



Disability Support for Older Australians (DSOA) Provider Forums – Frequently Asked Questions

In November 2023, the Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) and the Community Grants Hub held DSOA service provider forums.

The forums were an opportunity to discuss and address questions about the new DSOA funding agreements, performance reporting obligations and the transition of identified clients to the in-home aged care system before 31 December 2024.

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1. DSOA Grant Agreements from 1 January 2024

Client transfers

1.1) How do transfers work after the deadline has passed (i.e., if client has not found a new provider yet)?

- Most client transfers are aligned with the DSOA quarterly payments. Therefore, it is possible that any transfers now will be approved for 1 April 2024.
- Please contact your Funding Arrangement Manager (FAM) to discuss the circumstances around any client transfers.

DSOA service and pricing schedule

1.2) Will cross over shifts – that National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) allow us to claim – be considered through the DSOA Program under these new grant agreements?

- The pricing structure and funding arrangements will not change under the new DSOA funding agreements.
- Cross over shifts are not funded under the DSOA Program.

1.3) Will there be any further movement on high intensity rates to align with the NDIS?

- The pricing structure currently aligns to the high intensity rates as defined by the NDIS.
- Funding arrangements will not change under the new DSOA funding agreements.
- The unit prices for DSOA service types are reviewed each financial year, and any changes made will be listed in [Appendix A – DSOA Service and Pricing schedule](#) on the department's website.

1.4) Why are my clients not getting high intensity rates based on their disability or living circumstances?

- The Centre for Disability Studies conduct independent assessments on behalf of the department and they assess the client's support needs in accordance with the [NDIS Practice Standards: High intensity support skills descriptors](#).

1.5) Will there be an increase to the 1% fee providers receive as a result of the additional reporting requirements in our new Grant Agreement?

- The 1% management fee that is paid to DSOA service coordinators will not increase in the new agreements.
- DSOA service coordinators who are compliant with DSOA Program requirements and have up-to-date reporting lodgements should experience minimal administrative burden.
- The new quarterly reporting milestones are designed to prompt DSOA service coordinators with program requirements such as lodgement of client ISPs, Annual Reviews and client exit notifications, etc.

Clients with capped funding under DSOA

1.6) What does it mean if a client is capped?

- Clients that have capped funding will remain on their current services and supports whilst in the DSOA Program. They are ineligible to apply for increased funding through a Change of Needs (CoN) application.
- Any clients with capped funding that require increased supports may need to contact My Aged Care and consider a Home Care Package (HCP) or permanent residential aged care.
- Alternatively, the client may consider how they can access other supports from government subsidised programs such as the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) in addition to their DSOA funded package.
- You can contact your FAM for further information about the types of supports your client may be able to access without impacting DSOA funding.
- The client's funding will still be indexed based on changes to the NDIS prices into the future.

1.7) What will happen with clients that live in Supported Independent Living (SIL) with capped DSOA funding that have been found eligible for a HCP – but the funding levels do not meet their needs living in a 24/7 SIL home?

- The department administers the DSOA Program within financial and policy settings and are obliged to consider efficiencies and effective ways of administering funds that are made available through an Australian Government funded grant.
- You may wish to contact your FAM to discuss options on accessing other supports that can be provided in addition to the clients DSOA funded package.
- Changes made to the DSOA Program are a decision for Government. There is no current consideration of amending the DSOA Program policy.

1.8) What is the difference between capped transition clients, and capped from other reasons?

- Clients who have been identified for the transition to in-home aged care by 31 December 2024 are ineligible for additional DSOA funding in the same way that clients that are on supports in excess of \$50,000 per annum and eligible for permanent residential aged care or a HCP are.
- The majority of the clients who have been identified for transition are already capped because they have already been deemed eligible for a HCP or permanent residential aged care, or are already accessing aged care funded services.
- Clients who have been identified for transition are able to access Commonwealth Home Support Services Programme (CHSP) funded services in addition to their DSOA funded package until the commencement of their HCP.

1.9) If a client has an ACAT assessment completed for the purpose of accessing the Transition Care Programme after a period of hospitalisation will their DSOA funding be capped as a result?

- No. Clients can receive supports funded through the Transition Care Program in addition to their DSOA funded package.
- Please refer to the [DSOA Program Manual](#) and the [Aged Care Services factsheet](#) for further information about the types of services a DSOA client can access from other aged care funded programs in addition to their DSOA funded package.

