



Homelessness amongst Australian contemporary veterans: using the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection to examine veteran homelessness



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Related reports and documents

This report forms part of AHURI's *Inquiry into homelessness amongst Australian veterans*. The other reports in the Inquiry are:

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Van Hooff, M., Searle, A., Avery, J., Lawrence-Wood, E., Hilferty, F., Katz, I., Zmudzki, F. and McFarlane, A. (2019) *Homelessness amongst Australian veterans: homelessness and its correlates in Australian Defence Force veterans*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), Melbourne.

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Acronyms and abbreviations used in this report

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CTSS	Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
METeOR	Metadata Online Registry
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NPAH	National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
PMKeyS	Personnel Management Key Solution
SAAP NDC	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection
SHS	Specialist homelessness services
SHSC	Specialist Homelessness Services Collection
SLK	Statistical linkage key
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
UNSW	University of New South Wales

Executive summary

This report presents analysis of a linked dataset that counts veterans within the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC)—the dataset that comprises information on people seeking assistance from agencies that receive funding to provide specialist homelessness services (SHS) under the (former) National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) or the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). The SHSC data were linked with Australian Defence Force (ADF) data to report on the use of SHS services amongst ex-serving personnel. This is a methodologically innovative component of the broader Inquiry, as prior to the 2017/2018 reporting period, serving and ex-serving ADF personnel were not able to be counted in the SHSC.

The key findings of our analysis of the linked dataset, for the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), are as follows.

- Over the study period, 1,215 Ex-serving ADF Members accessed specialist homelessness services (SHS), with some of these accessing help more than once during those six years.
 - The proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients who were females is greater than the proportion of females in the All Ex-serving ADF cohort (23% versus 15%); whereas the opposite is true of males: they make up 85% of the All Ex-serving ADF cohort yet only 77% of Ex-serving SHS clients. This may indicate that ex-serving females are more likely than ex-serving males to be homeless or ‘at risk’, and/or are more likely to seek assistance from mainstream support services.
 - A far larger proportion of ex-serving females presented as ‘at risk’ of homelessness rather than ‘homeless’ over the reporting period (71% versus 29%), while for men the proportions were even (50% each). This suggests that females are more likely than men to seek help at an earlier stage of vulnerability.
 - Ex-serving SHS Clients were, overwhelmingly, those who had been at a lower rank when discharged (i.e. 95% of Ex-serving SHS Clients were discharged at a rank other than Commissioned Officer).
 - Ex-serving SHS Clients did not have a higher rate of disability than the general SHS cohort. However, in 2016/17 a higher proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients reported a mental health issue (39%) compared with all SHS clients (27%).
 - The most common ‘main reasons’ for Ex-serving SHS Clients seeking assistance in any year were: accommodation, financial, and interpersonal relationship issues.
 - An analysis of identified service need and service provision to Ex-serving SHS Clients showed a pattern of relatively high reported need for ‘any accommodation type’ (64% of clients); and a much smaller proportion of clients being provided accommodation (37%).
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- The period of support provided to Ex-serving SHS Clients typically ended because client needs were met (62%), and/or the client no longer requested assistance or could not be contacted (48%).
 - An analysis of the outcomes for Ex-serving SHS Clients, across three domains—educational engagement, labour force participation and income support—showed small but positive change over the six-year study period: there was little increase in the educational engagement of Ex-serving SHS Clients between first and last report (6% enrolled in education versus 7%); a slightly smaller proportion of clients were unemployed following service provision (45% at first report versus 42% at last report); and a slightly higher proportion of clients were accessing government benefits at last report (73%, versus 71% at first report).
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1 Introduction

1.1 Inquiry into homelessness amongst Australian veterans

In November 2016, the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales was commissioned by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) to lead a research project investigating homelessness amongst Australian Defence Force (ADF) veterans. The program of research—*Inquiry into homelessness amongst Australian veterans*—is governed by AHURI and funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), and aims to inform policy decisions about how best to monitor and respond to veteran homelessness.

The consortium of researchers involved includes academic researchers from the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), UNSW Sydney and the Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies (CTSS) at The University of Adelaide; a health economist from Époque Consulting; and community investigators from a number of veteran organisations¹, all of whom are ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

DVA funded this project so as to better understand the scale of veteran homelessness and to improve policy and practice responses. Previous work undertaken to estimate the scale of veteran homelessness in Australia has been based on extrapolations of existing datasets and has produced varying results (e.g. Thomson Goodall Associates 2009; Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee 2016). This AHURI Inquiry is the first national study to collect primary data and draw on multiple datasets.

The key aims of the Inquiry research are twofold:

- to provide an estimate of the number of homeless veterans in Australia
- to detail the experiences of homelessness for Australian veterans.

As there is no single, robust source of information to examine veteran homelessness, the project employs a mixed methodology and draws on multiple data sources.

The project comprises four key components:

- 1 a rapid evidence review
- 2 primary data collection
- 3 linking and analysis of the Specialist Services Homelessness Collection (SHSC)
- 4 analysis of existing Defence- and DVA-funded survey data.

The findings and methodology for each component are provided in individual reports (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2017; Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019a; Searle, Van Hooff et al. 2019; Van Hooff, Searle et al. 2019), and a final report integrates the overall findings (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019b).

The current report constitutes Component 3, linking data sourced from the ADF with the SHSC (data collected by mainstream, federally funded homelessness services). Linking these datasets enables counting and analysis of veterans who have accessed homelessness services over a four- to six-year period—this task would not be possible

¹ Team Rubicon Australia, RSLCare SA, Homes for Heroes.

using SHSC data alone, as the collection did not include an ADF indicator until July 2017.

1.2 The current report

The primary aim of this report is to use the linked ADF and SHSC dataset to determine the level and examine trends of SHS service usage by ex-serving personnel. The researchers acknowledge that service usage data cannot be relied upon for prevalence estimation, however, it does provide an indication of the scale of homelessness and related help-seeking behaviours. Additional data presented throughout this report illuminates veterans' experiences of homelessness.

The linkage task and analysis of the subsequent dataset was undertaken by researchers from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), including those from the Data Linkage Unit, the Veterans' Health and Welfare Unit, and the Housing and Homelessness Collection Processing Unit. AIHW was chosen for this task as it is an accredited integrating authority and is also the custodian of the SHSC. Furthermore, AIHW researchers have extensive experience analysing SHSC data, and in linking an extract of data received from the ADF with an administrative dataset, having undertaken this task recently for the *National Suicide Monitoring of Serving and Ex-Serving ADF Personnel project* (AIHW 2018a).

The methodology employed to link the two distinct datasets and perform the statistical analyses (as described by researchers from AIHW) is presented in Section 2. The research team from AIHW provided SPRC with output tables from the analyses, as well as summary statements related to the findings. This report includes all output tables, as well as commentary from the project team. Where possible, the findings for homeless ex-serving ADF members are compared to the general SHS population, drawing largely on research presented in the SHS annual reports (AIHW 2017a; 2018b).²

² The data presented throughout this report have not been weighted. This and other methodological differences between the research presented herein and other published SHSC data mean that comparisons of findings should be interpreted with caution. It should be noted, however, that data presented in the 2017/18 SHS report (2018b) have also not been weighted, due to improvements in the rates of agency participation and SLK validity. The authors of that report state that results using weighted data from SHS annual reports 2011/12 to 2016/17 are comparable with unweighted data for 2017/18.

2 Methodology

2.1 Inquiry components

The AHURI *Inquiry into homelessness amongst Australian veterans* employed a multi-method approach that is informed by international literature; makes the best use of existing data collected by ADF and DVA; leverages the benefits achieved by data linkage; and includes the collection of extensive primary data. Findings from the overall project are presented in the final report (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019b).

The Inquiry comprises four distinct components.

Component 1: Evidence review

An evidence review was conducted as part of this project to identify and examine:

- benchmarks and methods for estimating, and undertaking ongoing monitoring of, homelessness amongst Australian veterans
- best practice procedures and interventions to support homeless veterans.

The key findings from the evidence review are presented in an AHURI discussion paper (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2017).

Component 2: Primary data collection

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with two cohorts:

- ADF veterans who were experiencing or were at risk of homelessness (n=29)
- representatives from stakeholder organisations, including DVA support services such as Veterans and Veterans Family Counselling Service (now Open Arms), homelessness service providers, and ex-service organisations (n=15).

The analysis and key findings from the qualitative component are presented in *Homelessness amongst Australian veterans: findings from the qualitative interviews* (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019a).

Component 3: Linkage of the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection with Defence data

This component (presented in the current report) involved linking two datasets:

- the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC)
- an extract from the ADF's Personnel Management Key Solution (PMKeyS) database, which counts all people who have served for at least one day on or after 1 January 2001, and who were discharged after that time up to 11 August 2018 (n=115,551).

This linkage task, which enabled counting of ex-serving members in the SHSC, was undertaken by researchers located within the Data Linkage Unit of the AIHW. Subsequent analysis of the linked dataset was undertaken by researchers at the Veterans Health and Welfare Unit and the Housing and Homelessness Collection Processing Unit at AIHW. The results of this analysis and some broader discussion are presented in this report. The information in the remainder of this section describes the methodological process, undertaken by AIHW, to link the datasets and perform the statistical analyses.

Component 4: Analysis of existing DVA and Defence survey data

This component involved analysis of existing data collected as part of the DVA- and Defence-funded Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme (TWRP) and the Military Health Outcomes Programme (MilHOP).

