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Specialised child and youth mental health support a necessity

Any national mental health digital gateway must recognise the specialised and complex ways children and young people seek help and their need to access child and youth centred support.

Kids Helpline is using its more than 25 years experience with children and young people to help inform the development of the proposed Digital Mental Health Gateway to ensure the specialised needs of young people are fully represented.

yourtown CEO Tracy Adams said the organisation was working with the Government and other service providers on the Gateway project and was in a unique position to offer input about children and young people, particularly around their pathways into mental health services.

“Last year, Kids Helpline responded to more than 200,000 contacts from children and young people. Of the 70,210 who received counselling, 22% were about a mental health issue,” Ms Adams said.

“Half of contacts who received counselling for a mental health issue asked for support or strategies to manage an established disorder, while almost forty per cent presented with symptoms of an undiagnosed mental health condition.”

Ms Adams said children and young people know and trust Kids Helpline to be there to talk about their issues.

“Young people know that we are a confidential service that understands the issues specific to them and will listen and provide individualised help and support 24 hours a day,” she said.

“Any national service that caters for children and young people needs to ensure access to child and youth centred support and provide them with a choice as to who they reach out to for help.

“Kids Helpline already works very closely with other phone and online service providers and, if needed, will support young people’s referral to another specialist service, including emergency support.”

Kids Helpline gives children and young people choices, support and someone to listen. Kids Helpline is Australia’s only national 24/7 counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call **1800 55 1800** or www.kidshelpline.com.au. Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown**.

ENDS

Interview/filming opportunities:

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