



Frequently Asked Questions

WA Eating Disorder Specialist Services

What is an eating disorder?

Eating disorders are a group of serious and complex mental illnesses characterised by problems associated with disordered eating, body weight control and severe concern with body weight and shape.¹

How has the funding come about?

As part of the 2021 Election Commitment and the 2021-22 state budget, \$31.7 million has been allocated to the expansion of the Western Australian Eating Disorder Treatment Specialist Services (WAEDSSs).

Why do we need an expansion of services?

There are widely acknowledged services gaps in the support and treatment of individuals with eating disorders within public health system in Western Australia (WA), particularly for those aged 16 years and over

With one in five Australians affected by a mental health disorder each year, access to appropriate community-based services that help people recover and to manage their mental health issues is essential.

For those diagnosed at 16 and over, there is no state-wide comprehensive public eating disorder service. There are only a small number of therapy and support programs available, including some private services. There is however long wait lists of up to six months for the Public and private services.

The WAEDSSs is built on key principles which align to the:

- Sustainable Health Review;

- WA Health Strategic Intent 2015–2020;
- Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015–2025;
- National Eating Disorder Collaboration (NEDC) Stepped System of Care Framework; and
- WA Health Equity and Diversity Strategy 2015–2020.

WAEDSSs key principles include:

- Person-centred care;
- Best practice care;
- Recovery-oriented practice;
- Comprehensive and integrated care; and
- Equity of access

What will be included in the new WAEDSSs?

WAEDSSs will be evidence-based and aligned to nationally recognised best practice including, aligning to the NEDC framework and guidelines. WAEDSS will provide integrated services to ensure smooth transition across the different care settings.

Service elements include:

1. Two dedicated multidisciplinary state-wide services, located in the north and south metropolitan areas²

The key function of the teams will be to triage, coordinate and navigate consumers to services, intersecting with other services and service providers, including community services. Services include:

- Triage services;

¹ Australian Government. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). *Australia's Health 2018*, 3.13 *Eating disorders*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/australias-health-2018/contents/table-of-contents>

² A planned expansion of the locations will be considered at a later date, subject to budget approval.



- Intensive day programs - providing a step down from the intensity of inpatient treatment and a step up for when more intensive support is required beyond general outpatient treatment and programs;
- Intensive clinical monitoring to provide support to people in the community while they are waiting for the next phase of their treatment; and
- Specialist multidisciplinary outpatient clinics, providing outreach, transition support, a step-down service for inpatients with eating disorders and support for general health and wellbeing.

Access to the services are via an appropriate health practitioner.

2. Patient transition coordination

These roles will coordinate the care of people living with eating disorders, including the transition of people from the children's service to the youth and adult service. Five Coordinators will be located at each Health Service Provider.

3. Community services

This will include:

- Community treatment and support services, including education and supports for family members and carers.
- Peer support.
- New service for males with an eating disorder.
- Early identification, intervention and prevention.
- Workforce training – to enable increased resources in community treatment services.

Referrals into some community support services are generally required and can be received via a range of different sources including self-referral, general practitioners, general hospitals, health professionals including psychiatrists, and other components of the WAEDSSs, including the area-based hubs.

4. Consultation and liaison Service

Continuation and enhancement of the WA Eating Disorders Outreach and Consultation Service (WAEDOCS). WAEDOCS will continue to:

- consult and liaise with health professionals and members of the community;
- provide education and training of health practitioners; and
- research.

When are the services expected to start?

July 2022.

How was the model for the service developed?

Over the years models of care have been discussed and progressed in some manner. The model of care presented is a re-refresh of the previous work which has now been further developed and tested using the following method:

- Previous work of the Eating Disorders Sub-network including the strategy workshop held in October 2018 and the Round-table meeting with the Minister for Mental Health in 2018.
- A current state assessment and a gap analysis.
- Interjurisdictional comparison of eating disorder services.
- Review of current relevant mental health service reform documents relating to eating disorders in Western Australia and youth mental health in WA.
- Consultation and engagement with consumers, carers, clinicians and agencies.
- Review of evidence and research provided by the National Eating Disorder Collaboration, Centre of Excellence in Eating Disorders.

How will consumers in the regions access the service?

As with other health conditions, those individuals from regional areas will be able to access services through existing mechanisms (e.g. Patient Assisted Transport Scheme,



telehealth etc). This will be complemented by the services offered by the WA County Health Service (WACHS) Command Centre.

As well as a commitment to ensuring WACHS patients will have equitable access to inpatient care and the day program (this will be facilitated via WAEDOCS), additional services will be critical to ensuring appropriate treatment of rural and remote patients. This will include ongoing outpatient treatment and support close to home via telehealth facilitated through the central hub of the new WACHS Command Centre.

Who is it for?

This WAEDSSs are for people with eating disorders aged 16 years and over (including youth, adult, older adult and pregnant women).

What services are there now?

- **The Body Esteem Program®** (provided by Women's Health and Family Services supported by the Mental Health Commission) is a service which offers support for women suffering from eating disorders.
- **Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI)** – is a public specialist clinical psychology service, funding also provided through the Mental Health Commission. CCI develops and provides evidence-based treatments to adults experiencing complex anxiety, mood and eating disorders, and conducts clinically applied research to improve existing psychological interventions.
- **Eating Disorders Families Australia (EDFA)** advocate for the needs and roles of parents during this experience, and assists families and carers in recognising symptoms, accessing treatment as early as practicable and accessing programs and support systems to develop effective capabilities.
 - EDFA is a national organisation and the only group with the sole focus of supporting the families and carers of people with an eating disorder.
 - Support groups are also available for families of those with an eating disorder.
- **Perth Children's Hospital Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Eating Disorders Program (EDP)** –

provides outpatient care, day treatment and in-reach support for children and adolescents with eating disorders, for those aged 8 to 16.

- **The Hollywood Clinic** (day program and an eating disorder inpatient program) (private service) – focuses on recovery and helps participants develop the knowledge and skills to overcome unhelpful eating behaviours and mindsets.
- **The Swan Centre** is a private outpatient treatment service for children, adolescents and adults with eating and weight disorders or other eating and body image concerns.
- **The Western Australian Eating Disorders Outreach and Consultation Service** is a state-wide service providing specialist advice and guidance to staff caring for people with Eating Disorders aged over 16 years.

What's next?

- The MHC will continue to:
 - engage with the Eating Disorder Sub-Network to ensure support care pathways, models of care, clinical guidelines, service planning and service developments and improvements are continuously considered.
 - Work with Health Service Providers and Non-government organisations on the implementation of the services.

Who can I contact for more information?

- By writing to the Mental Health Commission (GPO Box X2299 Perth Business Centre WA 6847);
- By emailing Louise Soia, Policy and Service Development Manager, MHC.TreatmentServiceProvision@mhc.wa.gov.au