Ref No: SQ16-000745

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Digital Technologies

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

Can the Department detail what work it has done in relation to the Government's Digital Mental Health Gateway? What, if any work, has been undertaken since 2015?

Answer:

The Minister has approved a staged approach to implementation of the digital mental health gateway (the gateway), which is being developed in accordance with the Digital Transformation Office's (DTO) Digital Service Standard.

Over the past 12 months the Department has been actively working with sector stakeholders to identify and validate user needs, identifying current user journeys of the mental health system and understand the existing service landscape, in order to inform the purpose, target audience and proposed features and function of the gateway. This engagement has included regular meetings through various PHN forums, as well as a departmental Digital Mental Health Advisory Committee, other digital mental health service providers, health professionals, consumers and carers, the CEO's Group of Teleweb and Digital Services for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and individual stakeholders.

The Department established a sector representative Digital Mental Health Advisory Committee in early 2016 to inform the design, development and implementation of the gateway. It has met four times face-to-face and held a number of out-of-session teleconferences.

Healthdirect Australia has been engaged to undertake the participatory co-design process, develop branding for the gateway, and deliver the service concept and requirements.

Two discovery workshops were held in May 2016, involving over 40 representatives of the mental health sector, including consumers, carers, mental health service providers and peak bodies.

Site visits have been undertaken by the Department to a range of digital mental health service providers to understand their service offering and explore key issues for consideration in the design of the gateway.

Eleven co-design workshops (including one with an Indigenous community in Bundaberg) have been held with consumers and carers, health professionals, digital mental health services, and Primary Health Networks. Over 130 people were engaged through this process. Workshops were facilitated by Healthdirect Australia in partnership with Professor Jane Burns (Professor of Innovation and Industry at the University of Sydney); Jackie Crowe (National Mental Health Commissioner; Spark Strategies); and the Department.

An alpha stage assessment of the discovery and design phases of the gateway has been undertaken consistent with the DTO's Digital Service Standard. The assessment report is expected to be publicly available on the DTO website soon.

The Department has undertaken a procurement process using the Digital Transformation Office's 'Digital marketplace' panel to engage a suitable digital firm to build and operate the online channel/presence (e.g. website, social media channels) of the gateway. The phone-based contact centre will be delivered by a separate provider. The digital delivery partner is expected to be engaged from November 2016, to deliver the first release (Minimal Viable Product) of the gateway in the first quarter of the 2017 calendar year.

Healthdirect has engaged a branding agency to develop 'brand charter' for the gateway, and identify (with consumers and carers) a short list of potential names that will be market tested. Other brand assets (including a logo and colour palette for the gateway) will also be designed and tested in November/December 2016.

A database of mental health stakeholders has been developed. The Department sends regular progress updates on recent developments and activities to this group.

The Department has also been working with sector stakeholders on options to ensure the digital mental health services listed on the gateway are of a quality standard. A certification framework, including the development of digital mental health service standards related to evidence, usability, quality, safety, and outcomes evaluation/measurement, is one option being explored.