



Australian Government
**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

Community Mental Health Care

National Minimum Data Set

2023-24 version 5.51

The metadata for CMHC 5.51 can be found [on the Online Validator metadata page](#)

As at 15 March, 2023

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1. 2023-24 CMHC NMDS

1.1. Essential definitions

Scope - Community mental health care NMDS 2023-24 (METEOR ID [756067](#)).

Statistical unit - Mental health service contact (METEOR ID [727358](#)).

1.2. Changes for 2023-24

The specific detailed changes to the 2023-24 (version 5.51) specifications, compared to 2022-23 (version 5.50) are listed below.

1.2.1. Changes to the data model

No changes to the data model have been made.

1.2.2. Changes to definitions

The definitional changes to the 2023-24 specifications, compared to 2022-23 are listed in [Table 1.1](#).

Table 1.1 Changes made to 2023-24 definitions compared to 2022-23

Data items	Details	Rationale
Person—marital status, code N	Updated Guide for use, Collection methods, Comments, and Reference documents.	Updated to clarify the value domain definitions and refer to the most recent ABS Family, Household and Income Unit Variables.
Community mental health care NMDS 2023-24	Sex and Gender added to the list of glossary items.	These glossary items are included in the Person—sex, code X data element.

1.3. Reporting service provider entities

The reporting of service entities aims to create relationships between the mental health NMDSs, and where possible, the National Outcomes and Casemix Collection (NOCC), Local Hospital Networks/Public Hospital Establishments (PHE) NMDS and Admitted Patient Care (APC) NMDS (see [Table 1.2](#)).

The identifiers used in the CMHC NMDS are:

- State or territory (1 character)
- Region (2 characters)

- Specialised mental health service (4 characters)
- Service unit cluster (5 characters)
- Service unit (6 characters)

Table 1.2 Reporting requirements

Identifier element names	METEOR identifier	Community mental health care NMDS	Residential mental health care NMDS
Australian State or Territory identifier	720081	Yes	Yes
Region identifier	269940	Yes	Yes
Specialised mental health service organisation identifier	404186	Yes	Yes
Hospital/Service unit cluster identifier	722233 (MHE) / 404858 (MHE, CMHC & RMHC)	Yes	Yes
Service unit identifier	721740 (MHE) / 750360 (MHE, CMHC) / 722711 (MHE, RMHC)	Yes	Yes

The use of identical identifiers between the various mental health data sets is tested via the Mental Health Establishments Skeleton file (SKL), handled by the Online Validator. The reports section of the CMHC submission will highlight any mismatches which should be rectified either through re-supply of the Skeleton file, or adjustment to the CMHC submission.

The following section explores in more detail the reporting levels used in the CMHC NMDS.

1.3.1. State or territory

This level refers to the state or territory and should be reported using the *State/Territory identifier* data element.

1.3.2. Region

The region refers to an administrative concept not a geographical one. States and territories may have one or more regions into which the state or territory is divided and to which its mental health service organisations belong. Region would be reported using the *Region identifier* (RegId) data element. In the smaller states or in the territories there may only be one or no region. In these cases, the *Region identifier* is to be reported as '00' and the *Region name* (RegName) would repeat the name of the state or territory.

1.3.3. Organisation

The organisation is defined according to the Object class *Specialised mental health service organisation* (METEOR identifier 286449) and reported using the *Organisation Identifier* (OrgId) data element. An organisation is a separately constituted specialised mental health service that is responsible for the clinical governance, administration and financial management of service units providing specialised mental health care. An organisation may consist of one or more service units based in different locations.

1.3.4. Service unit cluster

A specialised mental health service organisation may consist of one or more clusters of service units providing services in admitted patient, residential and ambulatory settings. For example, a specialised mental health service organisation may consist of several hospitals (clusters of admitted patient service units) and/or two or more ambulatory or residential service clusters (for example, a cluster of child and adolescent ambulatory service units, and a cluster of aged residential service units).

To allow service units (as defined below) to be reported individually, but still to be identified as part of a cluster, a separate reporting level has been created called 'Service unit cluster'.

Ambulatory service units will not necessarily belong to a 'cluster'. However, for some ambulatory service units, the cluster the service unit belongs to may be a hospital that contains both an admitted patient and an ambulatory service unit. In this instance the *Service unit cluster identifier* for ambulatory service unit would be the *Hospital identifier*. Other groups of ambulatory service units could also be usefully reported as clusters. For example, clusters may exist of groups of ambulatory services for children and adolescents in particular geographical areas. However, where there is no requirement for a service unit cluster, then all service units within the organisation should be identified under a *Service unit cluster identifier* reported as '00000' and the *Service Unit Cluster name* would use the relevant organisation name.

