



Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project

IMPROVING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

FACT SHEET

In the health sector

Services will be improved for young people who seek help for mild to moderate mental illness.

Making primary health care more youth friendly

- Primary health provision in general needs to be more responsive to young people. An additional \$11.3 million over four years will be added to existing ring-fenced funding for primary mental health care. The group that this money can be used for will be expanded to include more young people with mild to moderate needs. The funding will be available not only to General Practitioners, but also to School-Based Health Services and Youth One Stop Shops (YOSS).
 - Work will be undertaken this year on how primary care in general can be made more youth friendly.
- The Ministry of Health will bring together an expert group to support this work in partnership with primary care networks.
- In the meantime, the Ministries of Health and Social Development will provide interim support for YOSS. YOSS have developed in response to young people's preferences. These services have generally been community-driven and have not always had sufficient administrative support or security of funding. The time-limited support will include funding for youth workers and the Ministry of Health will work on service enhancements with effective YOSS.

Improving wait times and follow-up care

- There will be higher expectations for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), including wait time targets.
- Currently there is no nationally consistent approach to follow-up care practices for young people discharged from CAMHS. There is a risk of relapse associated with mental health problems particularly in the period immediately following treatment.
- CAMHS will, in partnership with the young person and their family, identify a primary care provider to be responsible for follow-up care. CAMHS will ensure that this provider has access to appropriate documentation and support from CAMHS.
- Young people needing access to Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) support will receive this sooner as part of a Ministry of Health project to improve access to these services.

Referral pathways

- New Zealand's youth mental health system is complex, with many players. Referrals among these players are currently problematic.
- The Ministry of Social Development will lead a cross-agency review to look at where the referral pathways aren't working well, and will recommend practice changes.
- The review will be done this year. It will inform further advice to Ministers on improvements that can be made to the system.

Alcohol and drug education programmes

- Alcohol and drugs are significant factors in youth mental health. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the misuse of alcohol and drugs.
- Access to alcohol for young people is being tightened up through the Alcohol Reform Bill, currently before Parliament.
- In addition, there will be a cross-agency review of government-funded education programmes to tackle teenagers' drug and alcohol misuse. This review will ensure that funding is being provided for programmes that are in line with best practice.



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Q & A

In the health sector

Making primary health care more youth friendly

Why is primary health care important for mental health?

Primary health care services, including counselling, General Practitioner or nurse appointments, are usually the first point of contact for people with mental health conditions. In many cases, a young person will respond to a relatively simple intervention at an early stage.

What is being done to improve primary mental health care for youth?

At the moment, primary mental health funding is ring-fenced for high-need populations. There will be an additional \$11.3 million over four years in funding and the target group for this primary mental health fund will be expanded to include more young people in the 12-19 year age group.

What is a Youth One Stop Shop (YOSS)?

YOSS is a term used to describe community-based

centres which cater for a wide range of youth needs.

They have been developed in response to young people's preferences, which are different from the way in which adults interact with the health system.

There is no single model for YOSS. They can include a range of health, social and community services as they have generally evolved in response to local needs. They are supported by a variety of funding models, which may include District Health Board funding. While each centre has developed independently, as a group they have a common goal to promote access to health and social services for youth.

What is being done for YOSS in this package?

YOSS will receive time-limited support in the form of funding for youth workers. The Ministry of Health will work with effective YOSS on service enhancements while undertaking work on how primary care can be made more youth-friendly.

Improving wait times and follow-up care

What are Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)?

CAMHS services are specialist secondary mental health and addiction services for children and adolescents. The 'mix' of professional support provided may include family therapists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, nurses, social workers and alcohol & other drug workers.

What's being done to improve CAMHS?

There will be nationally consistent services and higher performance expectations for CAMHS, including wait

time targets and post-discharge follow-ups. It is taking too long for some young people to get help and when they do, their follow-up care in some cases is not as good as it could be. There will also be a requirement for integrated case management between CAMHS, Alcohol and Drug Services (AOD) and other NGO agencies.

What do you expect wait times to be?

The majority of young people will be seen within three weeks of referral. The wait time targets set for CAMHS and youth AOD services will be 80 per cent of young people to be seen within three weeks and 95 per cent within eight weeks of their referral.

Referral pathways

What is a referral pathway?

Referral pathways describe the way that young people move through the mental health system from when they first seek assistance.

How can referral pathways be improved?

New Zealand's youth mental health system is complex, with many players. Referrals among these players are currently problematic. Sometimes this is due to service gaps: there aren't enough mental health professionals to go around. But sometimes this is due to the various players not being clear who they should hand young people over to. Ideally, if one service couldn't provide for a young person's needs, the handover to an appropriate service would be smooth.

This package addresses some immediate issues with referrals - for example, ensuring that when young people leave CAMHS, there is good post-discharge follow up from these services. Integrated case management between CAMHS, AOD Services and other NGO agencies will also be required. However, more can be done. The referrals review will drill down into the problem and help us understand why young people sometimes fall through the cracks in the system and what more can be done.

How will the review help address the needs of young people?

The review will inform advice to the Ministers of Health, Social Development and Education on how the system can be further improved.

Alcohol and drug education programmes

What has prompted this review?

Government funds a number of drug and alcohol education programmes and resources for young people. International evidence shows that some types of these programmes are more effective than others in delaying or reducing alcohol or drug use. This review will ensure that the education programmes the Government is funding are having a positive effect.

Who will conduct the review?

The review will be jointly led by the Ministries of Education and Health..

How will the consultation process work?

Schools, government agencies and other organisations will be consulted to ensure up-to-date information on programmes is available.