

## NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-24

**Summary** This Policy sets out roles and requirements to facilitate the implementation of the NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-24. The Framework supports NSW Health to consider the health and wellbeing of young people when planning and delivering services and programs.

The Framework supports healthcare that is responsive to the needs of young people, including targeted approaches for young people at higher risk of poor health, youth-friendly services, access for young people, and workforce capacity.

Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks will agree a plan and priorities for implementing the Framework and will provide progress reports on implementation as requested.

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**Distributed to** Divisions of General Practice, Ministry of Health, NSW Ambulance Service, Public Health System, Tertiary Education Institutes

**Audience** Clinical, Clinical Governance, Consumer Engagement, Learning and Development

### Secretary, NSW Health

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is mandatory for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.

## NSW YOUTH HEALTH FRAMEWORK

### PURPOSE

This Policy sets out roles and requirements to facilitate the implementation of the *NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-24*. The *Framework* supports NSW Health to consider the health and wellbeing of young people when planning services and programs. It outlines the need for healthcare that is responsive to the needs of young people, including targeted approaches for young people at higher risk of poor health. The *Framework* promotes young people's engagement in health, youth-friendly services and better access for young people. It enhances workforce capacity to engage with and provide care to young people.

### MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks will agree a local plan and priorities for implementing *NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-24*.

Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks will provide an annual report, in the requested format, to the NSW Ministry of Health on progress against their implementation plan.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks have lead responsibility for implementing the *Framework*. They are to review information about the health needs of young people, as well as health service utilisation and capacity. This information should inform local priority setting and planning against the *NSW Youth Health Framework*. Local priorities should contribute to achieving the goals and outcomes for young people described in the *Framework* (pages 16 to 21). As a minimum this plan should cover priorities in relation to: workforce development, youth participation, transition pathways for young people with chronic disease, care pathways and partnerships to support vulnerable young people, use of adolescent health and wellbeing assessments, online service information for young people, and youth-friendly services.

The Health and Social Policy Branch, NSW Ministry of Health provides leadership and guidance to support implementation of the *Framework*. The Branch will monitor implementation. It will request an annual report from Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks about progress towards priorities in their local plans.

### REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Amendment notes
July 2017 (PD2017_019)	Deputy Secretary Strategy and Resources	Policy reviewed - mandatory requirements maintained. New Framework attached to reflect current priorities and practice.
December 2010 (PD2010_073)	Deputy Director-General Strategic Development	New Policy

## ATTACHMENTS

1. *NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-24*

# NSW YOUTH HEALTH FRAMEWORK

2017 – 2024



Health

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2017

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# MINISTER'S FOREWORD

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that young people aged 12-24 years have the best opportunity to achieve their full potential. Promoting health and wellbeing is at the heart of this commitment.

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We know that the health and wellbeing of young people is influenced by a range of factors and experiences during adolescence and early adulthood. Young people experience significant physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive and social changes. This life stage presents an important opportunity to intervene early in health concerns.

We also know that too many young people face challenges that heighten their risk of poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. This includes those that experience trauma, homelessness, violence and chronic illness and disability. It is vital that we empower young people to be healthy, and plan and deliver healthcare that is responsive to the needs of all young people and especially those that are harder to engage with or have less family support.

This Framework builds on the previous NSW Youth Health Policy and provides guidance to the NSW Health system to provide responsive care to young people. It complements the work led by NSW Health to create a connected and responsive health system that provides world class care for all people in NSW. It also provides a strong platform for the implementation of the new investments the NSW Government is making for young people in the areas of mental health and alcohol and drug treatment services.

Many partner agencies, health practitioners, health services and young people have been involved in the development of the Framework and their continued involvement in implementation is critical to its success. Collaboration and partnerships between the NSW Health, non-government organisations, cross-government agencies and significantly young people themselves will deliver accessible and effective health services for young people across the state.



Listening, respecting and responding to young people's needs as they transition through their different life stages are the foundations for making a difference to the health and wellbeing of young people, their families, carers and communities. However the investment into prevention and services can deliver much more than just improved health and wellbeing for any one individual. It also enables stronger engagement in education and employment and therefore an opportunity to build healthier and more productive communities that will benefit future generations.

**Brad Hazzard MP**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Medical Research

# FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

## VISION

Young people in NSW are healthy, safe and well

### GOAL 1

The health system responds to the needs of young people, including targeted responses for vulnerable young people

Young people's health needs are assessed in a holistic way and vulnerable young people are identified.

Young people's health needs are responded to; they receive quality healthcare and are supported to make informed decisions.

Vulnerable young people have their safety, health and wellbeing addressed and receive coordinated and integrated care.

### GOAL 2

Health services are accessible and young people are engaged and respected

Young people are supported to access and navigate health services.

Young people are respected and have a positive experience when using health services.

Young people are engaged and have a voice in health service design, delivery and improvement.

### GOAL 3

Young people are supported to optimise their health and wellbeing

Young people are supported to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing by youth-specific health promotion, education and early intervention.

Young people with chronic illness or disability receive effective care and are supported to manage their care and be as independent as possible.

The Framework is informed by learning from feedback from NSW Health, partner agencies and young people. It also takes account of relevant research and evidence including the *Access* research studies<sup>1,2,3</sup> which explore young peoples' experiences of accessing and navigating health services in NSW.

