

Submission by Micah Projects

Inquiry into the continuing operation of the
National Redress Scheme

5 February 2026



We would like to acknowledge people who have experienced childhood sexual abuse who shared their stories and experiences in order to produce this submission.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of Micah Projects' Redress Support Workers in North Queensland, Central Queensland and South East Queensland for their contribution in articulating the issues they face daily in supporting individuals to participate in the National Redress Scheme.

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“We see in our work that justice is a form of healing and how healing is a form of justice.”
– David Denborough

Introduction

Micah Projects, through Lotus Support Services, is the leading supporter of people who have experienced childhood abuse in an institutional setting or out-of-home care, often referred to as Forgotten Australians, and care leavers in Queensland. Micah Projects has been supporting people who have experienced childhood abuse in an institutional setting or out-of-home care and care leavers for over 30 years and operates three 'Lotus Place' locations in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville. Micah Projects was the first organisation in Queensland to formally support people who have experienced childhood abuse in an institutional setting or out-of-home care and care leavers.

Micah Projects is actively engaged with over 8,000 people who were formerly in care providing information and referral services, personal and skills development support, individual advocacy and support to access services, assistance with Redress, and has more recently commenced supporting care leavers to access aged care services.

Micah Projects has been contracted by the Department of Social Services since October 2018 to provide support services to National Redress applicants through *Lotus Support Services: Redress*. During this period, Micah Projects has worked with over 1,234 potential applicants. Micah Projects has assisted over 660 people to make applications. Redress Staff are based in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville and outreach to many regional cities.

Micah Projects submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Redress is based on the experience of Micah Projects in supporting people to make claims for Redress and extensive experience in supporting people who were formerly in care.

While the Scheme was intended to provide a pathway to justice for survivors of institutional childhood abuse, its operational design, timeframes, and reliance on under-resourced support services have instead created barriers that retraumatise survivors and exclude many of the most vulnerable.

Impacts of institutional childhood abuse last a lifetime. Recognition through the Scheme does not make this trauma disappear. Survivors require long-term, adequately funded support to engage safely with redress processes, to access justice, and to manage the profound psychological and social impacts of re-engaging with their abuse history.

Housing stability, health, including mental health, economic and social participation may all be impacted upon as a consequence of re-engaging with an individual's trauma history.

As the Scheme approaches its scheduled conclusion, it is increasingly clear that without urgent reform, many eligible survivors will be left without access to justice.

1. The Scheme's operational timeline, and the potential for this timeline to be extended

The National Redress Scheme's operational timeline is fundamentally mis-aligned with the realities of trauma, record access, and survivor capacity to engage.

It is unlikely that the Scheme will process all applications before the scheduled close date. Survivors routinely experience extraordinary delays in the process of applying for Redress at every stage of the process, often waiting years between application and determination. These delays are not benign; they compound trauma, exacerbate mental health distress, and in many cases lead to withdrawal from the Scheme altogether.

Historical precedents demonstrate the risks of rigid closure dates:

- the Forde Inquiry,
- the Disability Royal Commission,
- Stolen Wages schemes, and
- the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

In each instance, large cohorts were unable to engage due to trauma responses, disability, cultural barriers, lack of information dissemination (particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with disability), or disconnection from service systems. Many submissions were made after closing dates and were left unrecognised.

Survivors who are unable to engage within the Scheme's current timeframe are not failing to act—the Scheme is failing to accommodate trauma and vulnerability. The under resourcing of the National Redress Scheme compounds the applicants experience of re-traumatisation.

In addition, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and exploitation of people with a Disability was extended due to the inability to fully operationalise their inquiry due to Covid 19 closures. This has also applied to the National Redress Scheme implementation.

There is a clear need for:

- an extension of the Scheme,
- flexibility for late applications, and
- an ongoing pathway to justice where civil litigation is not an option, and evidentiary thresholds unfairly disadvantage survivors.

Recommendation

- Extend the National Redress Scheme beyond its current end date. Considering the two plus years that Covid affected the ability to proactively engage with survivors it would be reasonable to extend the scheme by two years.

2. The accessibility, funding, and transition plans for support services as the Scheme concludes

2.1 Accessibility

There has been a lack of engagement with the community about the National Redress Scheme throughout Australia. Most Australians are unaware of the Scheme and who is eligible to apply. The Service Charter for the National Redress Scheme under the heading “Finding out about the Scheme and considering your options” states there is a commitment to communicating widely about the Scheme. This aspiration has not been met.

Accessibility to the Scheme is significantly constrained by capacity limitations within Redress Support Services and by Scheme-imposed timeframes that do not reflect operational reality.

Support services are currently required to “hold space” for survivors for up to three years without adequate resourcing. This severely limits outreach capacity to cohorts who are disengaged from non-existent or under resourced service systems, including:

- people experiencing homelessness,
- people with disability,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
- LGBTIQ+ survivors,
- people in custody,
- care leavers and former child migrants, and
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The following case study highlights the complexity of the issues faced by prospective applicants. Many issues need to be addressed and supported in order to not exclude individuals whose lives are chaotic with a direct correlation to their sexual abuse.

K is 27-year-old indigenous women from a remote community. The Queensland Government Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety were involved with her and her family for most of her childhood, and she had multiple foster care placements with both kinship and non-kinship carers. She experienced sexual abuse in both foster care settings.

K has Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder that impacts on her cognitive capacity, and a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

She has the Queensland Public Trustee and the Public Guardian in Queensland appointed as substitute decision-makers. K made contact with Lotus Support Service for assistance to draft and submit her application to the National Redress Scheme around three years ago.

At this time, she had a newborn child and was supported under the NDIS. She had acquired her records of time in care. Shortly after referral, K disengaged from Lotus Support Services and was not contactable.

When she reconnected many months later, she had moved to another regional town with her partner. She was a victim of domestic violence, including physical, emotional and financial abuse, and living in temporary accommodation settings with her partner and infant child.

She was referred to support providers but has difficulty with building trusting working relationships due to her background of trauma and would frequently disengage. Additionally, after her experiences with the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, she is deeply resentful of any service she regards as having any control over her life, including the Queensland Public Trustee and the Queensland Public Guardian, leading to difficulties with receiving support for her mental health.

She has, however, continued her connection with Lotus Place. Her personal circumstances since relocating have been unsafe, unstable and chaotic, and her mental health has suffered as a result. She became pregnant shortly after reconnecting with Lotus Redress Services; and again, around four months after the birth of that child, so has given birth twice in a thirteen-month period.

Her three children have been removed from her care due to concerns over domestic violence and homelessness. She frequently expresses thoughts of self-harm and quickly becomes heightened and angry when talking about her situation.

K does still want to complete her redress application, but there is significant concern about the potentially re-traumatising effect of her recounting her history of abuse to complete an application at this time given her current circumstances and poor mental health.

Concern is specifically around the increased potential for suicidality and a deterioration in her relationship with her children should she be deemed a risk to them.

Lotus Redress Services has determined, in conjunction with K, that it is in her best interest at this time to focus on supported service access, contact with her children, advocacy, safety, and mental health support rather than going through the application process.

K's main priority is reconciliation with her children.

K and Lotus Redress are concerned that she will not be well or safe enough to complete an application prior to the application deadline for the scheme.

Micah Projects experience during the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability demonstrated that targeted engagement strategies, developed in collaboration with specialist services, can successfully engage these cohorts. However, current funding models under the National Redress Scheme make this work impossible.

Additionally, Scheme timeframes are incompatible with record access realities. Survivors are required to meet statutory response deadlines (e.g. eight weeks under section 24), while record searches frequently take 12 months or longer. Find & Connect services are particularly impacted. This disconnect actively blocks access to Redress.

The National Redress Service Charter in its service standards states *"We will answer 80% of calls within 2 minutes."* Neither applicant, nor indeed our staff, find this an accurate statement as calls are rarely answered without long waits.

The call centre phones cut out after 10 minutes of waiting and a recorded message stating to try again later. There is also an inability to leave a message. Applicants are both frustrated and angry at this non-responsive system.

The promotion by the Scheme for participants to use MyGov as their method of engagement does not accommodate the lack of computer-based skills of many participants. We are frequently told by participants that they do not want anything to do with Redress on their MyGov accounts.

2.2 Record searching

There is a very real issue with participants being able to access records from responsible institutions to confirm their eligibility for the scheme as well as procure in some cases the documented evidence of their abuse. Many institutions have an inability or reluctance to provide documentation in a timely way. Some institutions go as far as to deny access to records stating that they will only provide records to the National Redress Scheme.

An S24 requirements to respond within an eight-week time frame. To the request for further information, it may take nine to twelve months to access the required information from the responsible institution.

The issue of lack of records needs to be addressed. Where institutions lack records, it makes a person who is applying for Redress ineligible to proceed. Issues like the Queensland Government stating that the records were lost in the 1974 floods should not be an impediment to proceed.

The applicants' recollections and relevant life course often pay testament to the reality of abuse occurring and as such should not automatically deem an individual ineligible.

2.3 Funding arrangements

Funding arrangements fail to recognise the clinical and case management complexity inherent in redress engagement.

There is no funded provision for:

- clinical counselling at intake,
- ongoing clinical therapeutic support during drafting, and
- support during prolonged waiting periods between submission and outcome.

