

Position title:	Initial Assessment and Planning Worker
Location:	Northern Community Hub
Reporting to:	Initial Assessment and Planning Team Leader

VincentCare:

VincentCare was established to provide a range of professional accommodation and support services to people that are facing disadvantage and those that are ageing throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria.

VincentCare's primary focus is to:

- provide quality services for people at risk or experiencing homelessness, people with a disability, and people struggling with complex needs including substance abuse and mental health issues
- advocate for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, respect their dignity and rights and understand their needs so as to provide them with support and encouragement and enable greater independence.

Our Mandate

VincentCare was established to extend the Christian Mission of the St Vincent de Paul Society to support and advocate on behalf of the most disadvantaged Victorians

Our Aspiration

To be the leader in providing care, hope and advocacy for those facing disadvantage

Our Purpose

To create opportunities and lasting change for the most marginalised

Our Values

VincentCare is committed to expressing Christian love by embedding the following values in its culture:
Courage, Leadership, Accountability, Compassion, Excellence, Dignity

Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to the principles of social justice and aim to ensure every individual is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their cultural background, ability, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion.



Hubs

VincentCare services to clients are provided through Hubs, with each hub providing a range of support.

Inner Melbourne Community Hub: Provides a range of accommodation and support services, including crisis accommodation, drug and alcohol case management, and adult outreach.

Northern Community Hub: A hub with housing dispersed throughout the community, along with family violence services, case management services and youth outreach services.

Social Enterprises Hub: Incorporates Ozanam Enterprises at Carrum Downs, an Australian Disability Enterprise which provides a range of supported, practical, hands-on employment and training opportunities to people with disabilities or facing other forms of disadvantage.

Hume Community Hub: VincentCare's Hume Community Hub was established in 2016 to incorporate the family violence support programs that have been operating in Shepparton for many years. The Hub also provides emergency relief, financial counselling and capacity building and Home Care Packages.

Strategic Direction

In the past decade, VincentCare has initiated significant transformation, partnerships, leadership and action to guide the way the organisation delivers services to clients. VincentCare has done this to ensure that each individual's work culminates in fulfilling our purpose - to engage, enable and empower Victoria's most disadvantaged.

To meet the internal and external drivers of change and success, Vincentcare is in the process of adapting and iterating its Operating Model. This Operating Model will integrate the following six initiatives;

1. Elevating the voice, wisdom and critical value points for clients through methods such as client value mapping, end to end customer value chain mapping and client participation
2. Embedding Reconciliation and Diversity into the whole organisation through methods such as cultural change, systems sensitivity and adaptation.
3. Rigorous use of data, analytics and evidence through methods such as KPI reporting, Outcomes based frameworks, Program Logics and a central data hub.
4. Systematic driving of effectiveness and efficiency through methods such as VincentCare's Homelessness Recovery Model (service model), PDAC, Lean, Toyota Production System, Quality and compliance standards
5. Engaging and aligning our people, leadership and culture through collaborative learning approaches to problem solving, solution design, delivery and continuous improvement at the local and service delivery level
6. Driving financial sustainability through careful financial modelling, key metrics and controls, and long term financial planning.

ROLE SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Through its ten years of experience as a leading Access Point in the North and West metropolitan region, VincentCare Victoria recognises the profound importance the role of Initial Assessment and Planning has on the client experience of the homelessness service system. VincentCare is currently working to further enhance the service provided to clients. This has been demonstrated through the recent Department of Health and Human Services Hume Moreland Area Launch Site initiative – an opportunity to review and implement innovations to dramatically improve the client experience.

The Initial Assessment and Planning Worker plays an integral role within the homelessness service system and often acts as the first point of contact for most people seeking assistance. As a result, an IA&P Worker is required to have advanced communication and interpersonal skills especially when working with people who are experiencing trauma and housing crisis. In addition, the role demands an ability to be innovative in providing a tailored response to individual clients while working within the existing homelessness service system. This role is ideally suited to those who are energised by working from a solutions-focused approach – working both autonomously and as part of an enthusiastic team.

The IA&P Worker is responsible for performing certain functions within the Opening Doors Framework and wider service system, including:

- Undertaking assessments with clients that focus on their experiences, identified strengths and risks, as well as personal aspirations;
- The provision of information on a range of relevant topics including housing options, tenancy legislation, and allied service systems;
- Advocating on behalf of clients especially in relation to working with real estate agents and housing providers;
- Arranging crisis accommodation for clients using resources such as Housing Establishment Funds;
- Completing referrals to, and assisting clients to navigate a range of services/service gateways; and



- Providing an “active holding” response to clients who are prioritised for support vacancies.

While the role of an IA&P Worker is largely office based, VincentCare Victoria is committed to the development of service outposts within the community. This provides an opportunity for IA&P staff to work in a range of service settings and to develop and maintain professional working relationships and networks.