The key findings from this analysis are presented in two separate reports:

Homelessness amongst Australian veterans: homelessness and its correlates in Australian Defence Force Veterans (Van Hooff, Searle et al. 2019) and *Homelessness amongst Australian veterans: pathways from military and transition risk factors* (Searle, Van Hooff et al. 2019).

2.2 Data sources for linkage task

PMKeyS

The Personnel Management Key Solution (PMKeyS) is an administrative database that contains demographic and service information on all people with ADF service on or after 1 January 2001 (when the system was introduced). The Department of Defence provided the AIHW with an extract from the PMKeyS (as at 11 August 2018) containing 115,551 records of all ADF members who were discharged on or after 1 January 2001.

Specialist Homelessness Services Collection

The Australian federal government recently announced the establishment of a \$4.6 billion National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) to enhance access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing for people at risk of homelessness (Australian Government, 2018), and contribute to increased social and economic participation. Part of this funding includes the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC), which collects data from homelessness agencies funded under the NHHA and the transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). The SHSC collects information about people who are referred to, or seek assistance from, specialist homelessness services (SHS). These agencies collect data on an ongoing basis and are responsible for submitting data monthly to the AIHW. According to the AIHW, in the 2017/18 financial year, SHS supported approximately 288,800 people across Australia (equating to 117.4 clients per 10,000 population) (AIHW 2018b).

There are two parts to the SHSC: a Client collection and an Unassisted Persons collection. All of the data provided for this linkage project were from the Client collection. For the Client collection, the base unit is a person who presents to an SHS agency requesting services. A person becomes a 'client' once they receive a service(s). A 'support period' is the period of time a client receives assistance from a SHS agency—it relates to the provision of a service and/or supported accommodation. During a support period, a range of services additional to supported accommodation can be provided.³

On 1 July 2011, the SHSC replaced the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection (SAAP NDC), which began in 1996. As a result of this change, the scope of the data provided from the SHSC was homelessness service

³ Further detail on the types of service provided is available on the AIHW website: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-our-data/our-data-collections/specialist-homelessness-services-1>.

use from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2017. Homelessness services not provided by SHS agencies are outside the scope of this collection and therefore are not captured in the current analysis.

It should be noted that it is possible for SHS agencies to retrospectively add support periods in a particular financial year (e.g. 2013/14) that began in a previous financial year (e.g. 2011/12). When SHS analysis is conducted for the entire reporting period (2011/12 to 2016/17), it will include these updated support periods. Other published data analysing longitudinal datasets includes changes made by agencies to historic support period information—the analysis of this linked data does not include these changes.⁴

Further information about the SHSC can be found in the Specialist homelessness services annual report 2016–17 (AIHW 2017a) and the Specialist homelessness services collection manual (AIHW 2017b).

2.3 Data linkage methodology

Data linkage is a process that brings together information relating to an individual from more than one source. Linkage can be based on individually identifiable data (name, address, etc.) or a statistical linkage key (SLK) that is present in both datasets. The linkage methodology for the current analysis used individually identifiable data in the first stage and SLKs in the second stage.

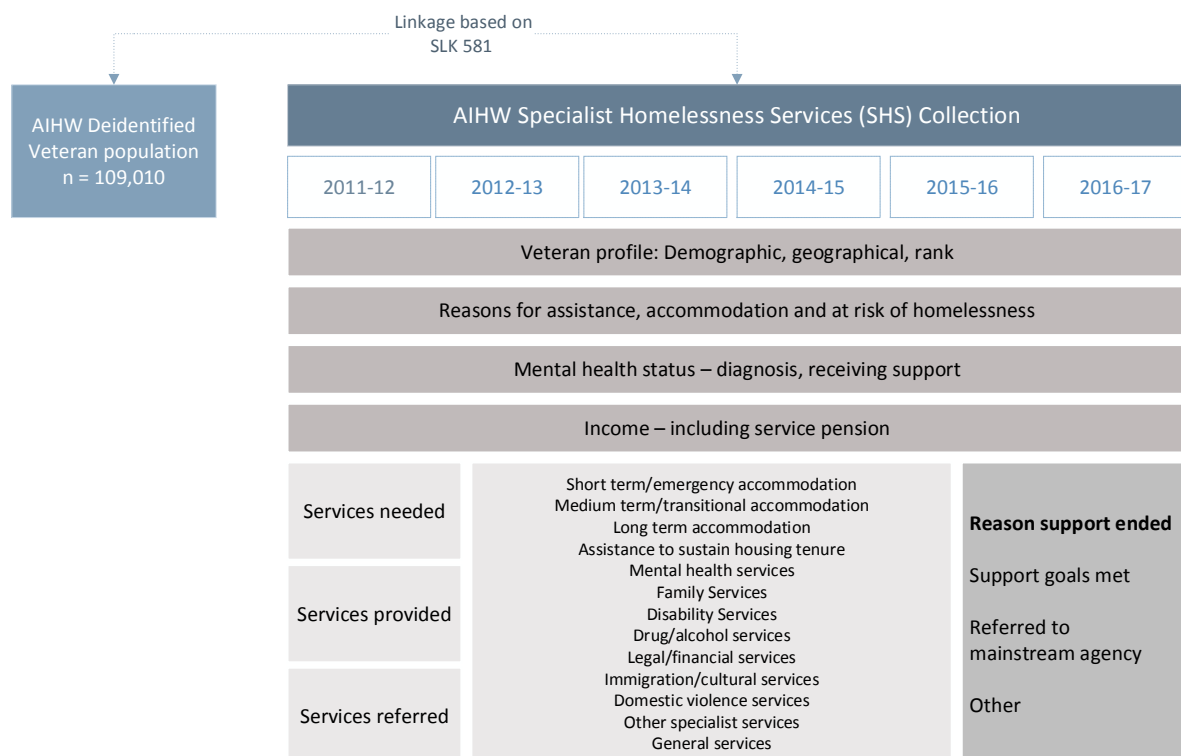
First, the PMKeyS data were linked to an extract of data from the DVA client database, using individually identifiable data. Data from the DVA client database were used to supplement the individually identifiable information from PMKeyS, by capturing additional and more up-to-date name and address information, where available, to improve the likelihood of linkage. The PMKeyS and DVA client datasets were linked using probabilistic linkage algorithms. In probabilistic linkage, the linkage of records in two files is based on the probabilities of agreement and disagreement between linkage variables.

The probabilistic linkage procedure involves creating record pairs—one from each dataset—by running a series of passes that allow for variation in full name information and demographic data. Each pass consists of deterministic pairwise matching on selected blocking variables and then calculating a comparison weight based on probabilities of agreement and disagreement for the blocking and match variables for each respective match pair in the block. In this way, the linkage process creates record pairs by combining records from one dataset with records from another dataset, based on similarities in characteristics including surname; given name(s); and day, month and year of birth.

Following this, an SLK was generated for each individual in the PMKeyS data, which was then linked via this key to the SHSC (without the use of individually identifiable information). This yielded 1,427 distinct matches with the SHSC across the six-year study period (see Figure 1).

⁴ The data quality statement for the 2016/17 SHSC is available at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/683255>. Data quality statements for previous years are also available at the AIHW Metadata Online Registry (METeOR).

Figure 1: Veteran SHSC data linkage components



All data linkage was carried out by the Data Linkage Unit at the AIHW, which is an accredited Commonwealth Integrating Authority. This accreditation requires the AIHW to adhere to stringent criteria and abide by the National Statistical Service *High level principles for data integration involving Commonwealth data for statistical and research purposes* (Open Data Toolkit 2019) and *National best practice guidelines* (AIHW 2012). As well as these guidelines, data linkage at the AIHW is carried out under the protections of the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987* (which carries additional privacy protections for companies and deceased people).

Strict separation of identifiable information and content data is maintained within the Data Linkage Unit in accordance with the AIHW linkage protocols, so that no one person has access to both types of data. Individually identifiable information is not released, and no individual can be identified in any reporting. The linked dataset created for this study will be stored securely on-site at the AIHW for 10 years.

2.4 Methodological limitations

The data linkage methodology outlined above was designed to count ex-serving ADF personnel within the SHSC.⁵ There are, however, a number of limitations in using this method to examine the extent and nature of veteran homelessness, which we address here.

⁵ A flag identifying veterans within the SHSC was added 1 July 2017.

SHSC service use by veterans

One aim of this broader research project—to estimate the number of homeless ADF veterans—has been partly informed by the service use figures reported herein. A notable limitation to using service data is that Australian homeless veterans are reluctant to access mainstream, government-funded homelessness services (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019b; Van Hooff, Searle et al. 2019). For this reason, the prevalence estimates presented in the Inquiry final report (see Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019b) are primarily based on the veteran-specific TWRP data, with the SHSC providing an indicative complementary source of the population, and extending the analysis into homeless veteran pathways and engagement with support services.

Other research confirms the difficulty of relying on service usage data to estimate prevalence. For example, findings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2010 General Social Survey (GSS) indicate that of those members of the general population who had experienced homelessness within the last decade, only 40 per cent had sought assistance from formal services (ABS 2011a). Thus, any homelessness estimate derived from the SHSC will be an underestimate of the total number of homeless veterans. In recognition of this, the prevalence estimate in this case has also been informed by analysis of TWRP data, the literature, and qualitative interviews with homeless veterans and sectoral stakeholders.

Another limitation related to service usage and other administrative data is that any analyses is dependent upon the parameters of the dataset. In this case, all ex-serving personnel who left the military before 1 January 2001 are not represented in the dataset.