Many survivors experience severe distress when re-engaging with their trauma histories, including but not limited to:

- anxiety,
- depression,
- flashbacks,
- suicidal ideation,
- relapse into substance misuse,
- deterioration in quality of life,

- deterioration of personal relationships including family breakdown and domestic and family violence
- increase in stress related health issues, and/or
- anger / rage.

Redress Support Services are not funded to provide the level of clinical support required, despite being relied upon to manage high-risk situations.

Micah Redress Support Service staff each deal with above issues on a daily basis.

After a week where we had three individuals who were so stressed and depressed by the lengthy time frames, and lack of a timely outcome by the National Redress Scheme that they each rang our service in severe distress with very real threats of self-harm and suicide.

Fortunately, our worker was clinically trained and was able through regular and persistent intervention and advocacy resolve their issues temporarily.

2.4 Transition planning

There is no clear transition plan for survivors still engaged with support services when the Scheme concludes. Without additional funding and continuity planning, survivors will be left without therapeutic or case management support at a critical point.

Recommendations

1. Increase and extend funding for Redress Support Services to provide end-to-end counselling and case management from engagement to post outcome particularly when applicants are found ineligible.
2. Provide supplementary funding for targeted engagement strategies for services with demonstrated success engaging:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples,
 - people with disability,
 - care leavers,
 - former child migrants,
 - people in custody,
 - culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and / or
 - survivors unable to apply or recently deemed ineligible.
3. Benchmark and resource record-search timeframes across all relevant institutions including government departments.
4. Remove or modify intrusive Department of Social Services reporting requirements that retraumatise survivors.
5. Develop and execute a meaningful communication campaign about the National Redress Scheme to disseminate information.
6. Ensure call centre staff can answer calls in a timely manner and reinstate the ability to leave a message.
7. Offer choice to participants who do not wish to engage with MyGov.
8. Development of a comprehensive transitional plan to provide ongoing support post the National Redress Scheme's operation.

3. Current case management issues, information requests, and the timeframe required to resolve these matters

3.1 Timeliness of National Redress Scheme processing

The major issue for participants and the Redress Support Service is the length of time taken to process applications for the Scheme.

The intent of the Scheme was to give participants the opportunity to have access to some justice making regarding their sexual abuse as children.

The lack of timeliness increases trauma, stress, distress and functioning and is unacceptable to survivors. It also significantly increases the workload of Redress Support Services as we deal with the impacts of compounded trauma with engagement characterised with frustration, anger, resentment and frequent distressed calls with an increase in suicidal ideation as coping decreases significantly at the two-year mark.

Application process

Timelines for processing an application for Redress.

While the timeframes vary for each of the stages of a redress application, the following times are common for most applications we process.

The exception is when individuals meet the requirements for urgent processing.

Timelines:

A prospective applicant contacts Micah Projects' Lotus Support, Redress expressing interest in making an application.

Wait time: 6-9 months

Commencement of application

Some applications take up to 2 years to complete. This is dependent on participant circumstance, how they engage with their trauma and capacity to cope.

Timeframe: frequently 12-24 months

Stage 1. of National Redress Scheme processing

Verification of application resulting in an Outbound Acknowledgement Call.

Time frame: Up to 6 months, sometimes longer

Stage 2. of National Redress Scheme processing

Request for information - sometimes with multiple contacts for further information.

Wait time: Up to 18 months

Stage 3. of National Redress Scheme processing

Determination by an Independent Decision Maker.

Wait time: Up to 2 years for an outcome

Stage 4. of National Redress Scheme processing

Outcome- Positive outcome

Wait time: Reasonably quickly, if applicant is timely in accepting an offer

Outcome- Negative outcome review

Wait time: up to 12 months

3.2 There is little recognition within the Scheme or Department of Social Services of the complexity involved in supporting a survivor from initial engagement to outcome.

See Appendix 1 which is a process map of Micah Projects' Redress Support Services framework for undertaking the responsibility of assisting participants to apply to the National Redress Scheme.

3.3 Survivors commonly present with intersecting issues including:

- family and domestic violence,
- homelessness,
- child protection involvement,
- mental health crises,
- ageing and health concerns, and/or
- legal matters unrelated to redress.

These issues often must be stabilised before an application can be drafted, as we acknowledge the responsibility we have to engage safely with Redress applicants before commencing an application.

There is a need to embed a Support and Advocacy worker in each Redress Support Service in order to work on the above issues to stabilise individuals so that an application can proceed. These positions will require a brokerage component. The difficulty in accessing and receiving funds from services funded to provide Emergency Funding are inadequate to meet the needs of individuals in crisis.

While writing this submission today we received the following email: *"I don't have the capacity to chase up inappropriate supports or supports that may not be in my catchment. I am barely keeping my head above water and trying not to drown. None of these services actually offer anything."*

In the words of a survivor to the Queensland Minister for community services "Darling, what I'd like you to do is pretend you are me and ring all the services in the front of the phonebook outside 9-4 Monday to Friday and try and get a service. On second thought ring them anytime and try and get a service but remember don't get exacerbated or frustrated, or the call will be disconnected."

Many trauma responses intensify as a direct result of disclosure and prolonged waiting periods.

3.4 Information requests and repeated procedural changes further delay progress and contribute to distress. Survivors are more likely to disengage, relapse into addiction, or experience suicidal ideation during extended waiting periods.

Recommendation 7.3 of the Australian Government Review, particularly regarding funded psychological and case management support, has not been met.

Recommendations

1. Offer Counselling, Psychological Care and case management support at commencement of engagement through to post outcome by embedding a Counsellor and Pathways Navigator into each Redress Support Service. This role is to undertake brief intervention support for those who are deeply distressed. Appendix 2 is a copy of the role of Lotus Redress Services Counselling and Pathways Navigator.
2. Reduce reliance on Redress Support Services to manage Scheme processes without adequate funding.
3. Stabilise Scheme workflows and minimise procedural changes that create uncertainty.

4. Outstanding applications and determinations, and processes needed to maximise just outcomes before the Scheme concludes

4.1 The Scheme lacks transparency, consistency, and accountability in its processing and decision-making.

Survivors are often unable to determine:

- where their application sits,
- what each stage involves,
- why delays are occurring, and/or
- whether quality assurance checks have been completed.

The issue of Stages of an application in relation to the processing of an application needs resolving. Since the inception of the Scheme, it was a four-stage process with Redress Support Services being able to confidently inform participants of the process their application would take. Our monthly Redress Support Service Report: Data as of 5 January 2026 states very clearly a four-stage process.

A five-stage process was initiated by the scheme with no communication to Redress Services about the relevant changes. When seeking clarity, the Redress Scheme has been reluctant to clarify the new process with vague and unhelpful responses further adding to the inability to proactively support individuals with clarity about their applications.

4.2 Outcome calls from the National Redress Scheme

Outcome communications are frequently reported as rushed, inconsistent, and lacking empathy despite the National Redress Charter stating *“all our contact with you will be trauma informed. This means we are mindful of the impact of your experience and take care to avoid causing further distress.”*

Language such as “fanciful” or “remote” is deeply harmful and contradicts trauma-informed principles.

There are some excellent workers at the Scheme, such as “L”, a long-term staff member who delivers the appropriate scripting with compassion and empathy. This is done in a way that does not come across as formulaic or scripted. Others, in the words of participants, deliver an outcome in a “cringeworthy”, “paternalistic” or “offhand” manner.

The wording of Outcome Calls is also an issue. The following case study illustrates this point:

In 2025, our Redress Support Service was contacted by an applicant whose application had been found ineligible. This decision was made after an S24 process (a process that included her being interviewed by phone, without a support person, by an NRS representative). The wording on the Statement of Reasons included:

“Her recollections are fragmented and dream-like, based on images in her memory.”

van der Kolk’s psychobiological theory ([van der Kolk, 1987, 1994](#)) and Brewin’s dual representation model of PTSD ([Brewin 1996, 2001, 2014](#); [Brewin et al., 2010](#)) suggest that trauma memories are uniquely encoded in autobiographical memory, separated from the overall memory network, and difficult to recall verbally. They further suggest that trauma narratives are characterised by sensory aspects, incoherence, and a lack of sequence, collectively referred to as fragmentation.

The Statement of Reasons went on to say:

“On the information before me, I cannot be satisfied there is a reasonable likelihood the applicant experienced the abuse as described. I am not satisfied the chance the abuse occurred is real and more than merely plausible – that it is not fanciful or remote.”

This wording was interpreted by the applicant to mean that she was not believed.

Implications:

- The applicant was distressed, both by the S24 interview and response process, as well as the subsequent wording in the Statement of Reasons. In her S24 response, she stated: “having to revisit the experience made me feel sick and retraumatised me.”
- The redress support worker who is assisting the applicant with her review has spent several months working with her, because she finds it very difficult to speak about what happened to her. In the applicant’s review request, she notes that she did not provide full details of her abuse in her original application or her S24 response because she did not understand the level of detail that was required.
- There is a lack of understanding of the complexity involved in peoples live that impede their ability to initially engage with and continue engagement with Redress Support Service. *“I don’t have the capacity to chase up inappropriate supports or supports that may not be in my catchment. I am barely keeping my head above water and trying not to drown. None of these services actually offer anything.”*

The inclusion of an Advocacy and Support worker in the funding arrangements would free up Redress Support Workers to focus on submitting applications, thus reducing wait-times and increasing the volume of applications. See appendix three which is a position description of a Lotus Support Service: Redress Support and Advocacy worker role.

