

Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care National Best Endeavours Data Set 2023–24

Technical Specifications for Reporting

Version 6.0
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Version history

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Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care National Best Endeavours Data Set 2023–24 – Technical Specifications for Reporting

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Acronyms

ABF	Activity based funding
ABF MHC DRS	Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care Data Request Specifications
ABF MHC DSS	Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care Data Set Specifications
ABF MHC NBEDS	Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care National Best Endeavours Data Set
AMHCC	Australian Mental Health Care Classification
APC NMDS	Admitted Patient Care National Minimum Data Set
CGAS	Children's Global Assessment Scale
CMHC NMDS	Community Mental Health Care National Minimum Data Set
FIHS	Factors Influencing Health Status
HoNOS	Health of the Nation Outcome Scale
HoNOS 65+	Health of the Nation Outcome Scale 65+
HoNOSCA	Health of the Nation Outcome Scale Child and Adolescent
IHACPA	Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority
LSP-16	Life Skills Profile
METEOR	Metadata Online Registry
MH-CASC	Mental Health Classification and Service Costs
MHISSC	Mental Health Information Strategy Standing Committee
MHPoC	Mental health phase of care
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
NHDISC	National Health Data and Information Standards
NHISSC	National Health Information Standards and Statistics Committee
NHRA	National Health Reform Agreement
NMDS	National Minimum Data Set
NOCC	National Outcomes and Casemix Collection
NAP NBEDS	Non-Admitted Patient National Best Endeavours Data Set
RMHC NMDS	Residential Mental Health Care National Minimum Data Set
RUG-ADL	Resource Utilisation Groups – Activities of Daily Living

1. Background

The Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA) has developed the Australian Mental Health Care Classification (AMHCC) to support the national implementation of activity based funding (ABF) for mental health care. The classification improves the clinical meaningfulness of classifying mental health care and will be used to price public mental health care services nationally.

National data collections are essential to the development of the ABF classifications. They are required for a number of purposes, including:

- ensuring that activity is categorised into meaningful groups
- analysing activity between local hospital networks and jurisdictions
- monitoring trends over time.

IHACPA created the Activity based funding: Mental health care national best endeavours data set (ABF MHC NBEDS) to support the use of the AMHCC through the collection of data. The ABF MHC NBEDS contains a set of data items to be collected alongside instructions, definitions and output values.

The National Minimum Data Sets (NMDS) and National Best Endeavours Data Sets (NBEDS) for 2023–24 activity data reporting were endorsed by the National Health Data and Information Standards Committee (NHDISC) in December 2022 and January 2023. All NMDS and NBEDS have consequently been published on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) Metadata Online Registry (METEOR).

1.1 Development of the AMHCC Version 1.0

In 2012, the Pricing Authority approved the development of a new mental health classification for mental health services in Australia for the purposes of ABF. To support classification development, IHACPA commenced the Definition and Cost Drivers for Mental Health Services Project. The output of the project was the creation of a separate care type for mental health services, a draft definition of mental health care for classification purposes and the identification of possible cost drivers.

The mental health care definition sets the scope of the AMHCC. The definition of mental health care was approved by the Pricing Authority on 31 May 2013 and was implemented as a [Health Standard](#) effective 1 July 2014.

The mental health care definition¹ is:

'Care in which the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is improvement in the symptoms and/or psychosocial, environmental and physical functioning related to a patient's mental disorder.'

Mental health care:

- *is delivered under the management of, or regularly informed by, a clinician with specialised expertise in mental health;*
- *is evidenced by an individualised formal mental health assessment and the implementation of a documented mental health plan; and*

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2015). *Mental health care*. Retrieved 10 February 2023 from <https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/575321>

- *may include significant psychosocial components including family and carer support.'*

This includes services provided as assessment only activities.

In 2014, IHACPA initiated a mental health costing study to generate data on mental health services and costs to inform the development of AMHCC Version 1.0. The study resulted in the creation of a robust consumer level dataset representative of mental health services provided in Australia.

On 25 February 2016, the Pricing Authority approved AMHCC Version 1.0. AMHCC Version 1.0 was implemented on a 'best endeavours' basis from 1 July 2016 and used to price admitted mental health care from 1 July 2022.

1.2 Development of the ABF MHC NBEDS

To support the development and ongoing use of the AMHCC, IHACPA developed the ABF Mental Health Care Data Set Specification (ABF MHC DSS) for data collection in 2015–16 in 2014. The intention of the ABF MHC DSS was to utilise existing data collections and definitions where feasible, with a principle of 'single provision, multiple use'.

Further development of the ABF MHC DSS occurred in 2014 with extensive consultation through IHACPA's working and advisory groups, including the Mental Health Working Group, NHDISC and the Mental Health Information Strategy Standing Committee. As a result of stakeholder input a significantly revised version of the ABF MHC DSS 2016–17 was developed in 2015.

In 2016, IHACPA revised the name of the DSS to the ABF MHC NBEDS. The ABF MHC NBEDS describe metadata sets that are not mandated for national collection, but where there is a commitment to provide data nationally on a best endeavours basis.

IHACPA develops the ABF MHC NBEDS annually in accordance with national standards. The ABF MHC NBEDS is also published in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's national metadata repository, the Metadata Online Registry (METEOR).

2. Australian Mental Health Care Classification

The AMHCC is a consumer level classification, comprised of seven variables that are unrelated to the clinical decision-making process. The first four variables are categorical variables:

- setting
- assessment only data item
- mental health phase of care (MHPoC)
- age group.

The remaining variables are complexity variables:

- Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS)/Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents (HoNOSCA)/Health of the Nation Outcome Scale 65+ (HoNOS65+)
- Life Skills Profile (LSP-16)
- mental health legal status.

The classification structure for the AMHCC Version 1.0 admitted and community settings is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1. AMHCC Version 1.0 – Admitted setting

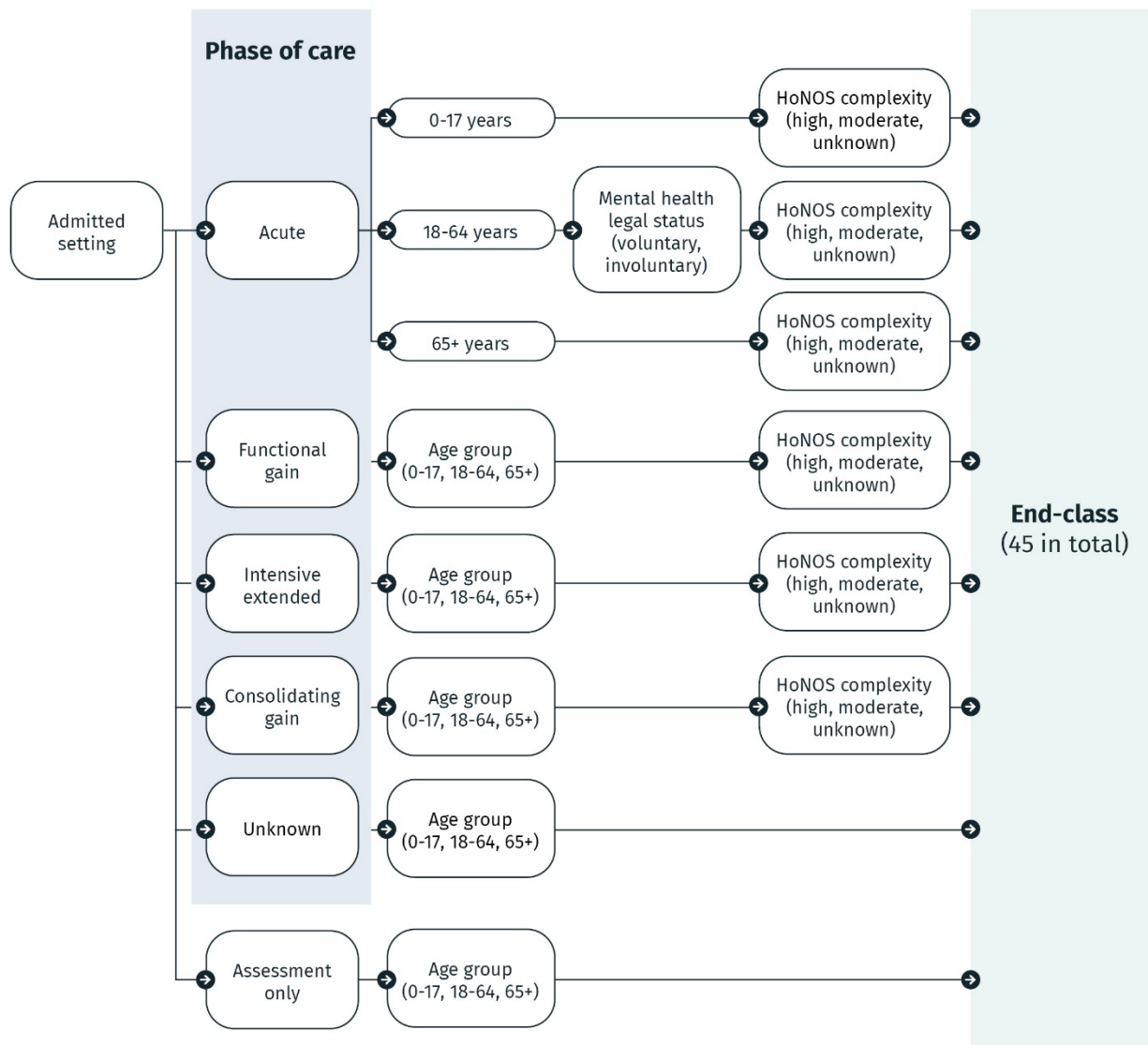
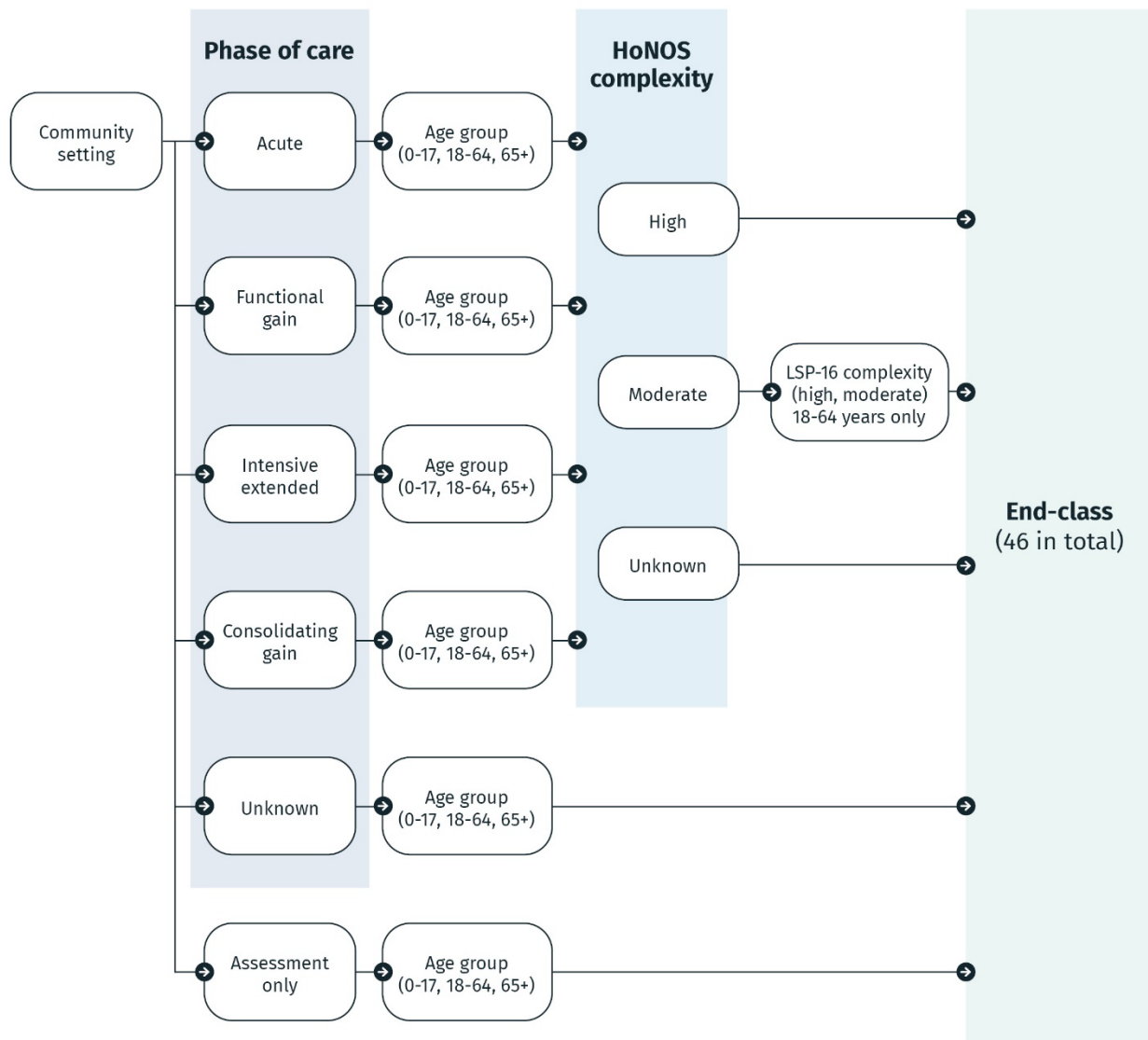


