



Nelson Marlborough, West Coast, Canterbury, South Canterbury, Southern

South Island Psychological and Social Support Steering Group

Key Messages

The South Island Psychological and Social Support Initiative Steering Group met on 7th November 2018 with the following key messages from the meeting:

- ***Evaluation of Psychological and Social Support Initiative:*** Interim reports (carried out by Sapere) will be available shortly prior to a final report being submitted in January 2019.
- ***Recruitment and retention challenges:*** The general shortage of clinical psychologists, the difficulty of the role and the risk of burnout all contribute to ongoing challenges around recruitment and retention of clinical psychologists in the service. There is concern that lack of continuity and minimal staffing levels are making it more difficult to integrate and embed the service into general cancer services.
- ***Outcome measures:*** There has been national agreement on the distress thermometer and the problem list as outcome measures. While it is acknowledged these are not perfect, they are nationally consistent and will help to tell the story about the work being done. This is a positive step, and further information is also needed to support planning and funding decisions, such as the impact the service has on equity and the impact it has on other service utilisation.
- ***Equity:*** On a purely proportional basis, Māori are accessing the service at expected rates, but further work is needed to address unmet need and achieve equity of outcome. Different channels need to be used to reach Māori and vulnerable communities to build a viable, trust-based relationship and ensure the service is viewed as credible. Utilising different channels to engage Māori and vulnerable communities will also support improving health literacy/taking a population approach to psychosocial health.

The next meeting will be held on the 27th February 2019.