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| Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals |
| Information for community service organisations |
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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, are an important part of Victoria’s reformed mental health and wellbeing system.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals 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 (GPs) 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 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals 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. These services are free of charge to consumers.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are intended for people aged 26 years and over, however people under 26 years old will be supported to access age-appropriate services.

# Services offered

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are free, voluntary, easy to access (no referral is required, but warm referrals are encouraged to support continuity of care) and delivered with a philosophy of ‘*how can we help?*’ and a ‘*no wrong door’* approach.

They offer:

* treatment and therapies
* person-centred wellbeing supports
* education, peer support and self-help
* consumer-led care planning and care coordination with other service providers.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals also provide integrated treatment, care and support for people with mental illness and co-occurring substance use, 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.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are delivered by a multidisciplinary workforce including consumer and family peer workers, mental health clinicians and wellbeing support workers.

The service is free for everyone, including people who don’t have a Medicare card.

# Accessing Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are progressively establishing so the types of supports offered can vary across locations. Once fully operational, support can be delivered in a range of ways including in-person, telehealth, and outreach.

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

For the most up to date information on future locations, please visit the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals page on the Department of Health website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-reform/mental-health-and-wellbeing-locals) < https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-reform/mental-health-and-wellbeing-locals>.

Consumers can access Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs, Partners in Wellbeing, Head to Health Services and other existing services while Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals get up and running.[[1]](#footnote-2)

# What’s different about Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals care for people who need more support than a GP or private mental health practitioner can offer, but who do not need higher-intensity services, such as hospital-based support services.

These services will not duplicate existing services already available. They work closely with GPs, private mental health practitioners, alcohol and other drug treatment providers and other community-based health and social services, to ensure consumer support needs are being met.

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals and community 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.

Mental health care coordination, system navigation and linkagesare a core function of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals providers have a current understanding of local needs and the delivery environment in the geographical area where the service operates.

They offer supported referral and/or practical supports to help consumers navigate and connect to Area Mental Health and Wellbeing services, Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) services, as well as a wide range of other community-based health and social support services as appropriate.

Care coordinators within Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals work across mental health, social support and welfare services and NDIS funded disability support to help consumers get the right supports at the right time and address barriers to access.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals also provide information and advice about mental health and illness to health and social support services. This builds their capability to respond to the needs of people with a mental illness.

Physical health care will be integrated into the service offer including (but not limited to) screening, preventative health care (such as smoking cessation), nutrition and diabetes education in partnership with a referring GP or a community health service.

Local Connections - a social prescribing trial is being delivered by the first six Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals which includes:

* developing the knowledge of, and pathways to local community activities and providers to address social isolation and loneliness, particularly for older people.
* community activities which could include walking groups, Men’s Sheds and Neighbourhood Houses, sport and art classes, group-based exercise, intergenerational programs, recreation activities, volunteering, education short courses, TAFE courses, and other diverse community-specific supports.

# Service Framework

The full intent and functions of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals 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 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals.

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1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)