



Fact sheet: Participation in the 24/7 registered nurse trial for Multi-Purpose Services (MPS)

Background

- In response to Recommendation 86 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Australian Government identified that staffing levels are vital to the quality of residential care and implemented 24/7 registered nurse (RN) arrangements in mainstream residential aged care facilities as of 1 July 2023.
- The Government's policy intent is that 24/7 RN coverage for residential care becomes the standard across the sector, including in MPS. Nevertheless, it also recognises the specific challenges faced by services in rural and remote areas in recruiting and retaining registered nurses.
- The MPS Working Group, established by the Intergovernmental Health and Aged Care Senior Officials Group (SOG), comprising Commonwealth, state and territory representatives, agreed to a proposed timeline for the trialling of 24/7 RN in MPS. This proposed timeline was subsequently agreed in-principle by the SOG in April 2024.

What is the purpose of the 24/7 RN trial for MPS?

The purpose of the trial is to work collaboratively with MPS providers to:

- provide assurance and recognition of MPS providers that already have RNs available on site and on duty 24/7
- facilitate real time assessment of barriers to compliance for providers
- consider any necessary exemptions for smaller MPS providers and/or other adjustments to policy settings to reflect the integrated health and aged care environment in which MPS operates
- test existing 24/7 reporting in an MPS context to determine if adjustments are required prior to full implementation, including options for streamlined, online reporting where required
- develop an evidence base for any additional funding required to sustain compliance (**note:** no additional funding is currently available, see discussion below).

What are the timeframes for the trial?

The trial will be phased – with only nominated MPS trial sites to participate in Phase 1 (July – December 2024).

Phase 1 will commence with a ‘soft launch’ to ensure participating trial sites have a shared understanding of trial requirements before formal trial activities commence. Subject to initial trial results:

- a broader trial for all MPS will commence in January 2025 (Phase 2), and
- formal implementation will be considered for on or after 1 July 2025.

What are the governance arrangements for the trial?

A MPS Reform Implementation Sub Working Group (SWG) will be established comprising representatives from all states and territories at a provider level. This SWG will report to the MPS Working Group.

How would our MPS be supported throughout the trial?

Each MPS participating in Phase 1 of the trial will be:

- provided with a pack of guidance materials
- visited or contacted by the MPS team from the Department of Health and Aged Care during Phase 1
- provided with ongoing support via the MPS team to all participating trial sites through multiple communication channels, including email, phone, and the provision of additional support materials where required.

Would our trial site receive any funding to participate in the trial?

- There is currently no additional funding in place to support MPS providers participating in the trial or complying with 24/7 nursing requirement (that is, MPS providers remain ineligible for the 24/7 RN supplement).
- This is because given existing RN resources available in an integrated health and aged care context, it was anticipated that additional funding may not be appropriate.
- However, as noted above, the 24/7 MPS trial will identify whether this assumption is correct and where applicable build an evidence base for future consideration.

What will participating in the 24/7 trial involve?

- Meeting with staff from the MPS team to discuss the trial.
- Completing required 24/7 trial reporting templates and submitting them to the MPS team (i.e. a report for August [Round 1] and for October [Round 2 TBC]).
- Providing suggestions, advice and feedback on elements of the Phase 1 trial to be incorporated into the Phase 2 trial.
- Participating in the Reform Implementation SWG, unless it is agreed you will be represented by other participating sites in your jurisdiction.
- For sites that identify challenges with compliance, commence initial discussions regarding scope of required exemptions (to be further tested in Phase 2).

What are the benefits to our MPS in participating in the trial?

- By participating in the 24/7 trial, your facility will help the Department with testing and refining the 24/7 RN model for MPS and will be able to influence the final model to ensure it is fit for purpose in an MPS setting.

Who do I contact for more information?

- Initially, reach out to your state/territory health department to express interest in participating in the trial.
- For questions relating to the trial you may contact the Department's MPS team via mpsreforms@health.gov.au