

7 Meeting the needs of clients

One way that the performance of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program can be assessed is by measuring the ability of agencies to meet the needs of their clients. This can only be measured after a client has finished receiving support. Therefore, it is necessary to look at closed support periods when examining the provision of requested services. This chapter focuses on the needs of clients who received services from SAAP agencies. Potential clients who were turned away – that is, who did not receive any services – are not included since this topic will be covered in a separate publication to be released in 2003.

A client might request many services in a single support period. In some cases SAAP agencies might not be able to meet all of a client's requests directly. In these instances referrals to appropriate organisations might be arranged. However, for some required services it might not be possible either to provide the service or to refer the client on. It should be noted that there has been a significant shift in the level of unmet needs for several of the broad service types, compared to the previous year's data. It is thought that the shift can be attributed to two factors: first, a change in the volume of contributions being made to the national data collection by several high-volume agencies; second, the effect of increased data collection training to SAAP agencies around Australia, which is serving to increase understanding of the collection and improve data quality in question responses.

Expressed requests for services

Agencies provided information on the action they took to meet the needs of clients for 155,700 out of the 159,300 support periods that finished during 2001–02 (Table 7.1). In 99% of these support periods, or 154,400, agencies recorded at least one service as being requested by the client. In many cases several services were sought, so that overall 987,000 services were requested (Table 7.2, Part b).

As expected, the pattern observed for service provision in all support periods active in 2001–02 was largely repeated for services requested throughout completed support periods (Tables 6.4 and 7.1). At the broad level, housing and accommodation services were requested in 84% of closed support periods, while services relating to general support and advocacy were required in 71% and those relating to basic support services in 66% (Table 7.1). Counselling services and financial and employment services were required less frequently, being requested in 47% and 42% of closed support periods respectively. Specialist services were requested least, with 34% of closed support periods involving such requests.

Looking at individual service types, SAAP or CAP accommodation was requested more often than any other service, having been required in 70% of support periods by the time support finished (Table 7.1). Advice and information services, meals, and washing facilities were the only other services identified as being needed in more than 50% of support periods, with these services being requested in 58%, 53% and 51% of completed support periods respectively. Eleven service types were requested in 5% of cases or less; all but three of these related to specialist services.

The pattern of expressed requests varied considerably across the States and Territories. At the broad service level, the Australian Capital Territory recorded the highest level of requests in all six of the broad groups presented (Table 7.1). Moreover, identified need levels were at least 20 percentage points higher in the Australian Capital Territory than in the

jurisdiction with the lowest recorded percentage of needs in each of the six groups. Apart from requests for SAAP or CAP accommodation, Queensland tended to have consistently low rates of request for services. Some of these differences may be explained by different approaches to service provision in the various States and Territories and by different types of agencies dominating service provision. For example, SAAP or CAP accommodation was required in at least 50% of closed support periods in all jurisdictions except Victoria (40%). However, in Victoria a large proportion of more than 3,000 properties in the parallel Transitional Housing Management program accommodate tenants provided with SAAP support. Consequently, these clients may not identify SAAP or CAP accommodation as being needed.

