



Transition of Community Options Australia (COA) clients to Disability Support for Older Australians (DSOA) Program

July 2022

This fact sheet provides information about the cessation of funding arrangements administered through Community Options Australia (COA) and what it will mean for clients after 30 June 2023.

About this fact sheet

From 1 July 2021 the Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA) replaced the CoS Programme.

If you have been receiving a CoS direct-funded package administered through Community Options Australia (COA), you can continue this arrangement until 30 June 2023. Clients on this arrangement are known as 'grand-fathered' clients.

The Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) does not have the authority to continue this funding arrangement beyond 30 June 2023. Clients will be supported through either the DSOA Program or by accessing Aged Care services, dependent upon their individual support requirements.

Can I choose to continue my direct-funding arrangement after 30 June 2023.

No. The Department does not have authority to continue funding these arrangements after 30 June 2023. This is because these arrangements are funded via a grant funding arrangement which expires on 30 June 2023.

Do I need to provide a DSOA Notice and Consent to share personal information with the Department?

Yes. The Department is instituting a new policy in relation to the DSOA Notice and Consent to share personal information form. The Department uses information in this form in order to verify the eligibility of a DSOA client to continue accessing DSOA, in line with the interface with Aged Care.

The DSOA Notice and Consent form can be found [here](#).

What are the benefits for me transitioning to the DSOA Program?

If you opt to transition to the DSOA Program you will:

- Still have choice and control when it comes to the services you access but your DSOA service coordinator will manage your budget, payment of invoices, service coordination and reporting requirements.
- Still have choice and control over your support workers
- Have funding for disability services that is more in line with NDIS pricing
- Be able to access additional supports as your needs change.

Will I need to have an Individual Needs Assessment (I-CAN)?

- You may require an Individual Needs Assessment (I-CAN) in order to ensure that you will receive the best mix of services and supports if you transition to the DSOA Program. Where this is a requirement the Department will fund the I-CAN assessment.
- An I-CAN assessment is undertaken by the Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) and will provide impartial evidence of your disability needs.
- An I-CAN assessment will also indicate whether an Aged Care Assessment (ACAS) is appropriate
- Clients will receive a copy of their I-CAN assessment once complete.

What changes for me when I transition to the DSOA Program?

- The way your funding is administered will change. Instead of receiving cash payments directly, the Department will have a contract with a service provider who will deliver your supports and services.
- The types of supports funded through the DSOA Program differ slightly to the CoS funded arrangements. If you are using your CoS funding for services not provided by the DSOA program, you will need to consider other government funded programs or subsidies.
- Your current living arrangements and support services are not changing unless you need them to.

Can I continue to employ my own workers under the DSOA Program?

No. Instead, your DSOA service coordinator will manage the employment of support workers and can sub-contract service providers to deliver your services. Service providers are required to be NDIS registered under DSOA.

Will I receive the same level of funding?

The I-CAN assessment recommendation will inform your DSOA funded package.

Some supports may need to be met through other commonwealth or state/territory government funded programs if they are not provided by DSOA. Where an Aged Care Assessment is being considered COA should support you to engage My Aged Care in order to determine whether you are eligible for support. In doing so, you should clearly outline to My Aged Care that you are a DSOA client, otherwise you may be found eligible for services that are provided through DSOA.

In the event you accept aged care supports that are delivered through DSOA, it will be taken that you have chosen to transition to aged care services instead of DSOA.

Who will be my DSOA service coordinator?

If you are currently receiving some services from a DSOA funded service coordinator (in addition to your direct funding arrangement) you can choose to consolidate your funding package exclusively with this service provider under the DSOA Program.

You may also like to choose a different DSOA service coordinator. COA will work with you to identify a suitable DSOA service coordinator and the process for putting this into place.

Can I change my DSOA service coordinator?

You can change your DSOA service coordinator any time by contacting your service coordinator or the Community Grants Hub on 1800 048 998.

Can I access additional support under DSOA if my needs change?

Your service coordinator is required to review your supports on an annual basis as a minimum. If your needs change after you have transitioned to DSOA your DSOA service coordinator may submit a Change of Needs application to access more support.

Your DSOA service coordinator will assist you with this process.

