

Summary Paper: Alliance Forum – 10 April 2024

This document provides a summary of the second ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance Forum, held on 10 April 2024 at EPIC. The Forum was attended by 43 representatives across a range of sub-sectors in the community, government, private, and academic sectors, as well as from the Alliance Youth Reference Group.

Forum Aim

The aim of the Forum was to:

- Contribute to projects being undertaken by the Youth Reference Group, and the Alliance Working Group, which aim to improve young people’s experiences with mental health and other services
- Provide an opportunity for cross-sector stakeholders to connect
- Provide an opportunity to update Alliance members on key initiatives

Forum Attendees

- ACT Education Directorate
- Australian Childhood Foundation
- Capital Health Network
- Capital Region Community Service
- Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS), Community Services Directorate
- Community Services Directorate (CYFSP)
- Conflict Resolution Service
- Early Family Support Service, ACT Health
- Families ACT
- Grand Pacific Health (headspace Canberra and headspace Tuggeranong)
- Headspace Be You Program
- Health Promotion and Grants, ACT Health
- Marymead Catholiccare
- Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Division, ACT Health
- Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)
- Meridian
- Office for Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Public Advocate
- School Youth Health Nurse Program, ACT Health
- STRIDE
- Uniting
- University of Canberra
- Woden Community Service
- Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Youth Reference Group, OMH&W

Session One (9:30 – 11:00am)

Welcome and Introductions

The Forum was emceed by Anais Le Gall from the Capital Health Network.

This second Alliance Forum builds on the first Forum, held in July 2023, which identified key priorities for the Alliance. It provides an opportunity for members to hear about and contribute to key project. Anais provided an Acknowledgement of Country and an Acknowledgement of Lived Experience. Forum members were invited to introduce themselves.

Youth Reference Group Presentation – Joey, Sam and Adam

The Youth Reference Group (YRG) was established by the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing and includes up to 15 young people with lived experience. The YRG meets monthly and has also established a working group to progress specific projects. Meetings are co-chaired by the YRG Coordinator, Joey Brogden, and a YRG member in a rotating co-chair role. Members are reimbursed for their time. The YRG is currently progressing two projects, described below.

The YRG released a new publication, the 'Our Say' - *Youth Lived Experience FAQs* resource, which compiles the broader, bigger picture questions that young people are often asked during consultations or whilst engaged in advocacy work; along with some of the YRG members' respective answers. Joey and Adam demonstrated the interactive document, which was developed by the members of the YRG as a preliminary resource to ensure those who consult with the YRG can get the most out of their time and participate in effective, meaningful engagement. It is available as a public resource via the Alliance website and can be referenced, quoted and utilised in a variety of projects. The YRG is looking to continuously improve on this document for future iterations and appreciate and welcome all feedback.

YRG Consultation: Lived Experience Guidance Toolkit

Sam provided an overview of the YRG's second project: the development of a lived experience guidance toolkit for service providers, to improve their practice and service delivery with young people. This toolkit will be collated over a number of phases. As a first step, the YRG conducted a consultation with forum attendees to inform the development of the Toolkit.

Session Two (11:15am – 12:30pm)

Alliance Update from Lead Agencies – Stephanie Lentern (CHN), Erin Barry (Youth Coalition) and Lee-Anne Rogers (OMH&W)

The lead agencies provided a brief overview of the history of the Alliance and activities that occurred following the last Forum in July 2023. The background and development of the Alliance is available at www.cymhalliance.com.au.

Following the 2023 Forum, Alliance activities have included:

- Establishment and delivery of a new Working Group to progress the two key priorities identified at the 2023 Forum
- Delivery of two Alliance Coordinating Committee meetings, including endorsement of the Alliance Terms of Reference
- Development of Alliance website: www.cymhalliance.com.au
- Delivery of monthly Alliance eBulletins
- Delivery of three Community of Practice meetings, delivering 10 service presentations
- Delivery of the Service Development Working Group to support planning for the Early Psychosis Youth Service, Head to Health Kids, and Youth at Risk service
- Delivery of the Alliance Youth Reference Group

The lead agency representatives provided an overview of the activities being undertaken by the Alliance Working Group. The Working Group was established to progress the following priorities:

1. Improving children, young people and families' experiences of mental health services
2. Improving service and system responses for children and young people with mental health concerns, and complex, co-occurring concerns

The role of the Working Group is to:

- Identify, promote and progress tasks, projects and other initiatives relating to the two priorities (both internal and external)
- Act as a conduit to the broader Alliance
- Identify opportunities for consultation with the broader Alliance
- Make recommendations to the broader Alliance

Members include representatives from across the community sector, government, mental health and child, youth and family sector. The Working Group will consult directly with the YRG on specific projects. Meetings are held every 6-8 weeks. A 'Workplan' has been developed outlining a range of projects and initiatives occurring across the ACT; with two key projects to be led by the Working Group:

1. Service readiness to collect and use service feedback from young people and families **(the focus of today's Forum consultation)**
2. Principles and practice approaches to information-sharing, privacy and consent (between services; and between young people and families).

Forum Consultation: Service readiness to collect and use service feedback from young people and families

The purpose of this project is to build service readiness to collect and use feedback from young people and families; prior to the potential introduction of client-reported 'experience' measures.

Intended project outcomes include:

- Improve shared understanding and agreements of the value of, key principles and good practice approaches, to collecting and using feedback
- Develop shared understanding regarding the capacity or capability constraints and challenges for services, including support needs
- Review of existing 'experience measures' for children, young people and families; and consideration on how these align with practice approaches
- Potential recommendations for use and delivery of 'experience measures' and other service feedback processes

Project phases include:

- Phase One – March to July 2024:
 - Aim: Gather and synthesise information regarding the value, key principles, and practice approaches to collecting and using client feedback.