1.3.5. Service units

The reporting of service units is at the discretion of states and territories. Service units with differing target populations must be reported separately. For example, if a service unit cluster or organisation provided two or more child and adolescent ambulatory service units, jurisdictions have discretion on whether these are reported as one combined child and adolescent ambulatory service unit, or reported as multiple individual service units. However, identification of service units should not combine target populations—there is no code available to identify 'mixed' target populations. Therefore, where a service entity provides discrete and specifically funded programs for multiple target populations, each of these should be identified as a separate service unit.

Comparison with the MHE NMDS is undertaken using the SKL file. At a minimum, the combination of Organisation and Target population must be the same between the CMHC and MHE submissions. For example, multiple Child and adolescent services within an organisation may be reported in the CMHC file, however, may be rolled together for the MHE submission, and vice versa.

1.3.6. Sector

Sector is not considered part of the identifier. Within this NMDS, sector is an attribute of each service unit.

1.3.7. Consistency of identifiers across reference periods

Where no major service reorganisations have occurred, the region, organisation, service unit cluster and service unit identifiers (RegId, OrgId, ClusId, SUIId) used by a jurisdiction should be preferably identical to the previous year. However, given that all jurisdictions have committed to aligning ID numbers between the different NMDS's, changes in ID numbers due to this process will be accepted, as will be the case for those jurisdictions that have undergone significant reorganisation of service delivery that warrant new service entity identifiers. In these cases, jurisdictions should provide a supplementary mapping document that clearly illustrates the changes in ID numbers between collection periods, at all levels.

Region, organisation, service unit cluster and service unit name changes are acceptable, especially if the new name is more locally relevant. These will be identified as a change in the Online Validator, however will not affect the generation of the historical trends reports for CMHC in future.

1.4. Data model of the CMHC Extract

The basic design of the extract consists of a single data record for each *Mental health service contact*. Each Mental Health Service Contact 'belongs' to a *Person* (the patient or consumer of services), who in turn is linked to a *Community mental health service unit* (the provider of services), which may be linked to a *Community mental health service unit cluster*, which is linked to a *Specialised mental health service organisation*, which is linked to a *Region* which is linked to a *State/Territory*.

The structure of the data to be reported is represented in the data model shown in [Fig. 1.1](#). In the model, a single *Community mental health service unit* has associated records for one or more *Persons*, who each may have one or more *Mental health service contacts*. Each of the seven data model building blocks (state/territory, region, organisation, service unit cluster, service unit, person, contacts) has a unique set of attributes which comprise the NMDS data elements and additional supplementary information.

It should be noted that non-volatile person-level data in respect of patients (Date of Birth, Sex, Country of Birth, Indigenous Status) are separated from person-level data items that may change between service contacts.