1.10) How can we find out if a client's funding has been capped?

- You need to ask your client to contact [My Aged Care](#) and determine what types of aged care services they have been found eligible for.
- The department cannot provide this information as we do not have the client's consent to release it.
- If your client or their representative does not recall completing an aged care assessment, they will need to contact [My Aged Care](#) to determine whether they have an existing My Aged Care record and have been deemed eligible for a HCP or permanent residential aged care supports.

Flexibility provisions

1.11) Is there further information on flexibility provisions?

- Your DSOA FAM in the Community Grants Hub will be able to provide you with information on flexibility arrangements.

2. Reporting milestones

2.1) Can the CEO delegate the quarterly reporting task to another member of staff to complete if they are away during this time?

- No, the quarterly provider verification statement must be submitted by an authorised person of the organisation, such as the CEO, COO or the primary contact person listed against the organisation.
- If the CEO is away when the submissions are due, another authorised person of the organisation must submit their response.

1.2) Will the performance report and acquittals be sent out with guidelines on how to complete them?

They usually come back multiple times for corrections as we do not understand how to complete them, especially for clients where we have overspent their budgets.

- If you have any questions regarding your performance report and its requirements, please contact your FAM for assistance.

3. Transition of DSOA clients into the in-home aged care system

3.1) As providers, how are we supposed to drop in-scope clients when there are safety concerns for continuity of care not being thought of (such as deaf clients that require Auslan staff)?

- There should not be an interruption to the client's support arrangements.
- Your client or their representative should contact [My Aged Care](#) to discuss their support needs. If they have already had an assessment and been deemed eligible for a HCP, they should ask for a reassessment.
- If the client is not able to be supported under a HCP, the DSOA service coordinator should write to the CommonwealthDSOA@health.gov.au with supporting documentation to explain the circumstances. The department may consider the request for the client to remain in the DSOA Program.
- The majority of the clients are already accessing CHSP funded services and/or have undertaken an aged care assessment and been deemed eligible for a HCP.
- The client will remain on their DSOA funded arrangement until their HCP commences.
- If needed, a client's provider can assist them to engage with an advocate to help them navigate the in-home aged care system.
- Services Australia offers face-to-face support with Aged Care Specialist Officers so older people can access information about aged care, health and social services in one location. More information about this service is available by contacting Services Australia on 1800 227 475 from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday.
- Clients may also choose to contact the [Older Persons Advocacy Network \(OPAN\)](#) which provides advocacy services. They can be contacted on 1800 700 600 between 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday and 10:00am to 4:00pm on Saturday.

3.2) How do we raise concerns about clients transitioning to My Aged Care? Providers may not be aware of issues until after the transition occurs.

- The HCP Program offers more flexibility with the types of services that are available when compared with the DSOA Program.
- Most in-scope clients will be familiar with assessment process because they have already been assessed for CHSP funded services or been deemed eligible for a HCP.
- Clients will be funded until 31 December 2024 under DSOA whilst they make their arrangements to move onto the in-home aged care system. Should the client be unable to access a HCP by then due to waiting lists, then their DSOA funded package will be extended.
- Services Australia offers face-to-face support with Aged Care Specialist Officers so older people can access information about aged care, health and social services in one

location. More information about this service is available by contacting Services Australia on 1800 227 475 from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

- Clients may also choose to contact the [OPAN](#) which provides advocacy services. They can be contacted on 1800 700 600 between 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday and 10:00am to 4:00pm on Saturday.
- If you have any concerns relating to the support requirements of your clients prior to their transition to the in-home aged care system, please email CommonwealthDSOA@health.gov.au
- Once the client exits DSOA and commences on an in-home aged care funded program, any issues should be raised with the [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission](#) or with [My Aged Care](#)

3.3) Why do providers need to communicate to clients about transitioning out of DSOA?

- The DSOA funding arrangement is between the department and the DSOA service coordinator, not the DSOA client. The department does not have a direct relationship to DSOA clients.
- It is the DSOA service coordinator's responsibility to engage with their clients about their funded support arrangements, however the client can contact the department directly if they wish to by sending an email to CommonwealthDSOA@health.gov.au.

3.4) As our clients have disabilities, it is hard for them to understand why they are being transitioned out. We need consistent information to provide these clients before we are willing to have these conversations with them. Where can I find more information?

