

Contribution to consultation on Local Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services

September 2021

The questions below are those asked by the Victorian Government's consultation Local Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services organisational survey:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/local-adult-older-adult-mental-health-wellbeing-services>

2. Do you think the new Local Services will address the needs of Victorians 26 years and over, in the reformed Victorian mental health system?

Yes

3. How do you think the role of the new Local Services could be clarified or improved? (max 1,000 characters)

Improved:

- Locals are for those who 'need more support than what they can get from general practitioners, private psychologists and psychiatrists alone'. Many disadvantaged areas lack these & cost is a barrier even if available. How will Locals in these areas support those unable to get support from primary/secondary mental health care, remain a welcoming 'front door', & how will they be resourced to provide primary/secondary care?
- Detail on funding, workforce, digital platform & responding to differences in complexity & needs across catchments will assist in understanding what is possible to provide

Clarify:

Scope:

- What supports come under the wellbeing umbrella eg art, pet therapy, yoga, as well as relevant social services: housing, family violence, AOD, family services, financial support, community connection
- Ability to undertake local health promotion/prevention work
- Provision of support groups

Integration:

- How will Locals work with federal funded programs and NDIS?

4. How can Local Services provide the best possible experience for consumers and carers? What would that experience look like? What would happen or not happen? How would the service be different to other services available? (max 1,000 characters)

Underlying approach: lived experience at centre; 'what can we do with you'; draw on client strengths to deliver programs

Ensure accessible for everyone:

- Peer /carer workers greet & engage
- Provide immediate support: limit waitlists; support at first contact & while awaiting allocation to a practitioner
- Client choice central
- Simple processes

Lived experience workers, including bi-cultural workers, central: providing welcome to the service; running groups; support across the spectrum of needs; being a bridge to mainstream programs

Service promotion that normalises caring for mental health.

Integration:

- enable seamless integration with diverse health & social support services, including AOD withdrawal (residential & non-residential) & harm minimisation, in addition to treatment
- Between youth services & local services to facilitate planned transition from youth to adult services for 26-year-olds

Resource carer support services: counselling, peer support, funding, respite.

5. How can Local Services provide the best possible experience for consumers and carers from diverse backgrounds and those who have specific needs? What would that experience look like? What would happen or not happen? How would the service be different to other services available? (max 1,000 characters)

Local community partnerships:

- Embed diverse, local governance; work with all local communities about their needs & preferences. Resource small groups to participate
- Codesign with community
- Staffing profile to reflect the local community
- Use peer workers & community success stories to promote service

Embrace cultural differences:

- Create diverse programs at individual, group, community levels to address mental health appropriate for the community eg art, food, music, sport
- Acknowledge First Nations spirituality

- Promotion & program development to be aware of mental health stigma & sensitive of community perceptions, while gently challenging misconceptions

Welcoming service:

- Culturally safe
- Visuals & signage welcome diverse communities
- All information available in community languages, both written & verbal (eg videos in a range of languages) & easy English
- Interpreters, ideally on site, with mental health experience
- Includes family & carers
- No wrong door

6. What are the top three things we have to get right to make the Local Services the best they could be? (max 1,000 characters)

1. Active, meaningful & ongoing involvement of the local community to ensure Locals respond to their needs, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. Locals must reflect the local community & have the flexibility to change.
2. Ensure Locals are accessible to everyone, regardless of ability, cultural or socioeconomic background, gender, ability etc. All barriers to access must be eliminated or reduced: cost, language, opening hours, outreach, online, integration with other services.

Simplify access into the service to overcome complexity, including being a responsive service, limited wait times & streamlined pathways to/from acute care.

Located services in areas of greatest need & highest barriers to accessing other care.

3. Ensure Locals are fully integrated, ideally on site, with relevant services & supports, including those that address the social determinants of mental health. Housing is critical, as is physical health care, employment, education, advocating against racism, etc.