Figure 2. AMHCC Version 1.0 – Community setting



3. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this document is to outline the reporting requirements for the provision of data against the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 by state and territory governments. This document provides details about the:

- content and key concepts included in the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24
- business rules relating to the reporting of the data items
- frequently asked questions relating to the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24.

The purpose of the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 is to capture information about patients receiving mental health care, funded by states and territories, that is associated with Australian public hospital services.

This document is based on information in existing technical specifications, handbooks, manuals and METEOR.

The scope of this document is limited to the above and does not cover discussion or issues relating to the provision of data that is a result of, or can be resolved through, system management and design at a state and territory level.

Similarly, this document does not address the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24.

The reporting requirements outlined in this document represent a minimum requirement for activity based funding reporting purposes and are not intended to limit the scope of data collections maintained by individual service agencies or state and territory governments.

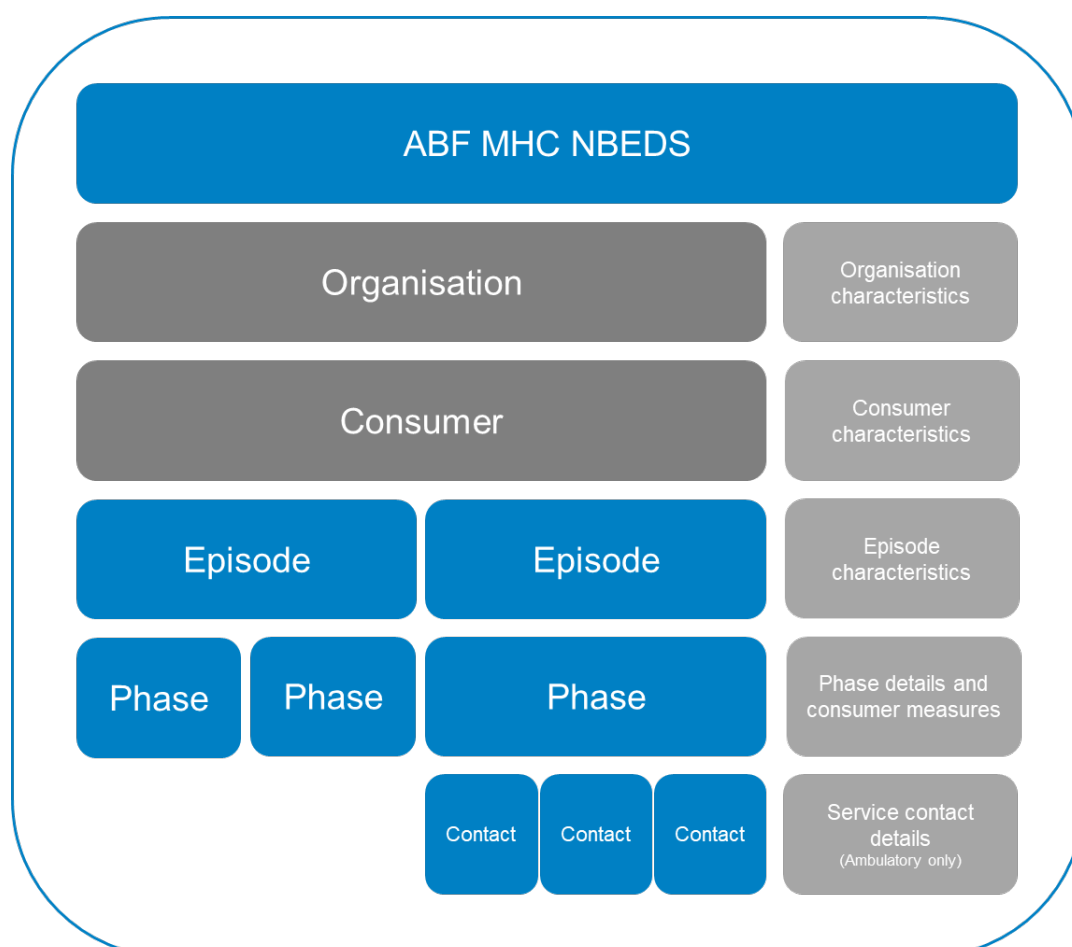
4. Overview of the Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care National Best Endeavours Data Set 2023–24 structure

The ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 consists of a single data collection, with the reporting of mental health care activity regardless of the setting. Where appropriate the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 enables the reporting of values through the derivation of existing activity data collections and the national minimum data sets (NMDS). For example, mental health legal status is drawn from the Admitted Patient Care NMDS (APC NMDS) via a linking process.

The ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 contains data items that are required to be reported for across all age groups and settings. The ABF MHC NBEDS requires the reporting of mental health care activity for consumer episodes and MHPoC. For ambulatory mental health care, individual service contacts are also reported.

The high-level structure of the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 is illustrated at Figure 3.

Figure 3. ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 high level structure



Specific data is collected in relation to the level of reporting (episode, MHPoC, assessment only data item and service contact) and is dependent on the setting type and age of the consumer.

Key concepts and data items contained within the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 are discussed in the following chapters.

5. Scope of the Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care National Best Endeavours Data Set 2023–24

The ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 was created for ABF purposes. Therefore, the primary scope is mental health care provided by in-scope public hospital services under the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA). However, as the AMHCC has a broader scope than the NHRA, mental health care services that are out of scope under the NHRA, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also encouraged to report their activity.

The total scope of the ABF MHC NBEDS includes consumers receiving mental health care in specialised and non-specialised services, across admitted, ambulatory and residential settings. The intention of the ABF MHC NBEDS is to capture instances of service provision from the consumer viewpoint.

In-scope NHRA services refer to specific specialised mental health services, public hospitals, local hospital networks and NGOs, managed or funded by state and territory health authorities. This includes services contracted by a public hospital, local hospital network or jurisdiction, regardless of the physical location of the contracting authority or the location where the services are delivered.

5.1 In-scope public hospital services

In accordance with section 131(f) of the *National Health Reform Act 2011* and clauses A16–24 of the Addendum to the NHRA 2020–25, the scope of public hospital services eligible for Commonwealth funding are:

- all admitted programs, including hospital-in-the-home programs and forensic mental health inpatient services
- all emergency department services
- non-admitted services that meet the criteria for inclusion on the General List of In-Scope Public Hospital Services.

5.2 Specialised mental health services

Specialised mental health services² are those with a primary function to provide treatment, rehabilitation or community health support targeted towards people with a mental disorder or psychiatric disability. These activities are delivered from a service or facility that is readily identifiable as both specialised and serving a mental health care function.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2016). *Specialised mental health service* (Object class). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/268984>

The concept of a specialised mental health service is not dependent on the inclusion of the service within the state or territory mental health budget.

A service is not defined as a specialised mental health service solely because its clients include people affected by a mental disorder or psychiatric disability. The definition excludes specialist drug and alcohol services and services for people with intellectual disabilities, except where they are established to assist people affected by a mental disorder who also have drug and alcohol related disorders or intellectual disability.

