

## Fact sheet

# Statewide Mental Health Lived Experience Register

## INFORMATION FOR STAFF

### What is lived experience?

Lived experience is the knowledge and understanding you get when you have lived through something. In this case, we mean living with mental illness or being family or friends supporting someone living with mental illness.

### Don't you mean mental health consumers and carers?

That's right. When we talk about people with lived experience, we mean people living with mental illness (sometimes called consumers) and family or friends supporting someone living with mental illness (sometimes called carers). If you feel more comfortable using those terms, that's fine - we will know what you mean, but we will still use the term lived experience because we think it better explains the uniqueness and diversity of everyone's own experiences.

### What is the Statewide Mental Health Lived Experience Register?

The Statewide Mental Health Lived Experience Register (we'll call it 'the Register' for short) is made up of people living with mental illness or family and friends supporting someone living with mental illness that have joined the register because they are interested in hearing about or providing their views on mental health issues.

In other words, the Register is the way we talk to people with lived experience about what's happening in the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, and ask them about issues or areas of mental health we'd like to know their views on. The Register is also a way people can tell us about what is important to them when it comes to mental health and wellbeing.

### How can I use the Register?

So you want to hear from people living with mental illness or family and friends supporting someone living with mental illness? Fantastic! There are four ways you can hear from or use people's lived experience via the Register:

If you'd like to involve people with lived experience in one or all of the ways above, you will need to get in touch with Lived Experience Team (that's us!).

### Four ways you can involve lived experience

OFFER INFORMATION	ASK FOR FEEDBACK	CONSULT WITH PEOPLE	REQUEST A REPRESENTATIVE
You can provide information such as newsletters and email updates	You can ask for feedback, survey responses or requests for opinions	You can invite people to forums about mental health issues that you are working on	You can invite a Lived Experience representative to be part of your work in either a once-off or on-going way eg focus groups or committees

Let us know how you'd like to involve Register members in your work, and we'll then forward on your request for members to respond - more on this in the next section.

**Please note:** *The Register will provide information and, where possible and appropriate, will direct Register members to other opportunities for involvement within other mental health service areas. However, administration and support of these opportunities will be the responsibility of the services requiring them.*

### I've decided that I want to involve Register members – now what?

To access Register members you will need to contact us via email on [Health.StatewideLivedExperienceRegister@sa.gov.au](mailto:Health.StatewideLivedExperienceRegister@sa.gov.au) so we can distribute your request.

The way you want to involve people will determine what information you need to include in your request.

*Please note that we send out requests on a fortnightly basis – you will need to factor this in when you are thinking about when you'd like a response.*

### If I want to offer people information or ask for feedback?

You will need to include the following in your email request:

- What the information you are providing is about
- Who you wish your request to be sent to

*For example: people living with mental illness or family or friends supporting someone living with mental illness, both? People with a certain experience, or skill set, or in a specific geographical area?*

- When you wish it to be distributed by
- If there is any particular information you'd like Register members to be made aware of
- If you are asking for feedback, the questions you'd like members to respond to and when you would like a response by
- Your contact information so that Register members can follow up with you, should they have any questions.

### If I want to consult with people?

You will need to lodge your request to us with at least three (3) weeks' notice and include the following information:

- Who you wish to invite  
*see example in previous section*
- What the consultation is about
- When and where the event or consultation will be held, along with how to get there
- How long the consultation will go for
- What kind of feedback or experience you are hoping to hear from Register members
- Whether refreshments will be provided
- Details of who to contact to RSVP, and the RSVP date

- Your contact information, so that Register members can follow up with you, should they have any questions.
- Whether members will be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses (see next section for more information)

### What is a lived experience representative?

A lived experience representative is someone who attends or contributes to a meeting or series of meetings to provide views on behalf of people living with mental illness or family and friends supporting someone living with mental illness.

### If I want to involve a lived experience representative?

You will need to lodge your request to us with at least three (3) weeks' notice with the following information:

- The skills, expertise and experience you require of the representative
- The meeting information, dates, times, meeting regularity and venue
- Your contact details
- When you wish to have responses by

We will then send out an Expressions of Interest (EOI) request to Register members based on the above information. Once we

receive people's responses to the EOI we will forward these to you and hopefully there will be people with skills and experience that are a good fit for your meeting.

You then need to organise with us a time to meet with the register member/s that you have identified. This face to face meeting will be a chance for us all to:

- Get to know the person/people
- Help you determine whether they have and are able to contribute skills and experiences to your meeting

It is also an opportunity for the people to ask any questions they may have about your meeting or the Register, and provide them with information that they need to be a representative.

Once we have selected a representative, you will need to invite them to become a member of your meeting. In your invitation you will need to include:

- Meeting details including date, time, venue
- Whether refreshments will be provided
- A date for people to respond to the invitation
- Request the person's preferred method of communication e.g. email, phone, text message etc.
- Your contact details, should they have any questions

*Please provide us with a copy of your invitation so that we can keep a record of what representative work Register members are doing.*

### What supports do I need to offer lived experience representatives?

We will offer training and support opportunities to people as part of their membership of the Register. You will need to ensure reimbursement is provided for certain lived experience representative activities so that people are not out of pocket by participating. When and what you need to provide payment for and the forms you need to provide to organise payment are outlined in the SA Health Fee Structure which is included in the Register guidelines - we can provide you with a copy.

You will also need to make sure that information for lived experience representatives is provided in a timely and accessible way and in the way that the representative has identified they prefer. We suggest that any documents be provided to the representative in hard copy at least two weeks prior to the meeting and that a reminder about the meeting is sent out a week before.

We ask that representatives provide updates to us about their work so we can hear about what's been happening, what the key issues are and can support them if

there are any problems. We provide representatives with reporting forms to do this, but you will need to let us know if there are any concerns about how or what representatives are reporting to us.

You will also need to make sure that any personal information about, or provided by, a lived experience representative is kept strictly confidential and stored in a secure file.

### What if there's a problem?

We will make sure that feedback and complaints are dealt with promptly, respectfully and confidentially.

If you have an issue with a Register member or lived experience representative, we ask that you meet with them in the first instance, along with another staff member

to discuss the issues and possible solutions. If the issue remains unresolved or you require further assistance, please contact us on the details below for further support and information.

If you have a problem with the Register, please contact us and we'll work together to sort out the problem. If you are unhappy with our response, you can direct your concern to the Manager, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist on this email [OCP@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:OCP@health.sa.gov.au).

### Who can I talk to if I need more information?

Please call us, the Lived Experience Team, if you have any questions or if you would like more information about anything to do with the Register:

#### Office of the Chief Psychiatrist / Mental Health Strategy & Planning Lived Experience Team

**Christine Small** –  
Consumer Consultant Project Officer

**Leanne Galpin** –  
Carer Consultant Project Officer

**Camilo Guáqueta** – Senior Project Officer  
Lived Experience Consultant

**P** 8226 1091

**E** [Health.StatewideLivedExperienceRegister@sa.gov.au](mailto:Health.StatewideLivedExperienceRegister@sa.gov.au)

