

February 2019

Certification framework and national standards for digital mental health services

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission), is scoping the development of a certification framework and national standards for digital mental health services.

Certification of services has the potential to build user confidence, increase adoption rates, and increase consumer choice in digital mental health services.

For the purpose of this project, a **digital mental health service** is defined as:

a mental health, suicide prevention, or alcohol and other drugs service that uses technology to facilitate engagement and the delivery of care.

This includes information, digital counselling, treatment and peer support services delivered via telephone, videoconference, websites, SMS, webchat, and mobile applications (apps).

The certification framework will support ongoing safety and quality assurance for digital mental health services, including those listed on the Australian Government's digital mental health gateway [Head to Health](#).

Background

For many people, interventions provided through digital mental health services can be as effective as face-to-face services, and provide additional access and anonymity.¹

The National Mental Health Commission reports that despite the recognised benefits of clinically effective digital mental health services, the landscape is poorly integrated and creates difficulty for consumers accessing these services.²

In response, the Australian Government developed a new digital mental health gateway, [Head to Health](#).

This gateway provides consumers, carers, the general community, and health professionals with greater access, choice and convenience in using digital mental health services.

Consultation

Input from consumers, carers, health professionals, service providers and other stakeholders will inform the development of the certification framework and national standards.

The Commission conducted a series of targeted consultation interviews in late 2018 with Australian and overseas digital mental health service providers, academics and experts, government and peak body representatives.

All stakeholders will have the opportunity to contribute to the project through further consultation activities in March and April 2019. These will include face-to-face workshops delivered at multiple locations across Australia, online sessions and an online written survey.

The Commission will report to the Australian Government Department of Health in June 2019 on options for certification and national standards for digital mental health services.

Questions?

For more information, please contact the Commission's project team at DMHS@safetyandquality.gov.au.

 @ACSQHC

¹ Department of Health. *Australian Government Response to Contributing Lives, Thriving Communities – Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2015.

² National Mental Health Commission. *The National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services*. Sydney: NMHC, 2014. This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.