

Name of digital mental health service: PeerChat

Name of service provider: ReachOut Australia

Date this form was completed: 21/05/2026

1. Is this service for me?

1.1 What health conditions does this service offer help with?

PeerChat doesn't offer treatment of specific conditions. Chats with a peer worker are guided by what you want to discuss. For example, you might want to talk about:

- where to find the right help and support
- romantic relationships
- friends and family
- anxiety, depression and mental wellbeing
- school, study and work stress
- alcohol or other substance use
- work, school or uni/TAFE
- gender, sexuality and cultural identity.

PeerChat may give you information and strategies you can use to feel better, but it isn't a treatment service.

1.2 Who is the service intended for?

PeerChat is a service for 16–25 year-olds living, studying or working in Australia. You don't need a referral from a health-care professional or to have been diagnosed with a mental health issue to use PeerChat.

1.3 What kind of assistance does the service offer?

PeerChat is a one-on-one, text-based service between you and a ReachOut peer worker. It's a safe and secure space to talk about what's going on for you.

PeerChat is a safe, friendly and inclusive space for young people. We support people of all genders, First Nations young people, the LGBTQIA+ community, and neurodivergent and culturally and linguistically diverse young people.

1.4 How is the service delivered?

PeerChat is a one-on-one, text-based service between you and a ReachOut peer worker. The webchat can be accessed instantly from the ReachOut website during service hours.

1.5 Are health professionals involved in delivering the service?

PeerChat is staffed by peer workers. Peer workers are real people who use their own experiences of mental health challenges as young people to understand and support others. Peer workers aren't clinical professionals,

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like psychologists or psychiatrists, their role at PeerChat is to provide in the moment support rather than diagnosis or long-term interventions. PeerChat peer workers are trained to support young people to feel heard and understood and to gain clarity around what you're dealing with. This includes training in mental health first aid.

1.6 When is the service available?

PeerChat is available Monday to Thursday 3–8 pm and Friday 11.30 am–4.30 pm, Sydney time.

1.7 How much does the service cost? Is there any ongoing cost?

PeerChat is completely free!

1.8 How can I access the service?

Just click *Chat to a peer worker* on the [PeerChat page](#) during our operating hours and you're in the queue.

1.9 Can I access the service anonymously?

We need your age to make sure that you're within our 16–25 years service bracket. We'll use your phone number to verify you're a real person. Additionally, we may receive your IP address automatically via your phone or computer. We will only use this information in case of an emergency.

1.10 Does the service allow my carer, family member or support person to work with me to use the service?

As PeerChat is an anonymous service, we do not have specific procedures to allow a carer or support person to participate in the session. However, we encourage you to seek help from your support people where needed, and share any resources if this would be helpful. [There is also a separate service for parents and carers of young people.](#)

2. Will I benefit if I use this service?

2.1 Is there any independent scientific evidence of benefit from using this service?

Peer work is an evidence based practice. ReachOut regularly conducts [research](#) into its products, services and the experiences of young people. An extensive [evaluation](#) was recently conducted, confirming the positive impact of PeerChat.

2.2 Is the service endorsed by a government or professional body?

PeerChat receives funding from the Australian Government Department of Health. ReachOut is accredited to the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards.

3. Could this service do me harm?

3.1 Are there any precautions or safety warnings related to this service?

ReachOut prioritises safety when designing and delivering our services. PeerChat is not intended to be a crisis service, and is not intended to replace assessment or treatment with a health professional.

3.2 Has anyone reported concerns or adverse health events after using this service?

The majority of people accessing PeerChat report feeling better afterwards. We aren't aware of any adverse effects of using PeerChat.

4. Should I trust this service?**4.1 What is the business model for the service provider?**

ReachOut is a registered not for profit organisation.

4.2 How does the service make money?

ReachOut is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. We receive additional support from corporate partnerships, the community, and philanthropic donations.

5. Is the service easy to use? Will I keep using it?**5.1 Is there any independent research on how easy it is to use this service?**

PeerChat was designed to be accessible. To start your chat, click *Chat to a peer worker* on the [PeerChat page](#) or the Chat now icon at the bottom right-hand side of your screen. Before we connect you to a peer worker, you'll be asked for your age and phone number. You'll then join the queue to be connected to a peer worker. An extensive [evaluation](#) was recently conducted, confirming the positive impact of PeerChat.

5.2 How much time will it take me to use this service as suggested?

Chat sessions are 45 minutes, starting from when you're connected to a peer worker. You can end the chat earlier if you want.

5.3 How long will it take to get results from using this service?

PeerChat is not a treatment service. The majority of people accessing PeerChat report feeling better afterwards.

5.4 Were people with lived experience involved in developing the service?

PeerChat was co-produced with young people and peer workers with lived experience of mental health challenges to ensure the service meets the real-life needs of Australian young people.