Overall, these characteristics of the data indicate that this analysis is likely to represent an underestimate of the level of need for homelessness services for ex-serving personnel. However, it is not possible to calculate the extent of the underestimate.

Indicators of service use

The findings presented in this report that relate to the reasons for seeking assistance and services provided (see Section 4) are crude indicators of the nature of homelessness for veterans. This limitation is addressed in the synthesis project report (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019b), where findings from multiple data sources are triangulated.

2.5 Scoping of analysis data

The scope of the analysis dataset is homelessness support received between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2017, which was accessed, after discharge, by ex-serving ADF members with at least one full day of service on or after 1 January 2001 (and who were discharged after that time).

Scoping of ex-serving population in PMKeyS

The PMKeyS extract provided by the Department of Defence contained a total of 115,551 records for ex-serving members, which was thereafter scoped using the process outlined below.

To be included in the final PMKeyS dataset, a record must have a termination date after 1 January 2001 and before 30 June 2017, and at least one day of service between the hire date and the termination date. In addition, a valid (non-missing) age is required in order to facilitate the analysis of the dataset. In the PMKeyS dataset, 6,726 records were excluded from analysis because they had:

- a termination date after 30 June 2017; or
- a termination date on or before 1 January 2001; or
- a reason for discharge of 'Military—Irregular enlistment' or 'Military—Failed to enlist' and less than one year of service. Individuals who were discharged for these reasons were considered out of scope as these individuals do not meet the criteria of having served 1 day in the ADF. Individuals within this group complete the enlistment process and do not attend the first day of service; or
- an exact duplicate record of another record; or
- a missing age; or
- less than one day of service.

Unique individuals with multiple records in the PMKeyS data were processed by combining key information from all those records, where appropriate, to create a unique record for analysis.

From the original 115,551 records provided in the PMKeyS extract, the scoping processes resulted in **108,825 unique in-scope records for ex-serving members in the PMKeyS dataset**. This cohort is referred to as 'Ex-serving ADF Members' throughout the remainder of this report.

Scoping of analysis population in the SHSC

Use of SHS was within scope if the services were accessed between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2017 by an Ex-serving ADF Member. As such, the termination dates of clients were compared with the financial years of SHS service use, to determine if any records were out of scope. A record of SHS service use was considered to be within scope if it occurred in the same financial year as the client's termination date, or in a later financial year.

Prior to scoping, there was a total of 1,425 distinct matches between the PMKeyS and the SHSC, which corresponded to 3,462 records (as there are multiple records per client in the SHSC dataset). After SHSC records were compared against a client's termination date, to determine whether they were within scope for analysis, 3,082 records remained, which **represented 1,215 individual clients who linked between the PMKeyS and SHSC**. This cohort is referred to as 'Ex-serving SHS Clients' throughout the remainder of this report.

2.6 Statistical analysis methods

Sensitivity analysis of marginal links

Of the 1,215 individual clients who linked between the PMKeyS and SHSC datasets, 190 were identified by researchers at the Data Linkage Unit as having a marginal link between the two datasets (i.e. a low linkage weight). A low linkage weight was primarily due to inconsistent geographical information between the two datasets (despite a match on the SLK); and, in a few cases, due to slight differences in the SLK, despite consistent geographical information. Sensitivity analysis was conducted to determine whether these cases with marginal links should be included in the final analysis dataset. Analysis revealed that there were no substantial differences between the results if the individuals with marginal links were included.

The demographic profile of the ex-serving individuals with marginal links was compared to the remainder of the analysis dataset. The only difference observed was in relation

to rank: there was a somewhat higher proportion of Officers among ex-serving individuals with marginal links, compared to those that were not considered to have marginal links. This difference had no substantial impact on the results, and as such the individuals with marginal links were included in the final analysis dataset.

Combining data across support periods within a financial year

Clients who have more than one support period during a given financial year may present with different characteristics in these various support periods. For example, their main reason for seeking assistance may be 'domestic and family violence' in their first support period, and 'housing crisis' in their second. Where there are multiple responses to a question, some information presented in our analysis is based on the individual's response to the question when they first became a client of an agency in that financial year. Other information is based on a counting methodology that analyses the client's responses and, if responses differ across support periods, determines the response provided most often, as well as the client's longest support period for each month in the financial year. The methodology is conceptually based on the client's journey during the course of the financial year, regardless of their movement between jurisdictions.

Combining data across financial years

For many of the analysis variables, data are reported for single financial years and for a combination of financial years (usually 2011/12 to 2016/17). The rules for combining data across multiple years in this analysis are consistent, where possible, with other published data for the SHSC.

Age

In the current analysis, age is calculated as at 31 December for each financial year in which the client received SHS support. When reporting across the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), where a client has records for multiple financial years, client age is calculated as at 31 December of the first financial year in which the client received SHS support.

Using age from PMKeyS

Both the SHS and PMKeyS datasets contain information on client age. There is strong evidence of the use of default birthdates of 01/01/YYYY in the SHSC data used in the linkage for this study, as the frequency of this combination of day and month was close to ten times the expected frequency.

Sensitivity analysis comparing age calculated using the PMKeyS dataset to age calculated using the SHSC dataset found that, while there were differences in the results produced using the two age measures, they were not substantial. As such, client age in our analysis is calculated from the PMKeyS data only, as it was considered to be the most accurate source for demographic information about Ex-serving SHS Clients.

Age groupings

The current analysis presents age using the following age groups: 17–24 years, 25–34 years, 35–44 years, and 45+. The age groupings used in the current report aim to provide consistency with *Specialist homelessness services annual report 2016–17* (AIHW 2017a), while ensuring the confidentiality of individuals in the data. Due to the limited number of Ex-serving ADF Members accessing SHS in the younger and older age groups, the groupings used in the current report are broader than those used in the

Specialist homelessness services report. The lower limit of 17 years was chosen, as the youngest individual in the linked PMKeyS-SHSC data was 17 years of age as at 31 December in the financial year in which they first received SHS support. It is important to note that while the age groupings have been made as consistent as possible with those used in the SHS annual reports, age in this analysis is based on information from the PMKeyS data (as described above).

Homelessness status

When reporting across the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), a client's homelessness status is determined as their homelessness status in the first financial year in which they received SHS support.

Reason support period ended

When reporting across the study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), the total number of clients reported against each reason for accessing SHS is the number of clients who have ever ended a support period for that reason, during those six years. A client may have recorded the same reason for multiple support periods in a single financial year, or in different support periods over multiple financial years, but each client will only be counted once for each reason.

Education status, labour force status and main source of income

For these variables, a client's status is reported at both first and last presentation. When reporting across the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), a client's status at first presentation will be the same as their status in the first financial year for which the client received SHS support, and their status at last presentation will be the same as their status in the last financial year for which the client received SHS support.

Mental health status

A client is identified as having a current mental health issue if they provided any of the following information: they indicated that at the beginning of a support period they were receiving services or assistance for their mental health issues or had done so in the past 12 months; their formal referral source to the specialist homelessness agency was a mental health service; they reported 'mental health issues' as a reason for seeking assistance; their dwelling type, either a week before presenting to an agency or when presenting to an agency, was a psychiatric hospital or unit; they had been in a psychiatric hospital or unit in the last 12 months; or, at some stage during their support period, a need was identified for psychological services, psychiatric services or mental health services.

Any client who was identified as having a mental health issue, during any support period between 1 July 2011 and 31 June 2017, is reported as having a mental health issue during the study period (2011/12 to 2016/17). Clients who were identified as having mental health issues during multiple financial years are only counted once for the study period.

Disability status

Clients with disability are identified as those who have reported that they always or sometimes need assistance with one or more of these core activities: self-care, mobility and/or communication. Clients were asked whether a long-term health condition or disability restricts their everyday activities, where a 'long-term health condition' is one that has lasted, or is expected to last, six months or more. This question was

introduced to the SHSC survey in the 2013/14 reporting year. Clients who only received SHS support before 1 July 2013 are thus not included in the analysis of disability status.

Disability status across the four-year period from 2013/14 to 2016/17 was assigned as follows.

- If a client identified as having a disability between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, they were assigned 'Yes' (having a disability).
- If a client's disability status was 'Not stated' for every year in which they received SHS support, between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, they were assigned 'Not stated'.
- If a client reported a combination of 'No disability' and 'Not stated' between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, they were assigned 'No' (no disability).

Support services needed, provided and referred

In the analysis of SHS needed, provided and referred in the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), a service is counted if the client ever needed, was provided or was referred to that service in the whole reporting period. For example, a client is recorded as needing short-term accommodation in the reporting period if they were recorded as needing short-term accommodation in any data collection month/year, regardless of the number of months/years over which this need was recorded, or the number of times they presented with this need during the overall reporting period. Analysis of services that were either provided or referred to also followed this approach. That is, a service was recorded as provided (or referred) if the client was provided (or referred to) that type of assistance at any time in the reporting period.

Days of support

Days of support reports the total number of days a client received SHS support over the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), in any state and territory in Australia. This includes accommodation as well as other types of support. To calculate the total number of days of support, the number of days the client received support in the reporting period is summed. This means that the total number of days of support does not necessarily represent a consecutive number of days the client received support. For example, a client who received support for seven days may have had two separate periods of support: one for five days and another for two days.

