



## Offender Services & Programs Corrective Services NSW

# Assessment of Offenders and Inmates

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# Assessment of Offenders and Inmates

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1	Policy statement	3
2	Scope	3
3	Purpose	3
4	Strategic focus	3
5	Relevant legislation	3
6	Related policies, procedures and guidelines	4
7	Definition of terms	4
8	Implementation guidelines	5
9	Document information	7
10	Document history	7

# 1 Policy statement

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Corrective Services NSW is committed to undertaking assessment of all offenders and inmates to support and advance its goals and targets for reducing reoffending.

All offenders and inmates undergo various risk and needs assessments as part of their case management, to provide appropriate advice to courts and allocate proper levels and types of correctional programming and services, classification, reintegration and reports to external agencies.

Only approved assessment instruments described in the Compendium of Assessments (the Compendium) are used when assessing offenders and inmates who are subject to the management of Corrective Services NSW.

## 2 Scope

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This policy stems from the Offender Management and Programs Division and, applied to both Custodial Corrections and Community Corrections Divisions, is essential to the implementation of key aspects of each Division's business plans.

This policy therefore applies to all CSNSW staff and contractors, including GEO and its employees, managing offenders within NSW. The policy does not apply to assessments conducted by Justice Health or TAFE NSW, although their assessments may be listed in the Compendium.

## 3 Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is to establish and maintain a consistent framework for evaluating and accrediting assessment instruments and to provide procedures and guidelines for their use.

## 4 Strategic focus

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- Department of Justice Corporate and Business Plan 2015 -19
- Department of Justice Multicultural Plan 2015 -18
- Corrective Services Business Plan 2016 -17
- Offender Services and Programs Business Plan 2016 -17
- Offender Services and Programs (OS&P) Strategic Plan 2016 -17
- Assessment and Case Management Business Plan 2015 -16

## 5 Relevant legislation

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- [Crimes \(Administration of Sentences\) Act 1999](#)
- [Crimes \(Administration of Sentences\) Regulation 2008](#)
- [Crimes \(Sentencing Procedure\) Act 1999 No 92](#)
- [Crimes \(Sentencing Procedure\) Regulation 2000](#)

## 6 Related policies, procedures and guidelines

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- Offender Classification, Placement and Case Management Procedures Manual
- Community Corrections Policy and Procedures Manual\_ Section A: *Case Management in the Community: Part 1 Case Management of Offenders Policy and procedures*
- Policy and Procedures for using the LSI-R in Correctional Centres June 2016
- Policy on providing Psychology Services in CSNSW
- Procedures for managing referrals to Psychology Services in CSNSW – Appendix 8 - Practice Guidelines for Criminogenic Needs/Risk (D15/246362)
- Accreditation Framework for Assessment Instruments (D13/336183)
- CSNSW Compendium of Assessments – 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (D16/628870)
- Assessment and Scoring Guide for the Level of Service Inventory – Revised 2007 (D14/427026)

## 7 Definition of terms

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Terms	Definition
ACMST	Assessment and Case Management Support Team
AMC	Assessment Management Committee
CSNSW	Corrective Services New South Wales
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory – Revised
OS&P	Offender Services and Programs

## 8 Implementation guidelines

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A key aspect of the State Priorities for Reducing Reoffending and the Business Plan for the Offender Management and Programs Division, is the provision of supervision and facilitation of programs to those offenders who are at higher risk of reoffending. Assessment is crucial to identify which offenders to target, what criminogenic needs are apparent and how to design the interventions to ensure positive responses.

CSNSW has implemented case management as the organising strategy for the assessment, planning and provision of services and programs in both correctional centres and in community-based supervision. Legislation requires that inmates are case managed and plans be based on sound assessment.

Accurate and thorough assessment of offenders, derived from the evidence-based What Works literature, is imperative to effective case management. Not only do assessments inform us about offenders, they indicate the case planning factors, goals and strategies required to reduce re-offending. Data from assessments also provide an indication for resource allocation.

