Australian Government
Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Consultation Paper – Transition to Work (TtW) 2022–2027

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Consultation Paper Response Form

Guidance: You are invited to provide feedback to any or all of the questions in the Consultation Paper in the relevant sections below.

Provide your organisation's name and other details as applicable, to assist the department consider your feedback.

Please use the "Consultation Paper Other Feedback" section for any additional comments.

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Question for feedback – Assessment, referral and eligibility

4.1 What primary risk factors that contribute to young people disengaging from work or education should be used to determine eligibility for Transition to Work services?

Feedback to Question 4.1

In terms of factors that can determine whether a young person has complex, non-vocational barriers research shows these are the key risk factors likely to influence disengagement from education or employment:

- homelessness, disability, mental illnesses, drug use, unstable homes, unsuitable learning environments, negative experiences at school with teachers and peers, few qualifications, domestic violence, early pregnancy/parenthood, youth offending and chronic illness, limitations in their access to transport, telecommunications resources, being an asylum-seeker or refugee/ English as 2nd language, learning difficulties

(Powell, A., Salignac, F., Meltzer, A., Muir, K., and Weier, M. (2018) Background report on young people's economic engagement. Report for Macquarie Group Foundation. Centre for Social Impact, UNSW: Sydney.)

The assessment process for TtW should be flexible and allow for easy re-assessment of young people in light of additional information becoming available. The non-vocational barriers which may mean a young person receives the 24 months of support may not be always be present at entry to the service, but may occur during their time in the service or the young person may not disclose until they have built up a rapport with their worker e.g. homelessness, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues. Having the ability to have a young person reassessed during their time in the service would likely be beneficial to recognise this.

Questions for feedback – Maximum duration of service for participants

5.1 What characteristics should be used to determine whether a young person has complex, non-vocational barriers and requires the maximum of 24 months of servicing?

Feedback to Question 5.1

Generally, as a provider, we would hope that in an 18 month period we would have been working with, and supporting, a young person within the TtW program to address, and where possible, overcome their non-vocational and vocational barriers to employment. However, some of these complex non-vocational barriers can take a long time to address and may be an on-going journey.

To assist TtW providers to allow them to continue their work and supports of young participants with complex non-vocational and vocational barriers to employment, the Department could look at implementing a similar process that Disability Employment Services (DES) utilise when conducting what's called a "Program Review".

'The Program Review is conducted by an Assessor, unless the P'articipant is participating in Employment or significant Education or Training, in which case it may be conducted by the DES Provider.'
(see DES Referral for an Employment Services Assessment Guideline v1.1)

In DES this review occurs at 78 weeks of Employment Assistance, in TtW, as outlined in this consultation paper, this could occur sometime between 12 -18 months in Period of Service, with an aim to extend the service period by 6 months.

As outlined in the excerpt above, where a TtW participant is already engaged in Employment and/or Education or Training, the Provider can automatically extend the TtW service by 6 months to ensure continued supports of the young person within those activities e.g. Post Placement Support and the like. This would also allow the TtW provider to continue other supports, such as counseling, that may be in place to address non-vocational barriers to employment.

Questions for feedback – Maximum duration of service for participants (Continued)

5.2 In addition to extending the maximum duration of service, are there any other changes needed to support Transition to Work providers in effectively servicing an increased number of young people with complex, non-vocational barriers?

Feedback to Question 5.2

Questions for feedback – Maximum duration of service for participants (Continued)

5.3 What circumstances in a young persons' life should determine whether they are transferred to online services or to an Enhanced Services provider at the end of their service period in Transition to Work?

Feedback to Question 5.3

We believe ultimately the young person should have a choice and be enabled to make the decision regarding the level of service and support most suitable to them. We also see that if the young person has had 18-24 months in intensive TtW support and has still not found a sustainable education or employment pathway, then not moving into Enhanced Services may have a negative impact on their motivation and momentum.

As mentioned in the response to 5.1, an assessment could determine the appropriate service based on the circumstances of the participant. This could be used to determine whether Extended TtW Service, Digital Service or Enhanced Services are more appropriate for the young person following 12-18months in TtW service.

To streamline this, prior to this assessment being required, a simple question and answers within the ESSweb system could assist in determining the need for a referral to Digital Services or Enhanced Services and this assessment could include ensuring the JSCI is reviewed and updated. The system, using JSCI scoring methodologies, could be used to assist the department and/or providers in determining the appropriate service for referral.

Questions could include, but are not limited to:-
    - A young person's access to IT facilities at home
    - A young person's demonstrated competency using IT facilities
    - Does the young person have complex non-vocational barriers?
    - Does the young person have vocational barriers?