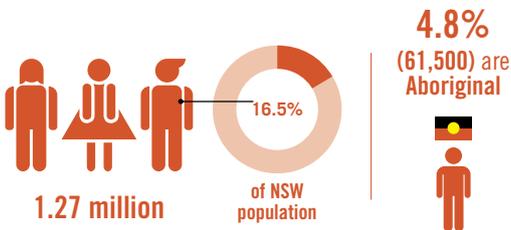
The Framework supports NSW Health to consider the health and wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 24 years when planning and delivering services. This includes supporting:

- Holistic healthcare that supports young people as partners in their own care
- Targeted health promotion and early intervention that is focused on prevention and harm minimisation
- Timely access to appropriate healthcare and youth-friendly services
- Person-centred, integrated care and transition support for young people with complex needs, including chronic illness and disability
- Service models that respond to the needs of vulnerable young people at higher risk of poor health
- Workforce capacity to provide responsive care to young people that promotes safety, welfare and wellbeing
- Consumer participation in health by young people
- Monitoring and improvement of health services for young people.

# YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW

Approximately one third of Australia's young people live in New South Wales.

## 12-24 YEAR OLDS IN NSW<sup>4</sup>



## DISABILITY<sup>5</sup>



7.6% of 15-24 year olds have a reported disability

## OUT-OF-HOME CARE<sup>6</sup>

As at 30 June 2015 there were over **6,000** 12-17 year olds in **Out of Home Care**



In the year to end March 2016, over **1,250** 15-17 year olds left **Out of Home Care**

## WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE?<sup>7</sup>



## CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE<sup>8</sup>

The 2011 national census showed that in NSW...

more than **340,000** 12 to 24 year olds are from a **CALD** background

nearly **16,000** are refugee born

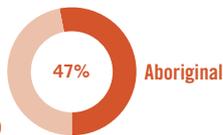


## JUVENILE JUSTICE<sup>9</sup>

On an average day in 2015-16

**1,413**

young people aged 10-17 were under Juvenile Justice supervision (community supervision and detention)



## PREGNANCY<sup>10</sup>

Young women who gave birth in 2015

**2,377**

19 years old or under

**11,358**

aged 20-24 years



## YOUTH HOMELESSNESS<sup>11</sup>

**18,400**

young people aged 15-24 years old sought housing or other support from Specialist Homelessness Services in 2015-16



Over **13,700** presented alone to SHS services

## YOUNG CARERS<sup>5</sup>



Over **80,000** 15-24 year olds care for someone who is older or who has a long term condition or disability, including **9,300** who are the **primary carer**

## SEXUALITY<sup>12</sup>

**16.8%** of secondary school students in Australia report that they are **attracted to people of the same sex** as them or to both sexes.



# HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW

Young people experience a range of health and wellbeing issues that are distinct from those of younger children and the adult population.

Young people experience physical, emotional, cognitive and social development throughout adolescence and early adulthood which influences their behaviours, feelings, impulses, sense of self, relationships and resilience<sup>13</sup>. Increased risk taking, experimentation, independence and engagement beyond family are also important and normal aspects of adolescent development<sup>14</sup>.

These factors can affect health and wellbeing, health choices and can increase risks of harm<sup>15</sup>. The diversity of young people (including gender, culture and sexuality) may impact how they approach and manage their health<sup>13</sup>. Risk factors for future health and the development of chronic disease in later life, such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers, also emerge in adolescence<sup>14</sup>.

Young people value their health and wellbeing and most self-report being in excellent, very good or good health<sup>16</sup>. However, many young people identify issues that affect health and wellbeing as being of concern to them and their peers.

## TOP ISSUES OF PERSONAL CONCERN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-19 IN NSW 2016<sup>17</sup>

ISSUE OF PERSONAL CONCERN	EXTREMELY CONCERNED OR VERY CONCERNED (%)
COPING WITH STRESS	44.5
SCHOOL OR STUDY PROBLEMS	39.9
BODY IMAGE	30.6
DEPRESSION	23.6
FAMILY CONFLICT	23.5
PERSONAL SAFETY	19.9
BULLYING/EMOTIONAL ABUSE	16.1
DISCRIMINATION	14.3
SUICIDE	13.4
DRUGS	8.9
ALCOHOL	6.8
GAMBLING	4.4

SOURCE: MISSION AUSTRALIA.





## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health concerns are the predominant cause of the burden of disease for young people<sup>18</sup>. Depression, anxiety, behaviour disorders, eating disorders, self-harm and early psychosis are all important issues.

- Suicide (as a subset of injury) is the leading cause of death among young people. The rates of self-harm hospitalisation are highest for young Aboriginal people and are higher for females compared to young males<sup>19</sup>.
- Some young people are at higher risk of poor mental health, for example: homeless young people, Aboriginal young people, LGBTI young people and young people living in rural areas<sup>20</sup>.
- Young people with complex mental health concerns often have co-morbid health and psychosocial issues that need to be addressed, including substance abuse, homelessness, smoking and obesity<sup>20</sup>.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

12-17 year olds experiencing high psychological distress<sup>21</sup>



Males



Females

16-24 year olds experiencing high or very high psychological distress<sup>22</sup>



Males



Females

### 12-17 YEAR OLDS IN AUSTRALIA<sup>23</sup>

16%  
Males



13%  
Females

experienced a mental health disorder in the last 12 months

Anxiety



Major  
Depressive  
Disorder



ADHD



Conduct  
disorders



### SUICIDES IN 15-24 YEAR OLDS<sup>19</sup>

78  
suicide deaths in 2013

Suicide rates for males  
**2x higher**  
than females

Suicide rates for Aboriginal young people

**2x higher**  
than non-Aboriginal young people

“YOUTH FRIENDLY STAFF ARE IMPORTANT SO I DON'T FEEL JUDGED. YOUNG PEOPLE CAN TAKE A LONG TIME TO FEEL COMFORTABLE ENOUGH TO OPEN UP, THAT'S WHY YOU NEED TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP.”