2.7 Variation between the linked data and ADF indicator results

The analysis presented in this report counts veterans whose status was obtained directly from employee administration records (PMKeyS). This analysis provides results that are different to those presented in recent SHS annual reporting (AIHW, 2018b). The information in this section explains some of the differences in scope and methodology between the linked data (which relies on historical SHSC data) and the ADF indicator data (which uses the ADF flag added to the SHSC in July 2017), which may assist in contextualising the variation between the number of Ex-serving SHS Clients found using the two datasets (see Section 3.1 for that data).

The introduction of a new question into the SHSC

An ADF indicator was introduced into the SHSC in July 2017. From this date, all clients upon first presentation at an SHS agency are asked if they are a current or former ADF member (full time or part time). There was some variability in the introduction of the question across agencies, which is common when implementing new data items into an administration data collection. It is expected that over time, as agencies become more familiar with the question and how to apply it, data completeness will improve. The aim of the ADF indicator is to provide a better understanding of the extent to which veterans may need support from SHS agencies, as they have been identified as a potentially vulnerable group (AIHW, 2018a).

Self-reporting

The SHSC uses a survey question for the ADF indicator, which relies on people self-reporting their ADF membership. Self-reporting has the advantage of including those who may not be captured in such an administrative system even though they have served (e.g. those who discharged before 2001). However, it is possible that some people will self-report as an ADF member when they are not (e.g. people who have served in defence forces overseas). There may also be people who will not identify as an ADF member even though they have enlisted (e.g. those who only worked for a short time in the ADF, or those who choose not to tell the SHS agency). The likelihood of someone incorrectly identifying as an ADF member would need to be further explored to understand how this impacts on overall numbers.

Differences between the ADF Indicator and linked data

Currently it is difficult to quantify how much each of the scope and methodological differences (presented in Table 1, below) contribute to the variation in numbers. Further years of reporting on the ADF indicator will provide more clarity around this issue.

Table 1 outlines the differences in scope between the two datasets. The main difference is the exclusion, in the linked data, of those who served in the ADF and were discharged before 2001, compared with the *inclusion* of this population pool in the SHSC ADF indicator.

All data collection methods have strengths and limitations. Below we discuss two of the factors to consider when understanding the 2017/18 SHSC ADF indicator.

Table 1: Differences in scope and methodology between the linked data and ADF indicator data

	Linked data (from historical SHSC)	ADF indicator data (from 2017/18 SHSC)
Currently serving ADF members	Not included	Included
Ex-serving ADF members	Includes members who have discharged since 2001	Includes members who have discharged at any time
ADF members who served part-time and full-time	Includes members who had at least one day of full-time or reserve service on or after 1 January 2001 and who were discharged after 1 January 2001	Includes members who identify as serving part-time and full-time in the ADF at anytime
Reservists	Includes reservists who had at least one day of reserve service since 2001 and who were discharged after 1 January 2001	Includes reservists who have served full-time at any time
Member age	Includes members aged 17 years and older, and excludes anyone with a missing age	Includes members aged 18 years and over
Financial years	Includes data for six financial years: 2011/12 to 2016/17	Includes data for 2017/18

Source: AIHW

2.8 Ethics approvals

The data linkage component of this Inquiry was conducted under strict privacy guidelines and with the oversight of organisational ethics committees. The current study was approved by the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC) on 20 April 2018 (047-18). It was approved by the AIHW Ethics Committee on 8 May 2018 (EO2017/5/411).

3 Profiling Ex-serving SHS Clients

In this chapter we present findings of the study related to the characteristics of veterans who have sought services through SHS agencies. In Chapter 4 we present findings about the services that have been provided.

Key points in this chapter include the following.

- During the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), 1,215 Ex-serving ADF Members accessed SHS. Some of these Ex-serving SHS Clients accessed help more than once during the study period, which explains why the sum of clients for each individual year is greater than the total number of unique clients in the 6 year study period.⁶
 - The rate of Ex-serving SHS Clients accessing services remained relatively stable over the six-year study period, apart from an increase in Ex-serving SHS Clients of 18.5 per cent from 2011/12 to 2012/13—the average annual increase in client numbers over the total study period was 3.8 per cent.
 - The proportion of ex-serving females accessing SHS was greater than the proportion of females in the total ex-serving ADF cohort (23% versus 15%), indicating that ex-serving females are more likely than males to access SHS.
 - A far larger proportion of ex-serving females presented as ‘at risk’ of homelessness rather than ‘homeless’ (71% versus 29%), while for men the proportions were even (50% each). This suggests that females are more likely than men to seek help at an earlier stage of vulnerability.
 - Ex-serving members discharged at a rank lower than Officer were, overwhelmingly, more likely to be SHS clients than those discharged at Officer rank.
 - Ex-serving SHS Clients did not have a higher rate of disability than the general SHS cohort. However, in 2016/17 a higher proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients reported a mental health issue (39%) compared with all SHS clients (27%).
-

3.1 How many veterans accessed SHS?

As shown in Table 2, below, 1,215 Ex-serving ADF Members who were discharged after 2001 accessed SHS during the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17). This group are referred to as ‘Ex-serving SHS Clients’ throughout this report. This cohort

⁶ Clients may receive several services over multiple years and will be counted in the total for each financial year in which they received SHS support.

represents 1.12 per cent of all ex-serving personnel counted in PMKeyS (i.e. 'Ex-serving ADF Members', n=108,825 for 2001–18).

The number of Ex-serving SHS Clients increased each year during the six-year study period: from 216 in 2011/12 to 399 in 2016/17 (see Table 2). This annual increase in Ex-serving SHS Clients is in line with the steady growth seen in the broader ex-serving population over the same time period. As indicated in Table 2, there was a substantial increase in the rate of ex-serving men and women accessing SHS services between 2011/12 and 2012/13, which may be related to data quality improvements. In subsequent years, the annual change rate was relatively stable. Over the six-year study period, there was an average annual increase of 3.82 per cent in the rate of SHS use by ex-serving ADF. As a point of comparison, the average annual increase of all clients receiving SHS between 2012/13 to 2016/17 was 4.2 per cent (AIHW 2017a).

Table 2: Ex-serving SHS Clients (per 10,000 population) and average annual change

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Ex-serving SHS Clients (number)	216	275	292	331	354	399
Underlying ex-serving population (number)	70,068	75,257	81,647	87,601	95,927	108,825
Client rate (per 10,000 population)	30.83	36.54	35.76	37.78	36.90	36.66
Annual rate change	-	5.71	-0.78	2.02	-0.88	-0.24
Annual change (%)	-	18.54	-2.13	5.65	-2.33	-0.65
Average annual change (%)						3.82

Notes:

1. ADF population counts are as at 30 June, at the end of the reported financial year: This is considered the most appropriate time point for these counts due to the rate of population growth in the ex-serving study cohort.

2. This differs to the time point for the Australian population denominator used to calculate crude rates for all SHS users in historical SHS tables which use the ABS ERP at the start of the range (for example, rates for 2011-12 were calculated using the ERP at 30 June 2011).

3. Due to the small number in the underlying ex-serving population for this study, a small increase in the number of Ex-serving SHS Clients between years will result in a larger percentage increase than observed in the broader population of Australian SHS users.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

In July 2017, an ADF indicator was introduced to the SHSC to identify veterans seeking assistance, without the need of data linkage. The SHS Annual Report for 2017/18 (AIHW 2018) states that 1,295 clients identified as a current or former member of the ADF in that financial year. This number differs markedly from the linked dataset result for the previous financial year (2016/17), which found 399 veterans accessed services. This difference could be due to several factors (as discussed in Section 2.7).

The SHS linkage figure is certain to be an underestimate, given the PMKeyS veteran population is a subgroup that does not include personnel who transitioned from the military prior to 2001. The figure does, however, provide guidance on the approximate number of Ex-serving ADF Members who are accessing SHS services. The new ADF

indicator in the 2017/18 SHSC provides an alternative perspective to the linkage work, notably including those who were discharged before 2001 and those who are currently serving in the ADF. However, the ADF flag is also considered to potentially underestimate veteran homelessness, given evidence that veterans may choose not to access mainstream (or indeed any) support services (Van Hooff, Searle et al. 2019; Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019b). Thus, any count of service use, especially mainstream services, is likely to represent only a proportion of the full population of homeless veterans.

The research team believe that the identified cohorts from the linkage project and the SHSC, in combination, add weight to our understanding of the possible level of veteran homelessness, as the numbers found in the linkage project provide a reliable minimum and the SHSC ADF indicator numbers encompass a broader group. These figures are further contextualised in the Inquiry's final report (Hilferty, Katz et al. 2019b), which triangulates findings from the Defence- and DVA-funded survey data, as well as the qualitative and literature review components of the project.

3.2 A demographic analysis of veterans accessing SHS

Table 3, below, presents a basic demographic analysis of the Ex-serving SHS Clients. As shown, 77 per cent of the total Ex-serving Clients were male and 23 per cent were female. This gender profile is different to that of the All Ex-serving ADF Members cohort (i.e. within the PMKeyS), where females comprised only 15 per cent of the total population. This suggests that ex-serving females are either more likely to access SHS, or more likely to be 'at risk' or 'homeless', than male veterans. This is consistent with findings from the general population accessing SHS: in 2016/17, the majority of clients were female (60%) and females' rates of service use were higher than males in all age groups (AIHW 2017a).

The analysis of cohort ages indicates that a higher proportion of younger Ex-serving SHS Clients, and a lower proportion of older Ex-serving SHS Clients, accessed SHS: 40 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients were aged 25–34 years, versus 28 per cent of all ex-serving personnel discharged since 2001. Additionally, 23 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients were aged over 45 versus 38 per cent of All Ex-Serving ADF Members. Note that the analysis presented in Table 3 is based on derived veteran age as at 30 June 2017. Further assessment of age during the six-year study period is provided in Section 3.2.1, below (see also Appendix A: Tables A1 and A3).