4.3 Advanced payments

The issue of advanced payments is both perplexing and a source of frustration and anger for some participants.

While the Scheme has a set of criteria for the \$10,000 advanced payment, people are often found ineligible.

It appears that the amount of evidence was/is more pertinent to the National Redress Scheme when awarding Advance Payments, instead of the participant’s actual circumstances and current vulnerability. The scheme states that while individuals may be eligible for an Advanced Payment it is discretionary.

A common experience has also been to move individuals from stage 2 to stage 3 before granting an application and therefore finding the person ineligible, even though it may take up to a further two years for a determination.

Applicant 1	Applicant 2
9 x documents/pieces of evidence put forward in private application for Advance Payment	3 x documents/pieces of evidence put forward in private application for Advance Payment
Circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At risk of homelessness - Financial debts - Employed 	Circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Living on the street (experiencing homelessness) - No money thus unable to afford accommodation - Unemployed - Committed an offence in order to have accommodation via prison
'Eligible' for Advance Payment	'Not Eligible' for Advance Payment

4.4 Independent Decision Makers

Inconsistent Independent Decision Maker decisions indicate applications are being assessed against varying standards.

The Scheme's original intent to process applications upon the basis of probability is no longer apparent. Our Redress Support Workers have seen a marked change from reasonable likelihood to beyond reasonable doubt.

Applications that would once have been deemed eligible are now more frequently found to be ineligible. The notion of benchmarking seems questionable.

As a Redress Support Service, we have received a number of applications which have been denied on the Independent Decision Maker's ability to believe the application, based on their opinion about perpetrator behaviour.

To paraphrase an application *"The sexual abuse in a toilet block at school would be remote and fanciful due to the number of other students and teachers around"*. In another case a young woman was sexually abused in a car park after a church youth group and the Independent Decision Maker found the case ineligible as the possibility was remote. Both these seem to reflect a lack of understanding of perpetrator behaviour and resulted in our undertaking an appeal process as requested by the applicant.

We are now in the position of regularly having to assist individuals in appeals processes which are lengthy and protracted and require a high level of additional work. The National Redress Service Charter states that appeals will be responded to within three months. This appears to imply an outcome rather than merely receipt of the application. In our experience it may take nine months or more for an appeals outcome.

4.5 The voice of those with lived experience

There has been a lack of engagement with people who are participants in the National Redress Scheme. The National Redress Scheme Survivor Roundtable held in Perth in March 2024 is a token response to those eligible for the Scheme. There is no formal mechanism for participants to individually or collectively give feedback.

4.6 Engagement by the National Redress Scheme with Redress Support Service

The National Redress Scheme continues to be “faceless” for Redress Support Services with communication going to a generic email address or Redress Support Workers spending time waiting for 1800 numbers to be answered. This depersonalised response can at times result in a lack of speed, clarity, immediacy, transparency and accuracy. The 1800 number is sometimes answered by new and inexperienced staff. There have been examples of staff providing misinformation which creates confusion for staff and trauma for participants. This could be resolved by embedding a National Redress Scheme staff member in each funded Redress Support Service one day per week.

Recommendations

1. Introduce a transparent application tracking system explaining each stage, benchmarks, and reasons for delay.
2. Publicly outline quality control processes for decision-making.
3. Mandate trauma-informed training for Independent Decision Makers.
4. Mandate training regarding perpetrator behaviour to all Independent Decision Makers.
5. Remove legalistic and dismissive language from all Scheme communications.
6. Reverse the onus of proof where records are unavailable, consistent with Royal Commission principles.
7. Review S24 interview processes in light of the literature on trauma and memory.
8. Review Statements of Reasons prior to release to ensure that both the language and the decisions are trauma informed.
9. Ensure that when individuals are eligible for an advanced payment this is not discretionary but approved and that any advanced payment cannot be declined when an application moves from stage 2 to stage 3.
10. Engage with the lived experience applicants and Redress Support Services to take seriously the dissatisfaction with the fundamentally flawed nature of the scheme in terms of transparency and timelines.
11. Fund Support and Advocacy Workers in each funded Redress Support Service to increase participation of vulnerable applicants and increase Redress Workers ability to focus on applications.
12. Embed a National Redress Scheme staff member in each funded Redress Support Service one day per week.

5. Planning for a possible increase in applications as the Scheme approaches its conclusion

As awareness increases closer to the closure of The Scheme, application volumes are likely to rise. The Scheme is not adequately resourced to manage this increase in the volume of people applying The Scheme.

Current practices risk excluding survivors and creating unjust outcomes.

There is still a lack of awareness of the Redress Scheme by the general Australian population.

There have been no mainstream communications for the Redress Scheme which is making it difficult for any care leavers to be aware of the Scheme unless they are already linked into a service like Lotus Place or have other networks.

This is further exacerbated for people with a disability. Many potential applicants may not know that the institution they were abused in is covered by the Scheme. This is because they were in disability specific institutions and not traditional children's institutions.

Carers, support workers, guardian(s) and Independent Decision Makers are unaware of the Scheme or the potential for them to apply on the applicant's behalf.

Increased awareness of the Scheme will be critical to increasing application numbers. By taking a lead in raising awareness the Government can show that people who suffered abuse are acknowledged, heard, and supported.

The awareness activities need to be multi-faceted – explaining what the scheme is about, it is giving people the opportunity to be heard, that support is available to make an application, and that support will be there for you throughout and after the process.

Any awareness raising needs to consider the different motivations for people to apply – sometimes financial, sometimes acknowledgement, sometimes the apology. It would also be advantageous to direct potential applicants to the support service first, not the application form.

Recommendations

1. Resource the Redress Support Scheme and Redress Support Services to manage increased demand without compromising fairness.
2. Remove unnecessary barriers such as mandatory medical certification where disclosure may retraumatise survivors.
3. Work with professional association and Human Services to increase awareness of the Scheme e.g. Australian Assoc of Social Workers, Aust. Psychological Association, Psychotherapy and Counsellor Federation of Australia etc.
4. Independent Decision Makers, parents and advocates need guidelines for how to apply on behalf of a person who has impaired capacity but has documented evidence about the nature of their sexual abuse.

6. Access to justice by vulnerable cohorts following changes to Scheme access in 2024

6.1 Responding to vulnerable groups

There still appears to be no targeted National Strategy to engage with vulnerable individuals from the following groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
- people with disability, including those in psychiatric facilities,
- care leavers,
- former child migrants,
- people in custody,
- culturally and linguistically diverse communities,
- people experiencing homelessness, and/or
- people disengaged from service systems.

The production of brochures and posters is not an engagement strategy.

Through both the National Redress Scheme and our previous work with survivors of institutional abuse, we are aware that women who, as children, were admitted to detention centres under both Care and Protection and Care and Control orders, as children they were required to undergo an internal gynaecological examination to determine both pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease status regardless of age.

Many had already experienced sexual abuse. This procedure, if the child or adolescent was uncooperative, could involve up to four male staff holding the child down while a speculum was inserted. This procedure was sanctioned by both Government and the institution and has stood outside the parameters of sexual violence although the women state their experience of the forcible penetration them was one of rape. It has had lifelong consequences for dealing with future gynaecological tests and treatment.

Recommendations

1. Restore consistency in eligibility decision-making.
2. Ensure discretionary powers are exercised transparently and equitably.
3. Reassess changes that have reduced access for vulnerable cohorts.
4. Work with Redress Support Services with experience in targeting these cohorts for optimal engagement.
5. Include in the definition of sexual assault legally sanctioned practices which in effect harmed children. The exclusion of people's experience of sexual assault/abuse where it has been legally sanctioned, especially when these procedures would not align with contemporary standards, would allowing adult survivors access to justice making.

7. Any other matters associated with the conclusion of the Scheme survivors wish to make known

There is no formal mechanism for survivors to provide feedback on the Scheme. The Department of Social Services satisfaction scoring focuses on Redress Support Services, despite dissatisfaction largely relating to Scheme processes and timeframes.

The Scheme's stated service standards (e.g. call wait times) do not reflect survivor experience.

There is also an over-reliance on Redress Support Services, and participants to facilitate processes such as Direct Personal Response (DPR), particularly for non-government institutions.

Recommendations

1. Implement survivor feedback and accountability mechanisms focused on Department of Social Services and the Scheme.
2. Reinstate regular, regionally based relationship management meetings.
3. Introduce independent oversight to hold the Scheme accountable for service standards.

9. Whether the operation and administration of the Scheme by DSS is meeting survivor expectations and statutory objectives

As a Redress Support Service, we are underfunded to meet the impost created by a Redress Scheme that fails survivors of abuse in that it does not meet the aspirations of the Scheme that was recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Childhood Sexual Abuse.

The lack of trauma informed processes, the overly lengthy timeframes requiring our service to hold space for people for up to 3 years is a very adequate system in redressing the wrongs perpetrated on individuals. This scheme which was intended to create healing and justice for individual has led to the further ramifications of individuals and created further harm.

Based on survivor experience and service delivery evidence, the Scheme's administration by DSS is not meeting survivor expectations nor its statutory objectives.

Processes are not consistently trauma-informed, timeframes cause harm, accountability mechanisms are inadequate, and survivors bear the burden of systemic inefficiencies. We are unable to achieve short wait times for those wanting to apply due to the number of people receiving support during the overly lengthy time frames for outcomes and the numbers of reviews of applications required.