Service provision and referral

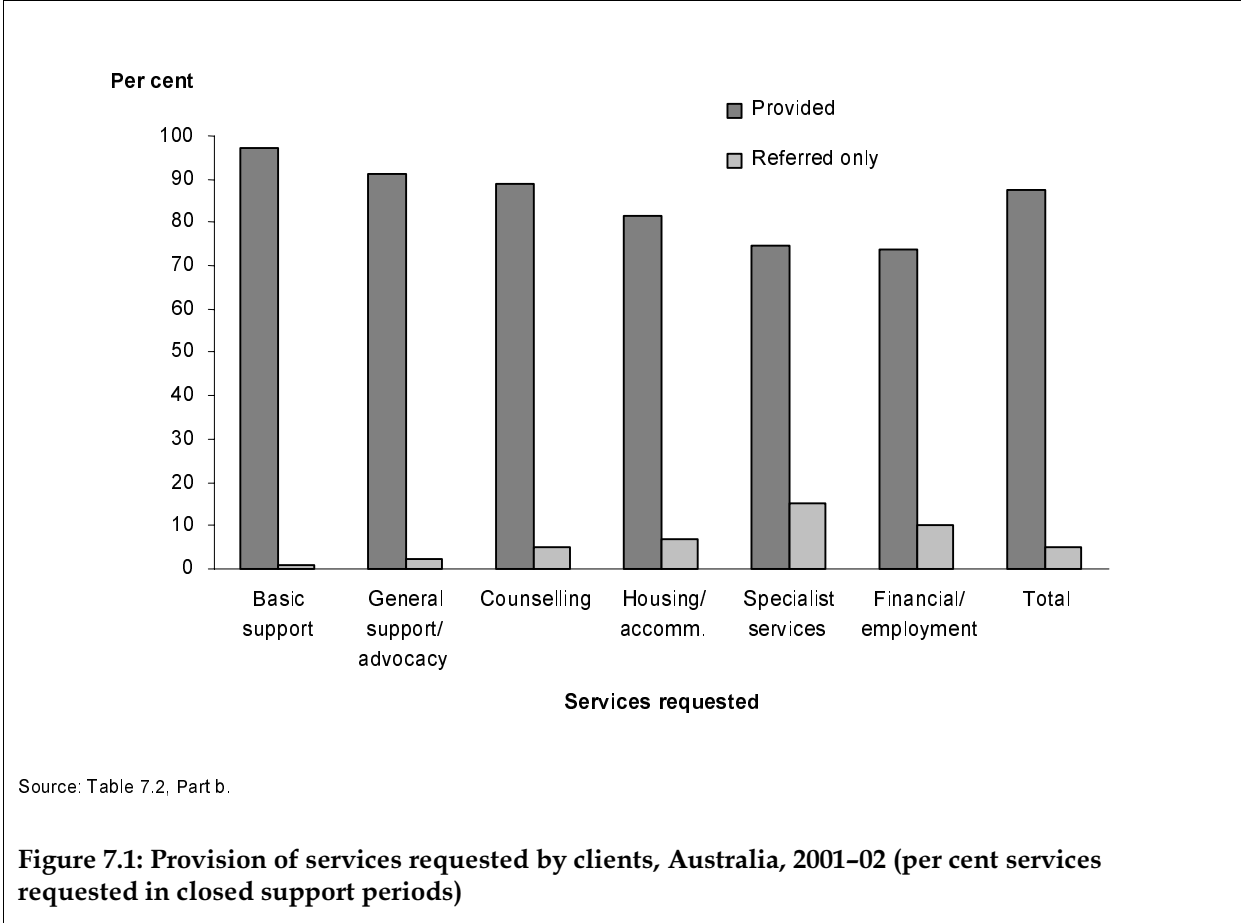
Overall, as mentioned, 987,000 different services were requested by clients in 154,400 closed support periods, so that on average clients requested six services each in these support periods (derived from Table 7.2). Services were provided directly by SAAP agencies for 87% of these requests. In addition to this, agencies were able to refer clients to other organisations for a further 5% of requests. Consequently, 913,800 (or 93%) of the 987,000 expressed needs were met at least to some extent. As illustrated in Figure 7.1, in all service groups requested services were provided in at least 73% of cases. General support and advocacy and basic support services, such as meals and laundry or shower facilities, were provided directly in an overwhelming majority of cases (91% and 97% of these requested services were provided respectively). Financial and employment services (provided in 74% of cases where need was expressed) were the least likely to be provided directly. In particular, employment and training assistance was provided less than any other individual service (26%). Some particular specialist services (psychiatric, psychological, and physical and intellectual disability services) were also provided directly by agencies in less than one-half of the cases in which the services were sought (Table 7.2).

Housing and accommodation services were identified as needed in 130,100 (or 84%) of closed support periods during 2001–02 (Table 7.1). Some clients had more than one requirement for housing-related services, resulting in a total of 194,200 requests in this area (Table 7.2, Part a). In 81% of these instances, some housing or accommodation services were provided within the support period; a further 7% of housing needs were met through referral. More specifically, SAAP or CAP accommodation was provided in 93% of the support periods in which it was requested, with requests being referred in an additional 3% of cases.