Specialised mental health services include admitted, residential and ambulatory mental health care services. In admitted consumer services, these can be a sub-unit of a hospital even where the hospital is not a specialised mental health establishment itself (for example, designated psychiatric units and wards or outpatient clinics).

5.3 Non-specialised mental health services

Non-specialised mental health services are those services that:

- do not identify as both specialised and serving a mental health function
- may provide services to clients other than mental health clients
- may be recognised as a service that has a speciality other than mental health care.

A non-specialised mental health service may provide adjunct care and services to a specialised mental health service, or their services may encompass a consumer's entire mental health plan. However, they are not recognised as providing specialised mental health care and may provide services to clients without a mental health disorder or disability.

While it is acknowledged that activity meeting the definition of mental health care type is delivered in non-specialised services, it is also acknowledged that due to system capabilities there may be limited ability to report associated activity through the ABF MHC NBEDS.

5.4 Non-governmental organisations

A mental health NGO³ is a private organisation that receives Australian and/or state or territory government funding specifically for the provision of services, where the principal intent is targeted at improving mental health and well-being and is delivered to people affected by a mental disorder, their families and carers, or the broader community.

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). *Mental health non-government organisation* (Object class). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/432937>

6. Key concepts of the Activity Based Funding Mental Health Care National Best Endeavours Data Set 2023–24

The type and number of data items reported for the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 are dependent on the service setting, consumer age group and the unit of count. The unit of count is the consumer's episode of mental health care.

The key concepts contained within the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 are defined and discussed below.

6.1 Service setting

In the ABF MHC NBEDS there are three different service settings: admitted, ambulatory and residential. The service setting is primarily defined by the service setting in which the consumer's episode of mental health care takes place.

6.1.1 Admitted setting

The admitted setting includes consumers that are admitted for mental health care. The consumer may be admitted to a general ward or a designated psychiatric unit in a general hospital or a psychiatric hospital. All activity reported will have a mental health care type for the admitted episode, regardless of the mental health specialisation status of the provider.

Admitted consumer care includes mental health activity, both specialised and non-specialised, which is currently reported through the APC NMDS as identified through data item *Hospital Service – care type*, value *11 Mental health care*.

6.1.2 Ambulatory setting

The ambulatory setting (also known as community) includes specialised and non-specialised mental health care services delivered to consumers who are generally not admitted to an inpatient facility or reside in a residential mental health care facility. For the purposes of the AMHCC, this includes the non-admitted hospital service setting (for example, outpatient clinics).

It is recognised that a mental health team from the ambulatory setting can provide mental health care to consumers in an admitted, emergency department or residential setting and this activity is considered an ambulatory episode. The ABF MHC NBEDS allows reporting of in-reach service contacts from specialised mental health community units into specialised mental health care admitted consumer units, which are out of scope for the Community mental health care national minimum data set (CMHC NMDS).

Specialised mental health services (as defined in Section 5.2) may include activity that is currently reported through the CMHC NMDS, or under the ambulatory care mental health service setting in the National Outcomes and Casemix Collection (NOCC).

Non-specialised mental health services (as defined in Section 5.3) are those services provided to consumers that meet the definition of the mental health care type, however, are not provided by specialised mental health services. Non-specialised mental health services may be reported through the Non-admitted patient national best endeavours data set (NAP NBEDS)⁴.

6.1.3 Residential setting

The residential setting⁵ includes care provided in a residential mental health care service that employ mental health trained staff on-site 24 hours per day and other services with less intensive staffing (the trained staff must be on site for a minimum of six hours a day and at least 50 hours per week). Services will provide specialised treatment, rehabilitation or care for people affected by a mental illness or psychiatric disability.

Residential care includes mental health activity that is currently reported through the Residential mental health care national minimum data set (RMHC NMDS).

6.2 Age group

The clinical measures associated with the ABF MHC NBEDS are dependent on the age group of the consumer, including child and adolescent, adult or older persons.

For the purposes of the AMHCC grouper, adults are defined as persons between the age of 18 and 64 years, older persons are defined as persons aged 65 years and older, and children and adolescents are defined as persons under the age of 18 years.

It is important to note that the age group boundaries can be influenced by the clinician's decision on which clinical measure is the most appropriate. For example, there may be circumstances where the adult clinical instrument is considered most applicable to a 17-year-old consumer, in which case the data items relevant to an adult episode of mental health care should be reported.

Clinicians will be responsible for determining whether age group and the associated clinical measures is determined on the basis of the actual age, condition and care needs of the consumer, or on the type of service providing the treatment and care, or a mixture of both.

6.3 Mental health phase of care

In addition to reporting episodes of mental health care, activity must also be reported according to the MHPoC. MHPoC is a prospective description of the primary goal of care that is reflected in the consumer's mental health treatment plan. The MHPoC reflects a prospective assessment at the time of collection, rather than a retrospective assessment. MHPoC should be considered a subset of episode of mental health care, meaning that for each episode there can be multiple phases.

MHPoC is independent of both the treatment setting and the designation of the treating service and does not reflect service unit type. For example, in an admitted episode of mental health care, the consumer may not have an acute MHPoC for the entire period. Similarly, MHPoC should not be determined based on consumer presentation but rather the primary goal of care. For instance, two consumers with the same diagnosis may have different goals of care due to other factors such as socialisation or age.

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). *Non-admitted patient service event – care type*, data item [value 5 *Mental health care*] (Data element). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/679528>

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2015). *Residential mental health care service* (Glossary item). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/373049>

The four MHPoC and related definitions from METEOR⁶ are described in Table 1.

Table 1. MHPoC and related METEOR definitions

Code descriptive term	Code definition
Acute	The primary goals of care are intended to reduce high levels of distress, manage complex symptoms, contain and reduce immediate risk.
Functional gain	The primary goal of care is to improve personal, social or occupational functioning or promote psychosocial adaptation in a patient with impairment arising from a psychiatric disorder.
Intensive extended	The primary goal of care is prevention or minimisation of further deterioration, and reduction of risk of harm in a patient who has a stable pattern of severe symptoms, frequent relapses or severe inability to function independently and is judged to require care over an indefinite period.
Consolidating gain	The primary goal of care is to maintain the level of functioning, or improving functioning during a period of recovery, minimise deterioration or prevent relapse where the patient has stabilised and functions relatively independently. Consolidating gain may also be known as maintenance.

It is recognised that there may be aspects of each MHPoC represented in the consumer's mental health plan, the MHPoC is intended to reflect the main goal or aim of care that will underpin the next period of care. For example, a consumer in consolidating gain phase may also have a goal to prevent relapse but the primary goal is to maintain their level of functioning, therefore consolidating gain rather than the intensive extended phase should be reported.

The MHPoC should be assessed on admission/registration to a service, where there has been a transfer of care between service settings or when there has been a change to the mental health care plan due to change to the consumer's symptoms.

If the primary goal of care changes as a result of the assessment, a new MHPoC may begin. Similarly, a review of the consumer's MHPoC may be undertaken part way through an episode within the assigned MHPoC but does not lead to a change in the MHPoC if the primary goal of care remains the same.

6.3.1 Assessment only data item

The 2017 Clinical Refinement Project recommended that 'assessment only'⁷ be redefined from a MHPoC to an administrative data item to allow for greater flexibility in capturing triage and assessment activity without encumbering this activity with business rules commonly associated with MHPoC. The assessment only data item is not intended to capture regular reviews that are part of standard clinical practice. This data item was developed to capture the significant amount of work undertaken by mental health services in assessing consumers who do not go on to receive treatment at that particular mental health service.

⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Episode of care—mental health care phase*, (Data element). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/744325>

⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Episode of Care – clinical assessment only indicator, yes/no/not stated/ inadequately described*, (Data element). Retrieved 22 February 2022 from <https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/745689>

To be assigned an assessment only data item, the care needs to first meet the definition of mental health care (as outlined in Chapter 1 of this document). This can include triage and phone triage services as long as the mental health care and assessment only data item definitions are met.

Example 1

A help line received a call from a consumer. The consumer was having a stressful period at work but did not exhibit symptoms relating to a mental disorder. General advice was given to the consumer. No further intervention was required. No consumer information was recorded, nor was a formal assessment completed or care plan developed.

This activity is not in scope of the mental health care definition as no mental health assessment was undertaken and no mental health plan was implemented.

Example 2

A consumer was assessed by a psychiatrist following a GP referral to the psychiatrist. The consumer had a three-year history of anxiety which had recently become more severe and had been seeing a psychologist following a referral by the GP. The consumer had a strong supportive family network and was attending an anxiety management support group offered by a local church. The consumer information and mental health assessment was recorded along with a documented mental health plan which included commencement of medication and management advice to the consumer and GP. A follow up appointment was not required and the consumer continued to be managed by their GP.

This activity is in scope of the mental health care definition as a mental health assessment was undertaken and mental health plan was implemented. This activity meets the definition of assessment only phase because the primary goal of care was to obtain information in order to determine the treatment needs.

The assessment only data item should only be reported if the review outcome does not lead to the consumer being placed in one of the four MHPoC immediately after. If the assessment outcome leads to acute, functional gain, intensive extended or consolidating gain phase being selected, then the assessment is included as part of the phase chosen.

Example 3

A consumer presented at the emergency department following an attempt to take their own life, with their history of psychosis becoming unmanageable. The consumer was assessed by the mental health team in the emergency department who agreed the high levels of behavioural disturbance meant the consumer required admission to hospital with the primary goal of care being the short term reduction in severity of symptoms/risks. The consumer began their acute phase immediately and was discharged 10 days later.

Although an assessment was completed, this was not assessment only data item as the assessment led to the immediate start of the Acute MHPoC.

6.4 Service contact

6.4.1 Service contact definition

For ambulatory episodes of mental health care, individual service contacts must also be reported. The CMHC NMDS defines mental health service contacts⁸ as:

'The provision of a clinically significant service by a specialised mental health service provider(s) for consumer/clients...where the nature of the service would normally warrant a dated entry in the clinical record of the patient/client in question.'

