

**Project Certification framework and national
Fact-sheet: standards for digital mental health services**

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission), has commenced a project to scope the development of a certification framework and national standards for digital mental health services.

Background

Evidence shows that interventions provided through digital mental health services can be as effective as face-to-face services for many people, providing additional access and anonymity¹.

The National Mental Health Commission has reported that despite the recognised benefits of clinically effective digital mental health services, the landscape is poorly integrated, creating difficulty for consumers accessing relevant services².

In response, the Australian Government developed a new digital mental health gateway, [Head to Health](#). This gateway provides consumers, carers, the general community, and health professionals with greater access, choice and convenience in using digital mental health services. The phone and online services featured on Head to Health include: information and education, counselling, therapist-assisted or self-directed treatment programs, and online peer support.

Development of a certification framework and national standards

The certification framework aims to support ongoing safety and quality assurance for digital mental health services, including for those listed on Head to Health.

Certification of services has the potential to build user confidence, increase adoption rates, and increase consumer choice in the digital mental health service system.

Other potential benefits include:

- Increased service quality and usability
- Improved visibility of services for consumers, carers, health professionals and other users
- Provision of clear governance structures to support safety and quality
- Greater inclusion of user feedback and experience in program development.

The Commission will review relevant existing standards, including the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and the National Standards for Mental Health Services, which could be built upon to develop national standards for digital mental health services.

Consultation

Input from consumers, carers, health professionals, service providers and other stakeholders, will be vital to inform the development of the framework and standards.

Individuals and organisations can register their interest for future consultations by contacting the Commission's Digital Mental Health Services project team at DMHS@safetyandquality.gov.au.

Please contact the project team should you require any assistance with tailoring this fact-sheet or any project material.

This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. The Commission will report to the Department in June 2019.

¹ Department of Health. Australian Government Response to Contributing Lives, Thriving Communities – Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2015.

² National Mental Health Commission. The National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services. Sydney: NMHC, 2014.