The support given by Micah Projects Contract Manager has been well regarded although Contract Managers have little control over the burden of reporting required to meet Department of Social Services contractual requirements.

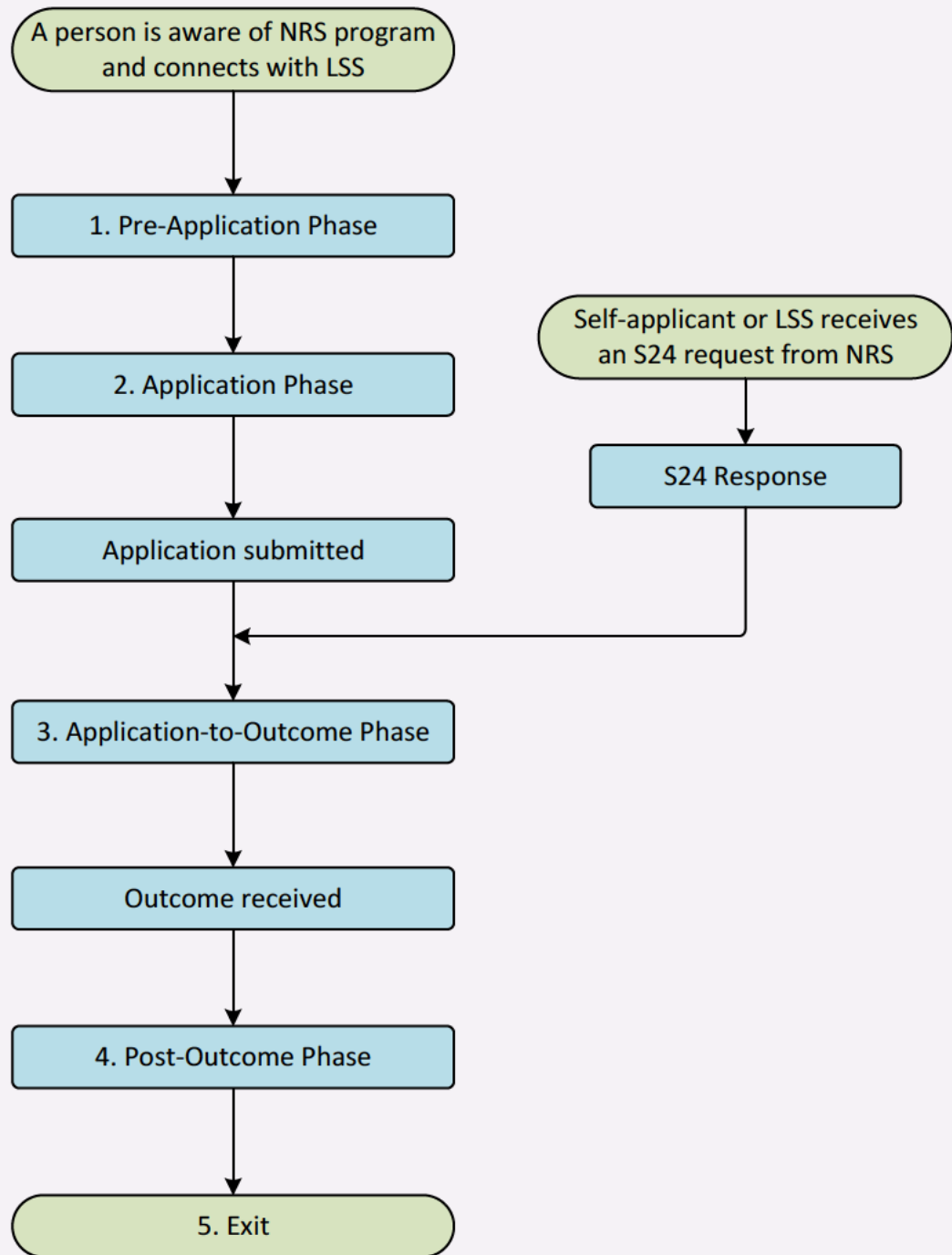
The recent increase in scoring in relation to participant engagement is a case in point. The scoring requirement has resulted in an increase in scoring from a 20% requirement in a quarterly period to a 50% requirement. This scoring is aimed at measuring participant satisfaction with the Redress Support Service and attempt to establish in a peculiar way skills development amongst other outputs. It is another onerous requirement that takes away from direct service delivery. This participant satisfaction requirement should include a category of satisfaction with the National Redress Scheme.

Recommendations

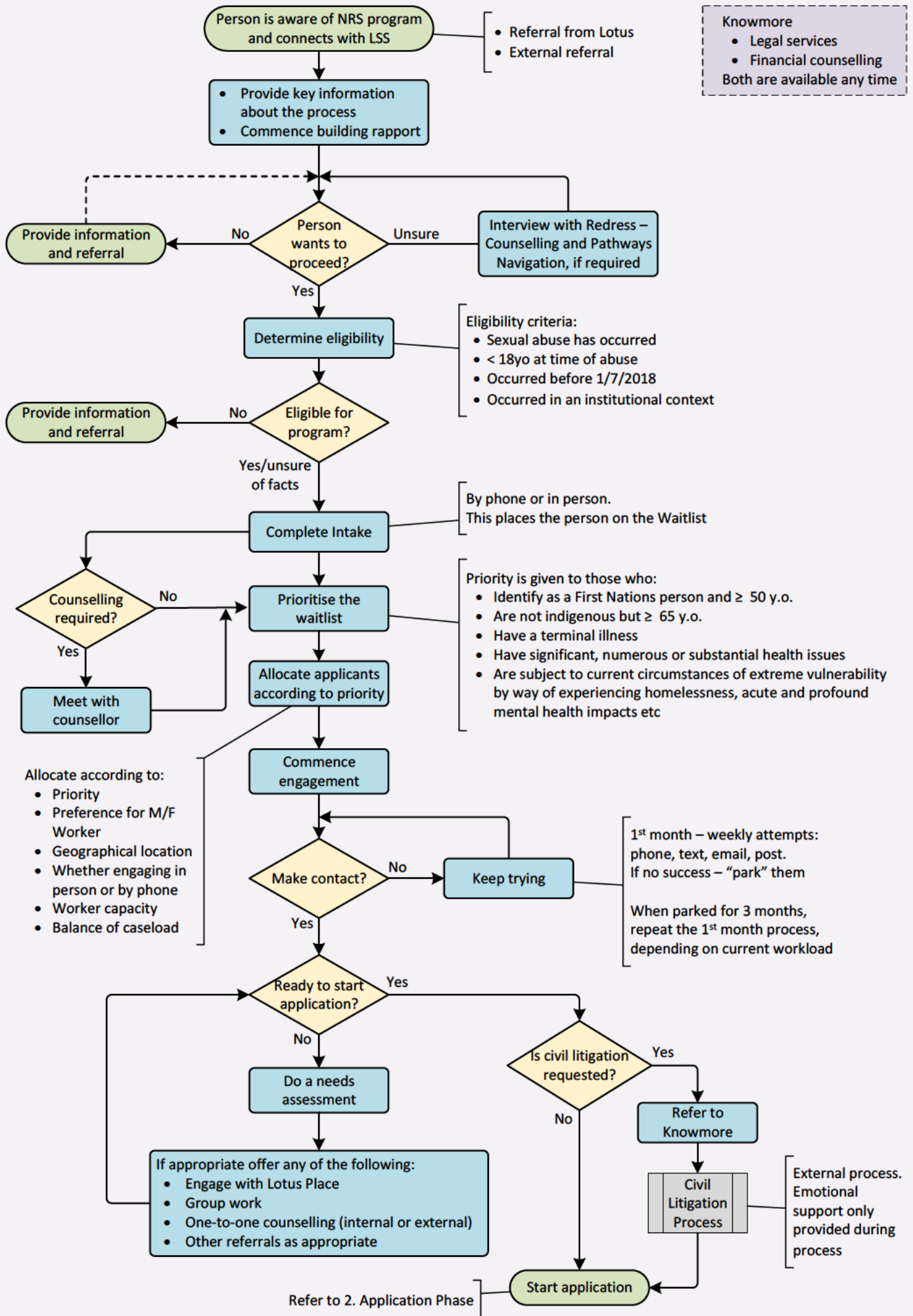
1. Align monetary payments with Royal Commission recommendations.
2. Ensure institutional contributions are equal and not survivor dependent.
3. Implement Recommendation 6.9 of the Government Review to strengthen accountability.
4. Reverse Scoring requirement for Redress Support Services to 20% from the increase to 50%
5. Implement a Participant Satisfaction Scoring for the National Redress Scheme.
6. Provide Counselling and Psychological care throughout the process by funding Clinical Counselling and Pathways Navigation worker in each Redress Support Service as previously recommended.
7. Increase funding to allow Redress Support Service to provide comprehensive advocacy and support for those on waitlists to engage with services around issues such as housing, domestic violence, income support, mental health and peer support service in order to free up Redress Workers to focus on applications.