Ex-serving SHS Clients were, overwhelmingly, discharged at a lower rank compared with all ex-serving personnel—only 5 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients were discharged at the rank of Officer, compared with 19 per cent of All Ex-serving ADF Members.

The proportion of ex-serving members discharged from the Army (as opposed to Navy or Air Force) was higher among Ex-serving SHS clients (71%) than All Ex-serving ADF (65%). There was a lower proportion of Air Force members among the Ex-serving SHS clients (9%) compared with All Ex-serving ADF (16%).

The characteristics reported in Table 3 are discussed in further detail below.

Table 3: Demographic profile of Ex-serving ADF Members with service from 1 January 2001, as at 30 June 2017

	Ex-serving SHS Clients		Ex-serving Non-SHS clients		All Ex-serving ADF Members	
Characteristics	number	%	number	%	number	%
Sex						
Male	941	77	91,413	85	92,354	85
Female	274	23	16,197	15	16,471	15
Age						
17–24	60	5	4,627	4	4,687	4
25–34	480	40	29,916	28	30,396	28
35–44	401	33	31,549	29	31,950	29
45+	274	23	41,518	39	41,792	38
Minimum age (years)	20	-	17	-	17	-
Maximum age (years)	75	-	90	-	90	-
Mean age (years)	38	-	43	-	43	-
Median age (years)	36	-	41	-	41	-
Service						
Navy	249	20	20,419	19	20,668	19
Army	858	71	69,660	65	70,518	65
Air Force	108	9	17,531	16	17,639	16
Rank						
Commissioned Officer	55	5	20,854	19	20,909	19
All ranks other than Commissioned Officer	1,160	95	86,755	81	87,915	81

Notes:

1. Service classification and rank are recorded at discharge and are current as at 30 June 2017.

2. Age is calculated as at 30 June 2017. This differs to the calculation of age used for analysis of SHS use (see Section 3.2.1), where age is reported as at 31 December of the financial year in which the client first received SHS support (for reporting over the six-year period), or as at 31 December for each financial year in analysis by financial year.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

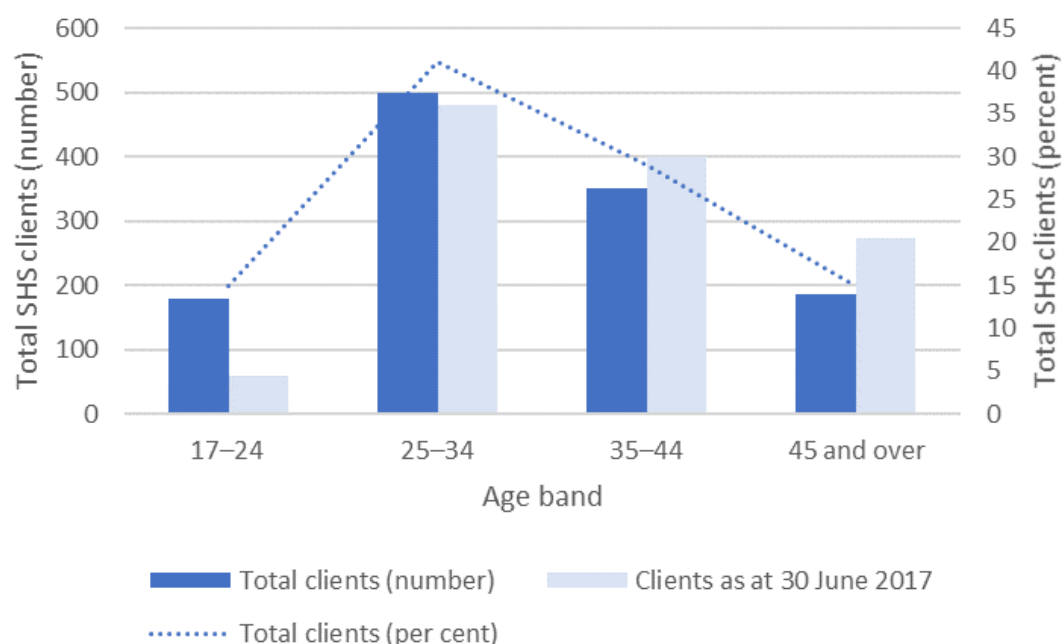
3.2.1 Age of Ex-serving SHS Clients

In addition to the aggregate age figures presented in Table 3 (where age was calculated as at 30 June 2017), the age of Ex-serving SHS Clients was separately examined for each service year as at 31 December of the financial year in which the client first received SHS support, over the six-year study period. As expected, this analysis shifts a proportion of clients into lower age bands (i.e. 17–24 and 25–34), with

clients between 1 and 5 years younger on first SHS contact (see Figure 2, below). Reflecting the relatively young age of the post-2001 discharge study group, this analysis provides further confirmation of the generally younger age profile of veterans accessing SHS.

The age profile of Ex-serving SHS Clients (n=1,215), and all those captured within PMKeyS (n=108,825), is markedly different from that of the broader veteran population. DVA estimated there to be around 641,000 Australians veterans who have ever served in the ADF, either full time or in the Reserves (as at 30 June 2018) (DVA 2018). Drawing on weighted National Health Survey data from 2014–15 (ABS 2015), researchers from the AIHW calculated that more than two-thirds of the people estimated to have ever served in the ADF are aged over 55 years, with the largest proportion aged 75 years and over (AIHW 2018c). This information provides perspective on the scale of veterans that are not reported in the SHS linkage study group, with over 160,000 veterans estimated to be over 75 years (i.e. the maximum age of our Ex-serving SHS Client group) as at December 2017. The older veteran groups in the ABS survey include those members who were deployed in the Korean War, Vietnam and the first Gulf War in Iraq (1990–91), which all occurred before the 2001 PMKeyS cut-off. Some older veterans may be more likely to seek assistance through aged care providers rather than SHS agencies, however, the extent to which this holds true in our analysis is unclear due to the 1 January cut-off point in the PMKeyS dataset.

Figure 2: Ex-Serving SHS Clients by age group, 2011/12 to 2016/17



Notes:

1. The light-blue bars represent the age bands calculated as at 30 June 2017 (see Table 3); the dark-blue bars represent the age bands calculated as at 31 December of the financial year in which the client first received SHS support, over the six-year study period.

Source: The research team.

3.2.2 Homelessness status of Ex-serving SHS Clients

Of the total 1,215 Ex-serving SHS Clients who received SHS between 2011/12 and 2016/17, 46 per cent were recorded as being homeless at presentation (i.e. at the

beginning of their first support period), while 54 per cent were identified as 'at risk' of homelessness (see Table 4, below).

Further analysis of homelessness status by financial year (see Appendix A: Table A2) indicates that the proportions of Ex-serving SHS Clients who were homeless and at risk of homelessness remained relatively stable over time. This trend in homelessness status amongst ex-serving personnel is consistent with the general SHS client population (AIHW 2017a).

Table 4: Ex-serving SHS Clients, by homelessness status, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Homelessness status (first-reported)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Homeless	495	46
At risk	587	54
Not stated	133	-
Total ('not stated' excluded)	1,215 (1,082)	100

Notes:

1. The data for homelessness status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods have been closed.
2. 'First-reported homelessness status' is the homelessness status of a client during the financial year in which they first received SHS support.
3. Percentages have been calculated using the total number of clients as the denominator, excluding 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

3.2.3 Homelessness status by sex

An examination of homelessness status by sex shows that the proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients who are female is greater than the proportion of females in the All Ex-serving ADF Members cohort (23% versus 15%) (see Table 3 above). This suggests that ex-serving females are more likely to be 'homeless' or 'at risk' of homelessness than ex-serving males, and/or are more likely to seek assistance from mainstream support services.

The information in Table 5, below, adds to this picture, showing that half the cohort of Ex-serving males presented as 'homeless' and half as 'at risk' (when 'not stated' is excluded) at their first support period (50%, n=430/425). In contrast, a larger proportion of Ex-serving SHS females presented as 'at risk' (71%, n=65) rather than 'homeless' (29%, n=65) (when 'not stated' is excluded). This suggests that ex-serving females are more likely than ex-serving males to seek help at an earlier stage of vulnerability.

Table 5: Ex-serving SHS Clients, by homelessness status and sex 2011/12 to 2016/17

	Homeless		At risk		Not stated	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Male	430	87	425	72	86	65
Female	65	13	162	28	47	35
Total	495	100	587	100	133	100

Notes:

1. The data for homelessness status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods have been closed.

2. 'First-reported homelessness status' is the homelessness status of a client during the financial year in which the client first received SHS support.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

3.2.4 Homelessness status by rank

An examination of homelessness status by rank adds to the profile of Ex-serving SHS Clients. Not surprisingly, this analysis shows that Ex-serving SHS Clients were discharged at a lower rank than the general ex-serving cohort: only 5 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients were discharged at the rank of Officer, compared with 19 per cent of all ex-serving personnel (see Table 3). Similarly, Table 6 below shows that only 3 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients who self-reported as homeless had been discharged at Officer rank. This suggests that those who succeed in military life, as demonstrated through longer service time and promotion to higher ranks, may possess or exhibit protective factors that guard against homelessness. Such factors may include: evident leadership capacity, enhanced decision making and communication skills, and higher salary.

