



Mental Health Advice and Response Service (MHARS) Assessment Request Guide

Introduction:

To support Forensicare's Mental Health Advice and Response Service (MHARS) to in its service delivery we are implementing a new **MHARS Assessment Request form** for **mental health assessment** from 18 October 2021.

This will help us to gather the right information at the time of referral to aid triaging, processing, and subsequent referrals. It will also help us to overcome the challenges that often result from a lack of information and will ultimately support us to provide a better service.

To assist referrers in identifying the right information to include in their referral the **MHARS Assessment Request form** has been developed in conjunction with the Magistrates Court of Victoria (MCV) and the County Court of Victoria (CCV).

As of 18 October 2021 referrers for **mental health assessment** must submit a **MHARS Assessment Request form**.

The MHARS Assessment Request form will support us to:

- ⇒ Obtain minimum referral data
- ⇒ Provide MHARS mental health assessments/reports that address specific stakeholder concerns
- ⇒ Achieve timely outcomes
- ⇒ Adhere to consent and confidentiality legislation and protocols
- ⇒ Triage and prioritize referrals according to acuity and risk

Referral:

The MHARS Assessment Request form should be submitted whenever a **mental health assessment** is required, with the following **EXCEPTIONS**:

- ⇒ **Community Correction Order - Mental Health Screen**
- ⇒ **CMI Check**

Community Correction Order – Mental Health Screen

When Community Correction Order (CCO) disposition is under consideration by the court, a mental health assessment is required to inform suitability for the **Mental Health Rehabilitation & Treatment Condition**. Such assessments are triggered via selecting “mental health” on the **Court Assessment & Prosecution Service, Community Correction Order Assessment Request**.

Referrers are asked to fill out as much information as you have reasonable access to.

If key referral data is missing and this prevents effective triaging and processing MHARS will liaise with the referrer directly to request the additional information required. However, we expect the MHARS Assessment Request form will reduce the need for this.

CMI Check

Requests for a mental health history of the accused (i.e., “**CMI Check**” - MHARS review of the Victorian Public Mental Health database - *Client Management Interface/Operational Data Store (CMI/ODS)*) **also do not require** the completion of MHARS Assessment Request form. Referrers can continue to contact their local MHARS team by telephone or email as they have done previously.

Referral Source:

MHARS Assessment Request forms are required by the following referral sources:

- ⇒ Magistrates, judges and court personnel
- ⇒ Legal practitioners
- ⇒ CISP/ARC
- ⇒ Court welfare services and disability services
- ⇒ Treatment agencies, including area mental health services
- ⇒ Police and prison mental health services (non-Forensicare)

Exempt

- ⇒ Self-referrers
- ⇒ Family, carers and supporters
- ⇒ Custodial Health Service

Form:

The MHARS Assessment Request form is designed in a **fillable PDF format** document allowing referrers to input referral data directly into the document electronically and forward to MHARS in a timely manner. The form is also designed with a brief referrer user guide on the reverse side to support its use.

Referrers are requested after selecting reason for referral, to ensure they provide additional contextual information if available, including any known co-occurring conditions e.g., intellectual disability, alcohol & drug, acquired brain injury etc.

Need Support?

Please contact the MHARS team at your court venue for assistance and support.