

SETSCoP

Communique: VIC-specific best practice meeting

Videoconference – 28 July 2021

On 28 July 2021, SETSCoP members from VIC attended a VIC-specific best practice meeting to discuss the particular challenges and opportunities for providers as public health restrictions for the state change.

Changes to restrictions

Attendees noted that this fifth lockdown has been particularly challenging. Despite being better equipped to move to online services quickly, providers emphasised that this recent lockdown brought more issues for their SETS service delivery and clients.

The rapid changes to restrictions has created significant uncertainty for providers and the clients and communities they service. Anticipatory anxiety around lockdowns, has led to considerable fatigue.

Attendees noted the value of the in-language eligibility checker which has recently been released by the Australian Government Department of Health, however suggested that translating the tool into Dari or Hazaragi would be incredibly valuable.

Key concerns for clients

Providers shared some of the most common challenges for their clients which include:

- Increased mental health issues due to the lockdowns and fear of COVID-19 outbreaks.
- High levels of stress and trauma associated with heightened conflicts in country of origin. This has been particularly evident in the Burmese community.
- Being targeted by online scams.
- Young people are struggling more than other generations.
- Feelings of fatigue and being overwhelmed by the degree of online engagement.
- Issues with home schooling. Many parents are struggling to support their children and many children are falling behind.
- High levels of unemployment for clients and difficulty to engage in job seeking activities during lockdowns.

Many providers acknowledged that it is difficult at present to discuss vaccine hesitancy with clients as they are preoccupied with numerous other concerns.

Further, the ongoing changes to messaging around vaccine eligibility has caused confusion among migrant communities and the more difficult the process to book and receive a vaccination, the more reluctance is evident among community members. One provider

shared that they are working closely with IPC Health to have pop up vaccination clinics at settlement service organisations and other community centres.

Providers also shared a few state-based employment initiatives which have been helpful for their clients.

Example initiatives

To support women who have been struggling with their mental health during this period, one provider has partnered with Foundation House to deliver regular mental health and wellbeing information sessions and support groups. This unfortunately has paused during the recent lockdown as many clients prefer to engage face to face.

Additionally, another provider shared how they have been able to engage 50 clients from the Syriac community through an online women's group.

To best support young people during this time, attendees discussed the importance of running fun activities rather than just focusing on information sharing or discussing topics such as vaccine hesitancy.

One provider highlighted that foundational to all settlement work is the relationship and partnership with clients to drive their settlement outcomes. It is easy for settlement practitioners to get caught up in the day to day tasks associated with settlement support, however it is the relationship and trust between a settlement practitioner and their client that leads to progress and attainment of goals.

Other business

Attendees discussed the upcoming Census and their work around preparing their clients to participate in Census collection.

Moreover, providers discussed the increase to citizenship application fees and how this is particularly problematic for larger families. One attendee shared that many who have pension cards are eligible for a substantial discount and that this helps to significantly reduce the fee.

Shared Resources

- For pop up vaccination clinics contact:
Paige VanEvery (IPC Health) - Paige.VanEvery@ipchealth.com.au
- [Jobs Victoria webpage](#)
- [Citizenship changes from 1 July \(Department of Home Affairs\)](#)
- ABS Census Inclusive Strategies branch contact:

Cindy Liu - cindy.liu@censusfield.abs.gov.au