



20 November 2025

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Dear Sally

**Review of CHS MHJHADS Specialty Services Operational Procedure -
Alcohol & Drug Services**

This letter has been prepared by the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (the Network) in response to the invitation from Canberra Health Services (CHS). It incorporates written and verbal feedback received from consumers in relation to the CHS MHJHADS Specialty Services Operational Procedure - Alcohol & Drug Services (the Procedure). The Network welcomes the invitation to provide feedback on the Procedure.

Upon review, consumers highlighted the following issues for consideration and review:

1. Section 1 Background (p. 3) does not reference the role of peer support or peer workers. Given the increasing importance of peer work in mental health services, it is recommended that these roles be explicitly acknowledged and incorporated into this section.
2. The inclusion and support of CALD consumers should be strengthened as follows:

- In Section 5 Referral Processes (p. 21 and 24), CALD consumers should be listed among priority population groups.
 - While interpreter services are essential, consumers emphasised the need for culturally supportive communication to assist understanding of the situation beyond language translation when receiving healthcare support (p.15).
3. Consumers expressed concerns about the potential division between Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) support and mental health support. They noted that in Section 2 Stepped Care, Table 2 (p. 6), the procedure was not sufficiently clear regarding which services would be provided sequentially, in parallel, or through an integrated care approach. Additionally, consumers emphasised the need for more integrated options in this area.
 4. The use of the MSF-III screening tool (p. 30) is concerning. Feedback indicated that the tool is outdated, contains inappropriate questions, and may pose a risk of triggering distress. Consumers recommended reviewing the use of MSF-III and considering alternatives such as the DASS for screening purposes.
 5. Consumers noted that the section on Oversight and Peak Advocacy Bodies does not include mental health associations (p. 55). Consumers suggested adding the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (ACTMHCN) due to its role as a peak advocacy body for mental health consumers. Other relevant organisations, such as the Youth Coalition of the ACT, could also be considered to support holistic service provision.

If you have any questions or require further clarification regarding this feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us on (02) 6230 5796 or executive@actmhc.org.au.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Procedure.

Yours sincerely



Dalane Drexler
Chief Executive Officer