Appendix 1 Micah Redress Workflow

LSS Redress Process



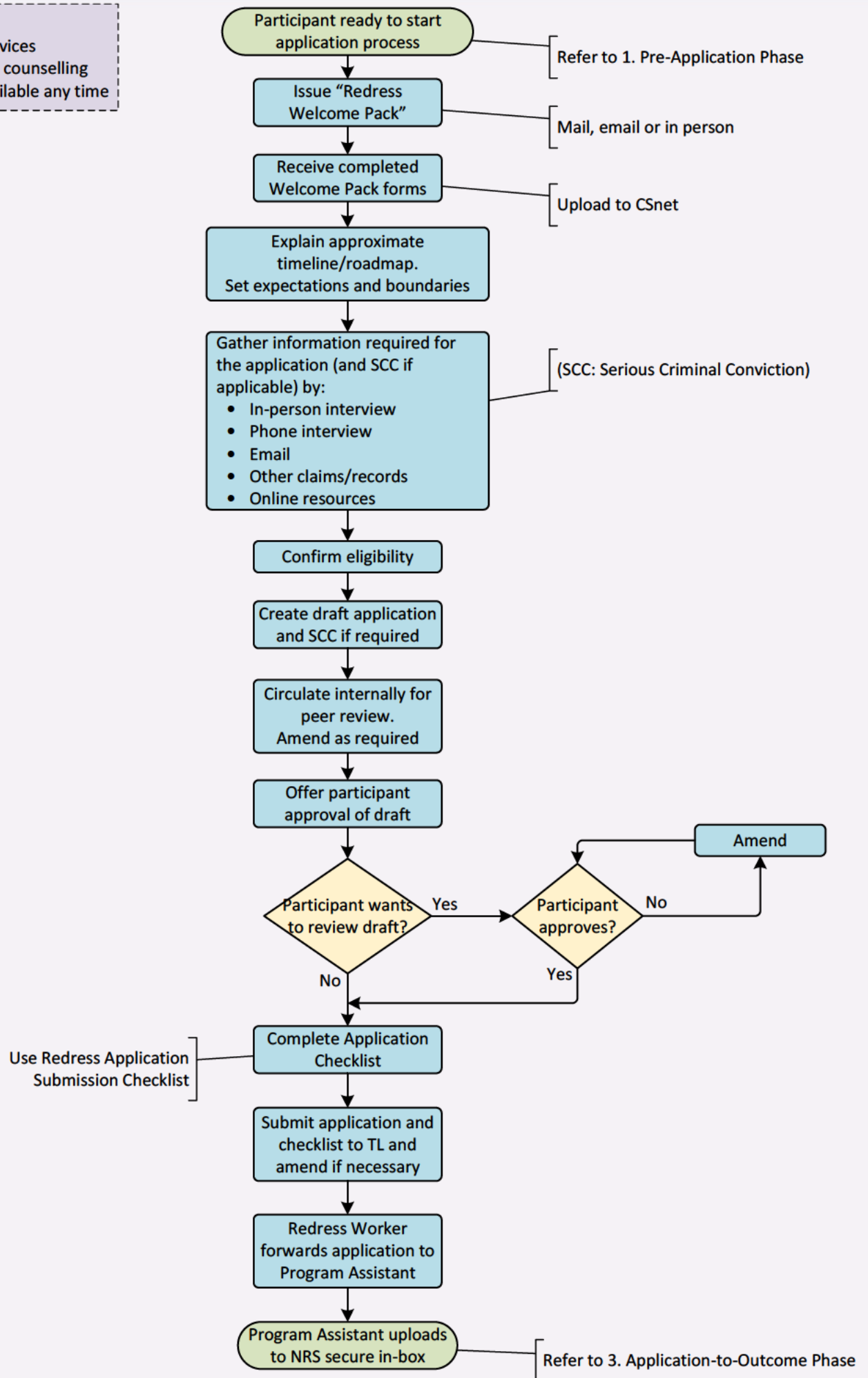
1. Pre-Application Phase



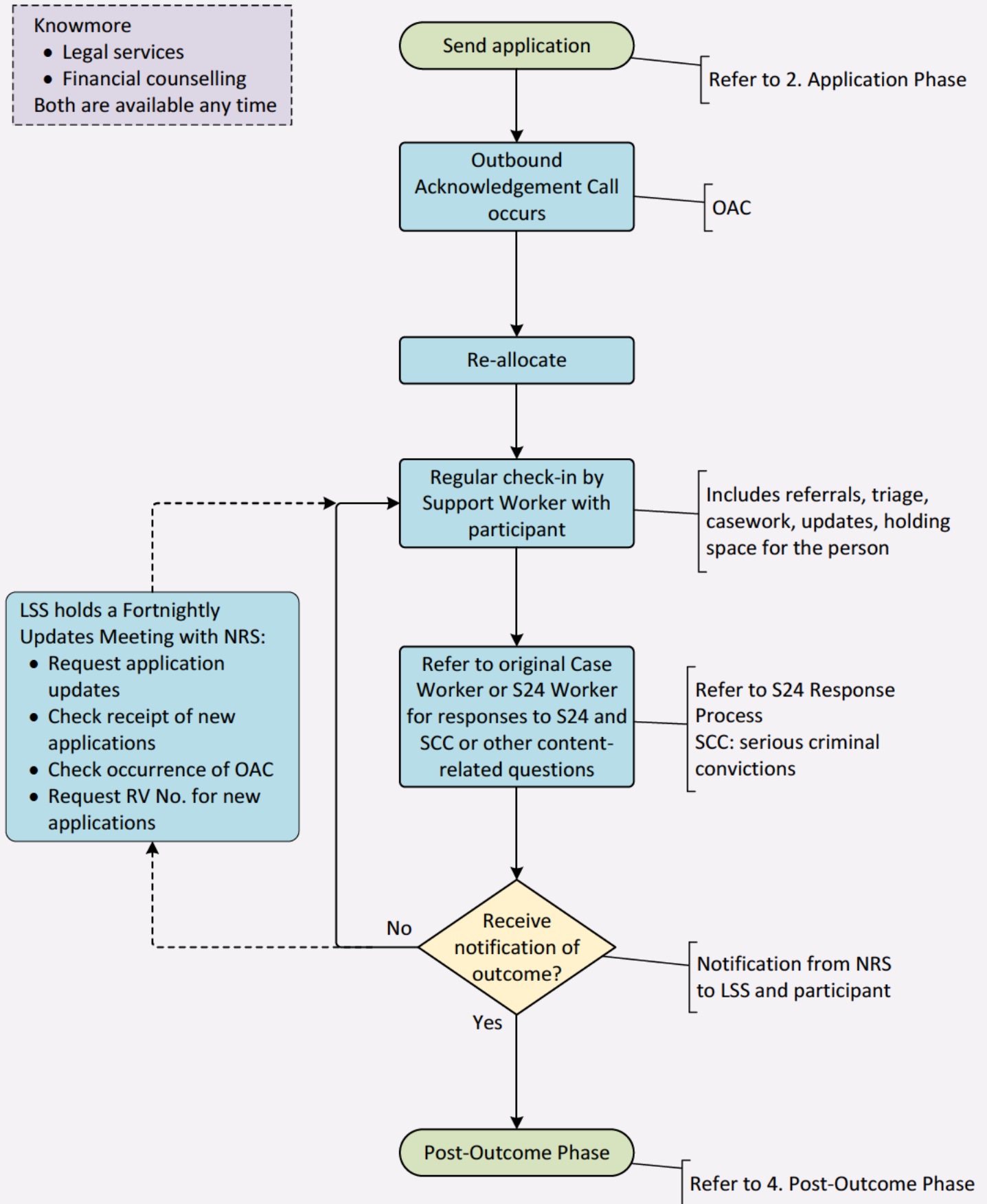
2. Application Phase

Knowmore

- Legal services
 - Financial counselling
- Both are available any time



3. Application-to-Outcome Phase

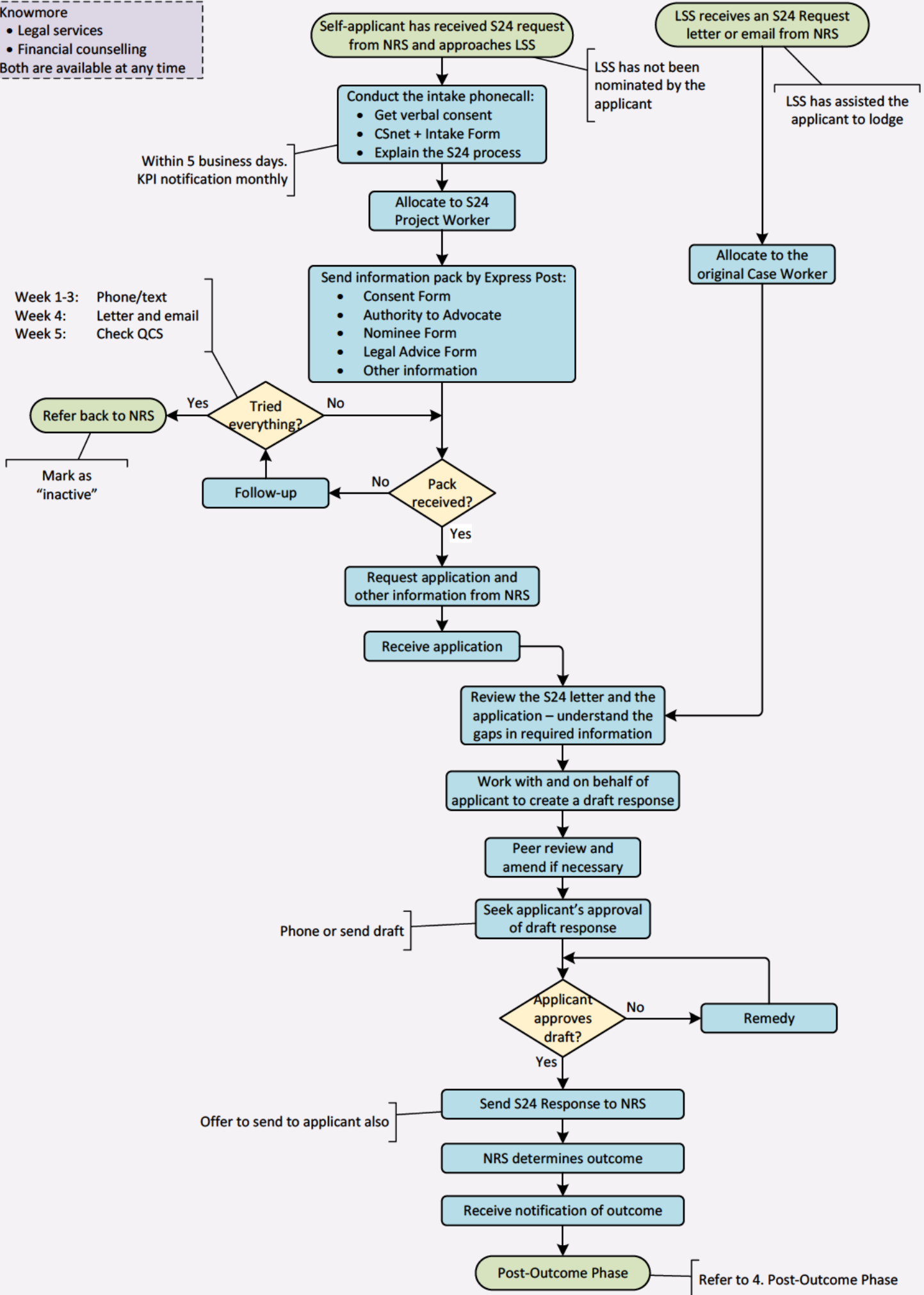


S24 Response

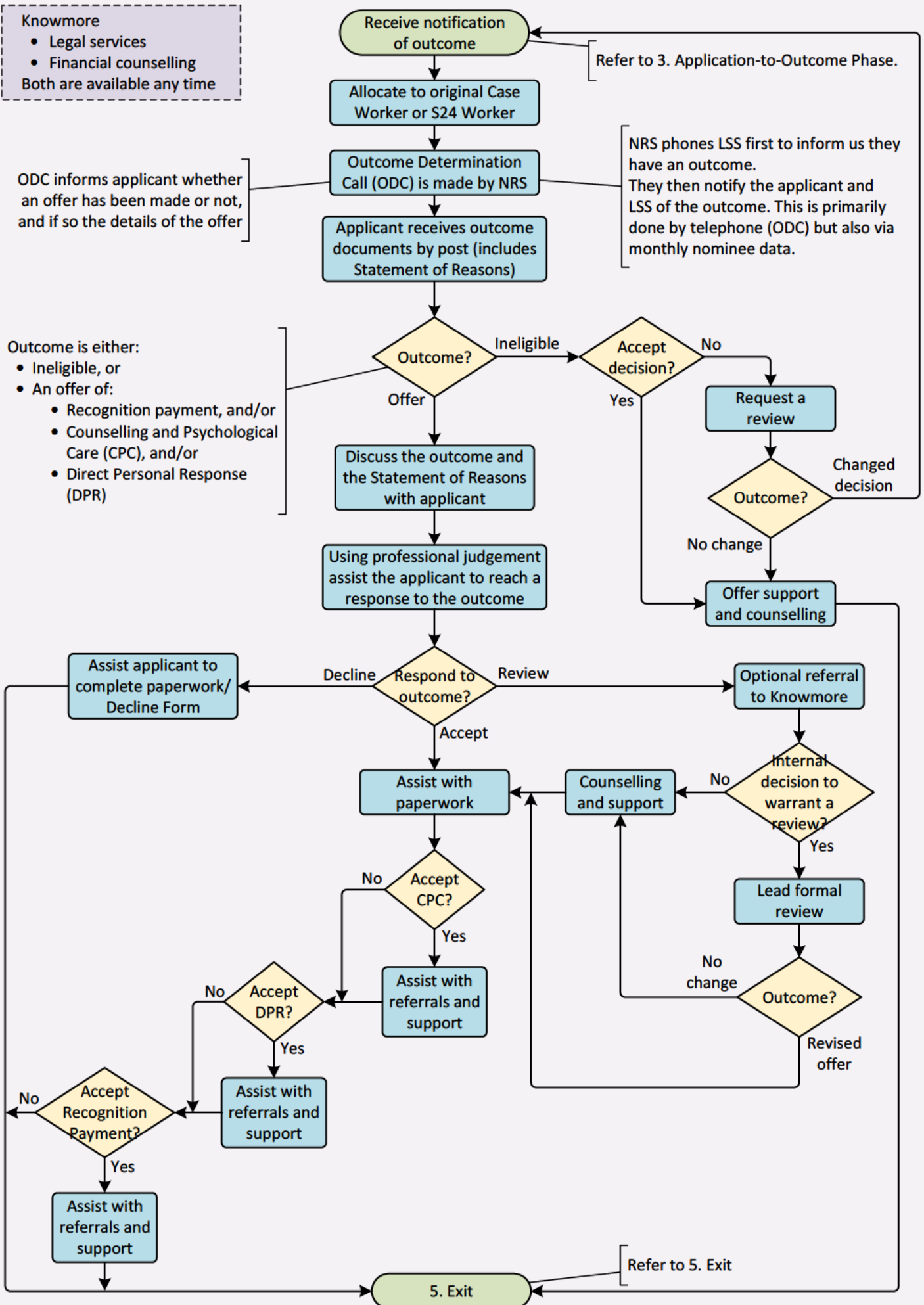
Knowmore

- Legal services
- Financial counselling

