

Coordinating Committee: ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance

MINUTES

10-11:30am, Friday 20 February 2026

Online via Teams

Chair: Natalie Johnson

Attendance:

- Alison Caley, Centre for Mental Health Research, ANU
- Erin Barry, Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Huyen Truong, Health and Community Services Directorate (CYFSP)
- Joey Brogden, Health and Community Services Directorate (Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing – YRG Coordinator)
- Natalie Johnson, Health and Community Services Directorate (Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing)
- Samantha Gill, Marymead CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn
- Sam Thomas, YRG Member
- Lauren Forner, Health and Community Services Directorate (Mental Health Strategic Policy – Child and Youth)
- Carrie Coghlan, CAMHS
- Shannon Lanza, YRG Member
- Stephanie Lentern, Capital Health Network
- Billieann Bambrick, Grand Pacific Health

Welcome and Introductions

- Natalie welcomed members and provided an Acknowledgement of Country and Acknowledgement of Lived Experience.
- November Minutes were endorsed for release on the website.
- Members introduced themselves.
- Natalie extended a welcome to Nicole Palmer from Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, who has joined the Committee but was unable to attend this meeting.
- Apologies: Lisa Kelly, MHCC; Cass Tinning (Lauren attending as proxy)

Alliance Strategic Priorities

- Erin provided an update on the Alliance activities between November and February, including the Forum delivered in December. See the attached PPT slides for further information.
- Members were invited to provide feedback and input into Alliance activities and priorities, particularly whether it would be valuable to host a 'Community of Practice' information-sharing session; and on topics for the next Forum, to be held on 18 June.
- Natalie noted that there are several large policy pieces underway, in which children and young people frequently recur as a priority cohort.



- The Mental Health Services Plan will complement the ACT Regional Plan, to guide the sector, with children and young people included as a priority group. Development of the Plan will include working groups, building on system feedback that has already been provided through other processes.
- The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement was due to end in June 2026, but has been extended for 12 months to June 2027, following a meeting of Ministers. Following this, will fall the next Bilateral Agreement between the ACT Government and Commonwealth Government.
- The Mental Health Act is undergoing a review.
- Members expressed an interest in understanding more about these policy initiatives and their development, and how the Alliance may be able to support them. It was agreed that information (when available) will be provided to the Coordinating Committee out of session, and that this may be a focus of a Community of Practice session, to share information with the wider sector.
- Other proposed topics for a Community of Practice included:
 - Service/Program updates: An opportunity to have refreshers on service changes and new offerings (e.g. peer groups, activities available for young people).
 - Peer work
 - Prevention and promotion, including social prescribing work being undertaken by Monash University
 - Headspace projects including the social prescribing pilot, and 'tech use and young people'.
 - Via Menti: sharing data from evaluation of implementation of Youth Trauma Service or Trauma Informed Practice training
 - Via Menti: Co-design opportunities and collecting feedback on any newly developed services/programs/tools - may be useful for new Youth Trauma Service or newly developed PREMs measures in Project 1.
- Via Mentimeter, members noted strong support for an online CoP to share information. Members also noted priorities put forward on behalf of Lisa Kelly, including: National Agreement, Foundational Supports, funding for unmet psychosocial needs, National Workforce Strategy – capability framework, Thriving Kids, and Kids Medicare MH Hub. And at the ACT level: MH Procurement, Mental Health Services Plan, Review of the Mental Health Act including sections on Mental Health Orders, Social Compact.
- Sam noted that the Forum would be an ideal place to advance the Issues Register, with time to investigate an issue. This could be an issue put forward by the YRG, with service providers discussing what they are doing to engage with the issue and the barriers/challenges. This could help to advance the content of the Issues Register, whilst also identifying other system issues as well.
- Joey noted that the YRG is currently working on 'Our Say 2.0'. Shannon suggested that the YRG could lead a segment in the Alliance eBulletin, which will be discussed at the next YRG meeting. Joey and Elian are writing a paper about a YRG resource being created, on the benefits of lived experience, co-design and engagement on the young people involved.
 - Members supported the idea of a YRG-led eBulletin segment or standalone eBulletin.

- Members discussed how best to position the Community of Practice and the purpose for doing so. It was felt that these could be placed between Forums, as an opportunity to share information between Forums, and reduce the need for information-sharing at Forums.
 - Joey noted the possibility of developing a YRG-led CoP, involving other service-based YRGs.

Alliance Processes:

- The Alliance Terms of Reference is still a working draft, pending further feedback from the YRG, and ongoing discussions regarding recruitment of members to the Committee.

Other Business

- Lauren reported that the Youth at Risk program being led by Uniting will be holding co-design workshops with service providers and young people, to design the intake mechanism. She also reported that Alison Cleave at the ANU was awarded the Grant to deliver the developmental evaluation of the YAR program. The Grants Assessment Panel for the Medicare Mental Health Kids Hub is currently underway.
- Alison reported that her colleague within the CMHR will be conducting research to understand children’s engagement with AI, including AI companions.
- Carrie reported that CAMHS’ project on the exit processes for young people turning 18 has been finalised and is now up and running. An internal launch across teams is occurring over the coming weeks. CAMHS is about to embark on Phase 1 of a review, in response to the 2023 Auditor-General’s report. Phase 1 will include mapping the client journey as young people are referred to the service and internal programs. Surveys will go out soon to 4000 young people who have accessed the services, and parents and carers; and will be shared with the Alliance to go out to the broader Canberra community as well. It is expected that Phase 1 will be completed by July.
- Huyen noted that HCSD are exploring the potential alignment of CYFSP and mental health sub-sector commissioning processes, which is expected to occur within 2026.
- The next meeting will be held on Thursday 23 April, from 3-4:30pm.

Meeting Close