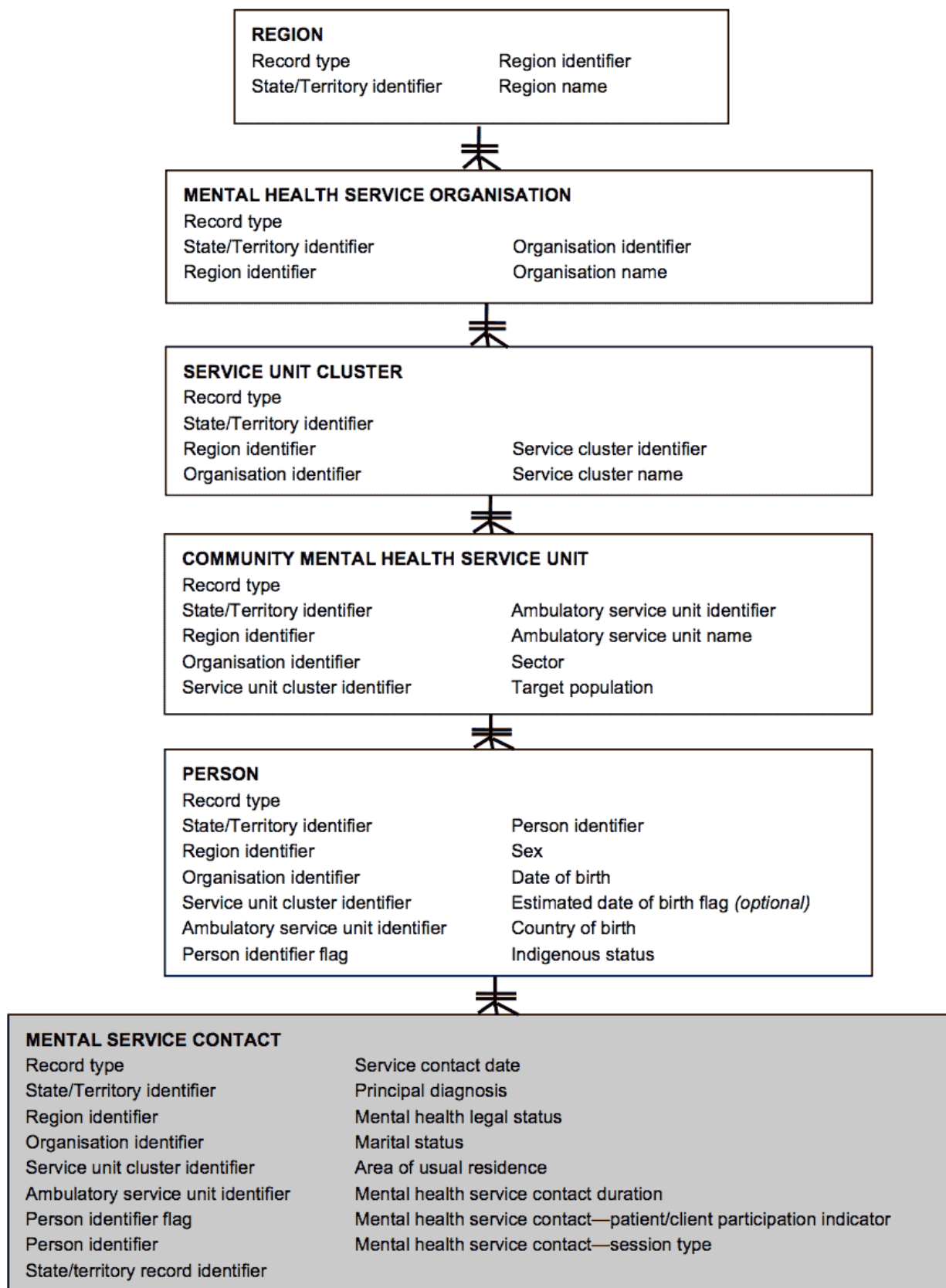


Fig. 1.1 Data model underlying the Community Mental Health Care NMDS data extract

1.5. Data integrity

For cases of missing data (that is, unknown, not stated or not available):

- For **Numeric [Num] fields**, the data should be reported as zero, using leading zeros when necessary to pad out the field to the required length. The principle here is that all numeric fields require a valid value.
- For **Text [Char] fields**, the data should be space-filled to the required length. For single character fields where a 'missing/not stated' value has been specified for a particular data element (for example, '9' has been specified for missing data), use the stated value for 'missing/not stated' rather than simply space filling.

Values in **Date [Date]** fields must be recorded in compliance with the standard format used across the *National health data dictionary*; specifically, dates must be of fixed 8 column width in the format DDMMYYYY, with leading zeros used when necessary to pad out a value. For instance, 13 March 2024 would appear as 13032024.

Values in **Numeric [Num]** fields must be zero-filled and right-justified. These should consist only of the numerals 0 to 9 and the decimal (".") point if applicable to the data element.

Note: Fields defined as 'Numeric' are those that have numeric properties—that is, the values, for example, can be added or subtracted in a manner that is valid. Where a field uses numeric characters that do not have these properties (for example, the use of numbers for *Patient identifier*), the field is defined as 'Character'.

Values in **Character [Char]** fields must be left justified and space-filled. These should consist of any of the printable ASCII character set (that is, excluding control codes such as newline, bell and linefeed).

1.6. Data set specification (DSS)

The following tables specify the order in which the data items should be provided to the AIHW.

The extract format consists of a set of hierarchically ordered *Data records*, of which there are six types (see [Table 1.3](#)):

- Region details records
- Organisation details records
- Service unit cluster details records
- Service unit details records
- Person details records
- Service contact records

In each extract file for any given period, the *Data records* must be preceded by a single *File Header Record* having the structure outlined below in [Table 1.4](#).

All records presented in the extract file should be grouped in the following order: Header Record, Region details records, Organisation details records, Service unit cluster details records, Service unit details records, Person details records, followed by Service contact records.