A total of 97,800 requests for services relating to financial matters and employment were made across 65,800 closed support periods (Table 7.2, Part b). Services were provided in response to these requests in 74% of cases. Direct provision of financial assistance or material aid was relatively high, being provided in 87% of the 44,300 support periods in which it was needed, with a further 9% of requests being referred. In contrast, provision of employment and training assistance occurred in only 26% of the 17,300 support periods in which it was sought. In a further 13% of cases, however, clients were referred to other organisations for this type of assistance.

Although services vary tremendously in terms of the number of clients who may require them, an inability to provide a particular service can have a significant impact on the client requiring that service. In these circumstances, an agency's ability to refer clients on to other appropriate service providers assumes added importance. Figure 7.1 shows that, generally, as direct provision of requested services falls the use of referrals increases, so that clients

received referrals for 15% of requests for specialist services compared with only 1% for requests for basic support services.



Some support services that could not be provided directly by agencies during 2001-02 were more likely than others to be referred, thus highlighting the need to draw on specialist support providers to meet the broad needs of SAAP clients. Both psychological and intellectual disability services, for example, could not be provided directly in around 60% of the support periods in which they were required, but in well over half of these cases agencies were able to refer the clients on (Table 7.2, Part a). On the other hand, clients were referred to appropriate services in around only one-third of cases (or 2,400) when drug or alcohol support or rehabilitation was required but could not be provided by an agency. In addition, clients were referred to other appropriate services for assistance with living skills and personal development in considerably less than one-quarter (around 600) of the 11,500 cases in which such assistance was requested but could not be provided directly by the agency.

Unmet needs

While 93% of expressed needs were met at least to some extent, 73,300 requests for services had not been addressed by the end of support (Table 7.2, Part b). These unmet needs were spread over nearly 33,000 closed support periods (Table 7.3; figure includes approximately 400 closed support periods with missing data in the table [see note 1]). Across all client groups, the most common forms of support that were neither provided nor referred were housing or accommodation services (accounting for 31% of all unmet needs), followed by

financial and employment assistance and general support and advocacy (21% of unmet needs respectively). Males with children and couples without children, although only small groups, both reported relatively high levels of unmet need in the area of housing and accommodation (in 45% and 39% of their unmet needs, respectively). In contrast, females presenting on their own under the age of 25 had the lowest level of unmet needs in this area – around 26% of their unmet needs related to housing services. Unaccompanied males over the age of 25 reported the highest levels of unmet need relating to financial and employment assistance (26% of their unmet needs were for such services). Both unaccompanied males and females over the age of 25 reported the highest level of unmet needs for general support and advocacy (25% respectively).

Among the various client groups, older unaccompanied males had the highest number of support periods with unmet needs, at 11,500. Older unaccompanied females had the next highest number, with this group accounting for 5,200 of closed support periods with outstanding requests for services. In contrast, there were only 300 support periods in which males with children still had unmet needs at the end of support. These figures primarily reflect the total number of support periods provided to each group. However, by comparing the distribution of all closed support periods with that of unmet needs across client groups, it can be seen that unaccompanied females aged 25 years and over had a relatively high level of unmet needs, accounting for 17% of unmet needs and 15% of closed support periods. This shows that the proportion of unmet needs reported for this client group was actually higher than its proportion of closed support periods. In contrast, females with children had relatively few unmet needs, with 14% of unmet needs relating to this group but 19% of closed support periods.