## RISK BEHAVIOURS

- Smoking, alcohol and drug misuse are often initiated during adolescence and pose risks to young people's health and wellbeing<sup>14</sup>.

### ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

16-24 year olds consume alcohol at levels posing a lifetime risk to health<sup>24</sup>:

**37.5%**



15-24 year olds: over **4,700 alcohol-attributable hospital admissions** in 2014-15<sup>25</sup>

- Cannabis is the most common illicit drug used by young 12-24 year olds<sup>26</sup>. In NSW young people aged 15-26 years are over represented in alcohol related emergency department presentations. Young people aged 15-34 years are also over-represented in methamphetamine-related hospital admissions<sup>27</sup> and emergency department presentations<sup>28</sup>.

### SUBSTANCES MISUSE



Used **illicit drugs** in the last 12 months<sup>26</sup>

12-17 year olds:

**11%**

18-24 year olds:

**30%**

- Increased risk of injury is associated with adolescent development. Injury and poisoning are the leading cause of death and hospital use for young people. Road transport accidents, interpersonal violence and self-harm are all significant causes of injury<sup>29</sup>.

### INJURY AND POISONING



**41%** of emergency department presentations for 13-17 year olds in 2014-15 due to injury<sup>30</sup>

**1 in 4** hospitalisations of 17-24 year old males is due to injury<sup>31</sup>



## IMMUNISATIONS

- Coverage rates for human papillomavirus (HPV) and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (dTpa) vaccinations among secondary school students are around 80%<sup>32</sup>. Opportunities to provide catch-up vaccination are an important health prevention focus during adolescence.



## HEALTHY LIVING

- Risk factors for obesity and associated chronic illness rise in adolescence, including reduced physical activity and increased sedentary behaviour<sup>14</sup>. Very few young people meet nutritional guidelines, including eating the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables. Consumption of unhealthy convenience foods and high-sugar drinks also increases during adolescence<sup>14</sup>.
- Rates of overweight and obesity are of concern across the population, although higher rates are seen for low socioeconomic status groups and in rural and regional areas<sup>33</sup>.

### OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE

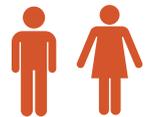
5-16 year olds<sup>34</sup>



**22%** **23%**



16-24 year olds<sup>35</sup>



**37%** **21%**



## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- More than half of chlamydia notifications in NSW are among young people aged 15-24 years<sup>36</sup>. Increasing condom use and STI testing among young people are sexual health priorities<sup>37</sup>.
- Reproductive health is a primary reason why young females use healthcare, including advice and support around contraception, pregnancy and unwanted pregnancy.
- Teenage fertility rates have fallen in recent years<sup>10</sup>. However, maternal and infant health risk behaviours such as smoking in pregnancy and delayed access to maternity care are significantly higher for young mothers. Promoting maternal nutrition and breastfeeding are also important for young mothers and families.

### SMOKING IN PREGNANCY<sup>38</sup>



**8.9%**  
All ages

**31.1%**  
19 years and under



“ACTUALLY I REALLY TRUST MY DOCTOR. HE CARES ABOUT ME AND HELPED ME TALK TO MY PARENTS ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING”



## CHRONIC ILLNESS AND DISABILITY

Alongside the normal challenges of adolescence, young people with chronic illness or disability experience episodes of ill health, have to learn to manage their care, and must navigate the transition from paediatric to adult services<sup>39</sup>.

- Many young people with disability require other supports beyond health to help with daily living, and improve their wellbeing, independence and community involvement.
- More young people with severe or complex congenital, chronic conditions and disability are living into adulthood<sup>39</sup>.
- Young people with chronic illness or disability can be vulnerable and at increased risk of comorbidities, particularly mental health concerns.
- Cancers and rare diseases affect small numbers of adolescents and young adults<sup>40</sup>. Access to evidence-based and age appropriate specialist care and support is very important.

15-24 YEAR OLDS

**9.8%**

have a long-term condition, without a reported disability<sup>5</sup>



**2.3%**

of 15-24 year olds have a disability which causes severe or profound limitation to daily activity<sup>5</sup>



"ONCE I LEFT THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES I HAD TO PICK MY ACT UP. IT WASN'T ME AND MY MUM DOING IT ANYMORE. IT WAS JUST ME, AS AN ADULT. ONCE I GOT THE HELP FROM TRAPEZE (TRANSITION SERVICE) THAT'S WHEN IT ALL STARTED COMING TOGETHER... I DON'T MISS APPOINTMENTS ANYMORE, I GO TO ALL OF THEM."



## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Young people can experience domestic and family violence in two ways: in their own interpersonal relationships and/or experiencing domestic and family violence in their home. Young people who experience or are affected by domestic and family violence are at high risk of suffering psychological and emotional trauma that can lead to ill health later in life<sup>41</sup>.
- Family breakdown and domestic violence are often contributing factors for youth homelessness.
- A spouse or domestic partner is the perpetrator in more than a third of cases where a young woman is hospitalised due to interpersonal violence<sup>42</sup>.



## SEXUAL ASSAULT AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

- Young women aged 15 to 19 years are seven times more likely to be sexually assaulted compared to the general population<sup>43</sup>.
- Young men experience the highest rates of hospitalisation due to interpersonal violence of any group, especially in regional and rural areas<sup>42</sup>.



## YOUNG PEOPLE AT A HIGHER RISK OF POOR HEALTH

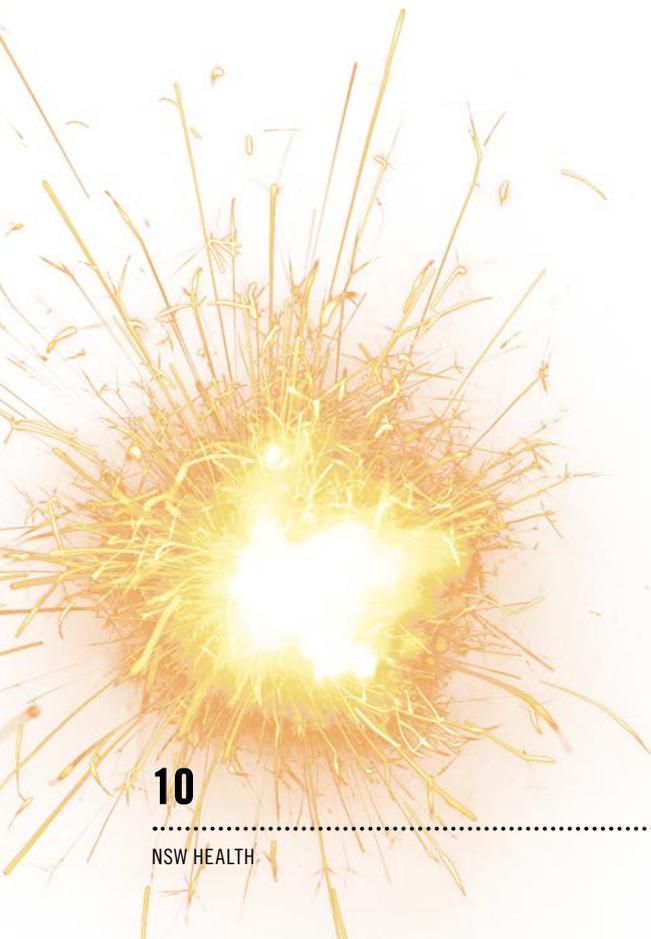
Some young people experience poorer health and wellbeing outcomes, increased risk of harm, more complex needs and increased access barriers<sup>13</sup>. This includes those who are vulnerable and/or experience trauma through poverty, neglect, violence, abuse including sexual abuse, homelessness, family breakdown, exposure to alcohol or substance abuse, time in out-of-home care, low education and literacy, caring responsibilities, experiences of the justice system or refugee status. Risks are further compounded for some young people who experience multiple issues.

Life circumstances, as well as negative or ineffective interactions with health and other services can also affect how vulnerable young people engage with healthcare. For example, they may be more likely to miss appointments, may be frequent users of urgent and emergency services or may not present until they experience a crisis.

### INDICATORS OF VULNERABILITY

Vulnerable young people who are at higher risk of poor health and wellbeing include those who:

- are Aboriginal
- are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- are sexuality and/or gender diverse (LGBTI)
- are entering, in, or exiting Out-of-Home Care
- are under justice supervision
- are refugees or newly arrived migrants
- have physical or intellectual disabilities
- have a chronic or complex condition, including mental health disorders
- are a young carer
- have experienced family, domestic, intimate partner or peer violence
- live in rural and remote areas
- are pregnant and/or parenting



“THE HEALTH WORKER CAME TO OUR YOUTH REFUGE. THEY MADE AN APPOINTMENT FOR ME TO SEE A COUNSELLOR AND SENT ME A TEXT MESSAGE TO REMIND ME. THAT WAS REALLY HELPFUL.”



## ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

A range of barriers exist which mean some young people are reluctant or do not recognise the need to seek help, or need support to access and navigate health services<sup>1,3</sup>. Barriers include:

- the complexity of health system and lack of knowledge about services
- the availability and cost of healthcare services
- difficulty making appointments and getting to services
- the capacity of the services to deal effectively with young people
- concerns about confidentiality
- embarrassment, stigma and cultural expectations
- not feeling welcomed and fear of being judged when using services

### EXPERIENCES IN HOSPITAL<sup>44</sup>

Among 8 to 17 year olds who were admitted to hospital

**45%**

reported they were able to discuss their worries completely<sup>30</sup>

**49%**

felt involved in their care and decisions

### YOUTH-FRIENDLY SERVICES<sup>45</sup> ...

- ...use flexible approaches to be accessible to young people (such as in relation to information about services, appointments systems, culturally safe practice, environment, cost and support for vulnerable young people)
- ...reflect up to date evidence-based practice, including use of youth psychosocial health and wellbeing assessments
- ...involve young people in service planning, reviews and evaluations
- ...work collaboratively to help young people, and their families and carers, to access and navigate the health system
- ...ensure staff receive training, supervision and support in working with young people and their families.