This result is partly consistent with the homelessness literature, which identifies low income as a risk factor for homelessness (e.g. Tsai and Rosenheck 2015), as rank determines the military pay grade. Those members who served at a lower rank may be more likely to be homeless after discharge as they lacked the financial resources to buy a house during their military career.

Table 6: Ex-serving SHS Clients, by homelessness status and rank, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Homelessness status (first-reported)						
Rank	Homeless		At risk		Not stated	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Officer	14	3	34	6	7	5
All other ranks	481	97	553	94	126	95
Total	495	100	587	100	133	100

Notes:

1. The data for homelessness status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods have been closed.
2. 'First-reported homelessness status' is the homelessness status of a client during the financial year in which they first received SHS support.
3. Rank is reported as at termination date.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

3.2.5 Service classification and homelessness

As well as rank, the analysis examined the association between service classification and homelessness status. As shown in Table 3 above, the proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients who served in the Navy was similar to the proportion of ex-Navy members in the All Ex-serving ADF Members cohort (20% versus 19%). However, there was a higher proportion of ex-Army members amongst Ex-Serving SHS Clients than amongst all ex-serving personnel (71% versus 65%). Conversely, there was a lower proportion of ex-Air Force members among SHS clients (9%) than among the all ex-serving cohort (16%). It is difficult to interpret this result as there is no literature examining the association between service category and homelessness.

3.2.6 Disability status and homelessness

Our analysis found that 4 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients who received support from SHS during the financial years 2013/14 to 2016/17 identified as having a disability (see Table 7 below). This is equal to the proportion of overall SHS clients reported to have a disability in the 2016/17 financial year (AIHW 2017a). While this result could be described as incongruous, given the higher rate of occupational accidents and injuries of serving men and women compared to the general population, it may reflect the fact that veterans with a disability are being adequately supported through non-SHS agencies such as the DVA, and also that people with certain disabilities are less likely to be accepted into the armed forces.

Analysis of disability status by financial year shows that the proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients with a disability has remained stable over the four-year period that this data has been recorded (see Appendix A: Table A5).

Table 7: Disability status for Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2013/14 to 2016/17

Disability	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Yes	32	4
No	823	96
Not stated	121	-
Total ('not stated' excluded)	976 (855)	100

Notes:

1. Clients with disability are those who have reported that they always or sometimes needed assistance with one or more of these core activities: self-care, mobility, communication. Clients were asked whether a long-term health condition or disability restricts their everyday activities (a long-term health condition is one that has lasted, or is expected to last, six months or more). This question was introduced to the SHSC in the 2013/14 reporting year. Clients who received SHS support before 1 July 2013 are not included in the analysis of disability status.

2. Any client who identified as having a disability between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017 has been assigned to 'Yes'. If a client's disability status was 'Not stated' for every year for which they received SHS support between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, they have been assigned to 'Not stated' in this table. If a client reported a combination of 'No disability' and 'Not stated' between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2017, they have been assigned to 'No'.

3. Percentages have been calculated using the total number of clients who had SHS use since 1 July 2013 as the denominator, excluding 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

3.2.7 Mental health status and homelessness

Of the Ex-serving SHS Clients who received SHS during the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17), 37 per cent were identified as having a mental health issue during at least one of their support periods⁷ (see Table 8). This is higher than the 24 per cent of all SHS clients who were identified as having a mental health issue over the five-year period 2012/13 to 2016/17 (AIHW 2017a).

Analysis of mental health status by financial year (see Appendix A: Table A6) indicates that the proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients identified as having a mental health issue increased over the six-year investigation period: from 21 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients in 2011/12 to 39 per cent in 2016/17. This increase is reflected in the general SHS cohort: the proportion of clients with a mental health issues has grown at an average of 12 per cent per year since 2012/13 (AIHW 2017a), whereas the average annual growth rate for Ex-serving SHS Clients is 17 per cent per year since 2011/12 (see Table B6).

These findings make clear that there is a high proportion of mental health issues among both Ex-serving SHS Clients and all SHS clients; though the rate is higher for Ex-serving SHS Clients. This high rate of mental health problems amongst recently transitioned ADF members has been confirmed by Van Hooff, Searle and colleagues (2019). The sustained growth rate in clients identified as having a mental health issue

⁷ This is determined if the client indicates at the beginning of support that they are receiving mental health services, or have in the past 12 months; if their referral source to the SHS agency is from a mental health service; if they report 'mental health issues' as a reason for seeking assistance; if their most recent dwelling has been a psychiatric hospital or they have discharged from one within the last 12 months; or if psychological services are an identified need following assessment.

is concerning; however, some caution needs to be taken in interpreting this result. Mental health issue identification for all SHS clients is based on factors such as: the current services the client is receiving; the referral source (such as a mental health service); and self-reporting. This data item does not indicate a diagnosed condition (for more information see Section 2.6: Mental Health Status).

Table 8: Mental health status of Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Mental health issues	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Yes	451	37
No	764	63
Total	1,215	100

Notes:

1. Any client who was identified as having a mental health issue for any support period between 1 July 2011 and 31 June 2017 is reported as having a current mental health issue.

2. Clients identified as having a current mental health issue in multiple financial years are only counted once.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

3.3 Summary of demographic analysis

The findings from the demographic analysis, presented above, provide new and important information about veterans seeking help from SHS agencies. Some findings are not surprising and are consistent with US studies of veteran homelessness—for example, that those who discharge as Officers and therefore on higher military pay grades are less likely to be homeless (Tsai and Rosenheck, 2015). Other findings, however, are reported for the first time in Australia, and add significantly to the picture of national veteran homelessness. For instance, the fact that almost two-thirds of ex-serving females presented as ‘at risk’ compared with ‘homeless’ (in contrast to men, who presented as 50% for each category) is significant, and suggests that women seek help at an earlier stage of vulnerability than ex-serving males. Interestingly, this trend of women seeking help at an earlier stage, rather than at crisis level, is consistent with findings for the total SHS client population (AIHW 2018b).

Another evident trend is the high prevalence of mental health issues among Ex-serving SHS Clients (37%) and the rapid annual growth rate in mental health issues among ex-serving personnel who access SHS services (an average of 12% per year over the study period).

The rate of veterans seeking help through SHS agencies each year is relatively stable, with the slight growth rate reflecting that of the broader SHS population.

4 Support services for Ex-serving SHS Clients

In this chapter we present our findings about the support services that have been provided to Ex-serving SHS Clients.

Key points in this chapter include the following.

- Ex-serving SHS Clients most commonly sought assistance from SHS agencies for accommodation, financial assistance, and because of interpersonal relationship issues.
 - An analysis of identified service need and service provision to Ex-serving SHS Clients shows a pattern of relatively high reported need for ‘any accommodation type’ (64% of clients); and a much smaller proportion of clients being provided accommodation (37%).
 - The proportions of Ex-serving SHS Clients accessing various durations of support (e.g. ‘up to five days’, ‘6-45 days’) are relatively similar to those reported for the total SHS cohort.
 - The support periods provided to Ex-serving SHS Clients typically ended because client needs were met (62%), and the client no longer requested assistance or could not be contacted (48%).
 - An analysis of the outcomes for Ex-serving SHS Clients, across three domains—educational engagement, labour force participation and income source—showed small but positive change. There was little increase in the educational engagement of Ex-serving SHS Clients between first and last report (6% enrolled in education versus 7%); a slightly smaller proportion of clients were unemployed following service provision (45% at first report versus 42% at last report); and a slightly higher proportion of clients were accessing government benefits at last report (73%, versus 71% at first report).
-

4.1 Reasons for seeking assistance

Ex-serving SHS Clients identified a number of reasons for seeking assistance from SHS agencies, which may have contributed to their homelessness or insecure housing situation. Table 9 reports results for the ‘main reason’ for clients seeking assistance, by financial year (i.e. at beginning of a client’s first support period in each financial year). The analysis shows that ‘accommodation’ was the most common main reason for seeking assistance amongst Ex-serving SHS Clients (35–43% of clients in each financial year). The next most common main reason for seeking assistance was ‘financial’ (19–29% of clients), followed closely by ‘interpersonal relationships’ (16–22%).

The fact that more than one in three Ex-serving SHS Clients seeks assistance from SHS agencies mainly for ‘accommodation’ shows that these clients are seeking help from appropriate sources. As a point of comparison, domestic and family violence is listed as the most common main reason for seeking assistance by the broader SHS client population in 2016/17 (AIHW 2017a).

Table 9: Ex-serving SHS Clients' main reasons for seeking assistance, by financial year, 2011/12 to 2016/17

	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
Main reason for seeking assistance	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Financial	56	29	77	29	70	26	74	23	79	22	76	19
Accommodation	68	35	97	37	96	35	139	43	146	41	172	43
Interpersonal relationships	39	20	43	16	58	21	57	18	79	22	74	19
Health	8	4	14	5	15	5	21	6	12	3	28	7
Other	23	12	31	12	34	12	34	10	36	10	46	12
Not stated	22	-	13	-	19	-	6	-	2	-	3	-
Total	216	100	275	100	292	100	331	100	354	100	399	100

Notes:

1. The client's main reason for seeking assistance is measured at the beginning of support.

2. Where more than one reason for seeking assistance has been provided, the client chooses the 'main reason'.

3. 'Other' includes: transition from custodial arrangements; transition from foster care and child safety residential placements; transition from other care arrangements; discrimination including racial discrimination; being itinerant; being unable to return home due to environmental reasons; disengagement with school or other education and training; lack of family and/or community support.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.2 Support needs identified and provided

4.2.1 Client needs identified and provided

Table 10 presents an analysis of the identified service need for Ex-serving SHS Clients and the services provided. There is some alignment between the main reason for seeking services (see Table 9) and the support needs identified by providers (Table 10).