ROLE ACCOUNTABILITIES

Key Result Area	Key Accountabilities
Core specifics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct high quality initial assessments of housing and support needs to persons who contact either by phone or in person, in line with the Opening Doors framework, established standards and procedures• Work alongside clients to develop person-centred plans that support• clients to achieve self-identified goals• An ability to quickly assess and triage presenting clients, as well as being able to undertake crisis interventions where required (especially in periods of high demand)• Respond to a range of enquiries regarding resources available to homeless and at risk households from a range of community stakeholders• Advocacy with accommodation and support providers• Identification of future long- term accommodation options and information and assistance to access these• Assess requests for financial assistance and provide financial assistance using Housing Establishment Funds in line with agreed budgets and guidelines.• Referrals to Crisis Supported Accommodation providers• Arranging Crisis Accommodation• Recording client information in VincentCare's Single Client Record database in a timely and accurate manner• Establish and maintain a thorough knowledge of local community agencies, including eligibility and referral requirements and other relevant resources• Maintain and utilise knowledge of support providers, both within and external to the homelessness service system, including eligibility requirements• Maintain comprehensive knowledge of housing providers such as rooming house operators, real estate agents, community housing and the Department of Housing• Actively use the above information in planning and advocating for outcomes with clients• Liaise with other staff of VincentCare Victoria, community agencies and government on matters arising from individual client work as identified and those as directed by Team Leader• Undertake liaison and networking activities with other agencies committed to working at a broader level to address housing issues related to those who are experiencing homelessness.• Provide secondary consultation to other services in the areas of housing information and referral• In conjunction with Team Leader, participate in the ongoing evaluation of service delivery and monitoring of outcomes achieved on behalf of clients.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake relevant professional development programs and maintain an appropriate working understanding of relevant policies and regulations in the area of housing and homelessness.• Provide quality reports as required.• Fulfil other related administrative tasks to the highest quality as required & directed
Client focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work from a person-centred, strengths-based approach that enshrines and respects diversity, equality, choice and client participation• Advanced communication and interpersonal skills especially when working with people who have experienced trauma or discrimination, or who are experiencing homeless• Ability to build rapport with clients and to tailor own approach to produce positive results• Ability to recognise when client behaviour is escalating and able to use skills to deescalate or resolve challenging behaviour• Utilisation of Trauma Informed Practice and motivational interviewing skills• Creating opportunities for meaningful client empowerment and working alongside clients to achieve identified goals• Knowledge of the importance of professional ethics and an ability to adhere to employee/client boundaries
Administrative function	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enter all client information into the VincentCare Single Client Record database and use as the primary mechanism to maintain client records• Timely and accurate completion of client file notes in line with relevant legislation• Strict adherence to relevant privacy legislation• Ensure that all critical incidents are recorded into the RiskMan Incident Reporting Tool
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Housing Establishment Funds in line with VincentCare policies and procedures• Financial literacy skills such as the ability to understand rental ledgers and income statements• Ensure all financial paperwork is completed accurately and uploaded to VincentCare's Single Client Record database
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all work undertaken within areas of accountability complies with VincentCare values, policies, procedures, codes of conduct and legislative/regulatory requirements and recognised accreditation standards (with a particular focus on Rainbow Tick Accreditation)• Ensure awareness of the policy, legislative and other relevant compliance obligations from day one of a working relationship with VincentCare.• Undertake appropriate training to support understanding of, and compliance with, key VCV policies including work health and safety, equal opportunities, privacy, procurement etc., to meet the required compliance obligations.• Ensure working within appropriate risk management and OH&S procedures and operating practices are embedded within VincentCare's services and accommodation provision to safeguard employee, resident and visitor health, safety and well-being.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in any periodic reviews of work practices/operating arrangements within areas of accountability to ensure potential risks/hazards/ breaches are identified and appropriately managed to meet compliance requirements.• Operate in accordance with VincentCare's schedule of delegated authorities.
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Key Contacts

- Initial Assessment and Planning Team Leader
- Manager – Engagement and Corodination
- Northern Community Hub Manager

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications – Required

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in Community Services, Social Work, Housing Management or Youth Work

Qualifications - Desired

Experience - Essential

- Experience in working in a community or social services
- Experience working within a team or care-team based approach when working with clients
- Experience in providing support to clients who have experienced trauma or disadvantage

Skills and Personal Attributes

- A demonstrated and personal commitment to working within an organisation that can affect immediate and lasting change as well as demonstrated experience in working from a person-centred, strengths-based approach
- A demonstrated ability to generate innovative and client-focused service responses with limited resources
- An enthusiastic and dynamic working style that is characterised by an ability to work autonomously as well as collaboratively within a team
- A personal commitment to ongoing learning and development as well as an ability to be self-reflective
- A demonstrated ability to be agile and flexible, especially when managing multiple competing demands in a busy environment
- Demonstrated ability to build rapport and trust with people who have experienced trauma, discrimination and distrust of services
- Strong administrative skills including timely completion of client notes, an understanding of the importance of data collection and high degree of computer literacy
- Current working knowledge of government, community and private sector housing developments, programs, policies & issues. Knowledge of the Opening Doors Framework an advantage.

Mandatory requirements



All appointments within VincentCare are subject to satisfactory completion of a police check and character/performance reference checks. Police checks will be undertaken for the selected candidate prior to any job offer being confirmed. Police checks are also undertaken on a periodic basis during the period of employment.

All appointments are subject to disclosure of any relevant employment history of formal disciplinary action for improper or unprofessional conduct taken by current or previous employers or any other integrity body within or outside Australia.

The incumbent for this position must have and maintain a current Victorian Working with Children Check or equivalent.

Approved by:	Grace Hyde – Manager – Engagement and Coordination
Date Approved:	17 May 2021