What happens if I currently receive supports that are not provided under DSOA?

You will be eligible to access services that are provided by DSOA. If you need to access supports that are not provided by DSOA, COA will provide you with a list of alternative ways to receive these supports from other state or territory government funded programs.

What services are provided by the DSOA Program?

You can find a list of services that are provided by the DSOA Program in the DSOA Program Manual in Section 4.1 DSOA Services and Pricing.

You can find the manual [here](#):

What services are not provided by the DSOA Program?

You can find a list of services that **are not** provided by the DSOA Program in the DSOA Program Manual in Section 4.6 What services are not funded under the DSOA Program:

You can find the manual [here](#):

What Information and services are available to assist clients finding supports?

The DSOA Program Manual provides information on the types of supports funded through the DSOA Program. Information regarding aged care funded services and other state and territory-subsidised programs as well as what should be considered under aged care services. Further information can be found at;

DSOA Program Manual – [DSOA Program Manual](#)

My Aged Care – <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au>

Disability Gateway – <https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au>

Carer Gateway – <https://www.carergateway.gov.au>

What do I need to do next?

COA will contact you to discuss your options. This will likely be as part of your annual review meeting.

Who can I contact for further information?

You can discuss your options further with COA or email commonwealthdsoa@health.gov.au directly with your queries.



Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA)

This fact sheet informs current Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme clients and their families, carers and advocates about the new Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA).

A review of the CoS identified the need to update the Programme to match the National Disability Insurance Scheme's (NDIS) pricing and service delivery rules.

As a result, from 1 July 2021 the Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA) will replace the CoS Programme.

What are the key changes for me?

- You will receive tailored support under an Individual Support Package overseen by a single DSOA service coordinator.
- Funding for disability services under DSOA will be more in line with NDIS pricing and will be nationally consistent across states and territories.
- You can access more support as your needs change.

What are the benefits for me?

Under the DSOA Program you will have:

- Better and more equitable access to services.
- Quality support as your needs change so you can continue to live at home or in assisted care.
- Access to an independent assessment to make sure you receive the best mix of services for your needs.
- Greater transparency and choice when it comes to the support you receive.

What is not changing under the new DSOA Program?

- Your current living arrangements, support services, and support providers are not changing, unless you need them to.
- If you make a financial contribution to your service provider, this arrangement will continue.
- You will be able to transition to aged care services if you need to.

Am I eligible to receive services under the new DSOA Program?

If you are currently receiving support through the CoS Programme, this will continue from 1 July 2021. The DSOA Program will not accept any new clients.

Will I receive the same level of funding?

You will receive the same level of total funding or more for the disability supports that you are currently receiving.

Who will be my DSOA service coordinator?

Under the DSOA Program:

- If you currently only have one CoS service provider, they will be your DSOA service coordinator.
- We'll ask your preference, but if you have more than one CoS service provider, your primary (largest) provider will become your DSOA service coordinator.

Can I change my DSOA service coordinator?

You can change your DSOA service coordinator any time by contacting your service coordinator or the Community Grants Hub on 1800 048 998.

What are the benefits of having a DSOA service coordinator?

Your DSOA service coordinator will manage all of your disability support services and help you access quality care as your needs change.

They will work with you to discuss your goals and planned outcomes and the services available to you, to meet those goals and outcomes.

They will prepare an Individual Support Plan that will outline the support you are entitled to. This includes service and funding levels, providing you with greater transparency.

Can I keep the same service providers under the DSOA Program?

Your DSOA service coordinator can make arrangements with your current service providers to make sure you receive uninterrupted disability support services from 1 July 2021.

Can I access a direct funding arrangement under the DSOA Program?

Only if you have an existing direct funding arrangement in place.

What fees will I pay under the DSOA Program?

You will pay the same fees as you currently pay under the DSOA.

If you do not pay any fees under CoS, you will not have to pay any fees under DSOA.

Can I access additional support under the CoS if my needs change?

Yes. Additional support applications will be accepted until 15 June 2021.

Can I access additional support under DSOA if my needs change?

You can access more support as your needs change under DSOA.

For changes that need \$20,000 or more in additional funding over a 12 month period, you will have an independent assessment to make sure you receive suitable support.

