



Appendix F – Guide to the National Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) Client Contribution Framework

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1. Purpose of this guide

This guide aims to support CHSP providers to establish client contribution arrangements that align to the CHSP Client Contribution Framework (the Framework). The Framework can be found in the [CHSP Manual](#) and outlined below in [Section 2](#).

Clients can also use this guide to understand the CHSP client contribution arrangements.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to client contribution arrangements across the CHSP and providers can flexibly implement the Framework to best meet their clients and their organisational needs.

This guide outlines key areas of consideration that providers can address when establishing their client contribution arrangements.

This guide should be used in conjunction with the CHSP Manual to assist providers setting their contribution arrangements and for consumers to better understand contribution arrangements when choosing a service provider.

2. National CHSP Client Contribution Framework

2.1 Framework objectives

Under the Framework, the department expects that CHSP providers charge client contributions where clients can afford to do so.

Providers are required to have a documented and publicly available client contribution policy in place that aligns to this Framework and balances the following objectives:

- **To move towards national fairness and consistency in client contributions:**
Providers should collect contributions if they are not already doing so. Providers need to disclose their contribution policy across their range of services and agree contribution amounts with clients in advance of care being provided. The client contribution framework for the provision of CHSP services provides an opportunity to address a number of inconsistencies and financial anomalies inherent in the existing fees and charges for services provided to assist clients to remain in their own homes.
- **Improve the sustainability of the CHSP:**
Providers who have not previously required clients to make a contribution for their services must have in place a contribution policy with a view to supporting ongoing service delivery and using the additional revenue to expand their services.
- **Provide appropriate safeguards for financially disadvantaged clients:**
Client contribution policies should ensure that those least able to contribute towards the cost of their care are protected.

2.2 Client contribution principles

Client contribution policies for providing CHSP services should incorporate the following principles:

1. **Consistency:** All clients who can afford to contribute to the cost of their care should do so. Client contributions should not exceed the actual cost of service provision.
2. **Transparency:** Policies should be in an accessible format and publicly available. CHSP providers should give a copy of and explain their policy to all new and existing clients.
3. **Hardship:** Policies should include arrangements for clients who are unable to pay the requested contribution.
4. **Reporting:** Providers should report the dollar amount collected from client contributions, as per the CHSP Grant Agreement.
5. **Fairness:** Policies should take into account the client's capacity to pay and should not exceed the actual cost to deliver the services. In administering this, providers need to take into account partnered clients, clients in receipt of compensation payments and bundling of services.
6. **Sustainability:** Revenue from client contributions should be used to support ongoing service delivery and expand the services that providers are currently funded to deliver.

2.3 Exclusions from the Framework

The following CHSP activities and services are specifically excluded from the Framework as contributions do not apply:

- Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) Hoarding & Squalor
- Sector Support and Development (SSD) activities.

3. Client contribution arrangements

CHSP providers will determine the fee to charge clients as part of their business operations, and all providers are required to have a client contribution arrangement.

There is no formal means testing for CHSP fees. When determining their fee schedule, providers need to consider a range of factors, such as the business cost drivers and socio-economic circumstances of their CHSP clients.

This means that CHSP fee charging arrangements vary across the country and from client to client. Depending on where they live, clients of a similar age with similar support needs may pay different client fees for the same services.

4. CHSP reasonable client contributions

The reasonable client contribution ranges are provided as a guide and may not be suitable for all client contribution policies.

Providers should implement their own client contribution policy with a view that clients who can afford to contribute to the cost of their care should do so.

See [Appendix G](#) for the reasonable client contribution range for each CHSP service type.

5. Operational considerations

5.1 Organisational approach

The Framework has been designed to be flexible enough to accommodate a range of structures, operations and systems in providing care to CHSP clients.

Providers who are already charging client contributions may not need to make significant changes to their business operations and systems. For other providers, this may be a different approach from how they have operated in the past.

Organisation type

An organisation's mission and structure can have an impact on how they choose to operationalise the Framework. Understanding these considerations before implementing the Framework will help align approaches to the organisation's mission, principles and ethos.

For example, the type of organisation (e.g. charitable, private, for-profit, government) will influence the approach to business and approach to setting fees or contributions.

Introducing contributions

Some CHSP providers, for example organisations who are predominantly government funded, may not have existing contribution arrangements in place. This Framework should prompt these organisations to plan changes to their client contribution arrangements and consider how to manage and communicate these changes to clients.

How to collect and report client contributions

Providers should consider their organisation's approach to collecting and recording client contributions. To successfully implement the Framework, providers should determine early what mechanisms are currently in place, or what mechanisms are appropriate.

The Framework is designed to be very flexible so the principles can align to existing business practices. Whether administration is centralised or dispersed through staff and volunteers. For example, an organisation that has volunteers in direct engagement with clients may choose not to ask volunteers to collect contributions.

Example 1: Purple Cross

Purple Cross is a charitable organisation that operates in a low socio-economic area of New South Wales providing transport services.

The Purple Cross Board implements the Framework by asking their clients to make a donation towards the cost of services. The Board is not sure if the approach will bring in much revenue but have plans to expand their support to a neighbouring town and think the small offset by clients may achieve this. Purple Cross writes to all their clients introducing the arrangement and makes information available on their website.

To their surprise, most clients are happy to donate. Some donations are a gold coin, others are more substantial. The donations vary depending on the client circumstances and capacity to pay on a given week.

The extra revenue from these donations allows Purple Cross to expand their services to the neighbouring community.

