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| Mental Health and Wellbeing Local  |
| Information for Area Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services |
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# A new level of the mental health and wellbeing system

The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System recommended the establishment of Local Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services across Victoria.

The new service stream, now known as Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals (Local Services), are an important part of Victoria’s reformed mental health and wellbeing system.

Local Services are designed to deliver integrated mental health and wellbeing treatment, care and support for people aged 26 years and over, who:

* need more support than they can get from primary and secondary mental health and related services (for example, general practitioners and private psychologists and psychiatrists)
* do not need the type and intensity of treatment, care and support delivered by Area Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services (Area Services).

A network of Local Services across Victoria provides a wide front door to the reformed mental health and wellbeing system, meaning people can access treatment, care and support closer to home. They provide a welcoming and inclusive service that meets the diverse needs of our communities.

Local Services are intended for people aged 26 years and over, however people under 26 years old will be supported to access age-appropriate services.

# What are Local Services?

Local Services are free, voluntary, easy to access (no referral is required, but these are encouraged) and delivered with a philosophy of ‘*how can we help?*’ and a ‘*no wrong door’* approach.

They offer:

* treatment and structured psychotherapeutic therapies
* person-centred wellbeing supports
* education, peer support and self-help
* consumer-led care planning and care coordination.

Local Services also provide integrated treatment, care and support for people with mental illness and co-occurring substance use or addiction, co-existing disability and trauma.

Priority is given to people who experience barriers to access and/or people who face the greatest barriers to good health and wellbeing.

Local Services are delivered by a multidisciplinary workforce including consumer and family peer workers, mental health clinicians and wellbeing support workers.

# How do we contact a Local Service?

Local Services will be progressively introduced across Victoria from now until the end of 2026.

Please visit the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Local website on the Better Health Channel](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mhwlocal) for information on how to contact the relevant Local Service.

For the most up to date information on the Local Services rollout, please visit the [Local Services page on the Department of Health website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-reform/local-adult-and-older-adult-mental-health-and-wellbeing-services%20for%20the%20latest%20information) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-reform/local-adult-and-older-adult-mental-health-and-wellbeing-services>.

It will take time for each Local Service to be able to offer the full range of services, which will include face-to-face, telehealth and outreach services provided on one-on-one and in group-based settings.

Consumers can access Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs, Partners in Wellbeing, Head to Health Services and other existing services while Local Services get up and running.

Victorian Head to Health services and the Victorian Government’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs will be progressively decommissioned with the establishment of Local Services across Victoria.[[1]](#footnote-2)

# How do Local Services work with Area Services?

The reformed mental health and wellbeing system has **six levels** of care, with the intensity of supports and services provided progressively increasing with each level.

* Level 1 comprises of social supports - families, carers and supporters, informal supports, virtual communities and communities of place, identity and interest.
* Level 2 is the broad range of government and community services outside the mental health system.
* Level 3 is primary and secondary mental health and related services.
* Level 4 is Local Mental Health and Wellbeing Services.
* Level 5 is Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services.
* Level 6 is statewide services.

Local Service providers have a current understanding of local needs and the delivery environment in the geographical area where the Local Service operates. Local and Area Services within the same region will be formally networked to promote warm referrals to Area Services, smooth transitions between system levels and shared care as a person’s needs increase or decrease. Area Services are also be funded to provide primary and secondary consultation to Locals Services clinicians. This allows Local Services in more regional and remote areas to help people with higher support needs, keeping their care closer to home.

Area and Statewide services (**level 6**) may also deliver care through Local Services, so people do not have to leave their local community to access the types of treatment and support these services offer.

Local Services also work with headspace and Infant, Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services to ensure a smooth transition for consumers as they reach 26 years of age.

#### High risk presentations

Local Services are not a frontline emergency response for people experiencing very high risk of imminent harm to self or others.

Where a person presenting to a Local Service is experiencing high levels of psychological distress or crisis and needs urgent help, the Local Service staff will provide immediate support to stabilise/de-escalate their distress while also working with emergency services and the networked Area Service to determine the most appropriate service response.

# Local Services Service Framework

The full intent and functions of Local Services is described in the [Service Framework](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-reform/recommendation-3) available on the Department of Health's website <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-reform/recommendation-3>.

The Service Framework reflects the vision and findings of the Royal Commission. It was developed with valuable and diverse input from people with a lived and living experience of mental illness, as well as technical and clinical advice from the mental health and wellbeing sector.

The Service Framework also provides a list of potential referrers to Local Services.

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1. With the exception of the Geelong Head to Health site which will continue to operate. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)