Your DSOA Service Coordinator will assist you with this process.

Can I carryover unspent CoS funds to the DSOA Program?

No, you must spend the funding within each financial year.

What happens if I currently receive supports that are not included under DSOA?

You will continue to receive these support services under the DSOA Program.

What do I need to do next?

You will be contacted and asked to confirm your DSOA service coordinator and provider arrangements before the new program commences.

Who can I contact for further information?

The Community Grants Hub is available to assist on 1800 048 998.



Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA)

This fact sheet informs current Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme direct funded clients about the new Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA).

A review of CoS identified the need to update the Programme to match the National Disability Insurance Scheme's (NDIS) pricing and service delivery rules. As a result, from 1 July 2021 the Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA) will replace the CoS Programme.

If you are currently a direct funded CoS client receiving payment through Community Options Australia (COA), you may continue this arrangement until 30 June, 2023 or choose to transition to the DSOA Program.

To inform client choice the following table outlines the main differences between continuing with direct funding arrangements or transitioning to the DSOA Program.

Table 1. Quick reference comparison

	DSOA Program	Existing Direct Funded
Who will manage the client's funding	The client nominated DSOA service coordinator will facilitate service payments and reporting on the basis of an agreed Individual Support Plan.	The client – but the client's funding will be preserved at the current level (as at June 30 2021).
Individual Support Plan - Client Service Agreement	DSOA service coordinator must agree to an Individual Support Plan with the client or their family, carer, advocate or representative.	The client continues to coordinate and manage their services.
Access to additional funding as needs change	DSOA service coordinators can apply for additional support if there is a change of needs. Requests of \$20,000 and above in a 12 month period are supported by an independent needs assessment. Independent assessments will be funded by the Department of Health.	The client will not be able to access additional funds (as at June 30 2021).
Independent Assessment	Clients transitioning to DSOA are encouraged to undertake an independent assessment	The client will not be able to access independent assessments.

	(facilitated by the Centre for Disability, at the cost of the Department of Health) to ensure the client is receiving the best mix of services for their needs.	
Pricing	Under DSOA, pricing of individual units of service or supports will be better aligned with market pricing and will be consistent across states and territories. See Appendix A – DSOA service and pricing schedule.	The client's funding will be preserved at the current level (as at June 30, 2021).
Client contributions	No change.	No change.
Employment of support workers	DSOA service coordinators should, where possible, organise services being delivered by the service provider/person chosen by the client. If a client prefers a particular support worker to deliver their services, they can ask the DSOA service coordinator to involve that support worker.	The client will continue to manage their staff and services.
Quality and Safeguards	The DSOA service coordinator and other contracted service providers will be required to be registered with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.	The client will continue to employ staff under their own arrangements.
Transition to Aged Care	DSOA clients can access supports under the My Aged Care that are not in-scope for the DSOA Program (such as Community Access). In such instances, they can access these supports simultaneously to DSOA and will not be required to exit to the program.	Where a client has been assessed as eligible for aged care but does not wish to accept aged care supports, the client may choose to remain as a Direct Funded client at their current level of funding.
Aids and Equipment and Transport Costs	State and Territory governments are responsible for supplying aids and equipment to people who are not eligible for the NDIS, including older people. State and territory programs should be exhausted before accessing funds through the DSOA Program.	The client will need to access aids and equipment through their state or territory aids and equipment program.

Home Modifications	Funding for Home Modifications is out of scope under the DSOA Program in all circumstances.	Funding for Home Modifications is out of scope under the DSOA Program in all circumstances.
Carryover of funds	Unspent funds cannot be carried forward and must be returned to the Department of Health.	Unspent funds cannot be carried forward and must be returned to the Department of Health.
Administration fee	A 1% management fee will be made available in addition to the client's budget to DSOA service coordinators.	NB: Service providers could factor in up to 15% of the client's budget to cover administration costs.

Why do client's need a DSOA service coordinator

The DSOA Program supports clients with varying needs.

The objective of a service coordinator is to ensure equitable access to services and support.

A key function is to act as a safeguard to ensure continuity of, and increases in services as client needs change.