As shown in Table 10, Ex-serving SHS Clients most commonly identified as needing general services (92% of clients over the six-year study period). 'General services' is a category that includes: advice and information (e.g. about how to obtain government allowances); material aid or brokerage; meals; and living skills (such as education and training assistance). General services were provided to 91% of Ex-serving SHS Clients, with almost one-third of clients (32%) being referred to another agency for service provision.

Assistance in accessing accommodation (short-, medium- and long-term housing) was identified as the next most common need for the majority of Ex-serving SHS Clients (64%). However, only 37 per cent were provided with some type of accommodation. This pattern of relatively high reported need amongst Ex-serving SHS Clients and a much smaller proportion of the cohort being provided services, and/or being referred to another agency, is repeated throughout the table.

It is also evident that Ex-serving SHS Clients have a variety of support needs beyond accommodation, including: health services, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, legal assistance, counselling (included in 'other' category) and domestic and family violence services.

Table 10: Service needs identified and provided for Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2011/12 to 2016/17

SHS service/assistance type	Need identified (number)	Need identified (%)	Service provided (number)	Service provided (%)	Referred (number)	Referred (%)
Any accommodation	778	64	452	37	306	25
Short-term accommodation	575	47	377	31	169	14
Medium-term accommodation	384	32	99	8	112	9
Long-term accommodation	517	43	27	2	196	16
Assistance to sustain housing tenure	463	38	371	31	63	5
Mental health services	152	13	74	6	75	6
Family services	66	5	44	4	27	2
Disability services	15	1	5	<1	11	1
Drug/alcohol services	81	7	45	4	35	3
Legal/financial services	112	9	63	5	55	5
Immigration/cultural services	25	2	23	2	10	1
Domestic violence services	184	15	161	13	35	3
Other specialist services	251	21	182	15	123	10
General services	1,123	92	1,111	91	384	32

Notes:

1. Note: these results are not comparable with other published SHSC results, due to different counting methodologies.
2. Percentage columns do not sum to 100%, as clients may have needed, been provided or been referred for more than one type of service during 2011/12 to 2016/17. If the same service was needed multiple times by a client during the study period, they are only counted once for that service.
3. Percentages have been calculated using the total number of clients as the denominator: n=1,215.
4. 'Other specialist services' include: health/medical services, specialist counselling services, and other specialised services.
5. Information about the services included in the 'general services' category can be found in the Specialist homelessness services annual report 2016–17 (AIHW 2017a).

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.2.2 Duration of support

Analysis of support days provided to Ex-serving SHS Clients during the six-year period under examination shows that almost one in three received support for a period of 6–45 days (29%) and another third (28%) for a shorter period of up to five days.⁸ Table 11, below, sums multiple support periods for individual clients across the study period. To calculate the total number of days of support, every day the client received support in the reporting period (2011/12 to 2016/17) is added together. Thus, the total number of days of support does not necessarily represent a consecutive number of days the client received support.

The proportions of Ex-serving SHS Clients accessing various durations of support are relatively similar to those for the total SHS cohort. For example, in 2016/17, 29 per cent of all SHS clients received between 6 and 45 days of support—the same proportion as reported for Ex-serving SHS Clients over the six-year period (AIHW 2017a). Similarly, 25 per cent of all SHS clients received support for five or fewer days (AIHW 2017a), in comparison to 28 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients. Almost one in five Ex-serving SHS Clients (18%) received support for more than six months, in comparison to 15 per cent of all SHS clients.

Table 11: Duration of support for Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Days of support	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Up to 5 days	335	28
6–45 days	348	29
46–90 days	164	13
91–180 days	155	13
Over 180 days	213	18
Total	1,215	100

Notes:

1. The calculation of days of support includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods were closed.
2. If the support period start or end date is outside of the reporting period for a financial year, total days are calculated using a start date of 1 July and an end date of 30 June in the financial year.
3. Days of support are calculated by summing all support days received by the client between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2017.
4. Percentages do not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.2.3 Reason support ended

As indicated in Table 12, below, for the majority of Ex-serving SHS Clients support periods ended because their needs were met by the SHS agency (62%); and/or the client no longer requested assistance, did not turn up, or the agency was unable to

⁸ Data on SHS support provided to Ex-serving SHS clients before 1 July 2011 are not available, therefore the total days of support may be underestimated for clients who were already receiving SHS support at the beginning of the reporting period for this study. Similarly, some clients may have continued to receive SHS support beyond 30 June 2017 but this information is not within the scope of this report.

contact them (48%). This latter reason highlights the itinerant nature of homeless clients. The results show that for 10 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients the support period ended because they were institutionalised, incarcerated, deceased or 'other'. This figure was the same for the all SHS client population (whose support period ended in the 2016/17 financial year) (AIHW 2017a).

Table 12: Reason support period ended for Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Reason support period ended	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Referred to another service	176	15
Needs met/goals achieved	709	62
Max. service period reached/service withdrawn	83	7
No longer requested assistance/did not turn up/lost contact	552	48
Institutionalised/incarcerated/deceased/other	110	10
Don't know	120	-

Notes:

1. The total number of clients is greater than the number of clients with any closed support period as a client can have multiple closed support periods within a reporting period.

2. Percentages will not sum to 100% as clients may have had multiple closed support periods during 2011/12 to 2016/17. Where a client had multiple closed support periods within the reporting period, each client is only counted once per reason.

3. Percentages have been calculated to only include clients who had at least one closed support period that ended for a valid reason as the denominator: $n=1,144$.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.2.4 Location of service delivery

An examination of homelessness status by remoteness (see Table 13, below) shows that the majority of Ex-serving SHS Clients accessed services from agencies located in major cities. As indicated below, 58 per cent of clients who were categorised as 'homeless' at first presentation accessed services in a major city, while 42 per cent of homeless clients accessed services from agencies located elsewhere (i.e. regional, remote and very remote areas). This pattern, of a slightly higher proportion of clients accessing services from major cities, is repeated for those categorised as 'at risk' of homelessness at first presentation. This is not a surprising result given the declining availability of affordable housing in major cities and the fact that access to services is often limited in more remote locations.

Table 13: Ex-serving SHS Clients by homelessness status and remoteness, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Remoteness area	Homelessness status (first reported)					
	Homeless		At risk		Not stated	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Major city	288	58	324	55	91	68
Other	207	42	263	45	42	32

Total	495	100	587	100	133	100
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Notes:

1. The data for homelessness status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods have been closed.

2. 'First-reported homelessness status' is the homelessness status of a client during the financial year in which they first received SHS support.

3. 'Remoteness area' is assigned based on the location of the agency from which services were sought.

4. Remoteness is assigned using the Australian Bureau of Statistics classification, Australian Statistical Geography Standard, 2011. 'Other' refers to all areas not classified as major cities (i.e. inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote).

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.3 Exploring outcomes of support

The following three subsections—discussing educational engagement, labour force participation and income source, respectively—are presented as indicators of outcomes of support, as status at first and last report are provided. This analysis thus gives some indication of outcomes over time for the Ex-serving SHS Clients.

4.3.1 Educational engagement

Table 14, below, shows that there was little change in the educational engagement of Ex-serving SHS Clients between first and last report: 6 per cent of Ex-serving SHS Clients were enrolled in education or training at first report, and 7 per cent at last report. The overwhelming majority of Ex-serving SHS Clients were not enrolled in education at any point in their contact with SHS agencies. In comparison, the rate of educational enrolment for all SHS clients for the 2016/17 financial year was 22 per cent and this rate remained stable from the beginning to the end of the support period⁹ (AIHW 2017a).

Table 14: Educational engagement of Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Educational enrolment status	First-reported		Last-reported	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Any enrolment	61	6	66	7
No enrolment	919	94	921	93
Not stated	235	-	228	-
Total ('not stated' excluded)	1,215 (980)	100	1,215 (987)	100

⁹ Direct comparison between Ex-serving SHS Clients and the general SHS client population, in relation to educational engagement, should be undertaken with caution due to different data specifications. For Ex-serving SHS Clients, the data for educational enrolment status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods had closed. For general SHS clients, the data for educational status is limited to those who had all their support periods closed at the end of the reporting period.

Notes:

1. The data for education enrolment status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods had closed.
2. First-reported education status is the status of a client during the financial year in which they first received SHS support.
3. Last-reported education status is the status of a client during the financial year in which they last received SHS support.
4. Percentages have been calculated using the total number of clients as the denominator, excluding 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.3.2 Labour force engagement

As shown in Table 15, below, the majority of Ex-serving SHS Clients were unemployed (45%) or 'not in the labour force' (26%) at the beginning of their first support period. This is not surprising, as unemployment is commonly identified as an antecedent of homelessness (Tsai and Rosenheck 2015). Following the provision of support, the proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients not in the labour force remained the same (26%); however, a slightly smaller proportion were unemployed (42%). The rate of unemployment (excludes those 'not in labour force') amongst all SHS clients for the 2016/17 financial year was 61 per cent at the beginning of support, reducing to 55 per cent at the end of the support period¹⁰ (AIHW 2017a).