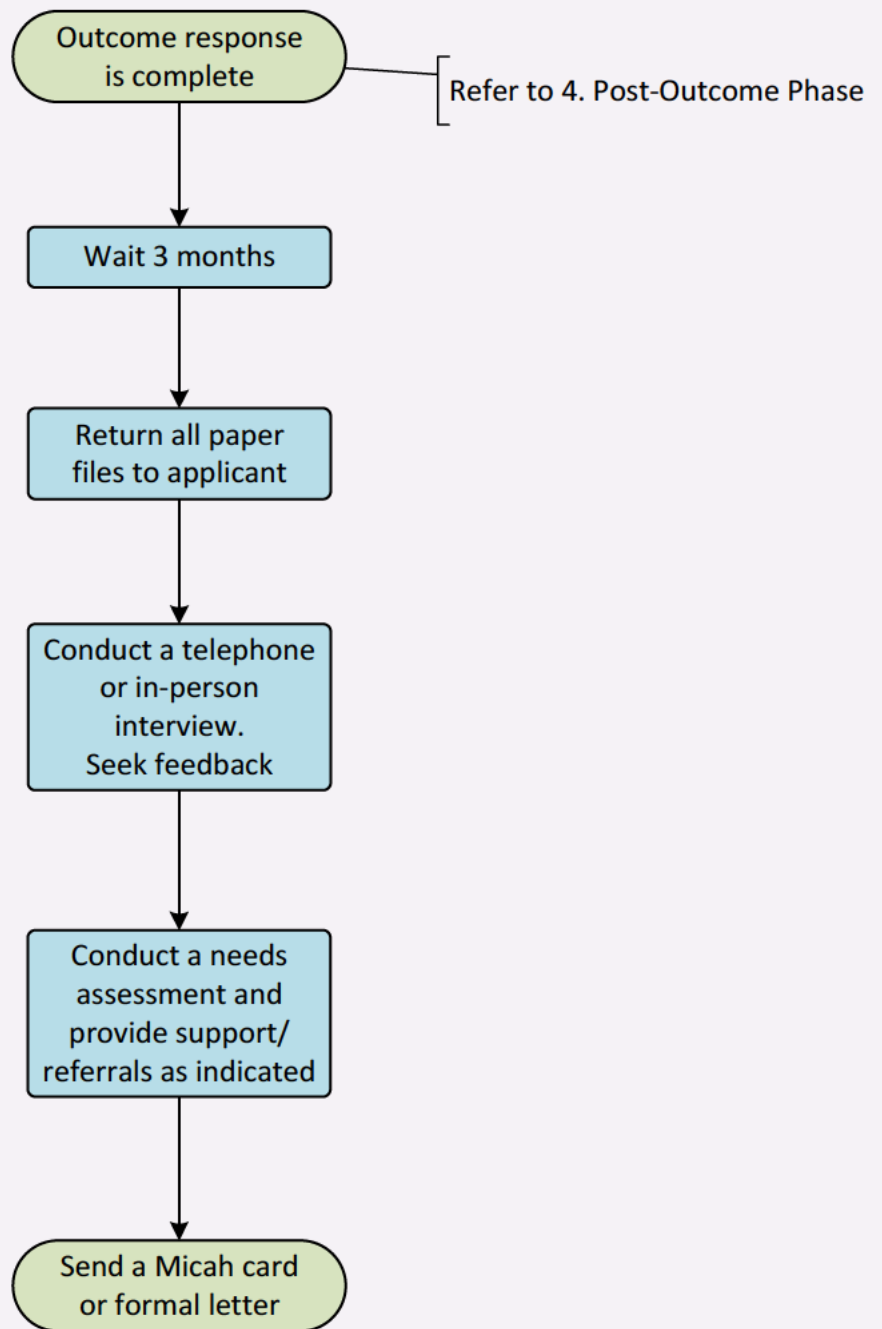
Both are available at any time



4. Post-Outcome Phase



5. Exit



Appendix 2 - Counselling and Pathways Navigator PD



Counselling and Pathways Navigator

Lotus Support Services- Redress



Who we are

Micah Projects is a community based, not-for-profit organisation with a vision to create justice and respond to injustice at the personal, social, and structural levels in church, government, business, and society.