7.1 Tables

Table 7.1: SAAP closed support periods: services requested by clients, by State and Territory, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent closed support periods)

Type of service	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total		
										%	Number
Housing/accommodation	87.5	73.1	88.9	90.4	77.6	73.2	94.2	91.5	83.6	130,100	
SAAP/CAP accommodation	81.2	39.6	84.5	86.4	59.3	51.1	86.9	85.0	69.8	108,700	
Assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation	16.5	33.8	32.9	12.2	31.0	17.7	33.6	9.9	25.7	40,000	
Assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing	18.1	40.1	34.5	17.8	27.1	38.4	48.0	15.2	29.2	45,500	
Financial/employment	31.0	50.4	47.8	39.4	36.4	43.5	60.4	45.5	42.3	65,800	
Assistance to obtain/maintain govt payment	8.6	12.0	25.9	12.6	13.1	13.0	26.2	10.3	14.8	23,100	
Employment/training assistance	5.3	6.9	26.9	4.6	5.9	3.5	19.0	4.3	11.1	17,300	
Financial assistance/material aid	22.3	41.5	18.8	31.1	27.6	33.5	46.3	39.3	28.5	44,300	
Financial counselling	7.9	11.2	4.9	6.5	11.5	9.2	21.9	7.5	8.4	13,000	
Counselling	38.1	50.0	45.8	47.0	60.9	55.7	78.4	51.2	46.9	73,100	
Incest/sexual assault	2.5	3.1	1.6	2.0	3.6	10.0	6.2	1.7	2.8	4,300	
Domestic violence	11.9	19.8	8.7	15.8	30.0	12.3	19.2	11.5	14.9	23,200	
Family/relationship	13.3	15.6	10.4	10.5	19.3	13.1	31.1	12.5	13.6	21,200	
Emotional/other	33.5	42.4	42.5	42.1	48.9	48.1	73.8	47.1	41.3	64,200	
Assistance with problem gambling	1.3	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.6	3.5	0.4	0.8	1,300	
General support/advocacy	70.1	75.3	66.1	58.9	83.9	67.8	88.5	69.8	70.7	110,100	
Living skills/personal development	17.1	11.1	36.9	15.5	12.2	9.5	39.5	18.2	20.2	31,400	
Assistance with legal issues/court support	9.7	14.2	6.8	8.8	14.4	8.1	20.1	12.2	10.5	16,400	
Advice/information	51.5	66.9	54.2	47.8	75.4	56.5	75.1	61.5	58.3	90,800	
Retrieval/storage/removal of belongings	32.9	11.7	34.3	18.0	26.0	12.0	30.8	19.9	25.2	39,300	
Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client	24.4	44.0	15.0	22.8	40.6	30.7	54.1	25.2	28.6	44,600	
Brokerage services	7.9	4.0	1.0	1.3	3.0	10.8	7.3	0.6	4.2	6,500	
Specialist services	31.8	27.5	42.4	38.5	24.6	17.1	55.3	46.6	33.7	52,500	
Psychological services	3.1	3.5	0.9	1.3	2.6	1.2	8.7	2.5	2.5	3,900	
Psychiatric services	3.8	3.9	2.3	5.7	3.3	2.8	12.2	1.7	3.6	5,600	
Pregnancy support	1.5	2.4	1.0	1.6	2.4	1.5	5.6	1.5	1.7	2,700	
Family planning support	1.0	1.1	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.7	3.1	0.7	1.0	1,500	
Drug/alcohol support or intervention	16.5	9.2	25.8	14.9	8.8	5.8	30.4	7.0	15.9	24,700	
Physical disability services	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	1.2	0.3	0.4	600	
Intellectual disability services	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.5	1.6	0.3	0.4	700	
Culturally appropriate support	4.5	5.2	26.1	10.6	5.5	0.9	7.8	31.2	11.3	17,600	
Interpreter services	1.3	2.0	0.4	1.2	0.9	0.4	1.5	0.5	1.2	1,800	
Assistance with immigration issues	0.8	1.1	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.2	1.6	0.2	0.7	1,100	
Health/medical services	14.4	14.5	32.4	17.0	13.5	8.8	33.5	17.8	19.3	30,000	
Basic support and services n.e.s.	81.6	42.9	69.5	75.8	52.6	61.6	90.0	86.4	66.0	102,800	
Meals	71.9	22.6	62.3	61.4	35.9	38.3	68.4	79.3	52.9	82,300	
Laundry/shower facilities	71.9	15.3	60.4	64.7	36.0	37.6	75.6	75.2	50.9	79,200	
Recreation	23.2	11.6	41.6	18.2	26.5	17.9	65.4	56.0	26.2	40,700	
Transport	26.8	23.6	24.6	31.9	26.1	28.3	56.6	49.5	27.0	42,000	
Other	15.6	12.8	6.1	10.4	5.4	11.7	13.4	15.1	11.2	17,400	
No needs recorded	0.5	1.4	0.6	0.1	0.9	2.4	—	0.9	0.8	1,300	
Total (%)	27.1	24.4	24.8	8.3	7.8	3.2	1.5	2.9	100.0	..	
Total (number)	42,200	38,100	38,700	12,900	12,100	5,000	2,300	4,500	..	155,700	