6.4.2 Types of service contact

Service contact encompasses two types of activities:

- mental health service contact. In the ambulatory setting, specialised mental health services record mental health service contacts. Specialised ambulatory services are those services that identify as specialised mental health services. Their primary function to provide treatment, rehabilitation or community health support targeted towards people with a mental disorder or psychiatric disability. These activities are delivered from a service or facility that is readily identifiable as both specialised and serving a mental health care function; or
- non-admitted patient service event. In the ambulatory setting, non-specialised mental health services record non-admitted patient service events. A non-specialised mental health service are those mental health services that do not meet the definition of a specialised mental health service but provide mental health services to those consumers that have a non-admitted patient service event - mental health care type⁹.

For ambulatory mental health episodes, if the consumer received specialised mental health services, mental health service contacts should be reported. If the consumer received non-specialised mental health services, non-admitted patient service events should be reported in the NAP NBEDS.

6.4.3 Reporting difference between ABF MHC NBEDS and CMHC NMDS

The CMHC NMDS excludes the reporting of mental health service contacts for consumers in the admitted and residential settings. This exclusion covers consumers admitted to psychiatric hospitals or designated psychiatric units in acute care hospitals and resident in 24-hour staffed specialised residential mental health services.

In contrast, the ABF MHC NBEDS allows service contacts to be reported in these settings in the context of a concurrent episode of care (refer to Section 6.5.2 Concurrent episodes of care).

6.5 Reporting unit of count

The overarching unit of activity within the ABF MHC NBEDS is episode of mental health care. Within an episode of mental health care, activity is reported according to MHPoC.

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Mental health service contact* (Object class). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/727358>

⁹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). *Non-admitted patient service event—care type* (Data element). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/679528>

6.5.1 Episode of mental health care

For the purposes of the ABF MHC NBEDS, an episode of mental health care is defined as the period of mental health care between the formal or statistical commencement of care (such as an admission) and a formal or statistical completion of care (such as a separation). The episode of mental health care is characterised by the mental health care type within a setting. An episode of mental health care reported through the ABF MHC NBEDS may differ from the clinical concept of an episode of mental health care.

Depending on the service setting and health service organisation, there may be variation regarding what constitutes or equates to the period of mental health care. For example, an episode of care may vary in definition between an admitted episode of care, an ambulatory episode of care and a residential episode of care.

For the purposes of the ABF MHC NBEDS, the episode of mental health care may be derived for admitted or residential consumers from existing reported episodes of care in the APC NMDS and the RMHC NMDS. Therefore, an admitted or residential episode of mental health care may commence with an admission to a facility or in the case of the residential setting it may be signalled by the start of a new reference period (refer to Section 6.5.3 Reference period). Likewise, the end of the episode for an admitted or residential episode of mental health care occurs when a consumer is discharged from the facility, at the end of a reference period, or for any other reason as stated in associated activity data set specifications¹⁰.

The concept of an ambulatory episode of mental health care is specific to the ABF MHC NBEDS and AMHCC Version 1.0 and may not be able to be derived from existing data collections.

6.5.1.1 Admitted episodes

Admitted episodes refer to the period of care provided to a consumer who is admitted to a specialised psychiatric inpatient service or to a general public hospital for the purposes of receiving mental health care (that is, the consumer would have a mental health care type). The period of care commences when the consumer has an admission and ceases with a discharge.

6.5.1.2 Ambulatory episodes

Ambulatory episodes refer to the care provided to consumers in a non-admitted setting that can be defined by exclusion – that is, the provider of the service is not of the admitted consumer, emergency department or residential care setting. However, it is recognised that a mental health team from the ambulatory setting can provide mental health care to consumers in any of those settings as an ambulatory in-reach service. This activity is considered an ambulatory episode and may be reported through the ABF MHC NBEDS.

The commencement of an ambulatory episode may be signalled by a new registration to ambulatory care or, if the consumer has previously been treated by the ambulatory team, the start of an episode may be the recommencement of care for a specified goal, such as when moving from mental health care in the admitted setting back to the community. Note that the rule for concurrent episodes allows an ambulatory episode to continue in parallel with an episode in another setting, such as admitted (refer to Section 6.5.2 Concurrent episodes of care).

For ambulatory episodes that start and end within the same reference period, the episode start and end date should be the first and last service contact dates. It is recognised that client registration

¹⁰ Refer to the Admitted Patient Care National Minimum Data Set or the Residential Mental Health Care National Minimum Data Set for further information on episode of care specific to an admitted or residential consumer.

may occur prior to the first service contact, however for the purpose of consistent reporting practice the ambulatory episode start date must align with a service contact date.

The cessation of an ambulatory episode of mental health care may occur when the consumer's case has been closed by the mental health care team, such as when the consumer moves to mental health care in another setting (for example, admitted or residential). *Episode of mental health care - episode end mode* should be populated to identify the reason the episode ended.

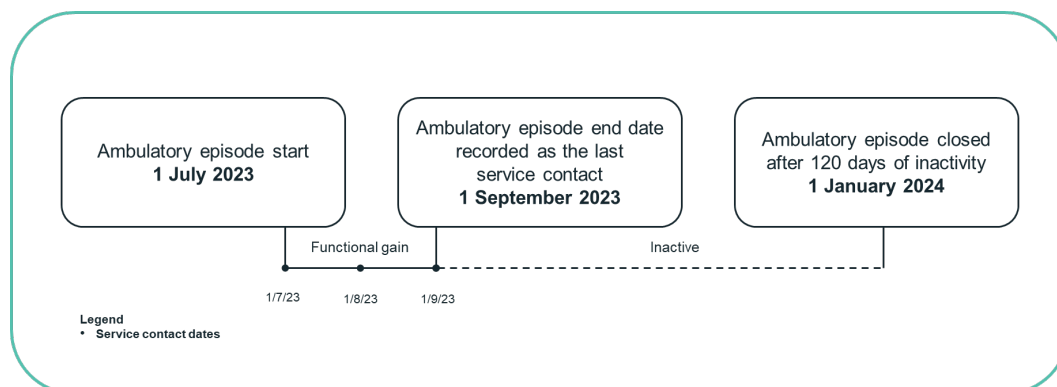
Note that the rule for concurrent episodes allows an ambulatory episode to continue in parallel with an episode in another setting, such as admitted (refer to Section 6.5.2 Concurrent episodes of care).

An ambulatory mental health episode needs to be closed when there has been a period of inactivity greater than 120 days¹¹. In this case, the date of the last service contact in the episode of mental health care will be the episode end date.

Example 4

On 1 July 2023, a consumer commenced their episode of ambulatory mental health care under the functional gain MHPoC. They received ambulatory service contacts on the following dates: 1 July, 1 August and 2 September 2023.

Since the last service contact on 2 September 2023, the ambulatory team has been unable to get in touch with the consumer who has not attended any further scheduled appointments nor responded to any phone call. On 2 January 2024 (120 days after the last service contact), the episode was closed following the business rule of closing off ambulatory episodes after 120 days of inactivity. The episode end date was backdated to the last service contact date being 2 September 2023, following the ABF mental health reporting rule.



This should be reported as follows:

Ambulatory episode 1 July 2023 – 2 September 2023

MHPoC Functional gain 1 July 2023 – 2 September 2023

Service contact 1 July, 1 August, 2 September 2023

6.5.1.3 Residential episodes

Residential episodes refer to the period of care provided to a consumer who is admitted to a specialised community-based ABF MHC NBEDS, episodes of mental health care that extend beyond a reporting period can be residential mental health service. The period of care commences

¹¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Episode of mental health care—episode end mode* (Data element). Retrieved 10 February 2022 from <https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/745660>

with an admission and ceases with a discharge. The admission and/or discharge may be formal or statistical. For the purposes of reporting activity to the reported using a reference period.

For the purposes of reporting residential episodes of mental health care:

- formal episode start date or end date – the formal start date or end date of a residential episode of care must occur on the same date as an admission or discharge.
- statistical episode start date or end date (occurring at a change of reference period) – the statistical start date or end date of a residential episode of care must contain the first or last date of the reference period, which may or may not correspond with an admission or discharge date.

6.5.2 Concurrent episodes of mental health care

Concurrent episodes of mental health care for a consumer within a mental health service organisation can be reported, provided the episodes of mental health care are reported for different settings. The AMHCC allows for concurrent ambulatory mental health episodes to occur with episodes in other settings, such as an admitted episode or residential episode. For admitted episodes, this may take the form of a specialised mental health admitted episode or an acute (non-mental health) admitted episode.

The ABF mental health reporting requirements of concurrent episodes is optional based on jurisdictional system capability.

6.5.2.1 Concurrent episodes within an ambulatory service setting

A consumer receiving an ambulatory episode of mental health care who is admitted to hospital can have both the ambulatory episode and the admitted episode reported. However, a consumer receiving episodes of ambulatory mental health care from different ambulatory teams within an organisation cannot have two ambulatory episodes reported. If more than one service unit from the same setting provided service in one episode, only report the service unit that is primarily *responsible for the care*.

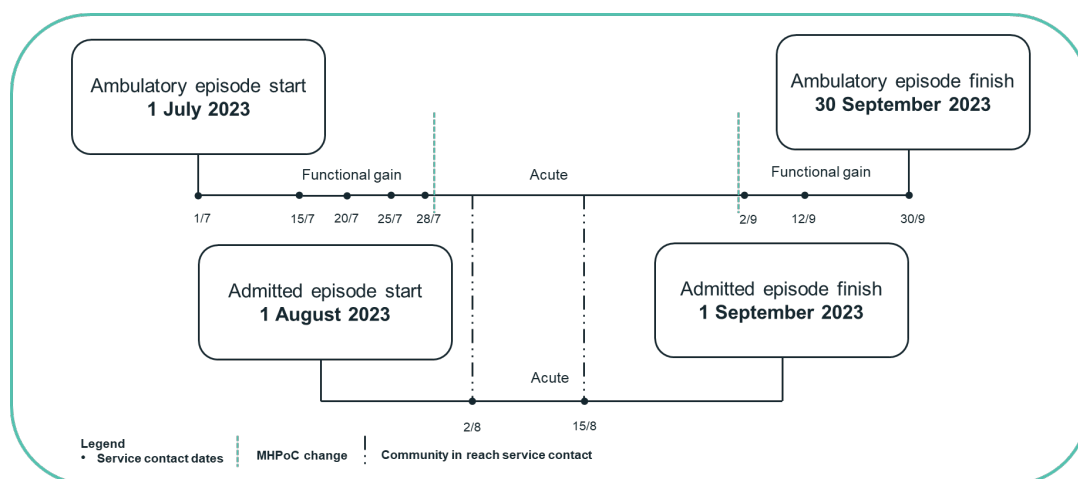
Example 5

On 1 July 2023, a consumer started their episode of ambulatory mental health care with a functional gain MHPoC. They received ambulatory service contacts on the following dates: 1 July, 15 July, 20 July, 25 July and 28 July 2023.