5.5 What do other users think of this service?

An extensive [evaluation](#) was recently conducted confirming the positive impact of PeerChat. Recent feedback from service users indicates:

- About 8 out of every 9 young people (approximately **89%**) reported feeling a bit or much better after they chat with a ReachOut peer worker
- Approximately 6 out of every 7 young people (85%) reported they felt heard and understood by their peer worker
- More than 9 out of every 10 young people (91%) rated their experience with PeerChat On Demand either 'great' or 'amazing'

5.6 Will this service link with other health services?

If a young person is looking for additional support, their peer worker will provide them with relevant resources and links to other services that may be suitable.

6. Who will have access to my personal data?

6.1 What information does the service collect about me?

[ReachOut's Privacy Policy](#) outlines the information we collect and the reasons for collecting it. We'll take notes following your chat. These are stored in our secure database and can only be accessed by the PeerChat team. See our [Terms and Conditions](#) for more information.

6.2 Who owns that data?

ReachOut retains legal ownership, custody, and stewardship of all digital data records, including chat transcripts and interaction histories. However, the user retains the intellectual property rights to the words and original content the user types into the service, alongside statutory rights to access the information held on file under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

6.3 Who is that information shared with and why?

Your personal information will only be disclosed to third parties in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#). There are certain circumstances where we are entitled to disclose Personal Information (including Sensitive Information) without your consent, including if we believe there is a serious and imminent threat to the life, health or safety of yourself or the public, for legally permitted law enforcement activities, or where otherwise required or authorised by or under law.

6.4 Where is information about me stored?

All information held by ReachOut is stored securely, using encryption and access controls to prevent unauthorised access, in accordance with our privacy policy. ReachOut uses third-party systems to host our PeerChat service and securely store information. Any third-party service providers are bound by contracts that require them to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 and relevant ReachOut policies.

6.5 Can I easily share my information and results if I want to?

PeerChat does not provide assessment services. However, you are welcome to share any resources provided to you by ReachOut.

6.6 Can I save the personal information I enter on my device without it being shared with the provider?

ReachOut only collects information you have shared with us. If you believe that the information we have is not up-to-date, complete or accurate, please send an email to privacy@reachout.com

6.7 Can I review and/or delete data that has been collected about me?

ReachOut will only keep Personal Information (including Sensitive Information) for as long as it is needed for any purpose for which it was collected, or otherwise if it is part of a Commonwealth record or is required to be retained under Australian law or by a court or tribunal. We will take all reasonable steps to keep your Personal Information (including Sensitive Information) up-to-date and accurate. You have the right to request access to or correction of any information which relates to you and we will take the appropriate steps to provide you with access to correct information we hold about you.

If you would like to access a copy of the Personal Information (including Sensitive Information) we hold about you, or believe that the information we have is not up-to-date, complete or accurate, please send an email to privacy@reachout.com

When you contact us, please include your email address and name and clearly describe your request or complaint. We will respond within a reasonable period. If we decline your request to access that information or to correct it we will provide you with written notice setting out the reasons why your request has been refused and the mechanisms available to you to complain about the refusal.

6.8 Does the service have a data-sharing (privacy) policy?

ReachOut has a [privacy policy](#).

6.9 What security measures are in place to protect my personal information?

ReachOut has implemented a range of procedures to protect your Personal Information (including Sensitive Information) from modification, misuse, disclosure, loss and unauthorised access. This is done through our technology infrastructure, our internal risk management framework and security policies and procedures, and for all donations and communications through our website via a secure server.

It is important to remember that no internet transmission is ever completely secure or error-free and the ReachOut Services may contain links or references to other websites to which this Privacy Policy might not apply. You should always read the privacy policy of every website you visit, especially when you provide Personal Information (including Sensitive Information) or make posts or other contributions to these sites.

We will comply with the notification and other requirements of the Act where your personal information held by us has been inadvertently lost or disclosed or improperly accessed and that loss, disclosure or access may result in serious harm to you.

7. Who can I contact with questions or concerns about this service?

7.1 How can I contact the service provider?

Details on how to contact ReachOut can be found on our [contact us](#) page.

7.2 Where can I go if I have concerns about this service?

To make a complaint, please visit our [Complaints](#) page.

- For privacy/security issues, contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-complaints/>
- For complaints against a health service, contact your state or territory health complaints organisation
<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/notifications/further-information/health-complaintsorganisations.aspx>
- For complaints against an individual registered health professional, contact the Australian Health Practitioners Regulatory Authority (AHPRA) <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/Raise-a-concern.aspx>
- For complaints about misleading claims, contact Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) <https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/complaints-problems/make-a-consumer-complaint>