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 3,617 closed support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. Clients were able to receive multiple services, so percentages do not total 100.
3. A client may require more than one type of service within a broad type of assistance.
4. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 7.2: SAAP services requested by clients in closed support periods, by provision, Australia, 2001–02

Part a: Individual types of services requested in closed support periods, by provision (per cent closed support periods)

Type of service	Not provided			Provided			Total	Closed support periods (number)
	Neither provided nor referred	Referred	Subtotal	Provided only	Provided and referred	Subtotal		
Housing/accommodation								
SAAP/CAP accommodation	3.5	3.3	6.8	89.8	3.4	93.2	100.0	108,700
Assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation	9.6	12.1	21.7	69.0	9.3	78.3	100.0	40,000
Assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing	32.5	12.4	44.9	41.6	13.5	55.1	100.0	45,500
Financial/employment								
Assistance to obtain/maintain government payment	5.8	10.1	15.9	68.7	15.5	84.2	100.0	23,100
Employment/training assistance	61.7	12.9	74.6	17.2	8.3	25.5	100.0	17,300
Financial assistance/material aid	4.8	8.5	13.3	75.9	10.8	86.7	100.0	44,300
Financial counselling	10.8	12.5	23.3	66.8	9.9	76.7	100.0	13,000
Counselling								
Incest/sexual assault	15.2	20.6	35.8	46.2	17.9	64.1	100.0	4,300
Domestic violence	6.9	7.0	13.9	75.4	10.7	86.1	100.0	23,200
Family/relationship	10.4	10.0	20.4	68.0	11.7	79.7	100.0	21,200
Emotional/other	2.9	1.5	4.4	91.1	4.5	95.6	100.0	64,200
Assistance with problem gambling	22.6	17.8	40.4	40.9	18.7	59.6	100.0	1,300
General support/advocacy								
Living skills/personal development	34.7	2.0	36.7	60.6	2.8	63.4	100.0	31,400
Assistance with legal issues/court support	8.9	15.5	24.4	52.8	22.8	75.6	100.0	16,400
Advice/information	1.2	0.2	1.4	94.4	4.2	98.6	100.0	90,800
Retrieval/storage/removal of belongings	2.4	1.5	3.9	94.2	1.8	96.0	100.0	39,300
Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client	2.3	0.9	3.2	90.2	6.6	96.8	100.0	44,600
Brokerage services	3.6	5.5	9.1	82.4	8.6	91.0	100.0	6,500
Specialist services								
Psychological services	27.3	39.2	66.5	18.1	15.3	33.4	100.0	3,900
Psychiatric services	18.9	33.8	52.7	25.3	22.0	47.3	100.0	5,600
Pregnancy support	11.5	15.2	26.7	52.1	21.2	73.3	100.0	2,700
Family planning support	16.2	20.8	37.0	41.9	21.1	63.0	100.0	1,500
Drug/alcohol support or intervention	14.2	9.8	24.0	63.1	13.0	76.1	100.0	24,700
Physical disability services	20.3	32.7	53.0	28.5	18.5	47.0	100.0	600
Intellectual disability services	25.9	33.1	59.0	22.4	18.6	41.0	100.0	700
Culturally appropriate support	2.2	3.2	5.4	90.8	3.8	94.6	100.0	17,600
Interpreter services	7.1	11.9	19.0	66.8	14.2	81.0	100.0	1,800
Assistance with immigration issues	9.3	16.2	25.5	47.8	26.6	74.4	100.0	1,100
Health/medical services	6.2	19.3	25.5	59.2	15.4	74.6	100.0	30,000
Basic support and services n.e.s.								
Meals	1.2	1.1	2.3	96.7	1.0	97.7	100.0	82,300
Laundry/shower facilities	0.9	0.4	1.3	98.3	0.3	98.6	100.0	79,200
Recreation	1.9	0.7	2.6	96.4	1.0	97.4	100.0	40,700
Transport	3.0	1.8	4.8	93.4	1.8	95.2	100.0	42,000
Other	2.3	1.4	3.7	92.6	3.7	96.3	100.0	17,400