With the exception of Region, Organisation and Service unit cluster details records, all *Data records* should include the following elements in the order shown:

- Record Type
- Establishment identifier (comprising: *State/Territory identifier*, *Region identifier*, *Organisation identifier*, *Service unit cluster identifier* and *Service unit identifier*)
- Specific data in the format specified for the given record type.

The order of fields in a record must be the same as the order they are specified in the Record Layouts below. Field values should be formatted as shown in the Record Layouts.

The first field in each record must be *Record Type*. Valid values are shown in [Table 1.3](#).

Table 1.3 Valid values for Record Type

Record Type	Description
HR	File Header Record
REG	Region details records
ORG	Organisation details records
CLUS	Service unit cluster details records
SERV	Service unit details records
PER	Person details records
CON	Service contact details records

1.6.1. File header record

The first record of the extract file must be a File Header Record (*Record Type* = 'HR'), and it must be the only such record in the file.

The File Header Record is a quality control mechanism, which uniquely identifies each file that is sent to the AIHW (that is, who sent the file, what date the file was sent, batch number of file, etc). The information contained in the header fields will be checked against the actual details of the file to ensure that the file received has not been corrupted.

The layout of the File Header Record is shown in [Table 1.4](#).

Table 1.4 Record Layout for File Header record within the data extract

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = HR
State/Territory Identifier (State) ¹	Char[1]	9	720081	<p>1 New South Wales</p> <p>2 Victoria</p> <p>3 Queensland</p> <p>4 South Australia</p> <p>5 Western Australia</p> <p>6 Tasmania</p> <p>7 Northern Territory</p> <p>8 Australian Capital Territory</p>
Batch Number (BatchNo)	Char[9]	10	—	Represents the YYYYNNNNN component of the extract file name.
Report Period Start Date (RepStart)	Date[8]	19	—	Report period start date
Report Period End Date (RepEnd)	Date[8]	27	—	Report period end date
Data File Generation Date (GenDt)	Date[8]	35	—	Data file generation date

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Data File Type (FileType)	Char[4]	43	—	Value = CMHC
CMHC Specification Version Number (SpecVer)	Char[5]	47	—	Value = 05.51

Record length = 51

Notes

1

METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to the CMHC NMDS

1.6.2. Region data record

The extract format for the *Data records* is specified in detail in tables [Table 1.4](#) to [Table 1.10](#). The order of fields in each record must be the same as the order they are shown below. Field values should be formatted as specified.

Table 1.5 Data record layout - Region details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = REG

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/Territory Identifier (State) ²	Char[1]	9	720081	<p>1 New South Wales</p> <p>2 Victoria</p> <p>3 Queensland</p> <p>4 South Australia</p> <p>5 Western Australia</p> <p>6 Tasmania</p> <p>7 Northern Territory</p> <p>8 Australian Capital Territory</p>
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	<p>AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction)</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Region Name (RegName)	Char[60]	12	407187	Common name used to identify the Region.

Record length = 71

Notes

2

METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to the CMHC NMDS

1.6.3. Organisation data record

Table 1.6 Data record layout - Organisation details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = ORG

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/Territory Identifier (State) ³	Char[1]	9	720081	<p>1 New South Wales</p> <p>2 Victoria</p> <p>3 Queensland</p> <p>4 South Australia</p> <p>5 Western Australia</p> <p>6 Tasmania</p> <p>7 Northern Territory</p> <p>8 Australian Capital Territory</p>
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	<p>AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction)</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.
Organisation Name (OrgName)	Char[100]	16	405767	Common name used to identify the Organisation

Record length = 115

Notes

3

METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to the CMHC NMDS

1.6.4. Service Unit Cluster data record

Table 1.7 Data record layout - Service Unit Cluster

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = CLUS

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/Territory Identifier (State) ⁴	Char[1]	9	720081	<p>1 New South Wales</p> <p>2 Victoria</p> <p>3 Queensland</p> <p>4 South Australia</p> <p>5 Western Australia</p> <p>6 Tasmania</p> <p>7 Northern Territory</p> <p>8 Australian Capital Territory</p>
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	<p>AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction)</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	<p>AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier.</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>
Service Unit Cluster Identifier (ClusId)	Char[5]	16	404858	<p>AAAAA: An identifier to indicate that a service unit is one of a cluster of service units, defined through administrative or clinical governance arrangements. If no cluster applies, set to 00000. As this field enables linking with the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments, the identifiers used in this collection should be the same.</p>
Service Unit Cluster Name (ClusName)	Char[100]	21	409209	<p>Common name used to identify the service unit cluster. If no cluster applies, enter organisation name as appears in previous line.</p>