- Please refer to the letter sent out by the department and the [DSOA client factsheet](#).
- There is also an [Easy Read version of the client factsheet](#), which has been designed for people with intellectual disability.
- Clients may also choose to contact the [OPAN](#) which provides advocacy services. They can be contacted on 1800 700 600 between 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday and 10:00am to 4:00pm on Saturday.

3.5) When do in-scope clients need to be notified about their transition out of the DSOA Program?

- Clients need to be notified as soon as possible regarding their transition out of the DSOA Program to ensure they have adequate time to contact My Aged Care to arrange an aged care assessment.
- An assessment will determine their eligibility for supports through either the CHSP or a HCP before the 31 December 2024.
- It is the client's DSOA service coordinator's responsibility to contact the clients to notify them of the transition and provide them with the [DSOA client factsheet](#).
- The department does not have a direct relationship with DSOA clients.
- The estimated wait time to be allocated a HCP can exceed 9 months.

- To minimise any delay to services and supports for transitioning clients, we recommend they contact My Aged Care as soon as possible to discuss their transition and options.
- The [latest estimated wait times for HCP](#) can be found on My Aged Care.

3.6) What steps do transitioning clients need to take?

- Please refer to the [client factsheet](#).
- When engaging My Aged Care, clients should advise My Aged Care that the supports they receive under DSOA will cease from 31 December 2024 so that this can be taken into consideration during their assessment.

3.7) If a client has been identified to transition out of the DSOA Program but their disability support requires a higher level of funds than what is available through a HCP, how can they receive increased funding?

- We are only transitioning clients whose individual care needs can be met through the CHSP or with a Level 1-4 HCP.
- Clients have been identified as meeting the criteria to transition into in-home aged care because the services they are receiving can be met through the CHSP or a HCP.
- If an aged care assessment determines that the client's disability needs cannot be supported through in-home aged care system, please email CommonwealthDSOA@health.gov.au advising this and the department will work with you and your client regarding next steps.
- Some of the clients will have already had an aged care assessment and been deemed eligible for a HCP, which means their DSOA funded package is already capped.

3.8) Can transitioning clients remain in the DSOA Program until 31 December 2024?

- Clients will continue to receive DSOA funding until 31 December 2024 or until their HCP commences, whichever comes first.
- When the client commences a HCP, the DSOA service coordinator will need to notify the DSOA Program within 14 days of the client exit.
- Please refer to Clause B4.1.2 [DSOA funding agreement](#) and the clause 7.3 of the [DSOA Program Manual](#).

3.9) DSOA support workers are specially trained for clients with disability needs but in-home aged care support workers are not. Has this been considered for the clients that have been listed to transition out to in-home aged care?

- We are transitioning clients whose individual care needs can be met through the CHSP or with a Level 1-4 HCP.
- If an aged care assessment determines that the client's disability care needs cannot be supported through in-home aged care system, the client will remain in DSOA.

4. Contacts and more information

Client advocacy

4.1) How does a client get advocacy services?

- Clients can contact the following organisations to enquire about advocacy services available to them.
 - The Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) via info@dana.org.au
 - The Disability Advocacy Support Helpline via thehelpline@advocacylaw.org.au
 - OPAN on 1800 700 600 to be connected to a local advocate.

Community Newsletter subscription

4.2) What is the link to subscribe to the DSOA community newsletter?

- To keep up to date with any DSOA Program news, please [register for the DSOA community newsletter via this link](#).
- We also encourage you to subscribe to the [aged care sector newsletter and alerts](#).

DSOA Program and Funding Arrangement Manager

4.3) Where can I find more information about DSOA and who can I contact?

- If you have any questions or require further information regarding clients transitioning to aged care, please contact CommonwealthDSOA@health.gov.au
- If your questions relate to the new quarterly milestone reporting, please contact DSOAcpliance@health.gov.au
- If your questions relate to a Change of Needs application, please contact DSOAchangeofneed@health.gov.au
- If you have any other questions, in the first instance you should contact your DSOA FAM in the Community Grants Hub via the relevant state or territory jurisdiction email below:

State/territory	Email
New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory:	nswact.DSOA@dss.gov.au
Northern Territory:	nt.DSOA@dss.gov.au
Queensland:	qld.DSOA@dss.gov.au
South Australia:	sa.DSOA@dss.gov.au
Tasmania:	tas.DSOA@dss.gov.au
Victoria:	vic.DSOA@dss.gov.au
Western Australia:	wa.DSOA@dss.gov.au