Table 15: Labour force status of Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Labour force status	First-reported		Last-reported	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Employed full time	82	7	88	7
Employed part time (or not stated)	97	8	123	10
Unemployed	536	45	501	42
Not in the labour force	307	26	309	26
Don't know	173	14	173	14
Not applicable	20	-	21	-
Total ('not applicable' excluded)	1,215 (1,195)	100	1,215 (1,194)	100

¹⁰ Direct comparison between Ex-serving SHS Clients and general SHS clients, in relation to labour force engagement, should be undertaken with caution due to different data specifications. For Ex-serving SHS Clients, the data for employment status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods had closed. For general SHS clients, the data for employment status is limited to those who had all their support periods closed at the end of the reporting period.

Notes:

1. The data for labour force status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods had closed.
 2. First-reported labour force status is the status of a client during the financial year in which they first received SHS support.
 3. Last-reported labour force status is the status of a client during the financial year in which they last received SHS support.
 4. Percentages have been calculated using the total number of clients as the denominator, excluding 'not applicable'.
 5. Percentages do not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.
- Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.3.3 Income source

The income source data (see Table 16, below) shows that only a very small proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients relied on a DVA pension at the beginning and end of their support from SHS agencies (5% at first report and 6% at last report). The majority of Ex-serving SHS Clients relied on other government benefits, such as Newstart and the Disability Support Pension, at their first contact with SHS agencies (71%). A slightly higher proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients (73%) were accessing government benefits at the end of their support. This result, and the lower proportion of Ex-serving SHS Clients awaiting government benefits at the conclusion of their support (6% at first report and 3% at last report) suggests that SHS agencies have assisted a small proportion of eligible Ex-serving SHS Clients to apply for and/or obtain a government benefit.

Table 16: Main source of income for Ex-serving SHS Clients, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Main source of income	First reported		Last reported	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
DVA pensions	51	5	58	6
Employee income	127	12	151	15
Other income (including non-DVA government payments and pensions)	735	71	747	73
Nil income	55	5	44	4
Awaiting government benefit	61	6	30	3
Don't know	186	-	185	-
Total ('don't know' excluded)	1,215 (1,029)	100	1,215 (1,030)	100

Notes:

1. The data for main source of income includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods had closed.
2. 'First-reported main source of income' is the income source of a client in the financial year in which they first received SHS support.
3. 'Last-reported main source of income' is the income source of a client in the financial year in which they last received SHS support.
4. Percentages have been calculated using the total number of clients as the denominator, excluding 'invalid or missing'.
5. 'Other income' refers to other sources of income not included elsewhere, such as Newstart Allowance, Parenting Payment, Disability Support Pension, Youth Allowance, Age Pension, Austudy/ABSTUDY, Sickness Allowance, Carer Allowance, Carer Payment, other government payments and allowances not

elsewhere classified, unincorporated business income, other income not elsewhere classified, interest, dividends, royalties, workers' compensation, payments from accidents/sickness insurance, scholarships, superannuation and annuities.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

4.4 Summary of SHS service provision to Ex-serving SHS Clients

The findings from the analysis of services provided to Ex-serving SHS Clients add to the existing understanding of veteran homelessness in Australia, in particular veterans' engagement with mainstream services. The analysis shows that Ex-serving SHS Clients access SHS services for a range of reasons and typically require a variety of services to address multiple and complex needs (e.g. no permanent home, drug or alcohol addiction, relationship breakdown, gambling issues, etc.). The analysis of identified need and service provision shows a pattern of relatively high reported need for accommodation services, and a smaller cohort receiving needed services. Nevertheless, a high proportion of support periods ended because Ex-serving SHS Clients had met their goals, or assistance was no longer requested. An analysis of service outcomes across three domains (educational engagement, labour force participation and income source) shows small but positive improvement. There is little change in educational engagement or labour force participation for Ex-serving SHS Clients over the period of support; however, it is clear that SHS agencies assisted a very small proportion of clients to apply for and obtain government benefits.

5 Conclusion

The two key aims of the *Homelessness amongst Australian veterans* Inquiry are: to estimate the number of homeless veterans; and to provide robust information on the experience of veteran homelessness (including identifying trajectories into homelessness, and possible risk and protective factors; service usage patterns, and ways to enhance service provision).

This report presents the findings from an analysis of a linked dataset that counts veterans within the SHSC over a six-year period (2011/12 to 2016/17). Although this administrative data source is not an appropriate indicator of the prevalence of a condition, it does offer valuable information about service usage patterns. Moreover, the findings from analysis of the linked dataset add to the developing profile of veterans who have experienced homelessness, and provide previously unknown information about support-service need and services provided.

The findings presented in this report relate to a relatively young cohort of Ex-serving ADF Members, as the PMKeyS data encompass only those ADF members who served at least one day of service (full time or reserve) on or after 1 January 2001 and who have since discharged from the military. Of the total Ex-serving ADF Members population identified in the PMKeyS (n=108,825), 61 per cent are aged 44 and under, while 78 per cent of the Ex-serving SHS Clients (n=1,215) are aged 44 and under.

A key finding of the analysis is that a number of relatively young ex-serving ADF members are accessing SHS services each year. The proportion of ex-serving men and women accessing these services annually increased by an average of 3.8 per cent over the six-year study period (2011/12 to 2016/17). While the total number of Ex-serving ADF Members accessing services each year may seem small (216 in 2011/12, increasing to 399 in 2016/17), it's important to bear in mind that the data linkage task was performed with a relatively small subset of the total Australian veteran population. Indeed, the PMKeyS dataset comprises only 108,825 veterans in the 2016/17 financial year, whereas the total veteran population has been estimated to be around 641,000—more than five times greater (AIHW 2018c). This suggests that annual counts of veterans accessing SHS services are likely to be far greater if older veterans (i.e. those who served and discharged prior to 1 January 2001) were included in the analysis.

The analysis provides important information about the profile of homeless veterans, as well as risk and protective factors. Ex-serving SHS Clients were, overwhelmingly, discharged from the ADF at a lower rank compared with All Ex-serving ADF Members. The data also suggest that ex-serving females are more likely to access homelessness services than males—and that they do so at an earlier stage of need, with ex-serving females more likely to present to services when 'at risk' of homelessness rather than 'homeless'.

Unsurprisingly, the findings indicate that Ex-serving SHS Clients have a higher rate of mental health issues than the general SHS client cohort. Generally, however, Ex-serving ADF Members are seeking support from SHS agencies for reasons similar to the general population: they need help to access accommodation, or require assistance for mental health or relationship problems. The metrics used to measure client outcomes in the areas of employment, educational engagement and income source show a small but positive change in client status before and after service provision.

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Appendix 1: Additional tables for demographic analysis

Table A1: SHS clients who reported being a current or former ADF member, by age, 2017/18

Age	Clients	
	number	%
18–24	127	9.8
25–34	220	17.0
35–44	318	24.6
45–54	327	25.3
55–64	161	12.4
65+	142	11.0
Total	1,295	100.0

Notes:

1. Recorded age is client's age at the start of support in the financial year 2017/18.
2. ADF item identifies whether a client reported they were a current or former ADF member for any of the client's support periods in the reporting year.

Source: Specialist homelessness services annual report 2017–18 (AIHW 2018b).

Table A2: Ex-serving SHS Clients, by homelessness status and financial year, 2011/12 to 2016/17

	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
Homeless status	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
Homeless	88	48	118	50	117	46	154	50	154	46	178	48
At risk	94	52	116	50	136	54	157	50	178	54	191	52
Not stated	34	-	41	-	39	-	20	-	22	-	30	-
Total	216	100	275	100	292	100	331	100	354	100	399	100

Notes:

- 1. The data for homelessness status includes all clients, regardless of whether all of their support periods have been closed.*
- 2. Percentages have been calculated using the total number of clients as the denominator, excluding 'not stated'.*
- 3. 'Homeless status' is 'first-reported'—i.e. the homelessness status of a client during the financial year in which they first received SHS support.*

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

Table A3: Ex-serving SHS Clients, by age at first support and sex, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Age	Men		Women		All clients	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
17–24	129	14	50	18	179	15
25–34	388	41	111	41	499	41
35–44	271	29	80	29	351	29
45+	153	16	33	12	186	15
Total	941	100	274	100	1,215	100

Notes:

1. Age is calculated using information from the PMKeyS data. In this table, age is reported as at 31 December of the financial year in which a client first received SHS support. Please note this differs to the calculation of age in National SHS reporting where the age of the client is defined as the client's age on the start date of their first support period in the reporting period. In National SHS reporting, those who were ongoing clients at the beginning of the reporting period, the client's age on the first day of the reporting period is used.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

Table A4: Male Ex-serving SHS Clients, by age and financial year, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Age group	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)	Clients (number)	Clients (%)
17–24	29	17	44	20	39	17	33	13	23	9	19	6
25–34	78	45	90	41	87	38	101	39	100	38	120	41
35–44	45	26	55	25	66	29	80	31	94	36	95	32
45+	22	13	33	15	38	17	47	18	47	18	60	20
Total	174	100	222	100	230	100	261	100	264	100	294	100

Notes:

1. Age is calculated as at 31 December for each financial year, using information from the PMKeyS data. Please note this differs to the calculation of age in SHS annual reports, where the age of the client is defined as the client's age on the start date of their first support period in the reporting period. In National SHS reporting, those who were ongoing clients at the beginning of the reporting period, the client's age on the first day of the reporting period is used.

Source: AIHW analysis of linked PMKeyS and SHSC data.

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