- By: Consultations with services (WG, Forum and Survey); consultation with young people (YRG); literature review on approaches and existing measures
 - Deliverable: Initial Paper for Alliance.
- Phase Two:
- Aim: Building on Phase 1, consider the implications for use of specific tools/measures within services
 - Development of recommendations

Through a world-café style consultation, Forum participants selected three topics to contribute to, of the following four consultation questions:

1. What is the value and benefits of collecting client feedback, and how can it be used meaningfully?
2. What are the ethical considerations to collecting and using client feedback: Safe and inclusive; vs inadequate and harmful?
3. What are the challenges, constraints and concerns for services in collecting and using client feedback?
4. How might client feedback processes look different for young people; versus children and families?

Participants participated in three, 15-minute sessions on the consultation questions, led by table facilitators.

Refer to **Attachment A: Consultation Findings** for a collated overview of the responses, presented through word-clouds. Participants' responses will be collated and inform the initial project paper, along with Working Group responses, survey responses, the literature review findings and YRG consultation.

Session Three (1pm -2:30pm)

Service Development Project Update and Sector Initiatives

Stephanie Lentern (CHN) provided an update on the new Early Psychosis Youth Service, announcing that Uniting successfully won the tender, and introduced Shona Dutton from Uniting. More information will become available as the program is established.

Dr Barbara Walsh from the Health Research Institute at University of Canberra provided an overview of the 'Connect Up' project, funded by the MRFF, which will develop and pilot a program to reduce loneliness and isolation for young people aged 18-30 in the suburbs of Bruce and Belconnen.

Hannah Watts, lead of the Senior Youth Work Team at the Education Directorate, provided an overview of the Senior Youth Work team. This team of five senior youth workers, provide support, supervision and build the capability of school-based youth workers in ACT public schools.

Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR): Therapeutic Support Panel and service system reform presentation – Dr Justin Barker

Dr Justin Barker is the newly appointed chair of the new Therapeutic Support Panel (TSP). In 2023, the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR) was raised from 10 to 12; and will be further raised to 14 by July 2025. The TSP was established in March to support these reforms, and includes a full-time Chair and 7 members from a range of disciplines and backgrounds. The Chair and the TSP are independent, statutory entities, reporting directly to the Minister.

The TSP receives referrals for children and young people with harmful behaviours, who are at risk of involvement with the youth justice system. The TSP's case management team assess young people's unmet therapeutic needs, and put supports in place for young people and their families. This may include providing direct support to young people, or working with existing services that are already supporting young people and families. TSP processes are still in development, and the team endeavours to find flexible and innovative responses that are youth centred and family oriented. A developmental evaluation will be undertaken.

In addition to coordinating supports for young people and families, the TSP monitors and identifies service system gaps for this cohort. Dr Barker identified that current observed issues include children and young people bouncing between services due to being assessed as too complex; and the need for some service models to be flexible to adapt to family circumstances, including the need for more outreach.

Actions, next steps and final comments

Anais thanked forum participants for their time and closed the forum. Actions and next step arising included:

1. YRG: Will use the findings of their consultation to progress their guidance tool; and distribute a feedback survey to participants about the consultation process.
2. The Alliance Working Group will collate the findings of the 'service readiness' consultation, to inform the broader project.
3. A forum evaluation survey will be sent out to all attendees via email.
4. A forum summary paper (this document) will be circulated to Alliance members via a future ebulletin.

Attachment A: Consultation Word-Clouds

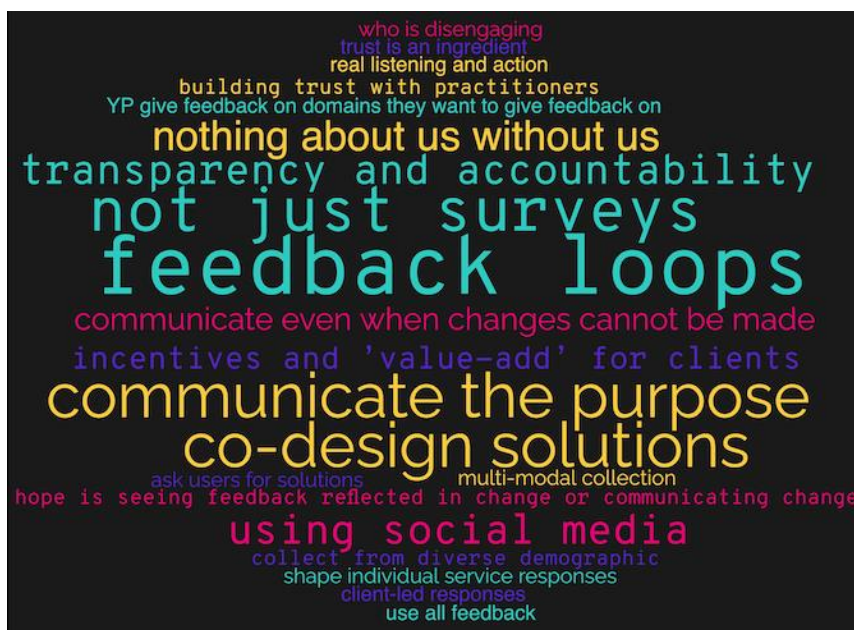
The word-clouds below presented the collated findings from the Forum consultation on 'service readiness to collect and use service feedback from young people and families'. The original consultation notes have also been retained.

Topic 1: What is the value and benefits of collecting client feedback, and how can it be used meaningfully?

Value and benefits:



How to use it meaningfully:



Topic 3: What are the challenges, constraints and concerns for services in collecting and using client feedback?



Topic 4: How might client feedback processes look different for young people, versus children and families?

Young people:



Children:



Parents/families:

