

Community Integration Team



Health

Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN) delivers health care to adults and young people in contact with the forensic mental health and criminal justice systems, across court, community, inpatient and custodial settings.

The Adolescent Community Integration Team (CIT) is a community health statewide service that assists young people with significant mental health and/or drug and alcohol concerns to access health services in the community upon release from custody.

The CIT commenced in 2008 with three sites and has progressively evolved to now provide services in the Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Gosford, Sydney metropolitan, Fairfield, Penrith, Newcastle, Wollongong, Kempsey, Grafton and Tamworth areas. CIT clinicians are strategically located in geographical areas where there are a high number of young people leaving custody. Clinicians are co-located within JJNSW Community Offices where they work in partnership with Juvenile Justice NSW (JJNSW) case workers to achieve optimal mental health and drug and alcohol outcomes.

Mental Health Reform funding is providing increased specialist clinical mental health services in the community through state-wide CIT support for over 500 young people, receiving approximately 15,000 hours of support per annum. CIT clinicians engage with young people during the critical post release period from custody which ensures that young people are integrated into the appropriate specialist community mental health and drug and alcohol services.

The CIT works with the young person to develop a management plan which identifies strategies to re-integrate them back into the community. In collaboration with JJNSW, Local Health Districts (LHD) and Non-Government Organisations (NGO), the CIT are committed to a holistic approach to youth health and well-being.

The involvement of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) is an important aspect of the young persons re-integration as approximately 60% of young people engaged with the CIT program are identified as belonging to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. Clinicians forge strong working

relationships with key Aboriginal Community and Medical Services ensuring that young people are supported appropriately at a cultural level.

The CIT is the only one of its kind in NSW that provides essential support to a vulnerable young client group who have complex mental health, intellectual disability, trauma presentations and drug and alcohol concerns.

Data collected since the CIT Program commenced, identified that it has:

- Been effective in increasing young peoples access to health care in the community following release from custody;
- Assisted with increasing engagement of young people and their family and/or carers with community services.
- Shown an overall increase in the mental health and well-being of young people who have engaged with the CIT.

Over the next 12 months, the CIT is focusing on sustaining and improving existing care pathways for young Aboriginal people through ongoing collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services' and LHDs. Also, continuing to support high numbers of young people engaged with the CIT by ensuring that CIT service development is informed through in-depth data analysis and community consultations. In-line with the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the CIT will be proactively ensuring that engaged young people presenting with an intellectual disability are assisted to obtain the benefits of gaining access to the NDIS.

The total number of young people engaging with the CIT has noted a steady increase from 479 in 2013/14 to 569 in 2015/16. An increase has been noted for young people not returning to custody for new offences whilst actively engaged with the CIT. This figure has increased from 60% in 2009/10 to 91% in 2014/15 similarly in 2015/16.

