

Coordinating Committee: ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance

MINUTES

3 – 4:30pm, Thursday 31 July 2025

Online via Teams

Chair: Stephanie Lentern

Attendance:

- Erin Barry, Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Billieann Bambrick, Grand Pacific Health
- Cass Tinning, Health and Community Services Directorate (Youth at Risk Project)
- Emily Brown, Education Directorate
- Lee-Anne Rogers, Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Lisa Kelly, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
- Rebecca McIntyre, Health and Community Services Directorate (Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing)
- Ryan McLaughlan, Health and Community Services Directorate (CYFSP)
- Samantha Gill, Marymead CatholicCare
- Sam Thomas, Youth Lived Experience
- Shannon Lanza, Youth Lived Experience
- Stephanie Lentern, Capital Health Network

Welcome and Introductions

- The Chair welcomed members and provided an Acknowledgement of Country and Acknowledgement of Lived Experience.
- It was agreed that previous Minutes would be circulated to the broader group via email for final endorsement.
- Members introduced themselves.
- Apologies: Carrie Coghlan and Vikki Radford.

Alliance Strategic Priorities

- This meeting introduces a new standing agenda, which is intended to provide more flexibility in the meeting format and discussion focused on key issues.
- The Chair provided a brief update on Alliance activities since April:
 - Alliance Forum held in June: Attended by nearly 60 people. The Forum focused on:
 - CAMHS exit processes for young people turning 18
 - Early findings from Dr Ginny Sargent's legislation review related to information-sharing of young people's health information
 - Mental health sub-sector commissioning (focused on children/youth)
 - Presentations from MHCC ACT, and headspace Canberra/headspace Early Psychosis
 - Alliance Project: Building services' capability to use service user feedback:



- The ANU literature review on young people's preferences for providing feedback on services is available on the Alliance website
 - The ANU is nearing completion of the scoping review of high-quality 'experience measures' for use by children and young people. There may be an opportunity for a further review focused on parent/carer experience tools.
 - Legislation scoping review on information-sharing of young people's health information:
 - Dr Ginny Sargent presented the early findings at the Alliance Forum and is nearing completion of this review
 - A complementary project is being undertaken by the Child and Young Person Death Review Committee (ACT Government), which will focus on scoping this at the organisational policy level.
 - The Alliance Working Group will meet in mid-August, to inform next steps for each of these projects.
- Members discussed issues related to information-sharing of young people's information; and barriers for young people to accessing services without parental consent.
 - Conversations about access to services without parental consent are currently occurring in the sector, as services involved in procurement for the forthcoming 'Youth at Risk' adolescent trauma service grapple with consideration of processes to enable access for young people under the age of 16.
 - Members noted it is especially concerning when young people who need services the most, are not able to access them without parental consent (especially when young people may be seeking support due to an issue with a parent or their family).
 - This issue arises across sectors, including with youth homelessness services. The issue of 'capacity' (to consent), also present within legislation, often arises as a concept lacking clarity.
 - This issue frequently arises within the Youth Reference Group. YRG members have noted barriers relating to consent as a concern; along with parental control over information of young people. Information-sharing provisions can put young people at risk if the wrong person get access to it, including in situations where domestic and family violence is a factor. This can deter help-seeking for young people.
 - Members were invited to contribute to a Menti responding to the question: *What opportunities, initiatives, or priorities should the Alliance be considering over the next 12 months, or beyond?*
 - Use of Menti prompted additional conversation, relating to:
 - *Age harmonisation of mental health services:* A national conversation is occurring regarding harmonising the age-eligibility of all mental health services up to the age of 25 (primarily with implications for CAMHS services in each jurisdiction). There may be an opportunity to consider an ACT perspective.
 - *Connect Up 2617:* The Health Research Institute at UC have been piloting a community development program for young people aged 18-30 in Bruce and Belconnen, to build social connection and reduce isolation. This project is due

to be completed in October 2025. A range of learnings could be drawn.

