

Structural Changes within the Department of Health

Following a period of consultation the Department of Health will be introducing several structural changes to Community Mental Health and Wellbeing and System Management and Reform Divisions commencing from 6 March.

The restructure includes combining the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate – known as MHADD – with functions of the State Office of Statewide Mental Health Services (SMHS) and moving key functions to other parts of the Department. The new team will be led by a Group Director at the same level as the current MHADD lead and the same level as each of the other streams in SMHS.

This functional realignment will result in changes to structures across the Department to address risk, strengthen governance and accountability, and consolidate resources.

Alignment of functional areas supports the sustainability of resourcing, removes the possible duplication of like functions being undertaken across different business units (as is currently the case across MHADD and the Mental Health Reform Team), and more meaningful engagement with external stakeholders including Primary Health Tasmania and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania.

The reorganised and renamed MHADD will have primary responsibility for supporting the development of reforms, for communication and for implementing reform across Mental Health in Tasmania and the Group Director will report to the Executive Director in SMHS.

The development and implementation of preventative mental health and harm minimisation strategies were previously shared across Public Health Services and MHADD, these will now be centralised in Public Health Services, as they are for other aspects of health prevention.

These changes will support progression of the Department's commitment to developing and implementing key strategies, including the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy, the Tasmanian Drug Strategy, the 20 Year Preventive Health Strategy and to deliver on initiatives and identify policy reform strategies as we move past Rethink 2025.

Systems Management and Reform (SMR), Public Health Services and MHADD have previously had grants and commissioning teams; consolidation of functional key grant and commissioning resources in SMR ensures a consistent and effective governance and accountability of funded services and is consistent with a recent audit outcome, for those organisations receiving grants from the multiple areas it should also reduce their reporting burden.

Importantly, as this is a structural realignment, your key contacts will continue:

- Kelley-Maree French, Manager – Funding and Commissioning, 6777 4385 or email:
 - mhfundingagreements@health.tas.gov.au for mental health service funding agreements
 - aodfundingagreements@health.tas.gov.au for alcohol and other drug service funding agreements
- Robyn Greaves, Manager Policy and Projects, 6166 0766 for policy and projects in relation to suicide prevention and alcohol and other drugs
- Zoe Bok, Senior Project Officer – Alcohol and Drug (AOD) Reform, 6166 6225 for AOD reform projects

- Tim Allen, Principal Policy Officer, 6165 8564 for mental health policy

A key enabler of this change will be to establish a clear governance structure and engagement framework to ensure we work closely with key partners to deliver on initiatives and the development of policy reform strategies. This work has commenced and will be ongoing.

Integrated mental health and alcohol and other drug services is a key objective of the Department of Health and of the sector. MHADD standing alone with no direct line to departmental services and the strategic direction in SMHS has led to the perception of a weakening of integration in recent times. It is important to reinforce that true integration can only be achieved through the design and delivery of one service system, with a range of providers, and this change is designed to enhance the path to that outcome.

I look forward to meeting with MHCT leaders at the upcoming forum in April, where I will be happy to answer any further questions, or if you have a burning question that can't wait you can contact me direct at secretary@health.tas.gov.au .

Dale Webster PSM
(he/him/his)
Secretary. Department of Health