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM YOUTH FRIENDLY CHECKLIST FOR HEALTH SERVICES, NSW HEALTH

"I TEND TO CHOOSE SERVICES THAT HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THEMSELVES ONLINE. SOME HEALTH SERVICE WEBSITES CAN BE CONFUSING AND IT'S HARD TO FIND INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO GET HELP OR HOW MUCH THEY COST."

# HEALTH SERVICES USED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

The main health services used by young people are services for the whole population, including primary care and hospital emergency departments. Specific services for young people, targeted programs or dedicated staff are also available, although access to these varies across NSW.



## PRIMARY CARE

- Primary care, including general practitioner (GP) services is the key access point to healthcare for young people.
- GP services include sexual and reproductive healthcare, mental health assessments, chronic disease management, and health advice.
- Around 8.6% of GP consultations are for 15-24 year olds (2014/15)<sup>46</sup>.
- NSW Health provides primary dental care to children up to 18 years and adults who have a valid concession card. All other primary dental care is privately provided.



## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

- Services provide advice, support and treatment for STIs and HIV/AIDS, blood borne viruses, contraception, and unwanted pregnancies.
- NSW Health and NGOs, including *Family Planning NSW*, provide some targeted services for vulnerable or high risk groups.



## ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

- Specialist drug and alcohol services provide early intervention, and community and inpatient treatment and support. These are mainly adult services with some NSW Health and NGO provision for younger ages.



## MENTAL HEALTH

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Youth Mental Health Services provide specialist care for young people with moderate to severe mental illness.
- *headspace* provides early intervention mild to moderate mental health services for ages 12-25 years.
- School-Link coordinators provide liaison between education and mental health services.
- Online self help, information and peer support services, such as *ReachOut*, *ehespace* and *Black Dog Institute*.
- Some counselling and support services are available for specific groups, including LGBTI, CALD or young people from families with mental health or drug and alcohol misuse.



## ONLINE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Many young people seek health information and support online. There are an increasing range of interactive resources and mobile Apps which help monitor and manage health; many are targeted at adolescents and young adults.

Examples of NSW Health websites for young people include:

- [www.yourroom.com.au](http://www.yourroom.com.au) (alcohol and other drugs)
- [www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au) (sexual health)
- [www.gethealthynsw.com.au](http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au)
- [www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au](http://www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au)



## ABORIGINAL HEALTH

- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services provide culturally appropriate and holistic primary care, sexual and reproductive health and health promotion. Many have targeted programs for adolescents.
- NSW Health also delivers targeted and general services and programs for Aboriginal people.



## SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

- Youth Health Services provide holistic health assessments, early intervention, multi-disciplinary primary care, counselling, case management and other support to vulnerable young people. There are nine youth health services across six Local Health Districts (LHDs).
- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network provides healthcare in custodial and community settings, including juvenile justice.
- NSW Health implements the Out-of-Home Care health pathway program which provides coordinated health assessments and intervention for children and young people who enter or exit statutory out-of-home care.
- Other services and support for vulnerable young people are provided through: the state-wide refugee health service, domestic or family violence services, family referral services, sexual assault services, and child protection counselling.



## HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

- A range of programs aim to: build health literacy, support young people to be safe, promote physical and mental wellbeing, and develop life skills and coping strategies for vulnerable young people.



## HOSPITAL SERVICES

- Emergency departments are a common entry point for young people
- There were over 350,000 emergency department presentations by 15-24 year olds in 2014/15<sup>47</sup>.
- Most young people over 16 years old receive adult hospital services. Paediatric services provide across NSW specialist medical and surgical services to children up to 16 years. Tertiary paediatric services are provided by the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and at the John Hunter Children's Hospital.
- Adolescent and young adult (AYA) medicine models provide specialist services in complex chronic illness, addiction medicine, adolescent gynaecology, eating disorders, and youth liaison and advocacy.
- In 2014/15, there were over 165,000 hospitalisations of 15-24 year olds<sup>48</sup>.



## MATERNITY SERVICES

- Antenatal and maternity care is provided in primary care, community and hospital settings.
- Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Services (AMIHS) and the Building, Strong Foundations for Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities program provide culturally safe antenatal, postnatal and early childhood health services.



## TRANSITION SERVICES

- Two transition services, Trapeze run by The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and the Agency for Clinical Innovation Transition Care Network, work together to support young people with chronic illness/disability moving from paediatric to adult services.

# POLICY CONTEXT

The federal and NSW Governments have various priorities to improve young people's health and wellbeing.

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The Framework contributes to the directions in the *NSW State Health Plan: Toward 2021* to keep people healthy, provide world class care and truly integrated care<sup>49</sup>. It also aligns with *Healthy, Safe and Well: A Strategic Health Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2014-24*<sup>50</sup> and *Healthy, Safe and Thriving: National Strategic Framework for Child and Youth Health*<sup>51</sup>.



## NSW GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

The Framework will contribute to the following NSW Premier's Priorities<sup>52</sup>:

### TACKLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY



Reduce overweight and obesity rates in children aged 5-16 years by 5% over 10 years.

### REDUCING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS



Increase the proportion of young people who successfully move from Specialist Homelessness Services to long-term accommodation by 10%.