Micah Projects subscribes to the principle of non-discrimination that seeks to guarantee that human rights are exercised without discrimination of any kind based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status such as disability, age, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, health status, place of residence, economic and social situation.

We believe that every adult and child has the right to a home, an income, healthcare, education, safety, dignity, and connection with their community of choice.

Work Health and Safety

Everyone has a right to feel safe at work, and Micah Projects is committed to minimising the risk to any staff member, student, volunteer, contractor, consultant, and Board Member within the organisation. We work collectively to comply with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

What we do

Micah Projects works to break down barriers that exclude people from housing, healthcare, employment, and meaningful connections, and to give people a voice.

We support individuals and families including children to resolve crisis, break social isolation, have a home, access health and community services, and build a community.

We provide a range of support and advocacy services to individuals and families according to their needs. We ensure the immediate needs of participants are met in a supportive, informed, safe, and respectful manner.

Equal Opportunity

Micah Projects is an equal opportunity employer and promotes access to employment to individuals from a diverse range of social and cultural groups. We acknowledge the First Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners of this land and support their right to self-determination and cultural expression. We recognise that Brisbane is a diverse community and acknowledge the needs of individuals, families and communities relating to age, gender, disability, sexuality, and economic status.

Working together

It is important to Micah Projects that people feel welcome, have choices, and do not experience discrimination when working with Micah Projects.

It is our aim to work with participants, each other, and our partners to respectfully share knowledge, ideas, resources, and skills in order to improve the service for the people we support, and the people who work as part of Micah Projects.

Child Safe and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding

Children and young people are entitled to live in a caring and nurturing environment and to be protected from harm and exploitation. Micah Projects is a child-safe and child-friendly organisation that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We actively provide guidance for management, staff, and others in identifying and responding to concerns about the abuse or neglect of a child or young person in contact with the organisation.

We extend these principles to create safe services for all participants we work with.

Micah Projects commitment to vulnerable and marginalised populations

Micah Projects Vision and Mission articulate our commitment to actively engaged with people who are marginalised, vulnerable and in many situations present with challenging behaviour.

Working in Micah Projects you are expected to proactively support this vision and mission whilst balancing the needs of staff to work in a supportive and safe environment.

To do this we actively work together to ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to understand that many people who access our services do not have the ability to always regulate their emotions. This often occurs when they are frustrated, do not understand what options they have, and are impacted on by substance use or alcohol. The consequences result in staff being exposed to inappropriate and challenging situations which we are committed to providing training and support to problem solve and ensure services can be maintained.

Micah Projects actively wants to adapt a shared responsibility approach for creating a resilient culture whilst providing services to our most vulnerable participants. This requires self-awareness and a proactive approach within our organisational systems. We support staff in understanding the approach and context in which we work. We encourage staff to communicate their needs within this environment and a willingness to engage in problem solving strategies whilst providing support to participants.

Micah Projects provides outreach service in the community, centre-based services and services via phone. Our goal is to always disarm people with courtesy, respect and clear communication recognising that we may not always get it right and will learn from our participants when necessary. We recognise that many participants of Micah Projects have long histories of trauma from childhood and as adults. Whilst this is not an excuse for behaviours that are threatening to others, it is also an opportunity for participants to learn alternative ways of meeting their needs. This is how we implement a trauma informed and sensitive approach to our work.

We are committed to providing a culture of wellbeing and safety for our staff. Employees can access support and guidance internally and externally, as outlined in our Wellbeing Guide.

Position Overview

Position Title

Redress Support Worker – Counselling
and Pathways Navigator

Team

Lotus Support Services - Redress

Reports to

Team Leader

Line Manages

N/A

Classification/Award

SCHADS Level 5

Talkin

Team Leader

Based at

Lotus Place

Backup when absent?

Team leader

Cluster/Team or Program Name

Lotus Support Services advocates for and supports adults who experienced childhood abuse, including child sexual abuse in institutional settings. Lotus provides support in living with the lifelong impacts of trauma from childhood abuse and seeking justice via applications for the National Redress Scheme and engagement with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with a Disability.

The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who were sexually abused as children while in the care of both government and non-government out-of-home care institutions and was created in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Scheme offers three components of redress:

- Access to counselling and psychological care.
- Acknowledgement and recognition for people who want it, through a direct personal response from the institution responsible for the abuse; and
- A monetary payment

Position Description

As the Redress Support Worker – Counselling and Pathways Navigator, you will...

As the Redress Support Worker – Counselling and Pathways Navigation, you will play a key role in supporting people engaging with the National Redress Scheme. You will provide trauma-informed counselling, advocacy, and pathways navigation to assist participants in addressing the lifelong impacts of childhood institutional abuse, including sexual abuse. The role focuses on strengthening participants' readiness to engage with the National Redress Scheme, while also ensuring they are connected to appropriate therapeutic, social, and community supports both during and beyond the life of the Scheme.

Stakeholder Engagement

This position as part of a team engages with the following organisations:

- National Redress Scheme
- Department of Social Services
- Other Redress Support Services nationally and across Queensland
- Queensland Government agencies
- Private counselling practitioners
- Community health, housing, and support services

Collaboration within the Cluster and across Micah Projects Clusters and initiatives may include:

- Inclusive Health Partnerships
- Homelessness to Home
- Domestic and Family Violence Services
- Supportive Housing
- Social Enterprise and Community Connections

Key Responsibilities

Service Delivery

- Promote a culture of respect, safety, and trauma informed approaches.
- Deliver trauma-informed, participant-centred counselling (face-to-face, telephone, video, and online).
- Provide brief intervention support to help participants prepare emotionally and practically for the National Redress Scheme.
- Facilitate group-based psychosocial education to build resilience, knowledge, and coping strategies.
- Assist participants to navigate health, housing, social, and community services.
- Establish and maintain connections to therapeutic and psychological care, including for participants ineligible for Redress.

- Ensure continuity of care and access to services during and after engagement with the Scheme.
- Advocate with government and non-government agencies to secure access to supports.
- Promote awareness of the impacts of institutional child sexual abuse and support a coordinated service response.
- Work collaboratively with Redress Support Services, the Department of Social Services, counselling practitioners, and community providers.
- Contribute to building resilience and capacity within participants' formal and informal support networks.
- Commitment and contribution to a safe workplace as per the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, including compliance.
- Assist Team Leaders to undertake administrative, practice and quality requirements in Micah Projects systems.
- Perform other relevant duties as assigned.

Data Management

- Complete administration and data collection for reporting and updating the participant management systems.
- Maintain a high quality of work with individuals and families as evidenced by well documented case notes and support plans using the organisational database.
- Accountable and responsible for making sure that organisational data and records are accurate, complete, and consistent, and used in accordance with policies and procedures and agreed upon evaluation processes.

Collaborative practice

- Work as a collaborative member of the multidisciplinary team, demonstrating a high level of teamwork, support, engagement, and communication reflecting the values of the organisation.
- Work as an inclusive member of the team, providing appropriate mentoring and guidance as required.

Professional practice

- Participate in all supervision and professional development as requested and to provide input into individual professional development plans.
- Provide high level professionalism, sensitivity, and responsiveness to the needs of internal and external people/partners.

Criteria and Conditions

Criminal History Screening	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Police Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Card
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Card	<input type="checkbox"/> APHRA Registration
Driver's License	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Essential	<input type="checkbox"/> Desirable
Travel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Essential	<input type="checkbox"/> Desirable
Assets Provided	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work Computer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work Phone
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pool Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Packaged Vehicle

Essential

- Tertiary qualification in counselling or equivalent.
- The ability to articulate a framework for practice in working with people who have experienced abuse.
- An understanding of the lifetime impacts of childhood sexual abuse in institutional settings, including out-of-home care.
- The ability to advocate with systems on behalf of vulnerable members of the community to access appropriate support.
- Demonstrated engagement and interpersonal skills, through taking a non-judgmental approach when working with a diversity of people, particularly those in crisis situations and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Demonstrated ability to use effective communication skills, both verbal and written – including the ability to advocate with community and government services, and to document information accurately and in a timely manner.
- Demonstrated knowledge, or the capacity to acquire knowledge, of a solution-focused and problem-solving approach to crisis, planned support, and advocacy.
- Demonstrated understanding of gender and equality in the workplace and vulnerable and marginalised populations.
- Evidence of effectiveness of communication style, written and verbal skills, and IT competencies (including Microsoft Office and other IT systems).
- Demonstrated commitment to cultural diversity and a working knowledge of equity and WHS principles.
- A positive attitude, and the ability to work flexibly, adaptively, and proactively in a team environment with direction and autonomously within program guidelines with a commitment to the values and principles of Micah Projects to meet community needs.