On 1 August 2023, they were admitted to hospital with an acute MHPoC whilst continuing to be visited by the ambulatory care team on the following dates: 2 August and 15 August 2023.

On 1 September 2023, they were discharged from hospital but received further ambulatory service contacts under functional gain MHPoC on the following dates 2 September, 12 September and 30 September 2023.

On 30 September 2023, their ambulatory care formally ended.



This should be reported as follows:

Admitted episode:		1 August 2023 – 1 September 2023
MHPoC	Acute	1 August 2023 – 1 September 2023
Ambulatory episode:		1 July 2023 – 30 September 2023
MHPoC	Functional gain	1 July 2023 – 1 August 2023
Acute		1 August 2023 – 1 September 2023
	Functional gain	1 September 2023 – 30 September 2023
Service contact		1, 15, 20, 25 and 28 July; 2 and 15 August; 2, 12 and 30 September 2023

As demonstrated in the example, the ABF MHC NBEDS does not require a concurrently occurring ambulatory episode to have an artificial separation date to coincide with the date of admitted episode admission. The ABF MHC NBEDS supports the continuation of an ongoing ambulatory episode in parallel with an episode in another setting.

For concurrent episodes, the ambulatory service contact should be reported through the ABF MHC NBEDS with the appropriate 'service contact episode of care setting'. The 'service contact episode of care setting' data item identifies the consumer location when they were seen by the community service provider. The location includes admitted or residential setting as well as emergency department.

6.5.2.2 Concurrent episodes within a residential service setting

In the circumstance of residential mental health care, while the RMHC NMDS allows concurrent episodes within the residential setting, the ABF MHC NBEDS does not allow concurrent episodes to be reported within the same setting.

6.5.2.3 Concurrent across different service settings

Examples of concurrent episodes across different service settings and applicable data set specification are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Concurrent episodes across different service settings and applicable data set specification

Concurrent episodes across different service settings and applicable data set specification		
	Episode A	Episode B
Example 1 – concurrent episodes across admitted and ambulatory settings with mental health care type.	Admitted setting – APC NMDS and ABF MHC NBEDS	Ambulatory setting – ABF MHC NBEDS
Example 2 – concurrent episodes across admitted and ambulatory settings with an acute care type and mental health in-reach services.	Admitted setting – APC NMDS	Ambulatory setting – ABF MHC NBEDS
Example 3 – concurrent episodes across emergency department and ambulatory setting	Emergency setting – Non-admitted patient emergency department care NMDS	Ambulatory setting – ABF MHC NBEDS

6.5.3 Reference period

A reference period is defined as the period of time for which activity is collected or reported.

The start or end of a mental health episode will be either formal or statistical:

- a formal start, or end, of an episode is used to indicate the actual commencement of an episode of care, and the subsequent discharge or completion of the episode of care.
- a statistical start, or end, of an episode is used when the episode remains open between two or more reference periods and is used for reporting activity associated with an episode during the specified reference period.

For mental health activity, IHACPA requires quarterly reporting currently. Therefore, the reference periods for mental health activity align with the reporting periods as outlined for 2023–24 data. That is:

Quarter 1: 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024

Quarter 2: 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2024

Quarter 3: 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024

Quarter 4: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

6.5.3.1 Reporting mental health phase of care across reference periods

The concept of reference periods does not apply to admitted mental health episodes. Admitted mental health episodes should only be reported once the consumer is discharged regardless of the timeframe and all MHPoC including those that ended in prior reporting periods should be reported once the episode concludes.

The concept of reference periods also does not apply to MHPoC. When a MHPoC carries over from the previous reference period, the start date for the MHPoC should be reported, even though it is before the reference period. This is demonstrated in the example 6.

Example 6

On 1 June 2023, a consumer was admitted to hospital for mental health services, under the Acute MHPoC.

On 6 July 2023, the consumer was discharged from the hospital.



This should be reported as follows:

Admitted episode: 1 June 2023 – 6 July 2023

MHPoC Acute 1 June 2023 – 6 July 2023

6.5.3.2 Reporting ambulatory service contacts across reference periods

For ambulatory episodes that span across reference periods, the episode start date for the first reference period should be the first service contact date. The episode start dates in following reference periods should be the start date of the reference period. To indicate the episode runs over the reference period, the episode start mode should be value 2 (start of a new reference period).

Similarly, the episode end date for the last reference period should be the last service contact date. The episode end date for all previous reference periods should be the last date of the reference period.

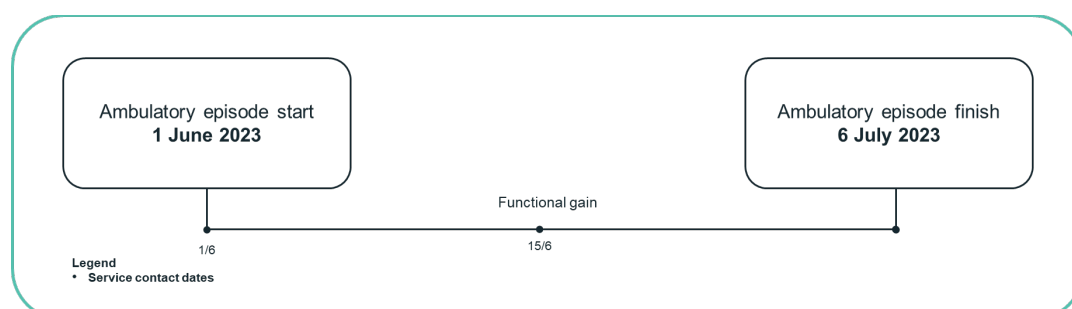
For ambulatory episodes across multiple reference periods that have the same MHPoC carried across reference periods, the MHPoC start date for all reference periods should be the ambulatory episode start date and the first service contact date. The MHPoC end date for the last reference period should be the ambulatory episode end date and the last service contact date. For all previous reference periods, the MHPoC end date should be reported as blank.

Where an ambulatory episode extends across multiple reference periods, only the service contacts falling within the reference period should be reported.

Example 7

On 1 June 2023, a consumer commenced their ambulatory mental health care episode under the functional gain MHPoC. They received ambulatory service contacts on the following dates: 1 June, 15 June and 6 July 2023.

On 6 July 2023, their ambulatory care episode formally ended.



This should be reported as follows:

Reference period		1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023
Ambulatory episode		1 June 2023 – 30 June 2023
MHPoC	Functional gain	1 June 2023 – blank
Service contact		1 June and 15 June 2023
Reference period		1 July 2023 - 30 September 2023
Ambulatory episode		1 July 2023 – 6 July 2023
MHPoC	Functional gain	1 June 2023 – 6 July 2023
Service contact		6 July 2023

6.6 Unique identification of consumers

Unique identification of the consumer is an essential requirement in clinical information systems, both for ensuring that local information collections support continuity of care, as well as analysis at a state or territory and national level.

State and territory governments vary in the extent to which different mental health service units share a unique identifier for consumers under care. However, where these are not in place, state and territory governments are taking steps to establish such arrangements.

The unique patient identifier reported to the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 should be in encrypted form and meet two fundamental requirements:

- the identifier should be identical to the identifier used in supplying unit record data in respect of the individual consumer in the corresponding data collections dataset
- the encrypted identifier used to supply data should be stable over time – that is, it should allow the consumer's data to be linked across reporting years.

The ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 contains the *Person – unit identifier type, mental health organisation type* data item that identifies the highest level of organisation (administrative or geographical) to which the patient identifier is unique, and allows all health care activity specific to the individual to be captured.

6.7 Linkage of mental health episodes within and across settings

The allocation of unique identifiers (for patients, episodes and settings) plays an important role in the ability to link patient episodes across and within settings.

IHACPA currently uses a combination of episode, establishment and service unit identifiers (refer to Section 7.1 Establishment and service unit identifiers) to link data from multiple data sets as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Data set specification sources of mental health care patient data

Patient data type	Specialised / non-specialised mental health care	Data set specification source
Admitted patient	Both	APC NMDS
Community patient	Specialised	ABF MHC NBEDS – values can be derived from CMHC NMDS
	Non-specialised	NAP NBEDS
Residential patient	Specialised	ABF MHC NBEDS – values can be derived from RMHC NMDS

These links also facilitate access to additional data items such as mental health legal status from the APC NMDS.

In the case of activity that has taken place in the emergency department, it should only be reported through the ABF MHC NBEDS if ambulatory mental health in-reach service was involved. All other activity that takes place in the emergency department does not form part of the ABF MHC NBEDS and should be reported through the Non-Admitted Patient Emergency Department Care NMDS.

The use of *Person—unit identifier type, mental health organisation type* identifies the highest level of organisation to which the patient identifier is unique. Together with the *Episode of mental health care – identifier* within the setting, these enable person-level matching between records within the ABF MHC NBEDS, and also between ABF MHC NBEDS and related data sets (APC NMDS and NAP NBEDS) depending on the episode service setting.

In selecting permissible values for *Person—unit identifier type, mental health organisation type*, where all ABF MHC NBEDS person identifiers are unique internally but do not match to a related non-mental health data set (for example the APC NMDS and NAP NBEDS) then Code 02 *state or territory Health Authority (specialised mental health)* should be applied.

At this stage, IHACPA does not intend to link internal data sets to external data sets (for example the CMHC NMDS and RMHC NMDS), and IHACPA does not intend to link to the NOCC data.

IHACPA recognises that there are issues with unique patient identifiers restricting the linkage of concurrent episode. These issues will be explored as systems mature.

7. Data items

The ABF MHC Data Request Specifications (DRS) incorporates unique linking keys that enable separately reported data to be linked together, providing more information without the need for lengthy data files. The ABF MHC DRS consists of three data files that can be linked, including:

- mental health care episode level data (MHCE)
- mental health care phase level data (MHCP)
- ambulatory service contact data (ASC).