### PROTECTING OUR KIDS



Decrease the percentage of children and young people re-reported at risk of significant harm by 15%.

### IMPROVING SERVICE LEVELS IN HOSPITALS



81% of patients through emergency departments within four hours.



## NSW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The *NSW Youth Health Framework* demonstrates NSW Health's commitment to the whole of government *NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People*<sup>53</sup>. This plan ensures young people have opportunities to thrive, get the services they need and have their voices heard. Relevant objectives include:

- *Safe* – children and young people are free from abuse, neglect, violence and serious injury
- *Respect* – children and young people are treated with respect
- *Wellbeing* – children and young people are healthy and well through the provision of affordable, accessible and timely services
- *Voice* – children and young people are empowered to be involved in the decisions that affect them



## NSW HEALTH STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Other relevant strategies and plans that promote young people's health and wellbeing or identify young people as a priority population include:

- *A Strategic Plan for Mental Health 2014-24*<sup>20</sup> and its associated health reforms<sup>54</sup>
- *NSW Rural Health Plan*<sup>55</sup>
- *NSW Aboriginal Health Plan*<sup>56</sup>
- NSW Health also has strategies and plans in relation to alcohol and other drugs, sexually transmissible infections, HIV and blood borne viruses, tobacco, healthy eating and active living, eating disorders, child protection, womens health, oral health, refugees and multicultural health.

Current documents are available at: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

"HEALTH SERVICES WON'T BE ABLE TO PROVIDE CARE TO HELP US IF THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT WE WANT OR WHAT WE NEED. IT'S GREAT TO KNOW OUR EXPERIENCES ARE LISTENED TO AND WE CAN PLAY A PART IN MAKING IMPROVEMENTS."



Youth mentors and youth health staff: youth health consultation event (Parramatta, September 2016)

# NSW YOUTH HEALTH FRAMEWORK

Vision: Young people in NSW are healthy, safe and well

## GOAL 1

The health system responds to the health needs of young people, including targeted responses for vulnerable young people

**The Framework supports the provision of a holistic and integrated approach to healthcare for young people across NSW.**

NSW Health will provide health services, care pathways and models of care that are evidence-based, age appropriate, culturally safe and respectful. Service planning will particularly consider the needs of Aboriginal young people, those with complex needs and other groups at higher risk of poor health. Where needs are identified, youth specific services and/or targeted responses will be implemented. NSW Health will strengthen relationships with other health services and cross sector partners to provide integrated and coordinated care.

Capacity building, guidance and tools will support health workers to engage with young people, assess their health and wellbeing, and provide appropriate responses and support. Monitoring, evaluation and sharing good practice will inform service development and improvement to ensure that the health needs of vulnerable young people are met.

## WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

- It is important that resources are available within Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Specialty Health Networks (SHNs) to support coordinated services for young people across a broad range of health concerns. Youth health coordinators, or equivalent roles, can make an important contribution to achieving this.
- Strengthened care pathways and service capacity are needed in some areas to meet young people's needs. For example, mental health, drug and alcohol and dental services.
- Targeted service models including youth health services, outreach programs, in-reach, case management, supported care pathways, intensive family support and cross sector partnerships can improve the health response for vulnerable young people.
- Access to targeted youth health services and outreach models varies across NSW with a greater number of services located in metropolitan than rural/regional LHDs.
- Planned collaborative service responses are needed to support young people at key transition points, such as exits from out-of-home care or custodial settings.
- Opportunities should be taken across health services to assess and respond to the psychosocial risk and protective factors that can affect a young person's health and wellbeing.
- A structured approach to building workforce capacity is important to improve confidence, knowledge and skills of health professionals in working with young people and their families and carers.
- Data collection and reporting in community health services needs to be strengthened to improve evaluations of services for young people.
- Further research is required to build the evidence base and knowledge translation to enhance effective interventions and approaches for young people.

\* 'What we have heard' provides a summary of evidence and issues identified through the review of the implementation of the *NSW Youth Health Policy*, stakeholder consultations and feedback from young people.

## GOAL 1

The health system **responds to the health needs** of young people, including **targeted responses** for vulnerable young people

### OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people's health needs are assessed in a holistic way and vulnerable young people are identified.

Young people's health needs are responded to; they receive quality healthcare and are supported to make informed decisions.

Vulnerable young people have their safety, health and wellbeing addressed and receive coordinated and integrated care.

### NSW HEALTH WILL...

- ...plan, provide and commission evidence-based health services and care pathways that respond to the holistic\* health needs of young people.
- ...implement targeted services and approaches to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.
- ...deliver health services that:
  - are age, developmentally and culturally appropriate
  - promote early intervention and prevention
  - are trauma-informed
  - promote strength based responses
  - promote family-focused assessment, interventions and care
  - support integrated care
  - respond appropriately to child protection concerns
  - support young people to be partners in their own care
- ...work in partnership with NGOs, other health services and cross-sector partners to support appropriate assessment, referral, case management, transitions and coordinated care for vulnerable young people, including those with chronic/complex needs.
- ...implement appropriate psychosocial assessment tools, such as HEEADSSS\*\* assessment, to assess and respond to the holistic health and wellbeing needs of young people.
- ...ensure that staff who regularly work with young people are competent to engage, and provide culturally safe and age-appropriate care to young people.
- ...ensure that staff development and training opportunities that align with the *NSW Health Youth Health Competency Framework*<sup>57</sup> are implemented.
- ...explore opportunities to collect patient reported measures, strengthen data collection to support evaluation and improvement of health outcomes and services for young people.