Desirable

- Experience and/or understanding of The National Redress Scheme
- An understanding of the Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- Current First Aid Certificate

General Conditions

- All employees are to practice the values of Micah Projects as outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- Appointment to this position will be subject to a criminal history check as outlined in the organisational Criminal History Screening Policy. All employees are required to cover the cost of this.
- All employees are to have valid working rights in Australia.
- All employees must utilise Micah Projects systems to facilitate the quality of the organisation's work and services. This includes, but is not limited to, Microsoft Office suite, Quality, Human Resource, Finance, Data, and Case Management Systems.
- Employment in this position is subject to continued funding.
- Employment may involve work or training outside of normal business hours.
- All employees will comply with Workplace Health and Safety legislation as outlined in organisational policy and procedures.
- All employees are required to engage in support and coaching through the organisational performance development system.

Acknowledgement

I have read this Position Description and understand the requirements and responsibilities of this position as part of my employment with Micah Projects

Employees Name _____

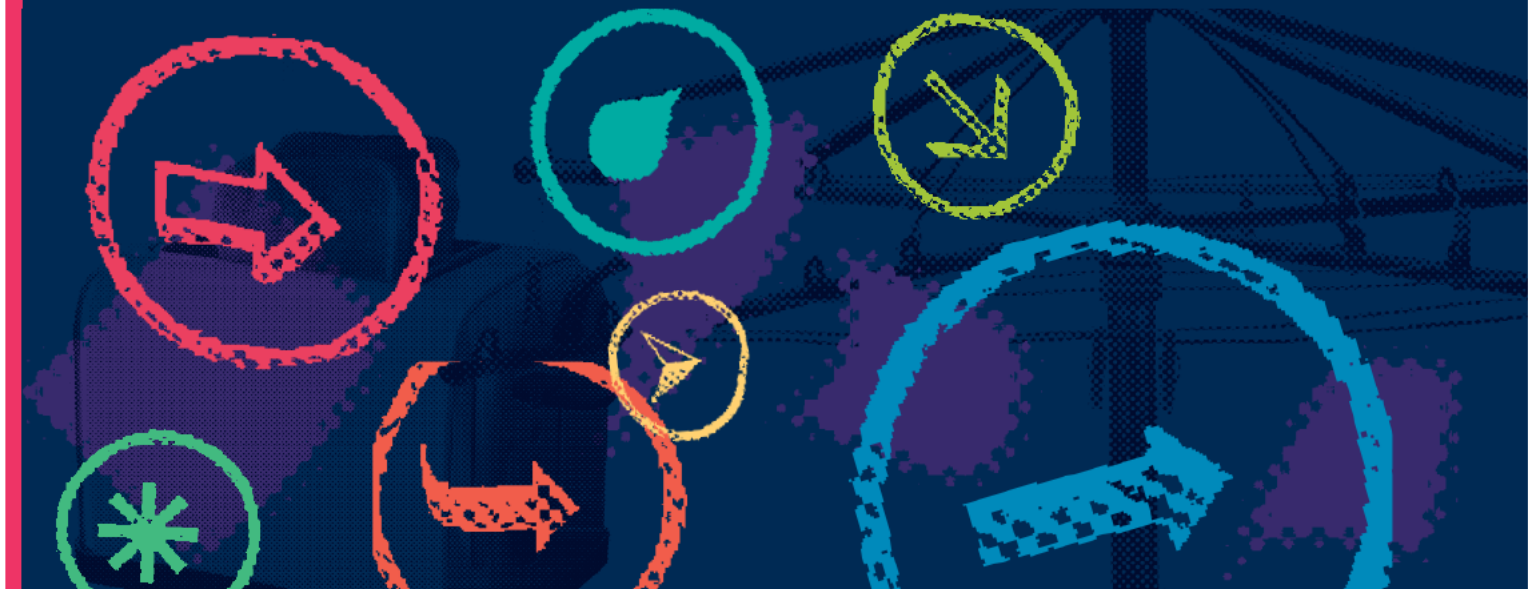
Signed _____ **Date** _____

Appendix 3 - Advocay and Support Worker PD



Support and Advocacy Worker

Lotus South Queensland



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What we do

Micah Projects works to break down barriers that exclude people from housing, healthcare, employment, and meaningful connections, and to give people a voice.

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We extend these principles to create safe services for all participants we work with.

Micah Projects commitment to vulnerable and marginalised populations

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To do this we actively work together to ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to understand that many people who access our services do not have the ability to always regulate their emotions. This often occurs when they are frustrated, do not understand what options they have, and are impacted on by substance use or alcohol. The consequences result in staff being exposed to inappropriate and challenging situations which we are committed to providing training and support to problem solve and ensure services can be maintained.

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We are committed to providing a culture of wellbeing and safety for our staff. Employees can access support and guidance internally and externally, as outlined in our Wellbeing Guide.

Position Overview

Position Title

Support and Advocacy Worker

Team

Lotus Place South Queensland

Reports to

South Queensland Coordinator

Line Manages

N/A

Classification/Award

SCHADS Level 4

Talkin

South Queensland Coordinator

Based at

Stones Corner

Backup when absent?

South Queensland Coordinator

Lotus Place

Lotus Place is a dedicated state-wide support service for people who experienced childhood abuse in institutional settings. Services are offered from 3 locations: Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville.

Lotus Place provides integrated peer support, advocacy, counselling, and other specialised support services who have experienced childhood abuse in institutional settings.

We aim to empower and foster independence through participation, and access to appropriate resources, opportunities, and services within the community. Services provided include:

- An information and resource centre.
- Personal skills development opportunities.
- Support to access government and community services.
- Support to seek redress of past abuse through the National Redress Scheme, criminal justice system, civil process or through church or religious institutional processes.
- Support people to obtain personal records.
- Support to reconnect with family and trace family history.
- Access to professional support and counselling services.
- Support to access the "My Aged Care" system.
- Referral to other specialist services.

Position Description

As a Support and Advocacy Worker, you will ...

work as part of the Lotus Place Team to advocate for and support individuals and families to access/maintain permanent and affordable housing, support, social and health services.

Stakeholder Engagement

This position requires timely and consistent interactions with the four hospital partnership processes as well as evaluation teams:

- Department of Housing
- Public Trustee
- Public Guardian
- Queensland Police Service
- My Aged Care
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- National Redress Scheme
- Services Australia (including Centrelink)
- Forde Foundation
- Knowmore Lawyers

Collaboration within Lotus Cluster and across Micah Projects Cluster and initiatives:

- Inclusive Health and Wellness Hub
- Street to Home
- Homelessness to Home Sustaining Tenancy
- Home and Healthy
- Aged Care Navigators
- Home For Good Hub
- Domestic and Family Violence

Key Responsibilities

- Promote a culture of respect, safety, and trauma informed approaches.
- Assist individuals through a team-based approach to resolve their crisis and identify solutions, including enhancing their resilience and coping mechanisms, and establishing or re-establishing support networks.
- Use tools and processes for planned support and coordination with other agencies.
- Maintain a high quality of work with individuals and families and well documented case notes using the Data and Case Management system.
- Provide proactive and supported referrals to specialist services.
- Empower and foster independence and interdependence through participation, and access to appropriate resources, opportunities, and services within the community.
- Develop the observation and engagement skills required to understand the dynamics of groups of people who use substances.
- Support individuals to access appropriate grants through the Forde Foundation
- Commitment and contribution to a safe workplace as per the Work Health and Safety Act 2011

- Perform other relevant duties as assigned.

Criteria and Conditions

Criminal History Screening	<input type="checkbox"/> National Police Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Card
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Card	<input type="checkbox"/> APHRA Registration
Driver's License	<input type="checkbox"/> Essential	<input type="checkbox"/> Desirable
Travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Essential	<input type="checkbox"/> Desirable
Assets Provided	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Computer	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Phone
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pool Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Packaged Vehicle

Essential

- Relevant certificate, diploma or tertiary qualification and extensive experience, or a combination of experience, expertise, and competence.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience of working with people who have experienced disadvantages and build on knowledge of the support services system for Forgotten Australians across Australia.
- Demonstrated effective communication and problem-solving skills to maximize participant care within the multidisciplinary team.
- Demonstrated ability, and commitment, to work collaboratively within a team and with external stakeholders.
- Evidence of effectiveness of communication style, written and verbal skills, and IT competencies (including Microsoft Office and other IT systems).
- A positive attitude, and the ability to work flexibly, adaptively, and proactively in a team environment with direction and autonomously within program guidelines with a commitment to the values and principles of Micah Projects to meet community needs.

Desirable

- Tertiary studies in human services.
- Previous experience in working with people who experienced childhood abuse in institutional settings.

General Conditions

- Employment in this position is subject to continued funding.
- All employees are to have valid working rights in Australia.
- Appointment to this position will be subject to a criminal history check, as outlined in the Criminal History Screening Policy. All employees are required to cover the cost of this.
- All employees are to practice the values of Micah Projects, as outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- All employees must utilise Micah Projects systems to facilitate the quality of the organisation's work and services. This includes, but is not limited to, Microsoft Office suite, Quality, Human Resource, Finance, Data and Case Management Systems.

- Employment may involve work or training outside of normal business hours.
- All employees will comply with Workplace Health and Safety legislation as outlined in organisational policy and procedures including Child Safe and Vulnerable Adults Framework.
- All employees are required to engage in support and coaching through the organisational performance development system.

Acknowledgement

I have read this Position Description and understand the requirements and responsibilities of this position as part of my employment with Micah Projects

Employees Name _____

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Document History		Version Number	04
Original Date	March 2017	Revised Date	January 2024