



COVID-19 & THE CHSP – INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS

21/07/2021

What is the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)?

The CHSP is an entry-level home support program. It helps people over 65 years old to live safe and independent lives in their own homes and communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over 50 years are also eligible for the CHSP.

The CHSP funds subsidised services to help older Australians, including:

- domestic assistance (such as house cleaning and linen services)
- transport
- meals
- personal care
- home maintenance (including gardening)
- home modifications
- goods, equipment and assistive technology
- social support
- nursing
- allied health and therapy services.

The CHSP also supports people who are caring for older Australians through planned respite services for older people. These services allow carers to take a break from their usual caring role.

To find out more about the services available, contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** (free call).

To get support for you or a loved one call the Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line on 1800 171 866. It is available Monday to Friday, except public holidays, from 8:30am to 6pm.

Is it safe to use CHSP services?

The CHSP promotes and supports the safety and welfare of older Australians in their home.

In delivering services to older Australians, CHSP providers should:

- have suitable capacity
- have qualified staff
- adhere to appropriate infection control protocols.

The aged care worker visiting the home should take all needed measures and follow all current advice to ensure the client stays safe.

Do you need an assessment to use CHSP services?

You can use CHSP services without an assessment if they're needed urgently or if you need short-term services because of COVID-19.

In all other non-urgent situations, CHSP services should not start before an assessment has taken place.

If you need permanent care beyond the initial six weeks, you will need to be assessed through [My Aged Care](#). The CHSP service provider can help with this.

Call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422, to arrange new or extra aged care services or to create or update client records.

When will social support groups and other group activities recommence?

Lockdowns in states and territories can disrupt group activities.

CHSP providers must follow their state or territory guidelines, advice and restrictions when they re-open social support services. This includes maintaining physical distancing and infection control measures. Providers must also have a COVIDSafe plan for their workplace and service delivery model.

If social support activities have stopped, contact your CHSP provider for advice on when they might recommence.

More resources and information on state and territory restrictions are available at www.australia.gov.au.

What support is available for clients who are lonely or are having mental health issues?

CHSP clients may be lonely or anxious during the pandemic.

Support is available:

- through the [Head to Health website](#). This website has information and resources to support people who would like help to cope with anxiety or worry about COVID-19
- Older Person's COVID-19 Support Line can give help, support and resources to older Australians (**1800 171 866**)
- Beyond Blue provides digital resources and a phone counselling service (1300 224 636). Accredited mental health professionals are available 24 hours, seven days a week
- the Australian Red Cross (1300 885 698) can arrange a daily telephone call to check on your wellbeing through a service known as "Telecross"
- the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) is a free service that provides friendship and companionship to older people receiving aged care services. Contact My Aged Care (**1800 200 422**) for more information
- Lifeline (13 11 14).

CHSP service providers are developing new service delivery models to help clients stay socially connected. To maintain physical distancing this could be:

- internet or phone-based welfare checks
- online social group activities.

What if a client is worried about going to the shops for groceries or has trouble preparing meals?

The CHSP may be able to help with grocery shopping or meal provision. This may include domestic assistance (unaccompanied shopping) and meals (delivered to the home). The Australian Government has provided \$50 million for CHSP meal providers to help expand services during the pandemic.

To find out more about these services contact **My Aged Care** on **1800 200 422**. They may refer you to a local CHSP provider who can deliver these services.

What services are available during the pandemic?

The Department of Health considers all aged care services, including those delivered under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), to be essential services.

CHSP providers must follow state and territory restrictions and guidelines to ensure;

- the safe delivery of essential aged care services and
- protect their employees, volunteers and clients.

If there is a change to service delivery, CHSP providers must contact you as soon as possible.

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) is a free advocacy service if you or your representative would like help to discuss service concerns with your provider.

Contact OPAN on **1800 700 600** from 6:00am to 10:00pm, 7 days per week.

What in-home help is available if a resident from an aged care home wants to live with family during COVID-19?

A national model of emergency support is available to aged care home residents temporarily returning to the community because of COVID-19. Support is available for up to eight weeks.

Tier 1 Clinical support for residents who re-locate from aged care homes significantly impacted by COVID-19

Temporary clinical support is available to residents who have had to relocate from a significantly impacted aged care home. Personal care and nursing services equivalent to a [Level 4 Home Care Package](#) are available at no extra cost to the resident.

If an aged care home is significantly impacted by an outbreak of COVID-19, the home will tell residents what support is available to them.

