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| Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals  |
| 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, 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 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.

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, 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 structured psychotherapeutic 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 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.

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.

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals and 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.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Local providers have a current understanding of local needs and the delivery environment in the geographical area where the service operates. Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals 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 funded to provide primary and secondary consultation to Mental Health and Wellbeing Local clinicians. This allows Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals 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 Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, so people do not have to leave their local community to access the types of treatment and support these services offer.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals 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

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are not a crisis service for people experiencing an immediate risk of harm to self or others.

Where a person presenting to a Mental Health and Wellbeing Local is experiencing high levels of psychological distress or crisis and needs urgent help, the 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.

# 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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