Record length = 120

Notes

4

METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to the CMHC NMDS

1.6.5. Service Unit data record

Table 1.8 Data record layout — Service Unit Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = SERV
State/Territory Identifier (State) ⁵	Char[1]	9	720081	1 New South Wales 2 Victoria 3 Queensland 4 South Australia 5 Western Australia 6 Tasmania 7 Northern Territory 8 Australian Capital Territory

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	<p>AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction)</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	<p>AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier.</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Service Unit Cluster Identifier (ClusId)	Char[5]	16	404858	AAAAA: An identifier to indicate that a service unit is one of a cluster of service units, defined through administrative or clinical governance arrangements. If no cluster applies, set to 00000. As this field enables linking with the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments, the identifiers used in this collection should be the same.
Ambulatory Service Unit Identifier (SUIId)	Char[6]	21	750360	AAAAAA: Service unit identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.
Ambulatory Service Unit Name (SUName)	Char[100]	27	750374	Common name used to identify the service unit.
Sector (Sector)	Char[1]	127	269977	1 Public 2 Private

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Target Population (TargetPop) ⁶	Char[1]	128	682403	1 Child and adolescent 2 Older person 3 Forensic 4 General 5 Youth

Record length = 128

Notes

5

METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to the CMHC NMDS

6

METEOR includes code 7 and 9, but these are not applicable to the CMHC NMDS.

1.6.6. Person Details data record

ⓘ Attention

Where multiple values for Sex, Date of birth, Country of birth, or Indigenous status are recorded for different service contacts for one PersId, data providers should adopt the value recorded for the last valid service contact.

Table 1.9 Data record layout — Person Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = PER

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/Territory Identifier (State) ⁷	Char[1]	9	720081	<p>1 New South Wales</p> <p>2 Victoria</p> <p>3 Queensland</p> <p>4 South Australia</p> <p>5 Western Australia</p> <p>6 Tasmania</p> <p>7 Northern Territory</p> <p>8 Australian Capital Territory</p>
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	<p>AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction)</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	<p>AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier.</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>
Service Unit Cluster Identifier (ClusId)	Char[5]	16	404858	<p>AAAAA: An identifier to indicate that a service unit is one of a cluster of service units, defined through administrative or clinical governance arrangements. If no cluster applies, set to 00000. As this field enables linking with the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments, the identifiers used in this collection should be the same.</p>
Ambulatory Service Unit Identifier (SUIId)	Char[6]	21	750360	<p>AAAAAA: Service unit identifier.</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Person Identifier Flag (PersIdFlag) ⁸	Char[1]	27	493279	<p>1 Yes, Patient identifier is for a uniquely identifiable person.</p> <p>2 No, Patient identifier is for a non-uniquely identifiable person</p>
Person Identifier (PersId)	Char[20]	28	290046	Person identifier is unique and stable for each individual patient within each service unit. Individual service units or collection authorities may use their own alphabetic, numeric or alphanumeric coding systems.
Sex (Sex)	Char[1]	48	741686	<p>1 Male</p> <p>2 Female</p> <p>3 Another term</p> <p>9 Not stated / inadequately described</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Date of Birth (DoB)	Date[8]	49	287007	The date of birth of the person.
Estimated Date of Birth Flag (DoBFlag) ⁹	Char[1]	57	—	<p>1 Date of birth is accurate</p> <p>2 Date of birth is an estimate</p> <p>8 Date of birth is a “dummy” date (ie, 09099999)</p> <p>9 Accuracy of stated date of birth is not known</p>
Country of Birth (CoB)	Char[4]	58	659454	To be provided in accordance with the Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC). ABS catalogue no. 1269.0 (2016). Values from 1601-1607, inclusive, are not permitted in this NMDS (Antarctica).

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Indigenous Status (IndigSt)	Char[1]	62	602543	1 Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin
				2 Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin
				3 Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin
				4 Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander origin
				9 Not stated/ inadequately described

Record length = 62

Notes

7

METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to the CMHC NMDS

8

See Appendix A for further details on unregistered client service contacts.

Optional data element providing additional information regarding the quality of date of birth data. Code 1 should be used when it is known that the reported date of birth is accurate, code 2 when it is known that one or more parts of the date of birth is an estimate, code 8 when birth date is unknown and a 'dummy' date of birth has been used (that is, 09099999), and code 9 when it is not known whether the date of birth is accurate or an estimate.

