

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2023-24

Key Takeaways for Western Australia

Overview

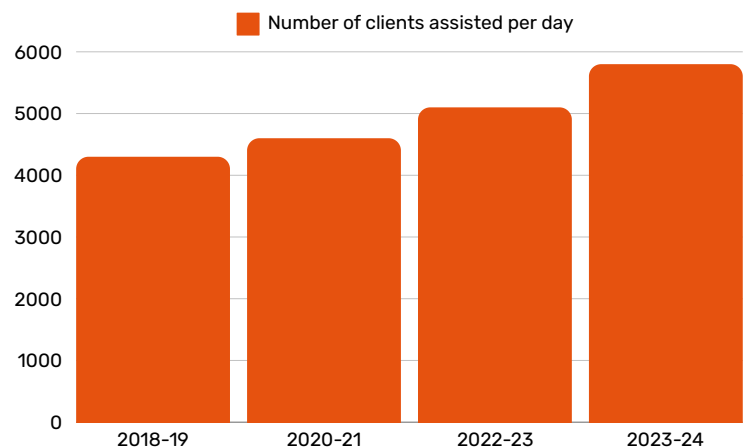
24,993 Total number of clients who were assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) in WA in 2023-24 was 24,993, representing a five-year peak.

The total number of SHS clients assisted in WA increased by 2% from the previous year.

Although the total number of clients assisted annually has increased slightly over the last five years, the 'On any given day' data reveals a more significant increase in assistance provided daily.

2023-24 saw an average of 5800 clients assisted per day, a 14% increase from last year (5100 per day in 2022-23), a 26% increase from three years ago (4600 per day in 2020-21), and a 35% increase from five years ago (4300 per day in 2018-19).

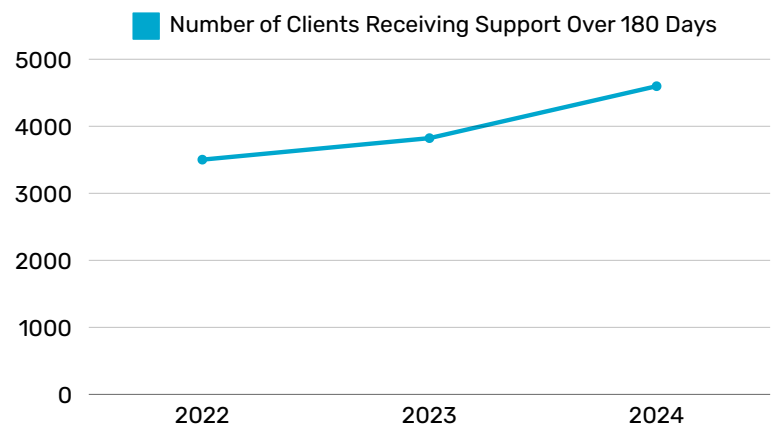
This outpaces the national average increase of 3%, 7%, and 13% respectively.

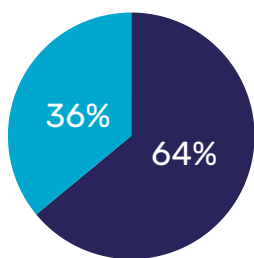


Much like last year, this suggests that the support periods are longer, and interventions needed may be more intensive.

This is evidenced by:

- A 20% increase from last year in the number of clients receiving support over 180 days (3823 in 2022-23 to 4598 in 2023-24).
- The average length of support jumping from 81 days in 2022-23 to 91 days in 2023-24 (a 10% increase).
- The increasing number of returning clients also supports this.



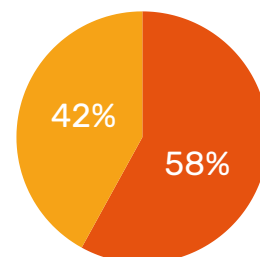


64% of SHS clients were returning clients while 36% were new clients.

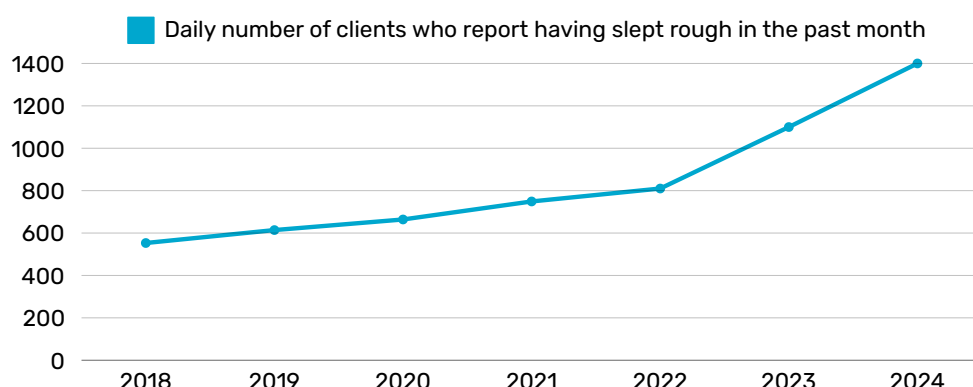
This reflects a three-year trend of increases in returning clients (up 3% from three years ago) and decreases in new clients (down 12% from three years ago).