Main responsibilities of the DSOA service coordinator include:

- manage and oversee disability support services for each client;
- develop an Individual Support Plan with the client or their carer, advocate or representative;
- deliver disability services directly to the client and/or sub-contract other disability service providers to deliver services under the client's Individual Support Plan as appropriate;
- monitor the client, home environment (where applicable) and appropriateness of service arrangements to ensure the ongoing safety of clients;
- review the services provided to the client annually (or more often as required) to ensure they are meeting the client's changing needs, and review of any Behaviour Support Plans in place;
- organise change of needs applications, including independent assessments, where appropriate;
- manage the administration of grant funding (including meeting all reporting requirements under the DSOA Program); and
- ensure the quality and safeguard requirements of the NDIS Commission are met, including the National Standards for Disability Services.

How do client's chose/change the DSOA service coordinator

If the client is currently receiving support through a CoS service provider (in addition to your direct funding arrangement) the client may be asked whether they would like to consolidate their funding package exclusively with this service provider under the DSOA Program.

COA and the Community Grants Hub will work with the client to identify a suitable DSOA service coordinator.

Clients can change their DSOA service coordinator any time by contacting their service coordinator or the Community Grants Hub on 1800 700 600.

What is an Individual Support Plan?

A comprehensive blueprint which details the client's goals and planned outcomes, which may also include consideration of the needs of the client's carer, and planned supports to achieve the client's goals. It will include:

- planned supports to meet those goals and outcomes including details on pricing, the personnel who will be delivering these services and the method of service delivery – prices detailed in the ISP must be the same as those in the DSOA Service and Pricing Schedule – Appendix A;
- administration arrangements such as frequency and form of statements of budget expenditure;
- planned review dates (at least 12-monthly review of supports are required under DSOA);
- agreed roles and responsibilities of the client and the DSOA service coordinator;
- processes for review of decisions, complaints, and how any issues will be resolved should they arise;
- processes in relation to short notice cancellations by the client (or no show);
- emergency support arrangements (for example for when a service is cancelled or a support worker does not show up to an appointment, illness of the client or their carer, or extreme weather events); and
- a risk-based assessment of safeguards required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the client for unplanned events – such as changes in informal support arrangements, and quality and safeguards regulations and complaints mechanisms that are relevant to both the client and the organisation providing the services.

The Individual Support Plan must be signed by both the client (and their carer, advocate or representative where relevant) and the DSOA service coordinator before the start of service delivery.

What is an independent assessment?

Independent assessments will give impartial evidence of DSOA clients' disability support needs, and ensure clients are getting the right mix of supports. They will be used to guide service provision under the DSOA Program. Independent assessments will also indicate whether an aged care assessment is appropriate for the client's changed circumstances.

The University of Sydney's Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) will undertake assessments for DSOA clients Australia-wide. The CDS has trained and certified allied health professionals and experienced disability needs assessors to undertake these assessments

Assessment costs will be directly covered by the Department.

How do I retain my choice of support services/workers?

DSOA service coordinators can deliver support services directly to clients, and also subcontract other disability service providers to deliver care and services under the client's Individual Support Plan as appropriate.

Clients should encourage their current support workers to engage with the client's chosen service coordinator to become a subcontractor.

Like DSOA service coordinators, subcontractors must be registered with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) under the NDIS Registration group(s) most

relevant to the services provided. For example - DSOA service coordinators need to comply with the workforce screening requirements of the NDIS Commission. All DSOA service coordinators have a responsibility to ensure that all staff, volunteers and executive decision makers delivering DSOA Program services are suitable for the roles they are performing.

The payment of the cost of obtaining relevant documentation such as a police check certificate is a matter for negotiation between the service coordinator and the individual. Individuals may be able to claim the cost of the police check certificate as a work-related expense for tax purposes. More information on this issue is available on the Australian Taxation Office (www.ato.gov.au) website.

What do I need to do next?

COA will contact you to discuss your options. This will likely be as part of your annual review meeting.

Who can I contact for further information?

The Community Grants Hub is available to assist on 1800 700 600.

Who will be my DSOA service coordinator?

If you would like to transition to a DSOA service coordinator, COA and the Community Grants Hub will work with you to identify a service coordinator in your area.

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