

GCPHN Mental Health Commissioned Services

Movement Matters for Mental Health Program

We are evolving our approach to Mental Health Service Delivery

At GCPHN one of our core roles is to commission evidence-based services that improve the mental health and wellbeing of our community. There is strong and growing evidence that **physical activity is a key contributor to mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery.**

[Research](#) from Australian and international bodies consistently shows that regular physical activity can:

- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Improve mood, sleep, and cognitive function
- Support recovery from severe mental illness
- Improve physical health outcomes, which are closely linked to mental health

Our direction

From the upcoming financial year, we will begin progressively integrating physical activity into commissioned mental health services. This will occur over time and will be tailored to the context of each service.

What this means for providers

We are asking providers to consider how physical activity can be incorporated in a way that is **appropriate, safe, and proportionate** to your service model and consumer cohort. This may look different across services, for example:

- **Low-intensity services:** group activities, partnerships, or direct delivery
- **Clinical or high-intensity services:** brief advice, screening, and referral pathways

In all cases, this may include:

- Recognising physical activity as part of holistic, person-centred care
- Embedding or linking consumers to appropriate movement opportunities
- Supporting safe and meaningful participation where clinically appropriate

Funding

There is no additional funding attached to this requirement. Providers are encouraged to consider how their model may change to incorporate exercise, low-cost, no-cost, and partnership-based approaches.

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Planning approach

We acknowledge that this represents a significant shift. Providers are **not expected to have a fully developed model immediately**. Instead, we are asking providers to:

- Begin planning how physical activity could be incorporated
- Consider consumer needs, safety, and accessibility
- Identify existing workforce strengths, partnerships and opportunities
- Propose approaches that can be tested and refined over time

Next steps

As part of upcoming contract variations, providers will be required to submit a proposal outlining their planned approach.

Proposal Due Date: 31 December 2026.

The proposal phase is intended to:

- Understand what is feasible across different service types
- Inform future commissioning and support approaches
- Guide the pace and expectations of implementation
- Support providers to align with current evidence surrounding the benefits of physical activity and mental health outcomes

Timeframes for implementation and any future contractual requirements will be informed by this process and communicated following review of proposals.

[A template to support proposal development can be located here.](#)

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