\* *Holistic* assessment and responses take account of a young person's age and development, and consider relevant risk and protective factors and the range of presenting health needs.

\*\* HEEADSSS assessment considers: **H**ome, **E**ducation & employment, **E**ating and exercise, **A**ctivities, hobbies & peer relationships, **D**rug use, cigarettes & alcohol, **S**exual activity & sexuality; **S**uicide, depression & self-harm; **S**afety.

## GOAL 2

### Health services are accessible and young people are engaged and respected

**The Framework seeks to improve access to health services for young people. It recognises the important role that technology, online information and social media can play in engaging young people to manage their own health.**

The Framework sets an expectation that NSW Health services for young people will use available electronic and mobile communication methods, and that online information is appropriate and meaningful. Further opportunities will be explored to develop and implement appropriate technology as part of service delivery, particularly to support young people living in rural and remote areas.

The Framework will support NSW Health to demonstrate their approach to partnering with young consumers, an important element of *National Safety and Quality in Health Services Standards*<sup>58</sup>. As with all consumer groups, it is important that young people are listened to when designing, delivering and reviewing health services. Engaging a diverse range of young people directly is essential for ensuring services are youth-friendly. The Framework supports innovative approaches to youth participation in health services.

## WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

- Online information about health services influences access. Young people want information to be more targeted to their needs and want to know which websites they can trust.
- Technology and social media provide a range of opportunities to improve engagement of young people. Health services and workers need more support and guidance to optimise the potential of technology.
- Feeling that they are listened to and not being judged are crucial for young people to have a positive experience of health services.
- Young people are increasingly concerned about healthcare costs, particularly primary care, dental care and specialist services.
- The *Youth-Friendly Checklist for Health Services*<sup>45</sup> is a useful tool which can be used by all health services to enhance their service response for young people.
- It is important that young people are supported to participate in service development and improvement and other consumer engagement activities. Good practice examples include:
  - youth consultants and youth advisory groups
  - collecting patient stories from young people and reviewing them at service and board meetings
  - young people on consumer boards, and
  - young people directly involved in assessing and designing services.

## GOAL 2

Health services are **accessible** and young people are **engaged and respected**

### OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are supported to access and navigate health services.

Young people are respected and have a positive experience when using health services.

Young people are engaged and have a voice in health service design, delivery and improvement.

### NSW HEALTH WILL...

- ...maximise opportunities to provide up-to-date and accessible online information for young people about health services including who they are for, how to access them, what they do and costs involved.
- ...provide and commission accessible health services for young people, including providing targeted outreach or in-reach services, reviewing service locations and opening times, and providing flexible support to young people who experience other access barriers such as lack of transport and healthcare costs.
- ...offer young people the option of electronic or mobile booking and communication.
- ...support health services to adopt appropriate technology, including telehealth, Apps, mobile technology and social media, to support access to services and engage and seek feedback from young people.
- ...ensure that services which regularly provide care to young people are 'youth-friendly' and culturally safe and responsive.
- ...encourage and support young people to provide feedback about their healthcare experiences, including patient stories and complaints.
- ...provide meaningful opportunities and support for young people to participate in reviews, evaluations and design of services and other consumer engagement processes.

## GOAL 3

### Young people are supported to optimise their health and wellbeing

#### **NSW Health has an important role to support young people to make healthy choices and to be healthy now and into adulthood.**

The Framework promotes the development, implementation, evaluation and coordination of targeted and age-appropriate health education, promotion, harm reduction and early intervention programs. Approaches should be developed with direct involvement of young people. NSW Health will support partnerships and encourage programs that promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, target vulnerable groups, build resilience, promote healthy relationships and build health literacy among young people. Wherever appropriate, support and information will be provided to build skills and knowledge of families and carers as central partners in promoting young people's health.

The Framework promotes person-centred and coordinated healthcare for young people with chronic illness and disability. It also supports young people to be independent and manage their health and wellbeing as much as possible. NSW Health will engage with young people and their families and carers to improve access to services that support young people when they transition from paediatric to adult services.

#### WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

- Health promotion and harm minimization programs designed and tailored to the diversity of young people are important to prevent and reduce risk taking behaviours.
- Further opportunities should be explored to coordinate and link programs such as respectful relationships, sexual health, reproductive health, mental wellbeing, drug and alcohol harm reduction.
- It is important that healthy eating and active living programs aimed at reducing overweight and obesity are designed for adolescents and young adults.
- Health services for young people should maximise opportunities to provide health advice, information and intervention.
- The identification of young people at risk and opportunities for health promotion and early intervention, including enhanced links with primary care and schools, should be strengthened.
- It is important for health professionals working with young people to feel confident to adequately support them to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), including young people with mental health concerns.
- Transition services and support for young people with disability and chronic illness, (including mental illness) can make a difference to improving health and wellbeing outcomes. Common principles for transition have been agreed by The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and the Agency for Clinical Innovation<sup>39</sup>. Further action is needed to ensure equitable access to these services across NSW.

## GOAL 3

Young people are **supported to optimise their health and wellbeing**

### OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are supported to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing by youth-specific health promotion, education and early intervention.

Young people with chronic illness or disability receive effective care and are supported to manage their care and be as independent as possible.

