



Disability Support for Older Australians (DSOA) Service Coordinator Forums August 2024 – Frequently Asked Questions

In August 2024, the Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) and the Community Grants Hub held DSOA service coordinator forums.

The forums were an opportunity to discuss and address questions about the debt recovery process, 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. Program requirements

1.1. Why is there so much reporting needed for a small program like DSOA?

- The DSOA Program is a grant program and its administration must meet the [Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines](#).
- The information you provide through documentation including your client's [Individual Support Package \(ISP\)](#), [Change of Needs application](#) and annual review help with evaluation of DSOA.

1.2. What is the difference between an ISP and annual review? Why do we need to complete both?

- The purpose of an ISP and annual review are different and must be recorded separately.
- An ISP is a record that you have spoken to your client about the services they are funded for under the DSOA Program.
 - Knowing the services and the funding available helps your client to make an informed decision should they wish to make a temporary or permanent change to their DSOA package to suit their needs.
 - You can watch a [video on how to complete an ISP](#).
 - You are required to submit a copy of your client's ISP every 12 months to the department at DSOAcpliance@health.gov.au. Submit the ISP sooner if the client has had a change to their supports or funding levels.
 - The ISP will be reviewed to ensure your client is receiving the supports they are funded for and to verify all supports provided are in scope of the DSOA Program.
- An annual review is an assessment of any changes to your client's disability support needs, which can include interviews or reports from support workers and allied health professionals.
 - Completing an annual review of your client's current needs can help reduce the risk of an incident occurring and will support a Change of Needs application.
 - The requirement to complete an annual review for your client has been a condition of your grant agreement since the DSOA Program commenced on 1 July 2021.
 - You are required to submit a copy of your client's annual review outcome every 12 months to the department at DSOAcpliance@health.gov.au.

1.3. If we have used funding from one service to provide additional outputs in another service, why can't we report delivery of services as a package, rather than individual line items in the performance report?

- Clients are funded based on their support needs. If you need to change the mix of supports for your client, you can submit a temporary or permanent change request

with your Funding Arrangement Manager. This can then be reflected in your performance report.

- Performance reports are assessed against each line item of funding that appears in your client funding breakdown (CFB), DSOA service coordinators must report against each line item individually as per the template provided to your organisation.

1.4. Do I need to seek approval to use funding flexibly within the same service type?

- Clients are funded for outputs for each service type, across different rates.
- DSOA service coordinators must seek approval to use funding flexibly, including within the same service types but different time or day of week.
- This will assist with the assessment and reconciliation of your acquittal report and performance report.

1.5. Why can't the reporting process be streamlined instead of having different touchpoints and duplicating information?

- The Community Grants Hub manages your grant agreement on behalf of the department. They assess performance reports and acquittal reports. These reports are about how your organisation has spent DSOA funding and delivered services.
- The reports you submit to the department such as the ISP, annual review and Quarterly Provider Verification Statement are client focussed and report on how your clients are accessing their DSOA funding.

1.6. Is there an overview of all reports, deadlines and requested reporting data required?

Report	Due date	Requirements
Quarterly Provider Verification Statement (QPVS)	31 July, 31 October, 31 January and 30 April every year	<p>We send the link to complete the QPVS to the primary contact person in your organisation to complete each quarter.</p> <p>Your next quarterly payment will be held if you do not complete the QPVS.</p> <p>The QVPS helps with timely reporting of underspends and clients exits, which can reduce the underspent funds you will need to repay at the end of the financial year.</p>
Individual Support Plan (ISP)	Annually	<p>You must complete an ISP annually with your client and submit a copy to the department by email to dsoacompliance@health.gov.au within 10 days of the client signing.</p> <p>The ISP must be updated if the client has a change to their support needs or a change to their funding levels.</p> <p>An ISP is record you have spoken to your client about the services they are funded for under the DSOA Program. It will help the client to make an informed decision should they want to change their mix of services temporarily or permanently.</p> <p>If the department does not have a current copy of your client's ISP, it may result in your quarterly payment being held or a delay in considering a Change of Needs application.</p>

Report	Due date	Requirements
		<p>The department will review your client's ISP</p> <p>For further instructions, refer to the Individual Support Package form instructional video and Appendix C - How to fill out the ISP template.</p>
Annual review	Annually	<p>An annual review is an assessment which can include interviews or reports from support workers and allied health professionals on your client's needs.</p> <p>You must submit a copy of your client's Annual Review to dsoacompliance@health.gov.au within 10 days of being completed.</p> <p>If the department does not have a current copy of your client's Annual Review it may result in your quarterly payment being held or a delay in considering a Change of Need application.</p> <p>Completing an Annual Review of your client's needs can help reduce the risk of an incident occurring and will support a Change of Need application.</p>
Performance report	Annually (31 August)	<p>Your performance report is due 31 August each year.</p> <p>Each line item must have a comment if you are reporting a delivery that is less than or exceeds 100% delivery for that item. Comments can be repeated if applicable.</p> <p>Your performance report will be reconciled against your acquittal report.</p> <p>Performance reports must be submitted to your Funding Arrangement Manager.</p> <p>Your quarterly payment may be held if your performance report is not submitted by 31 August.</p>
Financial acquittal report	Annually (31 August)	<p>Your financial acquittal report is due 31 August each year.</p> <p>Acquittal reports should be submitted to doh.acquittals@communitygrants.gov.au</p> <p>All unspent funds must be declared and will need to be repaid to the department, DSOA Service coordinators must quarantine all unspent funds reported, so that funds are available to repay to the department.</p> <p>Your acquittal report will be reconciled against your performance report.</p> <p>Your quarterly payment may be held if your acquittal report is not submitted by 31 August.</p>

1.7. Why hasn't my client's DSOA funding increased with the July 2024 indexation? Which service types did not have a price increase in July 2024?