1.6.7. Service Contact data record

Table 1.10 Data record layout — Contact Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = CON
State/Territory Identifier (State) ¹⁰	Char[1]	9	720081	1 New South Wales 2 Victoria 3 Queensland 4 South Australia 5 Western Australia 6 Tasmania 7 Northern Territory 8 Australian Capital Territory

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	<p>AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction)</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	<p>AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier.</p> <p>Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Service Unit Cluster Identifier (ClusId)	Char[5]	16	404858	AAAAA: An identifier to indicate that a service unit is one of a cluster of service units, defined through administrative or clinical governance arrangements. If no cluster applies, set to 00000. As this field enables linking with the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments, the identifiers used in this collection should be the same.
Ambulatory Service Unit Identifier (SUIId)	Char[6]	21	750360	AAAAAA: Service unit identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in the NMDS for Mental Health Establishments.

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Person Identifier Flag (PersIdFlag) ¹¹	Char[1]	27	493279	<p>1 Yes, Patient identifier is for a uniquely identifiable person.</p> <p>2 No, Patient identifier is for a non-uniquely identifiable person</p>
Person Identifier (PersId)	Char[20]	28	290046	Person identifier is unique and stable for each individual patient within each service unit. Individual service units or collection authorities may use their own alphabetic, numeric or alphanumeric coding systems.
State/Territory Record Identifier (RecordId)	Char[10]	48	—	This should be a stable number in the data collection of the jurisdiction.
Service Contact Date (ContDt)	Date[8]	58	737299	The date of each service contact between a health service provider and patient/client.

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Principal Diagnosis (DxPrinc)	Char[6]	66	746665	<p>Represented as ANN{.N[N]}</p> <p>The diagnosis established after study to be chiefly responsible for occasioning a mental health service contact, as represented by a code. The principal diagnosis must be a valid code from the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM) (12th Edition) or from the ICD-10-AM Mental Health Manual: An integrated classification and diagnostic tool for community based mental health services (1st Edition).</p>

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Mental Health Legal Status (LegalSt)	Char[1]	72	727343	<p>1 Involuntary patient</p> <p>2 Voluntary patient</p> <p>9 Not reported/ Unknown</p>
Marital Status (MaritalSt)	Char[1]	73	766507	<p>1 Never married</p> <p>2 Widowed</p> <p>3 Divorced</p> <p>4 Separated</p> <p>5 Married (registered and de facto)</p> <p>6 Not stated/ inadequately described</p>
Area of Usual Residence (ResArea)	Char[9]	74	747315	Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) code (ASGS Edition 3) N(9)
Mental Health Service Contact Duration (ContDur)	Number[3]	83	737218	Valid time measured in minutes. Expressed as NNN

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Mental Health Service Contact-Patient/Client Participation Indicator (ContPartic)	Char[1]	86	737291	1 Yes 2 No 8 Unknown
Mental Health Service Contact-Session Type (ContSesType)	Char[1]	87	737307	1 Individual session 2 Group session 8 Unknown

Record length = 87

Notes

10

METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to the CMHC NMDS

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See Appendix A for further details on unregistered client service contacts.

2. Submission and validation of CMHC NMDS data files

Submission, delivery and validation of the 2023-24 CMHC data (version 5.51) will occur through the [Online Validator](#). AIHW and the Department of Health and Aged Care will obtain jurisdictional DAT files directly from the Validator using the download functionality available to reviewers.

2.1. Timelines

Jurisdictions are requested to submit a stage 1 compliant file using the Online Validator by **3 January 2025**. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Department of Health and Aged Care are aiming to have Stage 2 validation completed by **18 April 2025** to facilitate timelier reporting of CMHC data, in accordance with the schedule in [Table 2.1](#).

Table 2.1 CMHC and RMHC NMDS 2023-24 data validation

Progress point description	Responsibility	Completion Time	Completion date
Stage 1 submission	Jurisdictions		3 January 2025
Submitter comment on all issues within the issue list	Jurisdictions	7 weeks	21 February 2025
Reviewer reply to all issues within the issue list and raise other issues based on historical reports	AIHW	3 weeks	14 March 2025
Resolution of any remaining issues - validation process completed	AIHW/Jurisdiction discussion back and forth	5 weeks	18 April 2025

2.2. File type and naming convention

DAT files should be a single Fixed Format data file, with each record in the file being terminated with Carriage Return (CR) and Line Feed (LF) characters.