Questions for feedback – Improving attendance at the initial appointment

6.1   Would a mechanism that helps facilitate commencement of young people in the service be desirable?

Feedback to Question 6.1

We support the implementation of the one-off payments suspension. We believe that this opportunity will afford us the chance to sell the benefits of the program at the first appointment and gain some commitment for longer term participation.

We also support consideration to the language on Departmental appointment letters and marketing material sent to the young person be changed to better connect with and increase engagement with the cohort.

Questions for feedback – Improving attendance at the initial appointment (Continued)

6.2   What is your preferred approach to achieving commencement and why?

Feedback to Question 6.2

As above, provided we have the initial opportunity, our teams goal at commencement is to begin building trust and an understanding of how TtW can assist participants with their career goals.

Questions for feedback – Performance Framework

7.1   What elements should the Department use to measure achievement of Education Outcomes?

Feedback to Question 7.1

Short courses and micro-credentials that are employment related could be considered to be a measurement

of progress towards an Education or Employment Outcome and a progress payment or performance incentive could be awarded to providers who support young people into this pathway.

Questions for feedback – Performance Framework (Continued)

7.2   How should the Department seek to ensure job seekers and employers are receiving quality of service from Transition to Work providers?

Feedback to Question 7.2

Surveying of young people and employers is an effective way to receive feedback relating to the user's perspective of the service received. As this can be seen as subjective, it is important to also seek the view of providers and reflection through identifying opportunities for improvement in service delivery. More tangible approaches to quality of service can also be used such as how many young people have moved into sustainable employment.

Questions for feedback – Performance Framework (Continued)

7.3 Are there any other meaningful measures that could be included in the Provider Performance Framework?

Feedback to Question 7.3

Questions for feedback – Performance Framework (Continued)

7.4   What improvements could be made to the current review and allocation of the Funded Places process?

Feedback to Question 7.4

Questions for feedback – Performance Framework (Continued)

7.5   What factors should the Department account for when determining Funded Places?

Feedback to Question 7.5

Questions for feedback – Performance Framework (Continued)

7.6   How might performance be benchmarked in the new model?

Feedback to Question 7.6

We would advocate for a similar approach to what they have now. At a national level results are strong, it

would be a shame to see the implementation of a performance framework that had unintended consequences on providers service delivery or operational tactics.

Question for feedback – Youth Advisory Sessions

8.1   Is there anything that the Department should change or improve in the way that Youth Advisory Sessions are currently running?

Feedback to Question 8.1

The Department should consider better ways of engaging participants in the sessions. How could those who

are falling through the cracks be identified and referred to the Youth Advisory Sessions?
Again, we also support consideration to the language used to promote these sessions to the young person to be changed to better connect and increase engagement with the cohort.

Questions for feedback – Other Service Settings to improve outcomes

9.1   Is there anything in the Transition to Work program that should change in order to have the right balance between ensuring national service standards are maintained, while also allowing providers the flexibility needed to enable local collaboration and engagement in their communities?

Feedback to Question 9.1

We think the balance is right. Flexibility in delivery is critical, at present results are strong and complaints are minimal.

Greater promotion by government to support provider's promotion activity in the community might help encourage more young people to connect to the program. Targeted promotion to the young person's family has also proved beneficial in engaging young people into the program.

Questions for feedback – Other Service Settings to improve outcomes (Continued)

