

Consultation paper – Alcohol and Other Drugs Service Stream

Date of release: 29 June 2022

Purpose of this document

- To outline the proposed change to affected staff and industrial representatives in relation to the introduction of a single Service Manager for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Service Stream (AODS).

Overview of the service

- The Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSW LHD) operates one inpatient withdrawal unit (IWU) along with a range of specialist community AOD services from Grafton to Tweed. The 10 bed IWU provides withdrawal management to those individuals who have substance dependence and at high risk for complications during withdrawal.
- A range of services include Assertive Outreach (Community Engagement Team), Hospital Consultation Liaison, Opioid Treatment, Counselling and MERIT (Magistrate Early Referral into Treatment). And a newly redesigned district service to support women during the peri-natal period.
- The AOD Service Stream is of a similar size and structure to the Child & Adolescent Mental Health service stream and as such an opportunity for structure alignment to strategically lead on service improvement, integration and expansion of services to better support those in the community with substance use disorders is proposed.

Current status

- Currently the AOD services have Managers who are operationally responsible for services within a geographical area.
- A number of District wide roles report to either Manager depending on historical decisions or primary work location.
- Please see the attached organisational diagrams of the current and proposed models.

Current challenges

- The existing NNSW LHD AOD service has several limitations and service gaps. These include:

- The current reporting structure is focussed on operational management which limits the ability for proactive strategic planning and stakeholder engagement to develop and expand service partnerships.
- The current structure does not support clear reporting for a number of District wide roles including a Clinical Director, AOD services.
- Limited service integration has limited opportunities for service redesign with internal and external partners.

Opportunity

- Continued growth is projected for AOD services and in order to prepare for expansion and growth, strong change management capabilities will be critical.
- There are constantly evolving avenues to address the increased volume and complexity of demand and strong relationships with partners both internal and external to the AOD service are key to ensuring safe, equitable, access to treatment is provided.
- A single point of accountability for service delivery will ensure the necessary performance and strategic growth and service improvement is achieved.

Concept

- The AOD Service stream will be led by a full-time Service Manager and a part-time Clinical Director to ensure strong clinical governance and efficient operational service delivery occurs across this District-wide stream.
- The current Service Managers will become Team Managers and continue to operationally manage the AOD services within a discrete geographical area with no proposed change to grading as a result of the addition of the over-arching Service Manager.
- Staff in District wide roles will move reporting line to the AOD Service Manager. This includes CNC 3, MERIT Team Leader and Clinical Senior.
- No positions will be surplus; the increased costs will be funded from a new budget allocation from 2022/23.

Benefits of the change

The proposed new AOD structure (Appendix 2) provides a number of important opportunities to improve services, which include:

- Proactively lead the strategic development and expansion of AOD services;
- Improve clinical and corporate governance;
- Improve whole of service stream performance and accountability;
- Strengthen existing relationships and service pathways between AOD, Mental Health and external Community partners in providing quality specialist AOD care;



- Participate and contribute to National, State and local forums and committees;
- Improve feedback mechanisms and reporting on LHD issues relating to AOD services to local and State level networks.

Consultation

- The LHD has endorsed the progression of the proposal for the introduction of a single Service Manager, AOD services.
- Consultation is occurring with all bodies taking a participative approach to implementing change.
- The LHD is commencing a consultation period for 14 days from the date of release of this Consultation paper.
- There will be a number of staff forums scheduled regarding the change whereby relevant information is shared with staff. Representatives of Industrial bodies' are invited to attend.
- Staff are able to make written submissions on the proposed change at any time to via email marked "AOD Service submission" to deidre.robinson@health.nsw.gov.au. All submissions are welcomed.
- Following the conclusion of the consultation period, the plan will be advised to all staff accordingly and the notice period for the change will commence, where the change is approved.
- Any questions should be directed to Ms Deidre Robinson on the above email address or by phone on (02) 6620 2623.