare is Victoria's leading provider of forensic mental health care. We work to meet the needs of consumers with serious mental illnesses across the justice system, mental health sectors and the community.

Our services deliver a range of mental health programs targeted at patients with different needs at different stages of recovery; from early intervention and prevention, inpatient care, rehabilitation and community transition support. These services are delivered through:

- Thomas Embling Hospital, a secure mental health hospital
- Prison Mental Health Services
- Community Forensic Mental Health Service

We also work in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology through the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science to deliver a forensic mental health research program, specialist training and ongoing professional education.

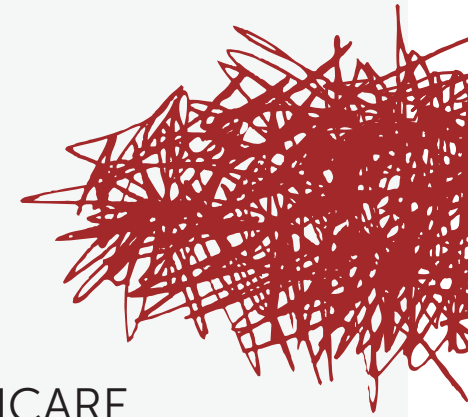


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FORENSICARE SERIOUS OFFENDER CONSULTATION SERVICE (F-SOCS)

Information for Community
Correctional Services

Community Forensic Mental Health Service



Forensicare

The Forensic Serious Offender Consultation Service (F-SOCS) is an initiative funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The program aims to support Community Correctional Services (CCS) and mental health services in the management of individuals who have a serious mental illness (SMI) and a history of serious violent and/or sexual offending.

About F-SOCS

The F-SOCS program targets clients of CCS with an SMI who are either not currently engaged in treatment with Area Mental Health Services (AMHS) or where engagement is problematic.

Clients to be considered for referral are those thought to pose a high risk of further serious violent and/or sexual offending.

F-SOCS provides forensic mental health assessments and facilitates access to the mental health sector for eligible offenders currently on an order supervised by CCS (CCO, Parole or Supervision Order).

Referrals to F-SOCS can only be made by CCS staff. A client does not require a condition placed on their order to be eligible for F-SOCS. Referrals can be made by CCS staff during the prison pre-release planning phase. Assessment by F-SOCS in this phase may assist in identifying the mental health and other treatment or service needs of serious violent and/or sexual offenders prior to their release into the community.

REFERRAL CRITERIA FOR F-SOCS

- Serious violent and/or sexual offending history
- Currently rated as high risk of violent and/or sexual offending
- Likely presence of serious mental illness
- Engagement in mental health treatment problematic or non-existent. For clients in custody, it is anticipated that difficulties in engagement with mental health treatment services will occur
- Planned or current involvement with CCS (Parole or Court Stream). Clients must have a minimum of 3 months left on their order

All criteria must be met.

F-SOCS DOES NOT PROVIDE PRIMARY TREATMENT FOR OFFENDERS.

Definition of serious violent and sexual offending:

Eligible clients are those who fall under legislative parameters that identify the offending as serious violent and/or sexual offences (such as *Sentencing Act 1991*, or *Serious Offender Act 2018*).

CCS clients who have significantly serious current and/or past offending, that has displayed an intent towards very serious harm will also be considered for assessment by F-SOCS.

How will F-SOCS support you?

F-SOCS is a unique mental health service working with the criminal justice sector to improve the delivery of mental health services to a high risk serious offender population.

F-SOCS will provide CCS case managers with:

- access to specialist forensic mental health assessments and advice in relation to the management of high risk offenders with a SMI
- comprehensive forensic mental health reports
- assistance in making referrals to AMHS and other appropriate mental health services
- improved access to mental health treatment
- consultation and advice in relation to clients who meet program eligibility but who have not agreed to a referral
- consultation to CCS staff supervising clients who have been assessed by the program

For very complex clients, a F-SOCS senior clinician will lead a time-limited process of coordination of service provision, which includes advice and consultation to CCS and mental health services.

F-SOCS does not have the capacity to provide urgent assessments however, F-SOCS may be able to assist the CCS case manager in accessing acute mental health services.

How to proceed with a referral:

If you have a client you believe meets F-SOCS criteria you should discuss this with your Principal Practitioner or Manager. If they agree the criteria is fulfilled, please contact a F-SOCS Clinician who will complete a pre-referral consultation with you. If it is determined the client meets F-SOCS criteria, instructions on how to proceed with a referral to the program will be provided.

Contact the F-SOCs team on:

Phone: 9947 2500

Email: fsocs@forensicare.vic.gov.au

Web: www.forensicare.vic.gov.au/our-services/forensicare-serious-offender-consultation-service/