9.2 What role can the Transition to Work service play in ensuring that young people are engaged in the design and delivery of policy and services?
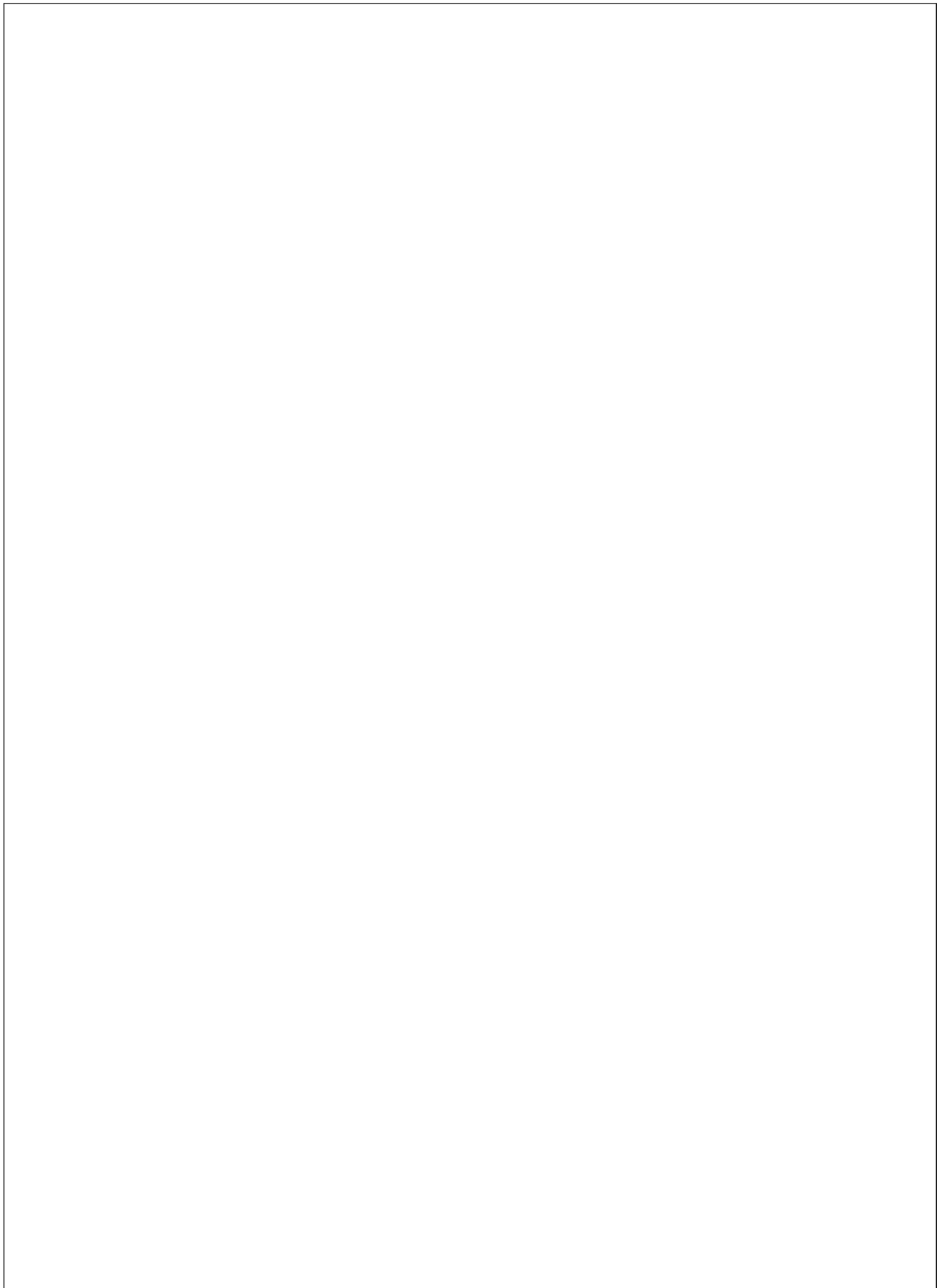
Feedback to Question 9.2

A National Youth Advisory Committee could be established and made up of young people who are current and former participants in TtW. They could meet 6 monthly to discuss and inform the design and delivery of Policy. This could also be used in promotion material to help young people feel more connected to the program and view the service more positively.

The use of social media platforms to engage young people in providing feedback and contributing to the policy and service design might encourage more engagement as it a platform that already carries a high level of comfortability rather than an official government approach.

Questions for feedback – Other Service Settings to improve outcomes (Continued)

9.3 Is there anything in the current service settings that might be seen as limiting youth engagement?

Feedback to Question 9.3

Questions for feedback – Other Service Settings to improve outcomes (Continued)

9.4   What do you think constitutes best practice with regard to supporting the mental health of participants in an employment service and how do we improve the ability of the service to deliver to this standard?