(continued)

Table 7.2 (continued): SAAP services requested by clients in closed support periods, by provision, Australia, 2001-02

Part b: Broad types of SAAP services requested in closed support periods, by provision

Broad type of service	Not provided			Provided			Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
	Neither provided nor referred	Referred	Subtotal	Provided only	Provided and referred	Subtotal			
	% distinct services requested							Number	Number
Housing/accommodation	11.5	7.3	18.8	74.2	7.0	81.2	100.0	194,200	130,100
Financial/employment	15.9	10.2	26.1	62.6	11.3	73.9	100.0	97,800	65,800
Counselling	5.8	5.1	10.9	81.4	7.8	89.2	100.0	114,200	73,100
General support/advocacy	6.8	2.1	8.9	85.6	5.5	91.1	100.0	229,000	110,100
Specialist services	9.9	15.2	25.1	61.6	13.3	74.9	100.0	90,200	52,500
Basic support and services n.e.s.	1.6	1.0	2.6	96.3	1.1	97.4	100.0	261,700	102,800
Total (%)	7.4	5.2	12.6	81.2	6.2	87.4	100.0
Total (number)	73,300	50,900	124,200	801,900	61,000	862,900	..	987,000	154,400

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 3,617 closed support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. In groups of service types, a client may require more than one type of service within the group. Percentages for broad groups relate to all needs and not to support periods. For individual types of services, a need can be recorded only once within a support period, so percentages relate to support periods.
3. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 7.3: SAAP services requested by the client in closed support periods that were neither provided nor referred: broad type of service by client group, Australia, 2001–02

	Male alone under 25	Male alone 25+	Female alone under 25	Female alone 25+	Couple no children	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other	Total		
Broad type of service										% unmet needs	%	Number
Housing/ accommodation	29.1	31.0	25.6	29.5	38.9	43.7	45.3	31.0	40.0	30.5	22,400	
Financial/ employment	20.4	25.6	17.3	23.9	23.5	17.3	15.6	13.4	16.1	21.4	15,700	
Counselling	9.8	2.8	16.0	7.4	6.4	14.0	12.2	17.9	9.4	8.9	6,500	
General support/ advocacy	18.2	25.0	17.2	25.2	21.9	9.1	12.2	17.5	13.3	21.4	15,700	
Specialist services	12.6	12.0	13.6	10.4	6.5	11.5	10.0	14.0	9.7	12.0	8,800	
Basic support and services n.e.s.	9.9	3.5	10.4	3.6	2.8	4.5	4.7	6.3	11.5	5.7	4,200	
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>73,300</i>	
Summary totals												
Total unmet needs (%)	13.5	35.1	13.3	17.3	3.2	2.3	0.8	13.8	0.5	100.0	..	
Total unmet needs (number)	9,900	25,700	9,800	12,700	2,400	1,700	600	10,100	400	..	73,300	
Total closed support periods with unmet needs (%)	13.3	35.3	12.1	16.0	3.3	3.0	1.1	15.4	0.6	100.0	..	
Total closed support periods with unmet needs (number)	4,300	11,500	3,900	5,200	1,100	1,000	300	5,000	200	..	32,600	
Total closed support periods (%)	12.9	34.1	11.7	15.0	2.5	2.7	0.9	19.3	0.8	100.0	..	
Total closed support periods (number)	19,900	52,600	18,100	23,200	3,900	4,100	1,400	29,800	1,200	..	154,200	

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 879 identified unmet needs.
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 391 closed support periods with identified unmet needs.
3. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 5,754 closed support periods, including cases with no information on service requirements or provision.
4. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.