### NSW HEALTH WILL...

- ...work with partner agencies, including Primary Health Networks, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, NGOs and Education to promote young people's health and wellbeing and support early identification of young people at risk.
- ...work with partner agencies to support and provide health promotion information, programs and services, and create healthy environments for young people in line with state and local priorities that support healthy living, physical and mental wellbeing, health literacy, harm and demand reduction, sexual and reproductive health, and injury prevention.
- ...provide support and work in partnership with parents, families and carers, where appropriate, so that they are able to support and advocate for young people.
- ...provide support to young people using health services to engage with the NDIS when they are likely to be eligible and where this is requested, in line with relevant NDIS and NSW Health guidelines.
- ...provide consistent and timely access to transition services and support, in line with agreed principles<sup>39</sup>, for young people with chronic illness or disability who move from paediatric to adult services.
- ...work in partnership with young people with chronic illness or disability to promote their health, wellbeing and independence and enhance peer support programs.

# IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A planned approach to implementation and monitoring will ensure a focus on young people's health outcomes. NSW Health will implement the Framework through planning and service delivery. The NSW Ministry of Health, and each LHD and Specialty Health Network will have an implementation plan for the Framework that will identify how the goals will be achieved. The Ministry of Health will identify state level priorities, and support opportunities to improve health responses for young people across NSW.

LHDs and SHNs have lead responsibility for the implementation of the Framework. The NSW Ministry of Health and Pillars will provide state-level leadership and guidance to help services implement the Framework.

The NSW Ministry of Health will develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Framework. This will measure progress in achieving the Framework goals and guide decisions on actions required to strengthen implementation.

Key Performance Indicators identified for the monitoring and evaluation plan will align with those developed for *Healthy, Safe and Well: A Strategic Health Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2014-24*<sup>50</sup> and the *NSW State Health Plan: Towards 2021*<sup>49</sup>.

A Youth Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group will provide expert advice to the NSW Ministry of Health on young people's health and will also monitor progress with implementation of the Framework. A formal report on progress will be provided to the Advisory Group biennially that collates and analyses annual reports from LHDs, SHNs and other relevant data.

At an operational level, implementation of the NSW Youth Health Framework will be supported by a Youth Health Coordination Group. This group includes Youth Health Coordinators and other representatives working in youth health from each LHD and SHN. It provides an opportunity to share good practice, promote consistent approaches and provide feedback and support for implementing the Framework.

A NSW Youth Health showcase will be held biennially to share examples of innovative projects and evidence based approaches in youth health.

# FRAMEWORK DEFINITIONS

<b>NSW HEALTH</b>	<p>Within the Framework, this relates to all:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Health agencies, including the NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Health Pillars, Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks</li> <li>• Health services provided by NSW Health</li> <li>• Services commissioned to provide healthcare on behalf of NSW Health</li> </ul>
<b>OTHER HEALTH SERVICES</b>	<p>Health service not provided by or on behalf of NSW Health. These include General Practitioners and other primary care services, Primary Health Networks, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, other Commonwealth funded health services and private health services.</p>
<b>PARTNER AGENCIES</b>	<p>Agencies that play an important role in promoting the health and wellbeing for young people but are not health specific. These include Government departments and services (particularly Education, FACS and Justice) and non-government organisations such as Specialist Homelessness Services and youth and community services.</p>
<b>VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE AT HIGHER RISK OF POOR HEALTH</b>	<p>The terms 'vulnerable young people at higher risk of poor health' and 'vulnerable young people' are used in the Framework to describe young people for whom there is evidence of poorer health and wellbeing outcomes, increased health risk behaviours or increased access barriers. This includes, but may not be limited to, young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are Aboriginal</li> <li>• are homeless or at risk of homelessness</li> <li>• are LGBTI (sexuality and/or gender diverse)</li> <li>• are entering, in, or exiting Out-of-Home Care</li> <li>• are under justice supervision</li> <li>• are refugees or newly arrived migrants</li> <li>• have physical and intellectual disabilities</li> <li>• have a chronic or complex condition (including mental health disorders)</li> <li>• are a young carer</li> <li>• have experienced family, domestic, intimate partner or peer violence</li> <li>• live in rural and remote areas</li> <li>• are pregnant and/or parenting</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH SERVICES THAT REGULARLY PROVIDE CARE TO YOUNG PEOPLE</b>	<p>These include services that are specifically for young people, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• youth health services</li> <li>• paediatric or adolescent and young adult (AYA) secondary or tertiary care</li> <li>• specialist mental health services for children, adolescents and young adults</li> <li>• early intervention mental health services for young people (e.g. <i>headspace</i>)</li> <li>• transition services for young people with chronic illness or disability.</li> </ul> <p>Services where young people are a target population or are a key health service provider for young people, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community health services, including those delivered through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services</li> <li>• hospitals, including emergency departments</li> <li>• alcohol and other drug early intervention and treatment services</li> <li>• sexual and reproductive health services</li> <li>• sexual assault services</li> <li>• oral health services</li> <li>• maternity services.</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH WORKERS WHO REGULARLY SEE YOUNG PEOPLE</b>	<p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health professionals and support staff working in services specifically for young people</li> <li>• any health professional whose role relates <i>specifically</i> to providing care to young people</li> <li>• health professionals working in a services which <i>regularly</i> provides care to young people as part of their responsibilities.</li> </ul>

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