

Government of **Western Australia**  
Mental Health Commission

# Community mental health step up/step down services Fact Sheet

## What is a community mental health step up/step down service?

Community mental health step up/step down (step up/step down) services provide a combination of psychosocial and clinical support programs within a residential-style setting. They provide short-term support that is aligned to a person's personal recovery plans and close to personal supports from family and friends.

These services aim to reduce and/or prevent hospital admissions by providing an alternative model of care in the community.

These services provide:

- Step up services, which allow people to step up from the community, and provide additional support for a person to manage a deterioration in their mental health, but where an admission to an inpatient facility (such as a hospital) is not warranted; and

Step down services, which allow people to step down from a stay in an inpatient facility, and provide additional support to a person who no longer requires acute inpatient care but does require assistance in re-establishing themselves in the community.

## Where are they located?

Step up/step down services are currently operating in Joondalup (22 beds), Rockingham (10 beds), Albany (six beds), Bunbury (10 beds), Kalgoorlie (10 beds) and Geraldton.

Further regional services are planned in Karratha (six beds), Broome (six beds) and South Hedland (10 beds). A dedicated youth step up/step down (10 beds) is planned in the metropolitan area.

## How do people access this service?

People wishing to use the service do so voluntarily and can self-refer, be referred by a GP or a mental health clinician.

A review process is then undertaken by the service provider and the local Community Mental Health Team. This is undertaken to ensure the referral meets the service's admission criteria and the service has the capacity to address the individual's needs.

People accessing the service are required to have a permanent home address.

## Is it for all genders?

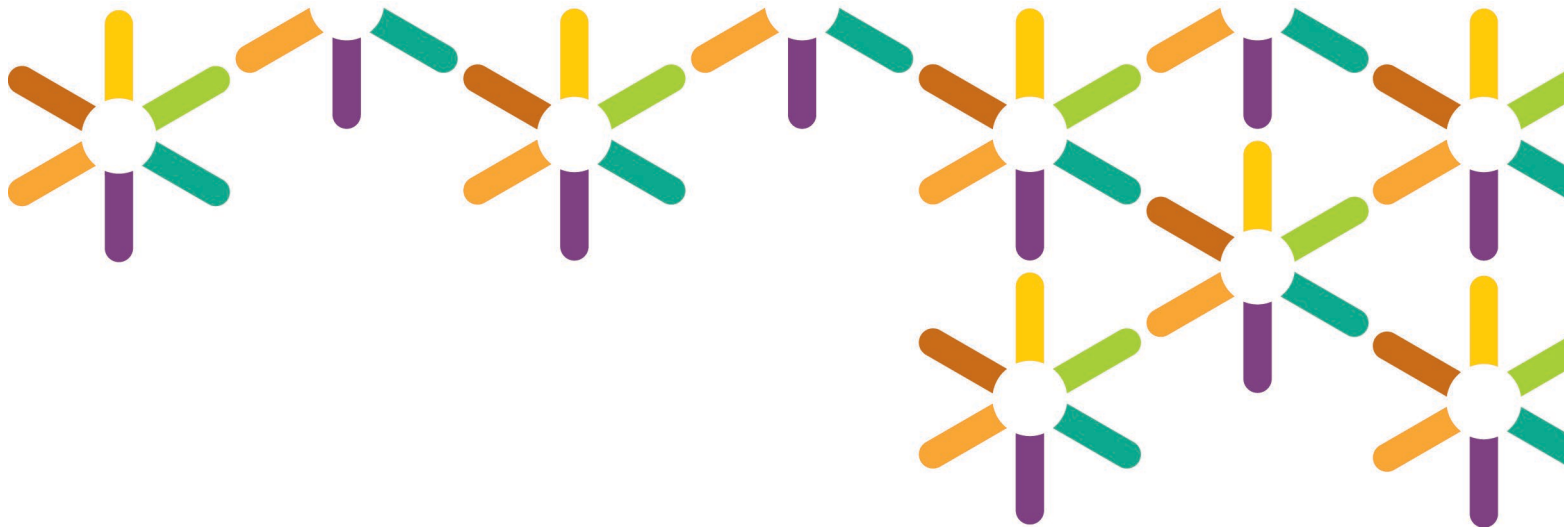
Yes. Each individual has their own unit.

## What age are the people who use the service?

The service is open to all people living with a mental health problem aged 18 and over. Step up/step down services may accept young people aged 16 to 17 years on a case-by-case basis, where assessed as clinically appropriate.

## How long do people usually stay at the service?

These services are for a short-stay; individuals can stay for up to a maximum of 30 days.



### **Is it staffed 24/7?**

Yes. The services have staff, on site, 24hrs a day, seven days a week.

### **Can people access alcohol and other drugs while at the service?**

These services are not alcohol and other drug rehabilitation centres.

It is acknowledged that people living with a mental health issue can have co-occurring alcohol and drug issues; however the focus of the step up/step down service is, and will be, for people to address their mental health issues.

People using the step up/step down service will be required to remain drug and alcohol free during their stay at the service.

### **How is the site location for the facility chosen?**

Step up/step down services are located within suitable proximity to the amenities that any general member of the community could expect.

This includes access to suitable public transport, shopping and recreational precincts, so that people can engage within the community and develop their skills with activities of daily living

### **What community engagement takes place?**

Depending on the locality and local planning legislation and regulations, different types of community engagement may take place, including:

- Letter drop to homes and businesses in close proximity; and
- Door knocking visits to neighbours in close proximity to the service.

We work closely with the local government to ensure all members of the community are appropriately informed about the service. Once the mental health service provider is appointed they will continue with community engagement.

### **How can I find out more information?**

The Mental Health Commission has produced five short videos that detail the experiences of consumers using step up/step down services, and employees of step up/step down services. To view these videos and for further information please visit:

[www.mhc.wa.gov.au/stepupstepdown](http://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/stepupstepdown)