Additional data relating to setting, such as data reported through the APC DRS, are linked with the MHCE via a linking key.

Table 4 provides an overview of the data files that are linked to the mental health care episode data file.

Table 4. Data files in the ABF MHC DRS linked to mental health episode data

Episode Setting	Episode Data	Phase data	Additional episode data
Admitted	MHCE	MHCP	APC NMDS
Ambulatory	MHCE	MHCP	ASC NAP NBEDS
Residential	MHCE	MHCP	N/A

In line with the principle of 'single provision, multiple use', several data items contained in the ABF MHC NBEDS can be derived from other linked DSS.

This section outlines the ABF MHC NBEDS data items, divided into each reporting level: episode, phase, and service contact. Appendix A contains lists of all data items and possible related DSS that could be sources for the provision of this content.

7.1 Establishment and service unit identifiers

Establishment and service unit identifiers are used in the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 to enable identification of the different levels of service units and organisations that provide mental health care services in the public system. As the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 specifies activity from both specialised and non-specialised services, the identifiers included may not be applicable for all settings.

Table 5 provides a guide as to when an identifier may be applicable, noting that this table is a guide only and local business rules may impact on when an identifier should be used.

Table 5. Establishment and service unit identifiers

Identifier data item	METEOR ID	Patient Setting	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Episode of mental health care—identifier	751899	All settings	All settings
Establishment—activity based funding organisation identifier	751912	All settings	All settings
Establishment—Local Hospital Network identifier	757017	All settings	All settings
Person – person identifier	290046	All settings	All settings
Person—unit identifier type, mental health organisation type	745668	All settings	All settings
Specialised mental health service – admitted patient service unit identifier	721740	Admitted	None
Specialised mental health service – admitted patient service unit name	721830	Admitted	None
Specialised mental health service—ambulatory service unit identifier	750358	Ambulatory	None
Specialised mental health service—ambulatory service unit name	750372	Ambulatory	None
Specialised mental health service – residential service unit identifier	722711	Residential	None
Specialised mental health service – residential service unit name	722715	Residential	None

7.2 Episode level data items

7.2.1 Principal and additional diagnosis

The principal diagnosis is the diagnosis established after study to be chiefly responsible for occasioning the consumer's episode of care or presentation at a health service. A principal diagnosis is reported for an episode of mental health care that occurs in the admitted, residential and, where possible, the ambulatory settings.

In the APC NMDS, principal diagnosis is determined in accordance with the Australian Coding Standards.

Additional diagnoses identify secondary or other diagnoses that affected the person's care during the period in terms of requiring therapeutic intervention, clinical evaluation, extended management or increased care or monitoring.

Additional diagnoses are reported for an episode of mental health care that occurs in the admitted or residential setting and where possible the ambulatory setting.

In the admitted and residential settings, the principal and additional diagnoses are coded at the end of the episode in accordance with the Australian Coding Standards.

Where a principal diagnosis is not able to be established, as in the case of ambulatory consumers who have been assessed but not activated, a symptom diagnosis (such as R45.89 *Other symptoms and signs involving emotional state*) may be provided as a substitution.

7.2.2 Service provider setting origin

In order to identify the setting from which a service provider for a mental health care episode originates, IHACPA included the data item *Episode of mental health care - Service provider setting origin* in the ABF MHC NBEDS. This data item contains three values: admitted, ambulatory or residential care.

Where there are multiple service providers for an episode of care, the service setting of the primary service provider should be reported.

For example, if the primary service provider is ambulatory mental health in-reach team for an admitted consumer (even if the consumer is not in a mental health care type for the admitted episode), the service provider setting origin will be 'ambulatory care' to reflect the origin of the primary service provider.

Alternatively, if the admitted team provides a post discharge follow-up service contact to a consumer previously under their care but their primary care provider is ambulatory mental health, the service provider setting origin will be 'ambulatory care'.

7.2.3 Assessment only data item

As discussed in Section 6.3.1, the 2017 Clinical Refinement Project recommended that 'assessment only' be redefined from a MHPoC to an administrative data item to allow for greater flexibility in capturing triage and assessment activity without encumbering this activity with business rules commonly associated with MHPoC.

Assessment only occurs when the consumer does not go on to receive further care from the mental health service which completed the initial review. This means the consumer does not immediately go onto a MHPoC (acute, consolidating gain, intensive extended, or functional gain).

Episodes recorded as assessment only will be valid as part of the MHCE level data set and should have no phase level data associated in the MHCP level data set.

7.3 Phase level data items

7.3.1 Mental health phase of care

As discussed in Section 6.3 Mental health phase of care, MHPoC is a key phase level data item being collected for all mental health episodes for the purpose of ABF reporting. For further information, please refer to the MHPoC documentation available on the IHACPA website.

7.3.2 Clinical assessments

7.3.2.1 Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS/CA/65+)

The HoNOS and HoNOS 65+ are 12 item clinician-rated measures designed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists specifically for use in the assessment of consumer outcomes in mental health services. The HoNOSCA is a 15 item clinician-rated measure modelled on the HoNOS and designed specifically for use in the assessment of child and adolescent consumers. Clinicians are required to rate consumers based on their assessment. HoNOS/CA/65+ should be reported at the beginning of each MHPoC regardless of the length of stay.

The existing supplementary value *8–Unknown* was replaced in ABF MHC NBEDS 2022–23 with the value *7–Not stated / Missing* and value *9–Unable to rate* and should be used for values that are missing or unknown in the HoNOSCA tool.

Key references

- Gowers S, Harrington R, Whitton A, Lelliott P, Beevor A, Wing J, Jezzard R (1999a) Brief scale for measuring the outcomes of emotional and behavioural disorders in children: Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents (HoNOSCA). *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 174, 413-416.
- Gowers S, Harrington R, Whitton A, Beevor A, Lelliott P, Jezzard R, Wing J (1999b) Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents (HoNOSCA): Glossary for HoNOSCA score sheet. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 174, 428-433.
- Wing J, Beevor A, Curtis R, Park S, Hadden S, Burns A (1998) Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS). Research and development. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 172, 11-18.
- Wing J, Curtis R, Beevor A (1999) Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS): Glossary for HoNOS score sheet. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 174, 432–434.
- Burns A, Beevor A, Lelliott P, Wing J, Blakey A, Orrell M, Mulinga J, Hadden S (1999) Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Elderly People (HoNOS 65+). *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 174, 424-427.
- Burns A, Beevor A, Lelliott P, Wing J, Blakey A, Orrell M, Mulinga J, Hadden S (1999) Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Elderly People (HoNOS 65+): Glossary for HoNOS 65+ score sheet. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 174, 435-438.

7.3.2.2 Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS)

The CGAS was developed by Schaffer and colleagues at the Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University to provide a global measure of severity of disturbance in children and adolescents. Similar to the HoNOSCA, it is designed to reflect the lowest level of functioning for a child or adolescent during a specified period. The measure provides a single global rating only, on a scale of 1–100.

Key reference

- Schaffer D, Gould MS, Brasic J, et al (1983) A children's global assessment scale (CGAS). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 40, 1228-1231.

7.3.2.3 Factors Influencing Health Status (FIHS)

The FIHS measure is a checklist of seven 'psychosocial complications' for child and adolescent consumers. The FIHS is based on the problems and issues identified in the Factors Influencing

Health Status chapter in International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Related Problems, Tenth Revision (ICD-10-AM). It is a simple checklist of the ICD factors originally developed for the Mental Health Classification and Service Costs (MH-CASC) project.

Key reference

- Buckingham W, Burgess P, Solomon S, Pirkis J, Eagar K (1998) *Developing a Casemix Classification for Mental Health Services. Volume 2: Resource Materials*. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services.

7.3.2.4 Abbreviated Life Skills Profile (LSP-16)

The LSP was developed by a team of clinical researchers in Sydney (Rosen et al 1989, Parker et al 1991) to assess a consumer's abilities with respect to basic life skills. It is applicable for adult and older person's consumers and is capable of being completed by family members and community housing members as well as professional staff.

The original form of the LSP consisted of 39 items. Work undertaken as part of the Australian MH-CASC study saw the 39 items reduced to 16 items by the original designers. This reduction in item number aimed to minimise the rating burden on clinicians when the measure is used in conjunction with the HoNOS. The abbreviated 16-item instrument is the version to be reported for the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24.

Key references

Original 39 item version of the LSP:

- Rosen A, Hadzi-Pavlovic D, Parker G (1989) The Life Skills Profile: A measure assessing function and disability in schizophrenia. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 1989, 325-337.
- Parker G, Rosen A, Emdur N, Hadzi-Pavlov D (1991) The Life Skills Profile: Psychometric properties of a measure assessing function and disability in schizophrenia. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 83 145-152.
- Trauer T, Duckmanton RA, Chiu E (1995) The Life Skills Profile: A study of its psychometric properties. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 29, 492-499.

Abbreviated 16 item version of the LSP-16:

- Buckingham W, Burgess P, Solomon S, Pirkis J, Eagar K (1998) *Developing a Casemix Classification for Mental Health Services. Volume 2: Resource Materials*. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services.

7.3.2.5 Resources Utilisation Groups – Activities of Daily Living (RUG-ADL)

Developed for the measurement of nursing dependency in skilled nursing facilities in the United States of America, the RUG-ADL measures the ability of those activities that are likely to be lost last in life – 'late loss' activities (eating, bed mobility, transferring and toileting). 'Early loss' activities (managing finances, social relationships, grooming) are also included in the LSP. The RUG-ADL is specific for older persons and is widely used in Australian nursing homes and other aged care residential settings. The RUG-ADL comprises four items only and is usually completed by nursing staff.

The existing supplementary value 8–*Unknown* was replaced in ABF MHC NBEDS 2022–23 with the value 7–*Not stated / Missing* and value 9–*Unable to rate* and should be used for values that are missing or unknown in the RUG ADL tool.

Key reference

- Fries BE, Schneider DP, et al (1994) Refining a casemix measure for nursing homes. Resource Utilisation Groups (RUG-III). *Medical Care*, 32, 668-685.