- Please refer to the [July 2024 issue of the DSOA Community Newsletter](#) for information on which service types had a price increase this financial year.
- Clients who are funded for Extended Continuity of Support (CoS) services only are not subject to indexation.
 - Extended CoS services is a grandfathered service so funding remains at the same level from the commencement of the DSOA Program 1 July 2021.
- DSOA gap funding is not subject to indexation.
 - Any additional funding the client receives such as indexation or an approved Change of Needs application will be deducted from DSOA gap funding.

1.8. Can unspent DSOA funding be carried into the next financial year?

- All unspent DSOA funding will need to be declared in your acquittal and performance report and repaid to the department, this includes DSOA gap funding.
- No unspent funding can be carried over to future funding periods.

1.9. Can Extended CoS services funding be used for non face-to-face supports?

- Extended CoS services funding must be used for face-to-face supports.

2. Change of Need applications

2.1. Is there a maximum funding amount I can apply for in a Change of Needs application?

- There is no minimum or maximum funding amount.
- The additional supports your client requires should be supported by their annual review and other evidence such as allied health reports or hospital reports.
- As outlined in Section 3.3 of the [DSOA Program Manual](#), the level of evidence provided with a Change of Needs application depends on what supports are requested and the amount of additional funding the client requires to meet their change in need. The more funding requested, the greater the amount of supporting evidence required to justify the request.
- You can watch a [video on how to complete a Change of Need application](#).

2.2. What is the timeframe for Change of Need application assessments including independent assessment?

- The time it takes for the department to finalise a Change of Needs application depends on several factors, including:
 - the complexity of the application
 - whether an [Independent Assessment](#) is required
 - the priority of other assessments in line for review.

- If the Change of Needs application has been accepted by the department, an indicative assessment timeframe can be provided on request.

2.3. My client needs therapy support. Can they access therapy through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) if they are eligible or can they access therapy through DSOA with evidence of need?

- Please refer to Section 3.6 of the [DSOA Program Manual](#) and the [DSOA and aged care services provider fact sheet](#) to see which aged care services will impact your client's DSOA funding.

3. Transition of DSOA clients to in-home aged care

3.1. The Home Care Package (HCP) level my client has been assigned is not enough to support their needs. Can they decline the HCP and ask for a re-assessment?

- If your client believes the HCP level they have been assigned will not be enough to support their needs, your client or their representative should contact [My Aged Care](#) to discuss their support needs.
- Please refer to the July 2024 letter, which provided an update on where your client is up to in their transition to in-home aged care and what they need to do before 31 December 2024.
- It is important your client understands their DSOA funding will not be extended after 31 December 2024 if they do not take the action detailed in the July 2024 letter.
- When your client commences a HCP, you will need to notify the department within 14 days of the client exit.
- Please refer to Clause B4.1.2 [DSOA funding agreement](#) and Section 3.8 of the [DSOA Program Manual](#).

3.2. My client does not want to transition to a HCP. Can they stay in DSOA?

- Your client will continue to receive DSOA funding until 31 December 2024. Your client was 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.
- Please refer to the letter sent July 2024, which outlines where your client is up to in their transition journey and what they need to do before 31 December 2024.
- It is important your client understands their DSOA funding will not be extended after 31 December 2024 if they do not take the action detailed in the July 2024 letter.

3.3. How do I know if my client is required to transition to in-home aged care?

- We are only transitioning clients who live at home and 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.
- The department sent letters to impacted DSOA service coordinators in November 2023, May 2024 and July 2024 with information about the clients who have been identified to transition to the in-home aged care system.

- Your CFB also shows which DSOA clients are only funded until 31 December 2024.
- Please refer to the [transition of some Disability Support for Older Australians clients into aged care factsheet](#).

3.4. My client won't be receiving the same support with in-home aged care as they are under DSOA such as personal care. What can they do?

- The HCP Program offers more flexibility with the types of services that are available when compared to the DSOA Program.
- Clients can visit the [My Aged Care website to learn about the HCP Program](#) or call [My Aged Care](#) to find out how they access the services they need with their HCP.

3.5. If the July 2024 price increase has pushed a client's DSOA funding over \$50k, will they still need to transition to in-home aged care?

- Yes, your client will need to transition to in-home aged care.

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.
 - Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) via info@dana.org.au
 - Disability Advocacy Support Helpline via thehelpline@advocacylaw.org.au
 - [Older Persons Advocacy Network \(OPAN\)](#) on 1800 700 600 to connect to a local advocate.

DSOA Community Newsletter subscription

4.2. How do I subscribe to the DSOA community newsletter?

- To keep up to date with any DSOA Program news, please [register for the DSOA community newsletter](#).
- 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 questions or need more information about clients transitioning to aged care, please contact CommonwealthDSOA@health.gov.au
- If you have questions about the new quarterly milestone reporting, please contact DSOAcompliance@health.gov.au
- If you have questions about 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 Funding Arrangement Manager 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