



Mental Health Reform Advisory Committee

Meeting 3 Summary – 5 October 2023

The third meeting of the advisory committee was held on 5 October 2023.

Members discussed the significant role easily accessible, well-curated digital and low intensity services can play in prevention and early intervention, particularly for people with mild or short term mental health concerns.

Members noted that monitoring and measuring user outcomes and compliance with the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards could help enhance quality and build trust among practitioners and the wider community. The advisory committee agreed that ensuring there was an appropriately trained and supported workforce to safely deliver low intensity interventions was a key issue requiring careful consideration.

Members also recognised an effective, user-friendly digital ‘front door’ to enable navigation to appropriate mental health care was essential to ensure people can access the right services for their needs – either independently or with the help of a health practitioner. Members recognised that mechanisms for step up and step down of care and ‘warm referrals’ between services were an essential component of system navigation and could significantly improve the user experience. Members were cognisant this would require interoperability between service providers and broader sector collaboration, and that co-design of approaches to system navigation with the sector and people with lived experience was critical to achieve this.

Members discussed the affordability of mental health care and noted gap fees for Medicare-subsidised mental health services continued to be a barrier to care and may be impacting access for people in areas beyond those experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage. It was acknowledged Australia’s Primary Health Networks make an important contribution to addressing inequity by commissioning free or low-cost mental health care.