



Mental health inquiry – draft report

Factsheet: Consumers and Carers

For many people, finding the right services at the right time is almost impossible. Doctors, nurses and many other people working in the system are doing all they can to help people – but their ability to assist is severely limited by the substantial gaps in the system.



In Australia, there are about 3.9 million people with mental illness and about 1 million mental health carers.

The mental health system is not listening to consumers and carers.

Consumers and carers are often excluded from decisions that affect their lives, ranging from treatment options to policy design.

Consumers and carers are looking for a mental health system where:



They can **access the services** they need when they need them.



The services they receive **accommodate their needs**



Information flows freely between providers, so consumers and carers do not have to tell their story over and over again.



To see all of our recommendations and read our full draft report, or to access our other fact sheets please go to www.pc.gov.au or google search productivity commission mental health report.

To improve people's experience, the Productivity Commission draft report recommends:



Focusing on prevention and early intervention, so that people can access treatment well before they reach a crisis point.



Helping people access the services they need, including online therapy and after-hours services that prevent people from needing emergency departments.



Creating meaningful gateways and pathways, so people do not fall through the cracks in care delivery.



For carers, the Commission's proposed reforms improve support services (including access to income support) and enable mental health services to talk to and support carers.



For families affected by mental illness, there would be greater access to family therapy, and more support for young carers in schools.



The Productivity Commission's draft report recommends setting up processes whereby consumer and carer voices can be heard – and make a difference to the way mental healthcare works.

Young People



Young adults experience **higher rates of mental illness** than the rest of the adult population.

26%

26% of 16–24 year olds have an anxiety, mood or substance use disorder – and report relatively high rates of psychological distress.



These **years are an important transition point** in a person's life regardless of their mental health.



Mental illness can **disrupt people's success in their education and careers**, and without proper support put them on a different trajectory for their whole life.



That is why many of our reforms have **focused on ways to support the mental health** of children and young people.



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