42% of clients were homeless on first presentation and 58% were at risk of homelessness.

Almost 3,000 clients were rough sleeping at first presentation. This represents a 19% increase from last year and a 35% increase from five years ago.



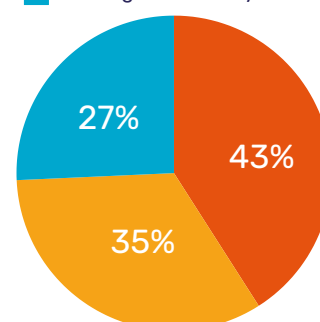
Similarly, the daily number of clients who report having slept rough in the past month jumped to 1400 people (compared to 1100 one year ago and 614 five years ago). This equates to a 27% increase from last year and a 128% increase from five years ago.



The top three reasons for seeking assistance remained the same as last year, with slight increases as follows:

- 43% family and domestic violence (compared to 42% last year and 37% nationally)
- 35% financial difficulties (compared to 34% last year and 41% nationally)
- 27% housing affordability stress (compared to 25% last year and 36% nationally)

Family domestic violence
Financial difficulties
Housing affordability stress



The daily number of clients spending the night in crisis accommodation has continued to increase (from 614 in 2018-19 to 760 in 2023-24, a 24% increase).

Accommodation & Housing

62% of clients in Western Australia needed accommodation (higher than the national figure of 58%).

81% of clients who needed short-term, or emergency accommodation received it during their support periods. This drops to:

- 26%** for medium-term or transitional housing and
- 2%** just 2% for long-term housing.

25% of clients who were homeless were assisted into housing.

91% of clients at risk of homelessness were assisted to maintain housing.

Demographics

66% of SHS clients were female and 34% were male (higher than the national figures of 60% and 40% respectively).

50% of SHS clients were First Nations, the same as last year. This is higher than five years ago (43% in 2018-19) and higher than the national figure (29%).

Clients with a disability increased 31% from last year, higher than the national increase of 8%.

Clients aged 55+ increased 22% from five years ago (2274 in 2018-19 to 2779 in 2023-24), higher than the national increase of 18%.

Single parents were the most common living arrangements at 34%. This is roughly in line with previous years and the national figures. "Other families" now account for 27% of clients, compared to the national figure of 17%.

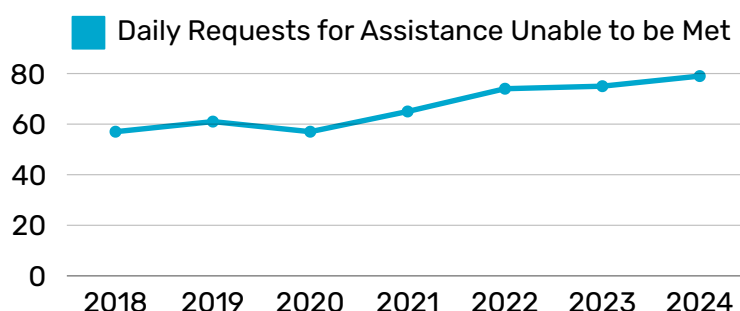
The daily number of clients who were children in families increased 17% in one year (from 1200 children last year to 1400 this year) and 27% in the last five years.

The proportion of SHS clients who are employed has increased from 10% in 2018-19 to 15% in 2023-24.

The proportion of SHS clients not in the labour force (e.g. not able to work) has decreased from 32% five years ago to 22% this year.

Unmet Need for Services

An average of 79 requests for assistance per day are unable to be met. This is the highest in the country. This figure represents a 30% increase from five years ago (61 in 2018-19) compared to 19% increase nationally over the same period.



63% of daily unassisted requests are women.

77% of daily average unassisted requests are for short-term or emergency accommodation; 24% are for other housing.

74% of daily average unassisted requests for short term or emergency accommodation were not provided because there was no accommodation available.

Almost 30% of need identified for mental health, disability, and drug and alcohol service and assistance was not provided.

Source: [AIHW website](#)