

A new approach to mental health service planning and delivery in Tasmania

Consumers and carers are often unable to access the mental health supports they need when they need them.

This has prompted Tasmania's key mental health organisations to come together to coordinate the planning and delivery of an integrated and sustainable mental health system for all Tasmanian communities.

The Tasmanian Department of Health, the Tasmanian Health Service and Primary Health Tasmania have partnered with the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, the National Disability Insurance Agency, Flourish and Mental Health Carers Tasmania to develop a new approach to mental health service planning and delivery.

What's involved?

A steering group will work closely with consumers, carers and stakeholders across the mental health service system on a range of joint actions that include:

- mapping the mental health services available on the ground in all regions of Tasmania against national benchmarks to identify service and workforce gaps
- aligning and streamlining mental health reform activity already underway in Tasmania, including *Rethink Mental Health*, the *Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy* and the recommendations of the *Mental Health Integration Taskforce Report*
- adopting a Mental Health Continuum of Care Model across public and community mental health services, that allows consumers to 'step up' to higher intensity supports or 'step down' to lower intensity supports without interruption as their needs change
- developing joint clinical governance arrangements and shared care protocols to enable referral and transition between services, and to deliver easy-to-navigate pathways for consumers and carers
- producing a joint mental health and suicide prevention plan for Tasmania that strengthens the intent of *Rethink* and other key local strategies, while incorporating new priorities to support service integration and access.

How will it impact you?

This new, collaborative approach to mental health service planning and delivery in Tasmania is an opportunity to address longstanding issues of service fragmentation and inefficiency. It's designed to improve care experiences, resulting in better outcomes for people with mental illness and those caring for them.

Guided by the vision and directions set out in the *Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan*, the work of coordinating and integrating our systems and services will progress over the next five years, starting with the joint mapping of mental health services and culminating in the design of innovative, multi-agency funding arrangements.

Consumers and carers won't be impacted by the new approach in the short term. Over time, it should become easier for them to find and access the mental health supports they need, and to transition between services when there is a variation in their wellbeing.

Similarly, mental health service providers won't notice immediate changes in their day-to-day operation, though they may be asked to respond to a request for information about the type of services and supports they provide, to enable accurate mapping of on-the-ground services.

What happens next?

The Tasmanian Department of Health and Primary Health Tasmania have jointly commissioned an expert group from the University of Queensland to undertake the mapping of mental health services in Tasmania, using a customised tool called the National Mental Health Service Planning Framework.

Applying the Framework in Tasmania will not only produce a detailed map of current mental health services on the ground but will also quantify the range and volume of services required by each region of Tasmania to meet national benchmarks, and the workforce required to provide those services.

For the first time, state and federal governments will have a detailed understanding of the current and future mental health needs of Tasmanians communities and will be able to plan sustainably for the years ahead.

This collaborative planning work will be delivered in early 2020 and will inform the development of the joint mental health and suicide prevention plan, due to be launched by 1 July 2020.

The Tasmanian Department of Health and Primary Health Tasmania will provide further updates as this work progresses.