



MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR

Communiqué

Introduction

On 24 November 2016 the Acting Queensland Mental Health Commissioner hosted a meeting for the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, the Honourable Cameron Dick MP and the community mental health sector. This meeting follows on from the Minister's meeting with the alcohol and other drugs services sector, hosted by the Commissioner, earlier in 2016.

Opportunities and challenges for people living with mental illness and the sector were discussed, with a particular focus on:

- the new *Connecting Care to Recovery 2016-2021: A plan for Queensland's State-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services* (Connecting Care to Recovery services plan)
- the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- engagement of the sector in government planning.

Connecting Care to Recovery services plan

Sector representatives congratulated the State Government, the Minister and Queensland Health on the Connecting Care to Recovery services plan and particularly that funding is provided to support its implementation.

The Minister confirmed that the \$350 million allocated to the plan is new funding. He indicated that around 25 per cent of the funds are being directed to services that support young people and adolescents. Queensland Health is currently developing implementation plans and further detail will be provided to the sector regarding the plan and in particular the funding and implementation of step up/step down services.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

There continue to be concerns within the community mental health sector about how those who are ineligible for personalised support packages under the NDIS will access services. There were also concerns raised about transitional arrangements.

The Minister confirmed that the Queensland Government will not be directing all of the current funding for the community mental health sector into the NDIS and will be retaining \$27 million of the current \$70 million investment. Future investment in the community mental health sector will also include funding provided as part of Connecting Care to Recovery services plan.

Sector representatives raised concerns about transition arrangements for consumers with complex needs. They indicated that there will be a period of time, between the commencement of the NDIS in a location (when the community sector will not have funding to deliver services and support) and when consumers actually receive services under the NDIS.

Sector representatives highlighted the need to ensure that mental health consumers and carers continue to receive support and services during this period and are not placed at greater risk of needing acute mental health services and/or hospital treatment.

Concerns were also raised regarding funding arrangements during the transition to the NDIS and the impact on the viability of non-government organisations. Sector representatives advised that there will be a period of time between when the NDIS commences (and State Government funding will be reduced or end) and when non-government organisations receive funding for services from the National Disability Insurance Agency. During this period, non-government organisations will need to rely on their funding reserves, if any, or reduce operational costs including salaries.

Those at the meeting indicated there is a need for transitional funding and planning and that the sector needs to be involved in developing future plans. They indicated that the Queensland Transition to the NDIS for Mental Health Forum, convened by the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health Inc. is well attended by government representatives; there is a need for more direct involvement in government planning by the non-government sector.

Engagement and planning

Sector representatives indicated that at the service delivery level, community mental health services, Hospital and Health Services and Primary Health Networks are working very well together.

Those at the meeting highlighted the importance of including Primary Health Networks in cross sector strategic discussions. There was also an expressed need to involve the community mental health sector in planning at the strategic level including planning to implement the NDIS and to roll out the Connecting Care to Recovery services plan. Dr John Wakefield, Deputy Director-General in Queensland Health, who also attended the meeting, agreed to continue to engage with the community mental health sector regarding the issues raised at the meeting.

Further information

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