7.4 Ambulatory service contact level data items

7.4.1 Episode of care setting

The location of the consumer receiving the ambulatory activity is identified through the use of the *Service contact – episode of care setting* data item for each contact and may vary within the episode. As ambulatory mental health services can be provided to consumers in a variety of settings, this data item identifies the consumer setting during that service contact.

The service providing the care may be a specialised community-based ambulatory mental health service or a non-specialised non-admitted public hospital service (e.g. outpatient clinic). For example, if the ambulatory mental health team provide a service contact to an admitted consumer (in a non-specialised mental health care setting), the consumer episode setting for the ambulatory service contact will be 'admitted patient – other' to reflect the consumer setting.

Alternatively, if the ambulatory mental health team provide a service contact to a consumer in the emergency department, the patient episode setting for the ambulatory service contact will be 'emergency department patient'.

7.4.2 Service duration

This data item, *Service contact – service duration, total minutes*, is intended to collect the total time in minutes from start to finish of a service contact. Although this has already been possible in specialised mental health services, inclusion of this data item in the ABF MHC NBEDS enables collection of data in non-specialised mental health services too. For specialised mental health services this data element can be derived from the existing data element *Mental health service contact—service duration, total minutes*.

7.4.3 Source of funding

The source of funding for consumers receiving mental health care in an ambulatory setting is collected using the *Service contact—source of funding, patient funding source code* for each service contact. This data item is collected at the service contact level given episodes of mental health care can last for extended periods, and to ensure that potential changes to the source of funding over the course of a consumer episode are captured. The new data element has been included specifically to enable the identification of the source of funding for ambulatory mental health care, as the source of funds for admitted mental health care is already captured in *Episode of care—source of funding, patient funding source code* in the APC NMDS.

8. Collection Protocol

This section outlines the minimum requirements for the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 and should not confine state and territory governments.

Activity for the ABF MHC NBEDS is reported in conjunction with the ABF MHC DRS. The ABF MHC DRS 2023–24 consists of three data files, the MHCE (for episode data), the MHCP (phase of care data) and ASC (ambulatory service contact data) which are linked with unique linking keys.

8.1 Reporting occasions

8.1.1 Episode level items

The ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 requires reporting of clinical and other data items at an episode level. Table 6 shows the items required to be reported at an episode level for each setting. The reporting of these data items is consistent for all age groups.

Table 6. ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 reporting occasions for episode level items

Data item	Admitted Episode	Ambulatory Episode	Residential Episode
Demographics			
Person – date of birth	✓	✓	✓
Person – sex	✓	✓	✓
Person – marital status	✓	✓	✓
Person – Indigenous status	✓	✓	✓
Person – country of birth	✓	✓	✓
Person – area of usual residence, statistical area level 2 (SA2) code	✓	✓	✓
Episode details			
Episode of mental health care – episode start date	✓	✓	✓
Episode of mental health care – episode end date	✓	✓	✓
Episode of mental health care – episode start mode	✓	✓	✓
Episode of mental health care – episode end mode	✓	✓	✓

Data item	Admitted Episode	Ambulatory Episode	Residential Episode
Episode of care – principal diagnosis	✓	✓	✓
Episode of care – additional diagnoses	✓	✓	✓
Episode of mental health care - service provider setting origin	✓	✓	✓
Specialised mental health service - target population group	-	✓	-
Episode of care—clinical assessment only indicator	✓	✓	✓
Identifiers			
Establishment – Activity based funding organisation identifier	✓	✓	✓
Specialised mental health service – admitted patient service unit identifier	✓	-	-
Specialised mental health service – admitted patient service unit name	✓	-	-
Specialised mental health service – ambulatory service unit identifier,	-	✓	-
Specialised mental health service – ambulatory service unit name	-	✓	-
Specialised mental health service – residential service unit identifier,	-	-	✓
Specialised mental health service – residential service unit name	-	-	✓
Episode of mental health care – identifier	✓	✓	✓
Establishment - Local Hospital Network identifier	✓	✓	✓
Person – person identifier	✓	✓	✓
Person – unit identifier type, mental health organisation type	✓	✓	✓

8.1.2 Phase level items

The ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 requires reporting of clinical and other data items at phase level. Table 7 displays the items required to be reported at phase level for each setting. The reporting of these data items is consistent for all age groups.

Table 7. ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 reporting occasions for phase level items

Data item	Admitted Episode	Ambulatory Episode	Residential Episode
Phase details			
Episode of care – mental health phase of care	✓	✓	✓
Episode of care – mental health phase of care start date	✓	✓	✓
Episode of care – mental health phase of care end date	✓	✓	✓
mental health phase of care – number of leave days	✓	-	✓
Clinical assessments – Refer Section 8.1.2.1			
Identifiers			
Establishment – Activity based funding organisation identifier	✓	✓	✓
Mental health care phase record identifier	✓	✓	✓

8.1.2.1 Clinical measures

The ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 requires clinical measures to be reported in relation to the MHPoC. A new MHPoC may be considered when undertaking a review. All clinical assessments should be completed as soon as practical following the commencement of MHPoC, with the exception of the FIHS. If an episode of mental health care only contains one MHPoC, the FIHS is reported at the end of the MHPoC (on discharge).

For the purposes of the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24, if a consumer is discharged from an episode of mental health care and commences an episode of mental health care in a different setting, then where applicable the clinical assessment score from the last MHPoC in the previous episode of mental health care may be recorded if:

- the assessment had been completed within the last two weeks
- the MHPoC is the same for the new episode of mental health care as it was for the discharge episode of mental health care.

Table 8 shows when the clinical measures are collected and reported in the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24.

Table 8. ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 reporting occasions for the clinical measures

Data item	Admitted Episode		Ambulatory Episode		Residential Episode	
	Phase 1	Phase 2 +	Phase 1	Phase 2 +	Phase 1	Phase 2 +
Children/ Young Adults						
Person – level of psychiatric symptom severity, Health of the Nation Outcome Scale for Children and Adolescents score (HoNOSCA)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Person – level of psychiatric symptom severity, Children's Global Assessment Scale score (CGAS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Episode of care – FIHS psychosocial complications indicator (FIHS)	x*	✓	x*	✓	x*	✓
Adults						
Person – level of psychiatric symptom severity, Health of the Nation Outcome Scale score (HoNOS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Person – level of difficulty with activities in a life area, Abbreviated Life Skills Profile score (LSP-16)	x	x	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Older Adults						
Person – level of psychiatric symptom severity, Health of the Nation Outcome Scale 65+ score (HoNOS 65+)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Person – level of difficulty with activities in a life area, Abbreviated Life Skills Profile score (LSP-16)	x	x	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Person – level of functional independence, Resource Utilisation Groups – Activities of Daily Living score (RUG-ADL)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓
<p>x* The FIHS is reported at the start of the second and subsequent phases within an episode. If an episode only has one phase, then the FIHS is reported at the end of the phase.</p> <p>✓*The LSP-16 is assessed and reported at the start of the first phase. If an episode is longer than 3 months, then the LSP-16 score from the initial assessment is reported at the start of each new phase, however, will not need to be re-assessed until the next new phase that falls after the 3 month period.</p>						

8.1.2.2 Clinical measures rating periods

Table 9 contains a summary of the rating periods for the clinical measures.

Table 9. ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 rating periods for the clinical measures

Outcome measure	Usual rating period	Exceptions
HoNOS/ HoNOS 65+/ HoNOSCA	Previous two weeks or preceding MHPoC (the shorter time period)	No exceptions to rating period
CGAS	Previous two weeks	No exceptions to rating period
FIHS	Period of care bound by preceding MHPoC	No exceptions to rating period
LSP-16	Previous three months	No exceptions to rating period
RUG-ADL	Current status	No exceptions to rating period

The clinician may draw on direct observation and information from other individuals that have been in contact with the consumer during the rating period. This may include family, friends, carers and health professionals.

8.1.3 Service contact level items

For ambulatory episodes, the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 requires reporting of data items at an individual service contact level. Table 10 shows the items required to be reported at a service contact level. The reporting of these data items is consistent for all age groups.

Table 10. ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 reporting occasions for service contact level items

Data item	Ambulatory Episode
Service contact items	
Service contact – service date	✓
Service contact – service duration, total minutes	✓
Service contact – patient/client participation indicator	✓
Service contact – group session indicator	✓
Service contact – episode of care setting	✓
Service contact – source of funding	✓
Specialised mental health service - target population group	✓

Data item	Ambulatory Episode
Identifiers	
Establishment – Activity based funding organisation identifier	✓
Specialised mental health service – ambulatory service unit identifier	✓
Specialised mental health service – ambulatory service unit name	✓
Mental health care service contact identifier	✓

9. Frequently Asked Questions

9.1 Episode of mental health care

a) Can episodes overlap between settings?

Multiple episodes that occur at the same time may be reported to the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24, provided the episodes are reported for different settings. This may occur as a result of a consumer being admitted for mental health care, whilst in an episode of mental health care in the ambulatory or residential settings. Multiple episodes that occur at the same time within the same setting cannot be reported to the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 if the services are part of the same organisation, such as a consumer receiving multiple ambulatory episodes of care from different service providers within one organisation. Refer to Section 6.5.2 Concurrent episodes of mental health care.

b) How and when is patient episode setting reported?

The *Service contact - episode of care setting* (patient episode setting) data item is intended for use within the ambulatory setting only. When consumer activity is reported on the ambulatory patient administration system (PAS), the setting of the consumer's service must be reported. For example, very often the ambulatory service will see consumers in the ambulatory setting, and the value reported will reflect that the care has been provided in the ambulatory setting. However, if the ambulatory service sees a consumer in another setting, such as the admitted patient setting (that is, in a concurrent episode) or the emergency care setting, the value reported will reflect the alternate setting. The patient episode setting data item is not reported by the alternate setting (for example, the admitted patient setting). Refer to Section 6.5.2 Concurrent episodes of mental health care.

Example: A consumer is currently active in an ambulatory mental health service unit. The consumer is admitted into a hospital's mental health ward with a mental health care type. The case manager from the ambulatory service wants to retain a pre-existing appointment with the consumer and visits them in the mental health ward. In this example, the episode reported in the community PAS has a patient episode setting value reported as *1 Admitted patient – specialised mental health care unit*. The patient episode setting data item is not reportable for the hospital's episode of care.

c) Ambulatory episodes of care may occasionally be opened prior to a service contact – how are these reported?

