

SETSCoP

Communique: ACT & NSW COVID-19 and Best Practice Meeting

Videoconference – 14 April 2022

On 14 April 2022, the SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP) held a videoconference for CoP members in ACT and NSW to share their best practice and innovative service delivery, along with challenges faced through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlights

Recently providers have delivered **events** for Seniors Week, International Women's day, Nowroz and Harmony Day. Various events were delivered with a combination of in-person and hybrid events.

Providers have started **delivering group sessions in person** again, such as: English conversation classes, academic English, exercise classes, healthy relationships sessions, driving knowledge test preparation, employment, digital literacy citizenship classes, playgroups and wellbeing. Providers have partnered with other organisations to assist young people to access driving lessons.

Many information sessions have been provided for Afghan clients with the support of NSW Legal Aid, to share information on the crisis and **immigration advice**, including information on visas.

Throughout COVID-19 restrictions various **online sessions** were established to maintain connection with clients and some of these continue, including sessions on skin care and hair design for women.

There has been more **opportunities for employment** for SETS clients, particularly in warehousing and training for security.

COVID-19 specific work

Due to the **limited updates being received** from the Department of Health, there has been less information shared on COVID-19 with clients. Some clients are confused about the amount of time they need to isolate for. Providers continue to meet regularly with community leaders and share any updates received through their networks.

In the Blacktown area, after much advocacy there has been an increase in the vaccination rates. In the Western Sydney health district **pop up vaccination clinics** were delivered. In Albury-Wodonga, work has been done with local health offices and pharmacies to make vaccinations easy to access. This has included establishing a vaccination hub in the community centre.

Case workers have been receiving requests for support to access **Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)** and also food support from those who have been a close contact and in isolation. Support is requested most often from those who live alone.

Challenges

Housing has become a challenge due to the increase in rental prices. This has been a challenge, in particular for Afghan evacuees who are receiving SETS support. As those on 449 visas are temporary, very few landlords will accept the application for rent. Providers have been sending support letters and talking with real estates to assist.

Another challenge has been that requests for **immicard renewals** which previously took 2 – 3 weeks is now taking more than nine months to be renewed.

Those on a 449 visa who want to get employment in security must complete a **police clearance**. In order to do this, they are requested to provide clearance from their country of origin, however the Afghanistan embassy have advised that they cannot support clients with this process.

There has been an big increase in the amount of time it takes for seniors to receive **support through My Aged Care**, after they have been assessed and approved.

Shared Resources

Facilitating social and economic participation of women in settlement

<https://setscop.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Facilitating-social-and-economic-participation-of-women-in-settlement-paper.pdf>