It is essential that all assessments chosen for use by CSNSW are of a high standard and are administered using established protocols which ensure their accuracy. They must have proven predictive validity and reliability to ensure a consistent standard of assessment is carried out. A centralised register of approved assessments (the Compendium), maintained by the Assessment and Case Management Support Team, is essential to ensure only valid instruments are used. User guides, training and other quality assurance methods are essential to ensure each assessment is accurate and credible.

In order to determine whether an assessment instrument may be used with offenders or inmates, CSNSW has assembled an Assessment Management Committee (AMC). This committee is made up of senior assessment subject matter experts and chaired by the Manager, Assessment and Case Management within the Offender Services and Programs Branch. The AMC will meet at least biannually to determine which assessments are suitable to be used with CSNSW offenders and inmates.

Decisions made by the AMC will be based on the Assessment Accreditation Framework (D13/336183). This Framework contains the criteria for accreditation as well as the process the Committee uses to make its determinations. The Manager, Assessment and Case Management will be responsible for maintaining the Framework document.

Four criteria are listed in the Framework for determining whether an assessment is accredited by the committee, namely:

- its relevance to agency goals
- strong psychometric properties
- standardised supporting material
- efficient use of time and resources.

Only robust psychometric tests, which would withstand judicial scrutiny, are to be used to estimate risks with the offender population.

Any assessment that is referred to the AMC for potential use with offenders will undergo a thorough literature review, to establish its comparative usefulness. All assessments approved for use by the committee, are to be reviewed every five years if accredited, or two-yearly if provisionally accredited.

Only accredited and provisionally accredited assessment instruments will be listed in the Compendium, and their listing indicates that they have been approved by the AMC. If the Committee determines an assessment will have specific users, or is only to be used under special circumstances, this is to be described under the assessment's listing.

Assessments are to be administered, scored, interpreted and reported on - in accordance with instructions described in the practice notes and/or the test manual, or specific guidelines set out by the Manager, Assessment and Case Management.

The categories of assessments are classified in the Compendium in the following manner:

Category	Description and sub categories
Attitudes and Beliefs	Attitude measures relating to offending. For example: tests for victim empathy, locus of control, personal effectiveness.
Clinical	Tools used mainly by psychologists to ascertain mental health status and/or psychological profile, at any point during contact with CSNSW. Includes diagnostic tests for mental illnesses related to the DSM. Tests include general diagnosis, specific diagnosis. mood, suicidality.
Criminogenic Needs Assessments	More specific measures of factors contributing to reoffending. For example: alcohol, drugs and addiction, education achievement, criminal associates and attitudes, sexual and violent offence specific.
Functioning	Assessments to measure daily functioning and living skills. Including academic, daily living and social skills tests.
Management	Assessments used to manage offenders in CSNSW. For example intake screening, self-harm and RIT, security rating.
Neuropsychological	Psychometric tests designed specifically for clinical offenders. For example: dementia, IQ, Acquired Brain Injury, memory, executive functioning capacity of the brain.
Personality	Measures of personality and their relationship with offending – often used for reporting to courts, SORC and SPA. Tests include general and pathological scales.
Responsivity	Assessments used to determine the barriers to intervention and likelihood of responding to treatment. For example: language, literature, motivation, readiness, social desirability, cognitive impairment.
Risk Assessments	Assessment instruments used to measure the likelihood and/or impact of an event. For example: risk of general reoffending, risk of sex offending, risk of violence, risk of terrorism, risk of harm to self or others.

### Level of Service Inventory – Revised

CSNSW's primary assessment instrument for the purpose of measuring and estimating an offender's likelihood of re-offending and criminogenic needs is the Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R). Specific procedures for administering the LSI-R in the community are published under the Community Corrections Policy and Procedures Manual and for use in custody under the Policy and Procedures for Using the Level of Service Inventory (LSI-R) in CSNSW Correctional Centres (D15/436479).

The Assessment and Scoring Guide for the LSI-R (D14/427026) is to be used to score the inventory.

## 9 Document information

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## 10 Document history

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1.0	24/04/2008	Initial publication
2.0	April 2014	Full review
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