5.2 Business practices

CHSP providers will need to consider how client contributions and the Framework align to day-to-day business practices. The Framework provides adequate flexibility for providers to decide which approach is best suited to the organisation.

CHSP providers should consider some of the core elements of the business when introducing new (or changes to) client contribution arrangements.

CHSP service delivery

The nature of the services and how they are delivered will impact the contribution arrangements. For example, providers may deliver services directly or through a third party. Depending on this arrangement, the approach to contribution arrangements could vary from a direct contribution to a voucher system that offsets the cost of the service (e.g. home maintenance).

Providers should also consider how services are delivered to determine the appropriate arrangement. Factors to consider include:

- face-to-face or remote (e.g. phone based or online)
- time period (e.g. hourly rates)
- ongoing or episodic.

Some services will be easier to apply a contribution level to than others. For example, a service that is time based may have an hourly based contribution, while episodic services may need a simple annual subscription.

Businesses cost drivers

Providers should consider the cost to deliver certain services and how much of this is supported through grant funding and other revenue streams. Understanding cost drivers is important, particularly if providers need to client contributions to support ongoing sustainability of service delivery.

Use of client contributions

While the contributions will go towards expanding service delivery, providers may like to consider where the greatest demand for additional service delivery is and plan for this. Providers may also like to engage their clients to involve them in this decision.

Example 2 – Community Care Inc

Community Care Inc is a service that has operated for many years in Queensland. The business currently only collects about 8% of their grant funding in client contributions.

To be able to deliver more services in their local area, the organisation is considering ways to increase the client contribution rate, including:

- charging a contribution amount for their weekly indoor bowls sessions
- making a small increase to the membership fees currently paid by clients who access activities in the day centre
- offering a discount to clients who can pay in advance or on time.

Example 3 – Keeping in Touch

Keeping in Touch provides monitoring services for CHSP clients living alone.

Most of their clients find it difficult to balance their often-small disposable income across all the cost-of-living expenses but value the security and comfort of having regular contact via the monitoring service.

Keeping in Touch understands they need clients to contribute but worry that introducing formal client contribution arrangements will be an administrative burden.

Keeping in Touch introduces an annual subscription. They have the flexibility to offer a range of payment options and a lower subscription amount for pensioners.

5.3 Understanding client profiles

The Framework is aimed at supporting clients who can afford to contribute towards the cost of their care to do so, while protecting those most vulnerable. To achieve this, it is important that providers understand their client base and how contributions should be applied.

Providers should apply the principles of consistency, transparency and fairness in the client contribution arrangements.

Financial status

Providers should consider the balance of financial circumstances in their client base, such as pensioners, clients on a low income and self-funded retirees.

This will help to determine how to apply the Framework in a way that is fair and encourages clients with the capacity to contribute towards the cost of their care to do so.

For example, if clients are predominantly pensioners, providers may establish a simple single contribution rate for all clients. If there is a broader cross section of clients, a tiered contribution model may be more appropriate.

Socio-economic circumstances

Providers should consider the socio-economic factors within their local service area when setting client contributions. The Framework allows for providers to have flexible arrangements to meet their client's needs.

Depending on client circumstances, providers can choose an appropriate approach, such as:

- set contribution rate
- voluntary contribution
- one off weekly or monthly contributions
- bundling services (see [6.3](#)) that don't impact on the level of service delivery.

Engaging new clients

Providers should consider how they will engage with new clients and consult on fee arrangements.

If providers change their contribution arrangements, they should allow sufficient time for clients to adjust to the changes.

Communicating to clients

Providers should have a copy of the client contribution policy available on their website or be made available on request.

Providers should discuss client contributions with clients and ensure all information is appropriate, clear and simple to understand. Providers should talk to their clients about contributions and what it means for them. The communication method may depend on the type of service. For example, if services are delivered mostly via telephone, sending written material will be more appropriate.

Providers should put arrangement in place for clients to make enquiries about the new arrangements or to get involved.

6. Additional considerations

6.1 Couples

Client contribution arrangements only apply to CHSP clients. If a client lives with a person (e.g. partner, spouse) who is not a CHSP client, the provider cannot ask the non-client to also contribute for services, such as cleaning and gardening services, delivered in the home.

Where both individuals living together are CHSP clients, they should not be asked to contribute separately. For example, if a 1-hour cleaning service is provided to a couple in their home, the contribution amount should reflect only 1-hour (not 1-hour per client).

6.2 Compensation clients

If a CHSP client has received (or is receiving) a compensation payment that is intended to cover some (or all) of the costs of home-based care and services, service providers should request the full cost of the service/s.

In compensation cases, service providers should liaise closely with the client or their representative regarding the cost of services.

6.3 Multiple service access (bundling)

Providers should make it clear how they will apply client contribution arrangements for multiple services. For example, clients may be expected to contribute for each instance of a service they receive, subject to their capacity to pay. Where multiple services are provided concurrently, it may be appropriate to 'bundle' the contribution amounts for the cost of these activities. This ensures contributions are fair and not prohibitive.

For example, where a client receives an hour of social support, a meal at this activity as well as transport to and from, they may be unable to pay the relevant amount for each individual service type delivered through that one instance of social support. The provider should clarify in the documented client contribution arrangements where bundling will be allowed.

Where a client receives services from more than one service provider concurrently, providers are expected to liaise with each other in respect to client contribution amounts. This ensures clients receiving multiple services are appropriately accommodated and not disadvantaged.