- *Mental Health Services Plan*: The forthcoming development of the Services Plan provides an opportunity to consider what this would look like for children and young people; and to input into discussions about the next national agreement. What are the statements we want to see included relating to children and young people?
- *Adolescent Unit*: Revisiting how the design of the unit in the hospital is impacting or potentially preventing access to inpatient support, for young people who most need it?
- *Evaluation of mental health services*: As new child/youth mental health services are developed and implemented, and there is increasing interest from the Commonwealth in improving evaluation; how could the Alliance support conversations and processes to do this, through the development of ongoing action research and use of lived experience? This was supported by other members, particularly in relation to ensuring that the voices of service users are present in both evaluation design and delivery. Could there be additional working groups over time that feed into evaluation processes? How could we understand what good evaluation looks like from different perspectives – young people, carers / families, service providers, government? What does that mean for the way government procures services?
- *Enabling a broader view*: As many variables within the system continue to change, the Alliance provides a broader view: how do we keep bringing all these changes back to what young people and children need?
- *System navigation*: We do not have a shared definition of ‘navigation’, and we are not clear on what the specific problem is, that requires navigation. This term can be used a ‘catch-all’ or buzzword, and there is a risk that we are not always clear on what the actual problems are, that we are trying to solve with navigation services. The YRG has also frequently discussed navigation. There were varying definitions of ‘navigation’ within the Committee, which may speak to the need for improving shared understandings of this issue. The YRG has spoken about the disconnect in this issue, between the services available and what young people expect or where they look for support; and that it is reasonable for young people to expect to receive help with navigating the system. This was also noted as an issue within other sub-sectors, including the CYFSP: what is navigation, versus access? How as systems, do we get better at coordination and access; and ultimately, support children and young people to get the right help, in the smallest number of steps?
- Members were invited to review and prioritise items in the Menti. Results are below. Some similar results have been grouped together:

Responses	“Upvotes”
- Continued support of the YRG and the growing need for consultation with young people	6
- Evaluating the social determinants of youth mental health, and investigating non/pre-clinical interventions	6



○ [related response] Prevention programs for children and adolescents	2
○ [related response] Taking forward findings from Connect Up : the pilot program for young people aged 18-30 to reduce loneliness	1
○ [related response] Was also going to add a point on loneliness - looking at how we can work together on those social supports for young people	0
- Continuing the work reducing silos across the service system that supports young people	5
○ [related response] Reducing silos and looking for potential for cross-sector opportunities to address systemic issues	2
- Consider what the unmet psychosocial needs are for young people and how that translates to funding and service allocation through the National Agreement	4
○ [related response] Design of a new national agreement - provides an opportunity for us to shape what the future for youth services in mental health could look like	2
- Engagement with Evaluation activities for the new services- providing a space for Evaluation Advisory Groups that will be needed for the new services to be able to consult with/ present at	4
○ [related response] Continuing progress on the 'lived experience/service user feedback in services' project	3
- Long-term: Monitoring emerging system gaps for children and young people	3
- Navigating mental health impacts in the aftermath of the social media ban	3
- Coordinating services to improve system navigation	2
○ [related response] Coordination of services for continuity of care	1
○ [related response] Easy transition of information from service to service to limit the number of times a young person tells their story	2
○ [related response] Understanding how MOST and MindMap will support system access/ navigation	1
- Mental health Services Plan	2
- Transitions between services and age groups	1
○ [related response] ACT perspective on age harmonisation (CAMHS going up to age 25)	3
- The establishment of the new child and youth services/ programs	1
- Commissioning of CYFSP and MH services	1
○ [related response] MH Commissioning will need a landing place for advice/consultations/ presentations	0
- Addressing the gaps that the design of the adolescent mental health unit is causing	0

Action: Lead Agencies to review Menti responses and Committee discussion.

Alliance Processes:



- Members were provided with a draft updated Terms of Reference for consideration out-of-session, and discussion at the next meeting. Key areas flagged for consideration of members include:
 - Revisiting previous established processes regarding membership term length; noting that the membership has now been expanded – this may look different for different organisation types (e.g. community-based organisations, versus government representatives).
 - Revisiting previous established processes to avoid the use of proxies: lead agencies proposed that members could nominate one proxy; to provide flexibility whilst still maintaining continuity and stability within the group.
 - The YRG will be invited to determine their own processes pertaining to the Coordinating Committee.

Action: Members to consider the Terms of Reference prior to the next meeting.

Other Business

- No other business was raised.
- The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 September.

Meeting Close