



Fact sheet for RAS and ACAT Assessors on care finders

Purpose

This fact sheet provides information on the care finder program, the target population for care finders and how an assessor can find and connect a person with this service. This fact sheet also details information on changes to the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) service type.

Key points

- Care finders will provide intensive support to vulnerable older people to assist them to access and navigate aged care and other relevant supports in the community.
- Care finders can provide assistance to someone before they access and register with My Aged Care, before they receive aged care services or as they access aged care services.
- Assessors can connect an older person with a care finder by phone. Contact information for care finders by region and area of focus is available on the My Aged Care website <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/help-care-finder>
- Clients don't need a formal referral to access a care finder.
- Some care finder services will focus on a particular group e.g. for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, however all care finders can help people from all backgrounds. Focus means that this target population is the organisation's area of expertise.
- From 1 January 2023:
 - connect people at risk of homelessness or who are homeless to care finders by phone.
 - refer people who need hoarding and squalor services through the My Aged Care assessor portal.

Background

Care finder services will commence from **3 January 2023** and ramp up with most services fully operational by 30 April 2023. The national network of care finders will provide one-on-one **specialist and intensive** support to help **vulnerable** older people to understand and access aged care services and other relevant supports in the community.

Care finder organisations have been commissioned by the 31 [Primary Health Networks](#) (PHNs) across Australia.

Detailed information on the program and its requirements is in the [policy guidance for PHNs](#).

The **Aged Care System Navigator (ACSN)** trial ended in December 2022. Care finders and ACSN providers were responsible for ensuring that people receiving support at the conclusion of the trial were connected with a care finder where appropriate.

Who is in the care finder target population?

To ensure care finder support is available to those who need it, **strict eligibility criteria have not been developed** for people to access care finders. **Care finder** organisations are **responsible** to determine if a person is within the target population.

An older person fits in the target population for care finders if they:

- are eligible for aged care services, and
- have 1 or more reasons for requiring intensive support to:
 - interact with My Aged Care (through the website, telephone, or face to face), or
 - access aged care services, or
 - access other relevant supports in the community.

Reasons a person may need the intensive support provided by a care finder may include:

- being isolated or they don't have available support (including because they are uncomfortable receiving the support, or their support person is not able to assist)
- communication barriers, such as limited English language or literacy skills
- difficulties processing information to make decisions being unsafe or they may end up in a crisis situation (within the next year), however they are resistant to engage with aged care or
- their past experiences mean they are reluctant to engage with aged care, institutions, or government.

What do care finders do?

Care finders help vulnerable older people in the target population to navigate, understand and access aged care services and other relevant supports in the community.

Care finders will assist people to use one of the three access channels (online - My Aged Care, face to face – ACSO's or phone - Contact Centre) to access aged care services (if needed).

Care finders will assist their clients by:

- supporting them to interact with My Aged Care so they can be screened for eligibility for aged care services and referred for assessment
- explain and guide them through the assessment process including, where appropriate, attending the assessment
- helping them to find the Commonwealth-funded aged care supports and services they need and connect with other relevant supports in the community, including supporting them to:
 - understand the different types of aged care supports and services
 - find and make an informed choice about providers or services
 - work through income or means testing, if relevant, and costs (with support from Services Australia as required)
 - complete forms for any service (unless someone else is better placed to help with this)
 - meet with providers to arrange services (such as by calling providers to check availability)

- understand the agreement that needs to be signed with the provider
- connect with other relevant supports in the community, noting that, this may occur **before** they assist a person to access aged care (as well as any other time)
- high level check-in with clients on a periodic basis and follow up support once services have commenced to:
 - check that the person is still receiving services and providers are managing any changes to their needs
 - provide support where services have lapsed or needs have changed and providers are not taking appropriate action, such as (depending on the situation and the client's wishes):
 - contacting the provider, with the client's consent, and working with them to put in place new services
 - working with the client to change providers
 - supporting the client to interact with My Aged Care so they can be referred for re-assessment and helping them to move to new services and/or providers (as required).

Care finders can work with people at any time in their involvement with My Aged Care (before, during and post assessment).

When would an assessor and care finder interact?

Assessors and care finders working together will help vulnerable clients get the intensive support they need to access aged care and other community services.

With the agreement of their client, an assessor who is part of a Regional Assessment Service (RAS) or an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) can connect the client with a care finder service, if they are in the target population

Where possible a client should be part of conversations that relate to them between an assessor and a care finder.

Care finders can work with people who are not yet receiving aged care services, as well as people who have an aged care assessment but have difficulty accessing the support identified on their Support Plan or those who are receiving aged care services.

The client being assisted by a care finder may ask the care finder to attend the assessment.

How to connect a person to a care finder.

People don't need a referral to access a care finder and they can receive support from a care finder without registering with My Aged Care.

Assessors can connect a person with a care finder service by phone. Calling the care finder service, with the client's consent, will increase the likelihood of the client engaging with the care finder

Care finders are provided through many different service organisations so there is not a central intake point or phone number.

Assessors can find the contact information for care finder services in each region on the [My Aged Care webpage](#). This information includes target groups the organisation will focus on (e.g., homeless, LGBTIQI, CALD or Forgotten Australians clients), phone numbers and other contact information.

The number and availability of care finder services will increase as the program rolls out from January through to the end of April 2023, and the list of services will be updated through this period.

Information on referral pathways for aged care access and navigation services is being incorporated into training for assessors, which will be available in early 2023.

Will assessors still need to provide linking support?

Many of the vulnerable clients that assessors currently provide linking support to are expected to be in the target population for care finders. You can connect these clients to care finders if they agree. You may connect a client to a care finder if they continue to require ongoing support to access services after the short-term linking support episode has concluded.

You may also provide linking support yourself if the client is not comfortable being referred to someone else, or if they need some help but are not in the target population for care finders.

Changes to Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) service type

From **1 January 2023** the CHSP ACH service type will provide ACH Hoarding and Squalor only. Assessor can continue to make ACH Hoarding and Squalor referrals through the My Aged Care assessor portal.

ACH navigation services (Advocacy – legal and financial and Assessment and Referral) currently funded in the CHSP ACH service type will now be funded as care finders.

To connect a person to support because they are **homeless or at risk of homelessness** (and there are no concerns regarding hoarding and squalor behaviour) contact the **care finder** by phone.

You will no longer be able to refer for homelessness services and support (ACH Advocacy – Financial, Legal or Assessment - Referrals) through the My Aged Care assessor portal.

ACH Hoarding and Squalor Services

The eligibility and description of ACH Hoarding and Squalor services have been updated in the [CHSP manual](#) (select to link to the manual) to reflect changes to the ACH service type.

Referrals to ACH Hoarding and Squalor services can continue through the My Aged Care assessor portal.

Further information

Training on navigation and access roles and responsibilities, including care finders, will be available from **February 2023** in the MACLearning system.

Please email carefinders@health.gov.au for more information in the meantime.