There may be occurrences where an episode of care is opened administratively in the local system, allowing preparatory work to occur prior to the first service contact. Whilst IHACPA acknowledges the importance of this work, for the purposes of reporting to the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 the episode must commence on the date of a service contact. Refer to Section 6.5.1.2 Ambulatory episodes.

- d) **There are occasions where an episode of care is formally closed, but work is still undertaken through family counselling or queries service contacts – how are these reported?**

The episode of care should not be closed until care for the consumer and family has been completed. Single service contacts that occur outside of an episode of care should not be reported through the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24. If there are a significant number of service contacts occurring, a new episode of care may be required to be opened.

- e) **How are episodes of care provided by non-governmental organisations (NGO) reported?**

Episodes for an NGO would be identified using the Establishment ID of the public hospital service they are contracted to provide services for. Where they are contracted through a jurisdictional health department, these would not be reported as the ABF MHC NBEDS does not have this facility.

9.2 Setting

- a) **What is the difference between a specialised ambulatory service and a non-specialised ambulatory service?**

The specialised ambulatory services are those services that identify as specialised mental health services. Their primary function to provide treatment, rehabilitation or community health support targeted towards people with a mental disorder or psychiatric disability. These activities are delivered from a service or facility that is readily identifiable as both specialised and serving a mental health care function¹².

A non-specialised mental health service are those mental health services that do not meet the definition of a specialised mental health service, but provide mental health services to those consumers that have a non-admitted patient service event - mental health care type¹³.

- b) **How are ambulatory in-reach consultation liaison services reported in the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24?**

Those activities that are normally reported through the activity data sets (such as consultation liaison from ambulatory in-reach services) should continue to be reported as normal through the CMHC NMDS. Consultation liaison in the community can be reported but it must be part of an episode, even as an 'Assessment only' phase if necessary. Associated service contacts should indicate that the consumer location is different from that of the health service provider.

For example, in the situation of consultation liaison to an admitted consumer episode in a non-mental health care type, the consultation liaison will be reported as part of ambulatory episode and there will be an admitted episode in the APC NMDS. This may or may not be able to be linked (dependent on the use of a unique consumer identifier).

¹² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2016). *Specialised mental health service* (Object class). Retrieved 10 February 2023 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/268984>

¹³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). *Non-admitted patient service event—care type* (Data element). Retrieved 10 February 2023 from <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/679528>

9.3 Clinical assessments

a) Are clinical assessment tools required for assessment only¹⁴?

Clinical assessment tools are not required for those episodes of care which are reported as assessment only, however local clinical practice may encourage the use of clinical assessments tools.

b) Does the LSP-16 need to be re-assessed if the consumer has a mental health phase of care change within three months of completing the tool for a previous mental health phase of care change?

No, as the LSP-16 is based on the previous three months it does not need to be reassessed any more frequently than three months. Refer to Section 8.1.2 Phase level items.

9.4 Service contacts

a) Are all service contacts within an episode of care reported?

Only the service contacts that occurred within the reference period are reported, rather than all the service contacts within an episode of care. Refer to Section 6.5.3 Reference period.

Example: If an episode of care commenced in July 2023, and is still ongoing, the service contacts that occurred during the July to December reference period would be reported.

¹⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). *Episode of Care – clinical assessment only indicator, yes/no/not stated/ inadequately described*, (Data element). Retrieved 10 February 2023 from <https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/745689>

Appendix A - Relationship between ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 and other related data set specifications

This appendix lists data items required for the ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 at each reporting level of the data collection: episode level, phase level and ambulatory service contact level. While all items are required to be reported for the ABF MHC NBEDS, some are able to be derived from other DSS sources. This appendix provides the METEOR identifier, and identifies any related DSS source(s).

It also includes additional items required by the ABF MHC DRS.

Episode level data items

Table 11 lists all ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 data items required to be reported at the episode level.

Table 11. Episode level data items within the ABF MHC NBEDS

ABF MHC NBEDS data items at episode level	METEOR ID	DSS Source	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Demographics			
Person – date of birth	287007	Derived – APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS, NAP NBEDS
Person – sex	741686	Derived – APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS, NAP NBEDS
Person – marital status	766507	Derived – APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS
Person – Indigenous status	602543	Derived – APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS, NAP NBEDS
Person – country of birth	659454	Derived – APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS, NAP NBEDS
Person—area of usual residence, statistical area level 2 (SA2)	747315	Derived – APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS, NAP NBEDS

ABF MHC NBEDS data items at episode level	METEOR ID	DSS Source	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Episode details			
Episode of mental health care – episode start date	730809	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS
Episode of mental health care – episode end date	730859	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS
Episode of mental health care – episode start mode	730813	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS
Episode of mental health care— episode end mode	745660	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – APC NMDS
Episode of care—principal diagnosis	746665	Derived – APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS
Episode of care—additional diagnosis	746667	Derived – APC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived – APC NMDS
Episode of mental health care – service provider setting origin	747301	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Episode of care—clinical assessment only indicator	745689	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Identifiers			
Establishment – Activity based funding organisation identifier	751912	Derived – concatenation	Derived – concatenation
Episode of mental health care – identifier	751899	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Episode of mental health care – service provider setting origin	747301	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Establishment—Local Hospital Network identifier	757017	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – NAP NBEDS

ABF MHC NBEDS data items at episode level	METEOR ID	DSS Source	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Person – person identifier	290046	Derived - APC NMDS, CMHC NMDS, RMHC NMDS	Derived - APC NMDS, NAP NBEDS
Person—unit identifier type, mental health organisation type	745668	ABF MHC NBEDS Derived – CMHC NMDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Specialised mental health service – target population group	682403	Derived – CMHC NMDS	N/A
Specialised mental health service – admitted patient service unit identifier	721740	Derived - APC NMDS	N/A
Specialised mental health service – admitted patient service unit name	721830	Derived – APC NMDS	N/A
Specialised mental health service—ambulatory service unit identifier	750360	Derived – CMHC NMDS	N/A
Specialised mental health service—ambulatory service unit name	750374	Derived – CMHC NMDS	N/A
Specialised mental health service – residential service unit identifier	722711	Derived – RMHC NMDS	N/A
Specialised mental health service – residential service unit name	722715	Derived – RMHC NMDS	N/A
Person—Individual Healthcare Identifier	743458	Derived – FIFS NBEDS	Derived – IHI NBEDS
Additional DRS items			
Phase linking key	DRS		
Service contact linking key	DRS		
Quarter indicator	DRS		

Phase level data items

Table 12 lists all ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 data items required to be reported at the phase level.

Table 12. Phase level data items within the ABF MHC NBEDS

ABF MHC NBEDS data items at phase level	METEOR ID	DSS Source	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Phase details			
Episode of care—mental health phase of care	744325	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Episode of care – mental health phase of care start date	575257	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Episode of care – mental health phase of care end date	575251	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Mental health phase of care – number of leave days	730862	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Clinical assessments			
Person – level of psychiatric symptom severity, Health of the Nation Outcome Scale (HoNOS) Person – level of psychiatric symptom severity, Health of the Nation Outcome scale for Children and Adolescents (HoNOSCA) Person – level of psychiatric symptom severity, Health of the Nation Outcome Scale 65+ (HoNOS65+)	748290 748288 748292	ABF MHC NBEDS / NOCC	ABF MHC NBEDS
Person—level of psychiatric symptom severity, Children's Global Assessment Scale score (CGAS)	654407	ABF MHC NBEDS / NOCC	ABF MHC NBEDS
Episode of care – FIHS psychosocial complications indicator (FIHS)	758487	ABF MHC NBEDS / NOCC	ABF MHC NBEDS
Person – level of difficulty with activities in a life area, Abbreviated Life Skills Profile score (LSP-16)	751910	ABF MHC NBEDS / NOCC	ABF MHC NBEDS

ABF MHC NBEDS data items at phase level	METEOR ID	DSS Source	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Person – level of functional independent, Resource Utilisation Groups – Activities of Daily Living score (RUG-ADL)	748505	ABF MHC NBEDS / NOCC	ABF MHC NBEDS
Identifiers			
Establishment – Activity based funding organisation identifier	751912	Derived – concatenation	Derived – concatenation
Person—Individual Healthcare Identifier	743458	Derived – IHI NBEDS	Derived – IHI NBEDS
Identifier—record status, Individual Healthcare Identifier record status	743464	Derived – IHI NBEDS	Derived – IHI NBEDS
Identifier—identifier status, Individual Healthcare Identifier number status	743466	Derived – IHI NBEDS	Derived – IHI NBEDS
Additional DRS items			
Mental health care phase record identifier	DRS		
Phase linking key	DRS		

Ambulatory service contact level data items

Table 13 lists all ABF MHC NBEDS 2023–24 data items required to be reported at the ambulatory service contact level.

Table 13. Ambulatory service contact data items within the ABF MHC NBEDS

ABF MHC NBEDS data item at service contact level	METEOR ID	DSS Source	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Service contact items			
Service contact—episode of care setting	744363	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Service contact—group session indicator	744359	Derived – CMHC NMDS	Derived – NAP NBEDS
Service contact—patient/client participation indicator	744355	Derived – CMHC NMDS	Derived – NAP NBEDS

ABF MHC NBEDS data item at service contact level	METEOR ID	DSS Source	
		Specialised	Non-specialised
Service contact—service date	744351	Derived – CMHC NMDS	Derived – NAP NBEDS
Service contact—service duration, total minutes	744347	Derived – CMHC NMDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Service contact—source of funding	744332	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Specialised mental health service— target population group	682403	ABF MHC NBEDS	ABF MHC NBEDS
Identifiers			
Establishment – Activity based funding organisation identifier	751912	Derived – concatenation	Derived – concatenation
Specialised mental health service— ambulatory service unit identifier	750360	Derived – CMHC NMDS	N/A
Specialised mental health service— ambulatory service unit name	750374	Derived – CMHC NMDS	N/A
Additional DRS items			
Mental health care service contact identifier	DRS		
Service contact linking key	DRS		



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