



Queensland CLC Client Survey: Frequently Asked Questions

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Why does my CLC need to do a client survey and two client case studies?

Queensland community legal centres (CLCs) who are parties to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DOJ) *Service Agreement for Legal Assistance Services 2020-2025* are obliged to complete a client survey that was developed through a co-design process with the Queensland legal assistance sector and the Australian Government.

This Agreement requires every funded CLC to conduct a client survey annually during the course of the NLAP service agreement (which runs until 30 June 2025).

The collection and collation of two client case studies from each CLC provides a valuable opportunity to showcase the positive impact of this sector in a collective Community Legal Centres Queensland (CLCQ) forum. (The DOJ Service Agreement requires that at least two such case studies are published in your Annual Report).

More information about preparing case studies forms part of the CLCQ Impact and Evaluation Toolkit, which is situated on the [CLCQ Members' Portal](#). Contact admin@communitylegalqld.org.au if you need help with your Members' Portal credentials. If you would like to discuss your case studies you can reach out to the CLCQ Capacity Building Team using our dedicated client survey email address: clientsurvey@communitylegalqld.org.au, or alternatively call the CLCQ office on 3392 0092 and leave a message – we will get back to you.

Why should Queensland CLCs take a coordinated approach to the client survey, and what is the future of the client survey?

The obligation on CLCs to undertake client surveys, as well as the CLCQ Impact and Evaluation Toolkit (available on the [CLCQ Members' Portal](#)) is a requirement of the National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement (NLAP).

NLAP is being replaced by the National Access to Justice Partnership Agreement (NA2JP) from July 2025, and the new agreement does not include a requirement to undertake a co-ordinated Client Survey. Future arrangements and funding allocations for a co-ordinated client survey (if any) will therefore need to be determined by the sector itself.

The survey has provided an important opportunity to develop a comprehensive data set across the State, supporting the CLC sector to understand its impacts and be positioned to demonstrate our value to government and other funders.

What is the coordinated approach?

CLCQ has supported Queensland CLCs to conduct a coordinated client survey process over the past 5 years. The coordination has involved:

- A single client survey;
- Centralised collection through SurveyMonkey;
- Coordinated timing i.e. all CLCs conduct their client survey in the same month (May each year); and
- Aggregated sector report to DOJ to satisfy NLAP requirements. CLCQ has advised the Department that, due to the wind-down of CLASS, it will not be possible for CLCQ to develop an aggregated sector benchmark report for 2025. Individual CLC reports and case studies still need to be provided to the Department, but will not include sector-wide benchmark data.

Individual CLCs will:

- Decide how to best collect data from clients through the survey - CLCQ can help support a diversity of collection mechanisms;
- Collect data from clients; and
- Deliver the individual CLC's report to DOJ, using data collated through SurveyMonkey.

When is the client survey period?

The survey period is in May each year, starting on **1 May** and with collection ending on **31 May**. CLCs will have an additional week to input data manually into SurveyMonkey if required.

What does the client survey look like?

The survey consists of a few questions about client demographics such as gender, age, income levels etc. There are 10 questions about the quality and the impact of the CLC service from the client's perspective. Trialling of the survey over the telephone (in 2018) indicated that it took less than 10 minutes to talk through the questions with each client.

A copy of the survey questions will be attached to CLCQ's initiating email for the client survey process each year. A link to the live unique survey collection tool (via SurveyMonkey) will be forwarded to each CLC by email in the last week of April.

What are the client survey questions?

Five of the survey questions are mandated by the Australian Government as part of NLAP. These questions were developed by Colmar Brunton for the Australian Government, and all legal assistance services around Australia are required to ask them.

The other five questions are based on work that CLCQ undertook on evaluating the impact of the Queensland CLC sector. These questions track to the Theory of Change that CLCs would hope to work together as a sector.

How do the survey questions align with CLASS service types?

The survey asks clients 'which of the following services [they] received' and asks respondents to select all that apply. As the survey questions do not precisely reflect the technical definitions of service types from the Data Standards Manual¹; the table below maps the survey question reference and the CLASS service type:

Survey question		CLASS service type
Access to informational materials (flyers, websites etc)		Information
Personalised advice from legal centre staff		Legal advice, non-legal support, legal task, facilitated resolution process
Written and/or in person representation by legal centre staff		Duty lawyer, representation services (closed during period)

¹ Available online at <https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/publications/national-legal-assistance-data-standards-manual>

Referral to other legal and/or non-legal services		Referral
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CLCs that have already transitioned to an alternative system to CLASS (eg ActionStep) will need to identify the equivalent service types within their new system.