The data file will have the naming convention of *CMHCSSSYYYYNNNNN.DAT* where:

- CMHC denotes 'Community Mental Health Care'
- SSS is the abbreviation for the State name, using the following convention:
 - New South Wales = NSW
 - Victoria = VIC
 - Queensland = QLD
 - Western Australia = WAU

- South Australia = SAU
- Tasmania = TAS
- Australian Capital Territory = ACT
- Northern Territory = NTE
- YYYY indicates the reporting year covered in the file, using the convention where financial years are abbreviated by referring to the last calendar year of the pair (for example, 2023-24 is identified as 2024)
- NNNNN represents an incremental batch number (leading zeros present).

Any resubmitted files should have a batch number greater than the file they replace. For example, the first CMHC data file submitted by the Australian Capital Territory covering the 2023-24 year would be named 'CMHCACT202400001.DAT'.

2.3. Validation

Mental Health National Minimum Dataset (NMDS) validation is the process of reviewing and cleaning the mental health service data received from state and territory governments using the [Online Validator](#) a web based validation tool. The process has two stages:

- Stage 1 validation
 - Structural check when file is submitted to validator
- Stage 2 validation
 - Respond to and accept all issues in the issues list
 - Review data set reports (CMHC and RMHC) and raise additional issues with the jurisdiction as necessary.

2.3.1. Stage 1 validation

Stage 1 validation ensures that the submitted data file structure is correct: that the data is in the correct layout, that there are no blank fields or invalid characters. These checks ensure that each line of data is correctly formatted and aligns to the specifications.

2.3.2. Stage 2 validation

Stage 2 Validation is the process of reviewing unusual trends in the files submitted and accepted in stage 1 validation. Each collection is different and has its own structure, but the general process of validating is the same. Once stage 1 validation is complete:

1. Work through the issues list, either providing comments on known issues or updating and resubmitting the file. It is expected that most jurisdictions will need to submit updated files multiple times before validation is finalised. Note that jurisdictions must submit comments on issues before the AIHW is able to accept an issue.

2. Engage with the AIHW when more information is required on an issue through the validator. Each jurisdiction will have an AIHW staff member assigned as the lead validator, who will be in touch early in the validation period. Please ensure that any email communication is also Cc'd to the Mentalhealth@aihw.gov.au inbox in case of staff absences or changes in AIHW staffing.
3. The AIHW will review the Data Set Reports and will raise additional queries about any large fluctuations evident in these reports after investigating which regions, organisations and service units are causing them. The AIHW will endeavour to ensure that additional queries are limited to essential issues that impact the state-wide result.

2.4. Data quality survey

States and territories must complete the data quality survey in the Online Validator for the CMHC submission. Details will be used to inform the Quality statements published on METEOR for each NMDS collection period.

2.5. Additional information and queries

AIHW and Logicly staff are available to answer any queries regarding the submission and validation of the 2023-24 CMHC NMDS. In order to obtain a coordinated response, requests should be sent to the following parties simultaneously:

AIHW

Email: mentalhealth@aihw.gov.au

Logicly

Email: support@validator.com.au

3. APPENDIX A: Notes on reporting service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients

3.1. Background

The Community Mental Health Care (CMHC) NMDS is a national data collection that is built from mental health service contact records reported by each State and Territory jurisdiction. The basic concept underpinning the collection is a simple one, involving the following components:

- each service contact recorded for an identified client is reported to the national data pool;
- each service contact is attributable to an individual client by virtue of an anonymous unique patient identifier attached to the service contact record.

This allows each service contact to be linked to an individual client to whom it 'belongs', and provides a basis for reporting on the number of clients in receipt of community mental health care and the services that they receive.

However, since its inception in 2000-01, the data reported by jurisdictions for the CMHC NMDS have included a variable number of service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients. For the purposes of this current data extract specification, these are defined in the following terms:

Service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients refer to those mental health service contacts for which a person identifier was not recorded.

Typically, when such contacts are reported to the national data set, the person identifier number is not reported but the contact record includes details on one or more person-level data elements (for example, date of birth, sex, country of birth etc).

For some jurisdictions such contacts comprise up to 20% of total service contact records. For a significant number of such records, person-level data elements are also reported. It is evident that these contacts are genuine service contacts in respect of an individual client rather than 'non patient care' activities of community-based mental health services. In this respect, they are fully compliant with the scope of the CMHC NMDS. The only problem is that they have no unique patient identifier attached to the contact record.

A variety of factors underlie the reporting of service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients. These include:

- The service provider clinician may record a service contact for a person who has not been assigned a local patient identifier, and for whom there is no intention to assign such an identifier.
- The clinician may record a service contact for a person prior to a local patient identifier being assigned to that individual.
- Alternatively, a clinician may record a service contact for a person for whom a local patient identifier has been assigned but, due to technical limitations, the identifier is not included in the data submitted to the relevant State or Territory health department.