You can then call OPAN on **1800 700 600** to discuss the resident's care needs. OPAN informs residents and their families on their eligibility, things to consider and the process for temporarily withdrawing residents from an aged care home. Once the resident and family chooses to transition to the community, OPAN can arrange for a referral to a suitable CHSP provider.

Services that may be accessed through this program include:

- personal care: provides assistance to maintain appropriate standards of hygiene and grooming
- nursing: clinical care provided by a registered or enrolled nurse. This care includes treatment and monitoring medically diagnosed clinical conditions.

The aged care provider will work with you and the CHSP provider to:

- develop a care plan
- decide a suitable care start and end date
- plan any arrangements to transition the resident back to the aged care home.

The family will be responsible for care and safety of residents during their time away from aged care. This includes considering resident mobility and access to mobility aids. It also includes the capacity of the family to provide care for 24 hours a day and a suitable physical environment.

Residents who need more complex or higher level aged care services may need to remain in their aged care home. The aged care home may also temporarily transfer these residents to another suitable care home.

Tier 2 Entry-level services available for all people who decide to return to the community

Residents who are not eligible for the support outlined in Tier 1, but choose to return to the community, can access entry-level home support (regardless of whether their aged care home has been impacted by COVID-19). These residents can use services for up to eight weeks through the CHSP. For residents who access Tier 2 services, a client contribution fee may apply.

To access Tier 2 services, residents or their family can contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**. My Aged Care gives information on the services available, the process for transition to the community and can arrange for a referral to a CHSP provider.

This support is available to all residents returning home from an aged care home. Services that can be accessed through the CHSP include:

- meals
- transport (for essential trips to medical appointments)
- social support for the individual
- unaccompanied shopping
- personal care
- nursing
- allied health and therapy services.

Tier 1 residents can use the additional services listed, except for personal care and nursing already provided.

It is important to understand that these services will be entry-level. They will not give the same level or frequency of care available in an aged care home. Residents who need more complex or higher level aged care services may need to remain in their aged care home.

Things a family must consider before transitioning an elderly family member from an aged care home to the family home:

- accommodation requirements – they will need a separate bedroom, and if possible a separate bathroom; is the bed accessible, and the correct height?
- internal and external access to the home – are there stairs, is a ramp required, are doorways/hallways wide enough for a walker, are there trip hazards?
- mobility aid essentials – shower chair, walker, toilet rails, transport

- 24 hour care from the family, which can be supplemented with some professional support by a CHSP provider
- PPE during the quarantine period, families must know how to use PPE – including gowns, face masks, eye protection and gloves
- PPE must be purchased prior to the family member coming home
- general day to day living assistance that may be required – toileting, showering, meals, dressing, administering medications
- how they will transition their family member back to their aged care home after their stay in the community.

Residents should not leave the aged care home until services are in place.

It is recommended that families stay in close contact with the aged care home. This is for discussions on the resident's care plan, any issues, and to organise for the family member to return to the aged care home. You should also be in contact with the CHSP provider to discuss the provision of services that have been organised.

What happens if the resident does not want to go back to aged care?

If the resident decides to remain in the community on an ongoing basis, they will need to give up their place in the aged care home. An assessment for home care services through My Aged Care will need to be arranged.

If the assessment indicates the resident requires a Home Care Package (HCP), you should be aware of the average wait time for a HCP. The My Aged Care [website](#) provides information on this.

Residents can access entry-level CHSP services while waiting for their HCP. Once they give up their place in residential aged care, they will not be eligible to continue accessing Tier 1 services. Residents and their families must carefully consider whether entry level services will be sufficient to support them while on the wait list for a HCP.

What if I have more questions about COVID-19?

To find out more, phone the **National Coronavirus Helpline** on **1800 020 080**

The Department of Health has also published a collection of [resources](#), including information on [COVID-19 vaccinations](#) and responses to [frequently asked questions](#), for the general public on its website.

If you need to find out more about support services, contact **My Aged Care** by phoning **1800 200 422**.

If you have any concerns about your care services, or carer, please contact your CHSP service provider.

Where can CHSP service providers find more information?

The Department of Health has published fact sheets for CHSP providers including information on:

- [CHSP emergency funding](#)
- [CHSP flexibility provisions](#)
- [other CHSP support and program arrangements](#).

Webinars are also available on the [Department of Health's website](#) for on-demand viewing.

Providers should [subscribe](#) to the normal aged care sector emails and newsletters to receive regular updates.

For more information, CHSP service providers should contact their Funding Arrangement Manager.