What if my CLC doesn't like the survey questions?

The Queensland Government requires all CLCs to use the same survey across all CLCs.

CLCs wanting to take this opportunity to ask other questions of their clients may do so, but the SurveyMonkey version of the client survey cannot be altered or extended; the data from any other questions would need to be collated separately by the CLC. Another option is to use this client survey process as a guide for a later evaluation tailored to the individual CLC.

Can I customise or add questions to the survey?

You are not able to customise or add questions to the client survey. This is because it is a standardised survey used by all participating CLCs, under which data is collected via one survey with multiple collectors.

If you wish to ask additional questions, you can set up a companion survey that is administered by your CLC at the same time as the client survey so that your clients are not surveyed twice. You will need to set up your own mechanism for collecting and analysing this additional survey data, as it will sit outside the client survey process.

Contact the CLCQ Capacity Building Team via our dedicated email address if you would like to discuss this further: clientsurvey@communitylegalqld.org.au

How do I need to administer the client survey?

Each CLC can decide the best way to collect the data from its clients during the May survey period. Methods can include:

- Providing the survey in hard copy to a client who attends in person for a service;
- Providing the survey on a tablet to a client who attends in person for a service;
- Emailing clients with the SurveyMonkey link;
- Telephoning clients and asking them over the phone to complete the service (CLCQ can help you with this – see *How can CLCQ support my CLC to do the client survey?* at page 7 below);
- Posting the survey to the client with a return stamped addressed envelope.

Generally, the best returns in terms of both rate of response and richness of data are achieved with the telephone survey. The lowest response is from clients who are posted the survey and asked to return it.

How you collect your survey responses will depend upon the types of services your CLC provides and how they are provided, considering the sample size. Also be aware that the prevalence of email scams means that some clients may be (very sensibly) reluctant to click on email links, so if your CLC is using this method of collection, it is important to inform clients in advance so that they know to expect your email.

What sample size is needed?

Best practice requires a sample size of 25% (i.e. of your clients in the month of May), and involves ensuring a representative sample of clients. The 2024 client surveys provided a sample of 25.88% of clients for the period, which achieved a representative sample overall both in population numbers and demographic distribution.

Response rates may be low, and it is recommended that CLCs seek to survey all clients who use their services in the month of May using a census approach (i.e., all clients are approached about doing the survey). If a census approach is not possible, then a random selection of clients should be surveyed.

To ensure a representative sample for robust data, aim to survey clients who reflect your CLC's programs or services, and your client demographics.

Example 1: representative sample across your programs, so if half your work in May is one-off advices and half is casework, you would draw 50% of your survey responses from advice clients and 50% from casework clients.

Example 2: representative sample based on your client demographics, so if 80% of your clients identify as women and 20% identify as men, you would aim to obtain 80% of your surveys from women.

Which clients should we include in the client survey?

The client survey has been a funding obligation of the Community Legal Service Program (CLSP). Some CLCs have multiple programs with different funders / funding arrangements, and clients of these programs may not be provided with services through the CLSP.

CLCs can determine which client cohorts they wish to survey, and can either survey CLSP and non-CLSP clients together or restrict their survey to only CLSP clients (e.g. by using the funding category filter in CLASS).

The survey process does not differentiate between various client cohorts and all clients remain anonymous and completely deidentified, so there is no visibility in survey results about which program a client is drawn from. As all survey results are collated together there is no ability for CLCQ to separate out results for various client cohorts.

Where does the data get collected?

If the client is not directly entering their responses into the SurveyMonkey format, then the data must be entered into SurveyMonkey manually by the CLC. A CLC specific link will be provided to each CLC by CLCQ.

See also *How can CLCQ support my CLC to do the client survey?* (page 7 below)

All client survey data will be collected in SurveyMonkey that is administered by CLCQ.

What about client confidentiality?

The survey does not ask the client to identify themselves.

As CLCs will collect the data from clients using their own staff or volunteers, no issues of client confidentiality arise. (See *What do I need to do to prepare for the client survey?* - page 9 below).

Each CLC has its own unique SurveyMonkey link through which it inputs survey data. CLCs are not able to login to SurveyMonkey to view their own client survey data. No CLC is able to see another CLC's data.

No confidential or identifying client information is provided to CLCQ via the survey. CLCQ collects the aggregated data for each CLC and provides this back to individual CLC. Individual CLCs only have access to their data through the individual report provided by CLCQ after the survey period ends.

What about client safety?