Differences between jurisdictions in how unregistered contact data are handled also contribute to the variation that is evident in the national data set. Three key differences that affect the national collection are:

- *Differences in patient registration guidelines*—jurisdictions differ in the extent to which policy documentation has been developed to guide local agencies on when to assign patient identifiers in community settings. Some jurisdictions have prepared detailed instructions for agencies that specify the requirement for patient identifiers to be assigned to all clients for whom a clinically significant service is provided, regardless of whether the client is accepted for ongoing services. For others, decisions about when to assign identifiers are left to the discretion of local agencies.
- *Different approaches to whether service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients are held in State and Territory-level collections*—while some jurisdictions require such contacts to be reported to the State/Territory health department, others do not, or have no capacity to store or process such data.
- *Different approaches by states and territories to whether service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients are included in data submitted for the CMHC NMDS*—for those jurisdictions that hold such contact data within the State- or Territory-level collections, differences exist as to whether such records are included in the data submitted for National Minimum Data Set purposes.

3.2. How contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients should be reported for CMHC extract purposes

Contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients create an anomaly for the national analysis and reporting of data submitted by states and territories. The following approach to the reporting of non-uniquely identifiable client contacts has been incorporated in the extract specifications to promote consistency where these contacts are reported:

- States and territories that choose to report service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients to the CMHC NMDS may continue to do so, following the requirements of the extract specification. There is no expectation that jurisdictions that have not previously submitted such data will do so in the future—the choice is entirely the responsibility of each State and Territory.
- Where such records are submitted to the national collection, they will conform to the data model underpinning the extract—that is, for each unregistered client contact record, there must be a matching *Person details* record.
- Service contacts for non-uniquely identifiable clients will be clearly differentiated through the addition of a *Person identifier flag* on all *Service contacts* and *Person details* records.
- For each *Service contact details* record that represents a contact with a non-uniquely identifiable client, a unique patient identifier should be created to fill the *Patient identifier field*, which can be used in conjunction with the *Person identifier flag* to identify these contacts. All other data elements on the *Service contact* record should be reported where these are available.
- For each unique patient identifier generated for a non-uniquely identifiable client reported in *Service contact details* records, a corresponding *Person details* record should be created. The various data elements normally included in *Person details* records should be reported here where these are available.

3.3. Options for how patient identifiers for non-uniquely identifiable clients can be generated

There are many ways to achieve this. Below are suggestions for two common tools—SPSS and Microsoft Access. Further advice in relation to other packages can be provided to jurisdictions should this be required.

Note that it does not matter if patient identifier values for non-uniquely identifiable clients clash with real identifiers since there is a flag that allows them to be differentiated.

The general method suggested below assumes that the data source for non-uniquely identifiable clients is contained in a file/table with a single row containing the demographic and contact details. It also assumes that you have already created the registered client data set and that these are still in a format manipulable by your software tool of choice.

The steps are:

3.3.1. SPSS

1. Add a unique identifier to each row if one does not exist. You can use the following idiom to create the values:

```
COMPUTE PersIdent = $CASENUM.
```

2. Add the data from the unregistered clients to the tables/files/spreadsheets containing the registered client data making sure that the Person identifier flag is set correctly:

```
SAVE OUTFILE <temporary path for unregistered data>.

ADD FILES=\* /FILE=<path to your registered **person** details data>
/KEEP <space separated list of **person** details items>.

SAVE OUTFILE <path to your final **person** details data>.

GET FILE <temporary path for unregistered data>.

ADD FILES=\* /FILE=<path to your registered **service contact**
details data> /KEEP <space separated list of **service contact**
details items>.

SAVE OUTFILE <path to your final **service contact** details data>.
```

3.3.2. Microsoft Access

1. Add a unique identifier to each row if one does not exist:

- Create a table which contains all of the required columns including 'Person Identifier'. Ensure that the 'Person Identifier' column is of type AutoNumber.
- Append the patient data to that table excluding 'Person Identifier' from the list of fields to append. Each row will be given a unique number.

2. Add the data from the unregistered clients to the tables/files/spreadsheets containing the registered client data making sure that the Person identifier flag is set correctly. Run two append queries:

- One to append the person details records from your unregistered client table to your final person details table (already containing your registered person details records).
- The other to append the service contact details records to the final service contact details table.