Feedback to Question 9.4

Collaborative Multi-disciplinary services where participants are not telling their story over and over. This can be achieved with a strong relationship with an external provider or a seamless internal support network.
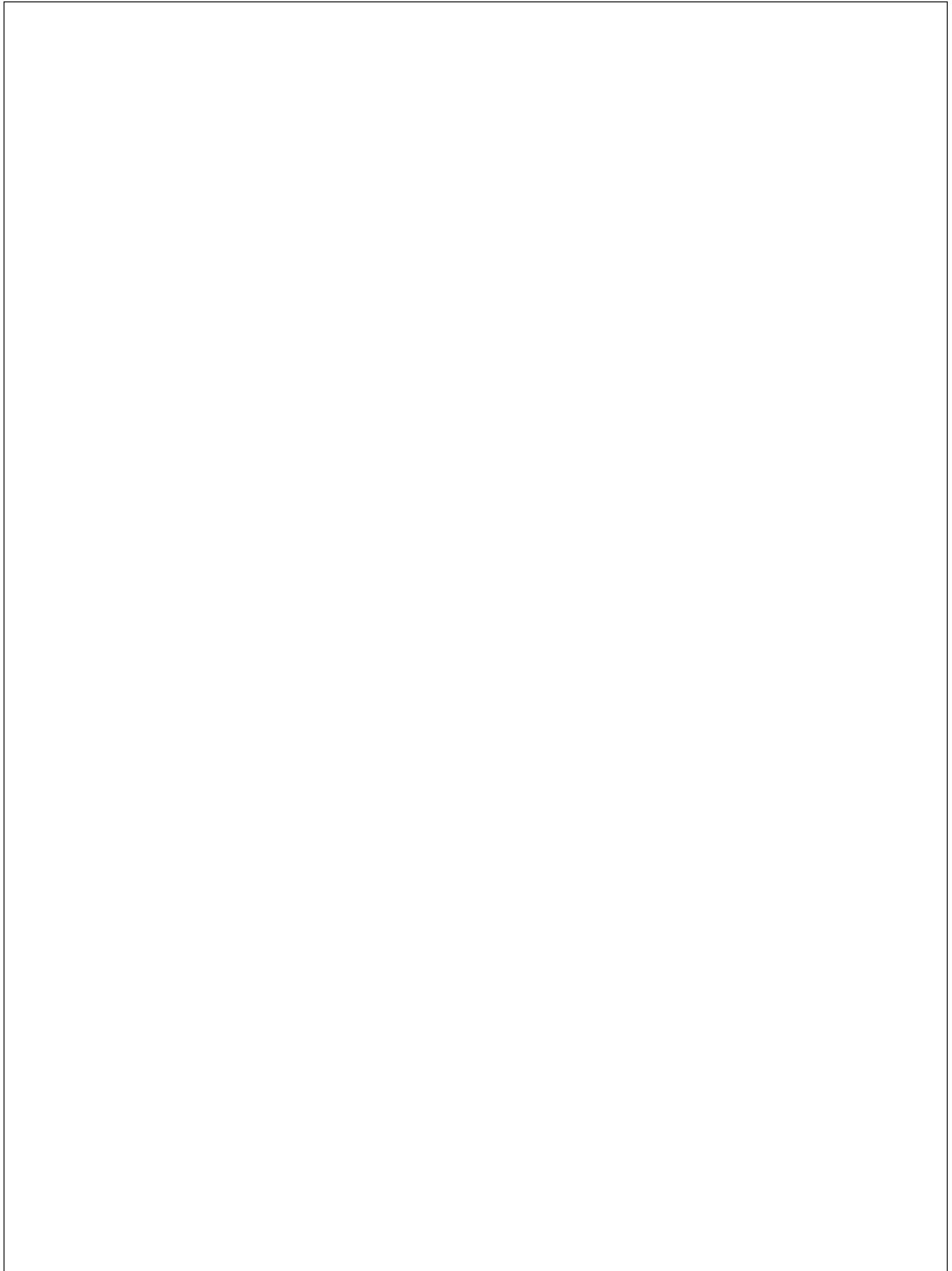
Ensuring the workforce has adequate skills and training to deliver an individualised service to young people including Youth Mental Health First Aid training to support those with mental health problems.

Recovery-oriented practice recognizes the importance of having a supporting circle of family, friends and community and the need to understand and address, as allies, the structural inequalities and barriers people face that limit their opportunities and to find ways collectively to build communities that are more inclusive. This requires all professionals to work collaboratively across systems and with other services in order to improve service access and build partnerships that will expand opportunities and create welcoming communities that are free from stigma and discrimination. *(Martin, N. McKee, K. (2015) Career Services Guide: Supporting people affected by mental health problems)*

There is also research on the benefit of employment services providers meeting regularly with the team of providers who work with a client e.g. counsellors, housing specialists and at these meetings they review the clients' status and plan a more coordinated, recovery-oriented approach. This is a core part of the Individual Placement and Support approach *(https://ipsworks.org/index.php/what-is-ips/)*.

Questions for feedback – Other Service Settings to improve outcomes (Continued)

9.5   What are appropriate servicing strategies or principles in situations where there are longer waitlists for specialist services, in contrast to locations where there are readily available specialist mental health services?

Feedback to Question 9.5

Questions for feedback – Other Service Settings to improve outcomes (Continued)

9.6 What are the features of a service that acknowledges the significant mental health challenge across the youth caseload and embeds appropriate responses into the default service offer, including by addressing particular issues such as disclosure and stigma?

Feedback to Question 9.6

We know through our current service delivery model that a robust assessment process, mental health awareness training for staff, a tailored approach and triage to the appropriate supports, are all important elements to successfully working with a young person. They key is that the service must show compassion, understanding, support and patience, to build rapport quickly and match support appropriately.

Consultation Paper Other Feedback

If there are any comments you wish to provide that are not already captured, please provide them below.

Feedback to Consultation Paper - Other

Overall, we are supportive of the enhancements suggested to the TtW model and believe the success of the program is a reflection on the simplicity and flexibility in the design of the service and performance framework and encourage DESE to retain this in the new model.