If you have recorded a client's safety concerns, such as limits on client contact or safe methods of contact, you will of course prioritise those concerns and ensure that no contact impacts on a client's safety. Individual CLCs are best placed to determine this for their client groups.

All information provided through the SurveyMonkey data collection is anonymous.

What about client consent?

Client consent is best provided at the time the client is asked to complete the survey. This ensures consent is informed and timely. Clients should be provided clear options to complete the survey or not.

Where clients agree to complete the survey, their completion of it is enough to show their consent. Verbal consent (for example, for surveys administered by phone) is sufficient, and consent need not be recorded.

What about clients with accessibility requirements?

In trialling the survey, CLCQ found that methods of collection, such as telephone surveying or face to face conversation, can assist in explaining the questions if clients have information accessibility issues.

How can we communicate with clients about the survey?

CLCQ can assist with a range of communication tools including sample emails or cover letters.

For CLC administering the survey by telephone, CLCQ can provide tips and a template script. Some options will be available as part of the CLCQ Impact and Evaluation Toolkit (available on the [CLCQ Members' Portal](#)).

What happens if clients complain about the survey?

CLC should ensure that staff and volunteers, especially those administering the survey, clearly understand the CLC's complaints policy and can refer clients to the policy if needed.

Staff and volunteers administering the client survey should be ready to explain that no confidential information is required to be disclosed through the survey.

How can CLCQ support my CLC to do the client survey?

There are a number of ways CLCQ can support your CLC to do the survey. We will contact your key person to discuss this in detail and provide any ongoing information or support that is requested. Besides providing the coordinated survey and reporting, CLCQ can provide contact details for the UQ Pro Bono Centre (UQPBC) for you to arrange student volunteer assistance. The CLCQ Impact and

Evaluation Toolkit (available on the [CLCQ Members' Portal](#)) also contains some useful resources for CLCQ members.

What's involved in using UQ Pro Bono Centre (UQPBC) volunteers?

CLCQ can provide the contact details for the UQPBC so that CLCs can directly arrange volunteer support – please email clientsurvey@communitylegalqld.org.au.

You will need to induct the volunteers pursuant to your own policies and procedures. However, the induction may be commensurate with the tasks required of the volunteers. For example, if you are asking volunteers to help with photocopying blank forms, you may decide you need not provide a full induction. Volunteers handling confidential client information (names, phone numbers, addresses) to make telephone calls or send letters, will need to understand your CLC's confidentiality policies.

What are the ways I could use volunteers to do the client survey?

Volunteers may be able to assist by:

- Making telephone calls to clients, asking the survey questions over the telephone and recording the answers directly into SurveyMonkey;
- Assisting clients at your CLC's premises or outreach location to complete the survey (on a computer or other device, or a hard copy);
- Mailing surveys to clients;
- Emailing survey links to clients;
- Entering survey results into SurveyMonkey.

If my service is outside Meanjin Brisbane, can I still use UQPBC volunteers?

Yes. CLCQ can host volunteers of your CLC at our Spring Hill (Meanjin Brisbane) office and provide telephone or computer facilities for your volunteers to telephone or email your clients and/or enter survey responses into SurveyMonkey. Please note that CLCQ does not supervise the volunteers, which you will need to manage remotely.

We already have volunteers, can we use them instead?

Yes. CLCs can arrange volunteers as most appropriate for their needs, including through accessing their own networks and partnerships.

UQPBC volunteers are an optional additional resource.

How does the client survey inform other evaluation work in my CLC?

The client survey data can be used as a source of information in the Impact and Evaluation Toolkit to track your CLC's impact against a sector-wide Theory of Change. The Toolkit is available from the [CLCQ Members Portal](#).

What happens after the client survey period?

Due to the wind-down of CLASS and the transition of CLCs to alternative platforms, CLCQ is not able to provide a benchmark report in 2025 showing the averages across the sector.

CLCQ will provide every CLC with their Survey Monkey data summary. CLCs will still need to prepare a report to provide to DOJ by **31 August**, but this will not include references to sector-wide data.

What do I need to do to prepare for the client survey?

In the lead up to the client survey going live on 1 May, you will need to decide how your CLC will collect survey responses from the nominated methods of collection. You will also need to decide if your CLC would like extra volunteer support, and put in place plans to arrange this.

Who do I contact to ask more questions?

If you have more questions or need additional information about the client survey process, please contact the CLCQ Capacity Building Team using our dedicated client survey email address:

clientsurvey@communitylegalqld.org.au, or alternatively call the CLCQ office on 3392 0092 – leave us a message and we will get back to you.