On 12 April 2020, the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians and Minister for Youth and Sport, Senator The Hon Richard Colbeck, announced additional workforce contingency measures to ensure continuity of aged care during COVID-19.

The measures include:

- Access to a Temporary Surge Workforce, through the online platform Mable, to help providers if they are unable to fill critical skills because of infection or staff having to self-isolate
- New Emergency Response Teams which are on standby, through Aspen Medical, if there’s a significant outbreak in a residential aged care facility
- Remote Locums, available through Aspen Medical, to support aged care providers in remote Australia if they are unable to source staff.

This is in addition to the COVID-19 Aged Care Support Program, established to reimburse expenses due to direct impact of COVID-19.

Further detailed information on each measure is provided below.
Temporary Surge Workforce Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved provider of:</td>
<td>• Directly impacted by COVID-19</td>
<td>• Inform the Department of Health of your Covid-19 case or outbreak at <a href="mailto:agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au">agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exhausted all other recruitment avenues</td>
<td>• Contact My Aged Care Provider and Assessor Hotline 1800 836 799 who issue a referral to Mable following screening and eligibility checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Residential aged care</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• NATSIFACP</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Home Care Packages</td>
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</table>

What is the Temporary Surge Workforce Support?
If you are experiencing a case or outbreak of COVID-19 you may be eligible for additional workforce support.

Mable, an online workforce platform provider, has been engaged by the Department to help eligible approved aged care providers directly impacted by COVID-19 to find skilled workforce to fill critical gaps or shortage.

Eligible approved aged care providers will be able to engage the required workforce for up to four (4) weeks initially. The Government will pay the costs of eligible approved aged care providers for engaging the workforce through Mable.

This is designed to fill an immediate gap while the aged care provider finds a longer-term solution, which includes staff returning from isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19.

Who is eligible?
The following Commonwealth funded approved aged care providers with one or more services directly impacted by COVID-19 are eligible:

• Residential Aged Care;
• National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP); and
• Home Care Package providers.

Directly impacted means services with one or more COVID-19 infected or isolated residents / clients / staff.

Providers must have exhausted their existing resource recruitment channels before they are eligible to access funded workforce support.
For example, if a home care package provider urgently needs a personal care worker to deliver in home care services, or a residential provider requires a registered nurse and they have been unable to find a resource(s) using their existing channels, they can use this service to get an appropriately skilled person to deliver the services they need.

**How do I access surge workforce support?**

Eligible approved aged care providers experiencing a case or outbreak of COVID-19 must first let the Department of Health know by emailing agedcarecovidcases@health.gov.au

Eligible approved aged care providers can then access the Temporary Surge Workforce Support through the **My Aged Care Provider and Assessor Helpline on 1800 836 799.**

My Aged Care will determine the provider’s eligibility for this support and will provide directions to the provider on how to access funded workforce support through Mable.

**Can I get access workers from Mable if my service is not directly impacted by COVID-19?**

If an aged care provider is not directly impacted by COVID-19 they are not eligible to access funded Temporary Surge Workforce Support.

Aged care providers can still access workforce via Mable. Providers can go directly to the Mable website: https://mable.com.au and find workers in their local area who may be available for a variety of roles.

Providers who are not impacted by COVID-19 will be responsible for paying for all costs associated with engaging workers.
Emergency Response Teams (ERT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Approved provider of: | • Significantly and directly impacted by COVID-19  
• No longer have capacity or capability to deliver quality care due to COVID-19 | • Inform the Department of Health of your Covid-19 case or outbreak at agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au.  
• Departmental officer will be in contact with all providers directly impacted by COVID-19 and will deploy Aspen Medical ERT if assessed as needed |

What is an Emergency Response Team or ERT?
Aspen Medical has been engaged by the Department to deploy Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) where intensive and critical support is required by an approved residential aged care provider who no longer has the capacity or capability to continue delivering aged care services due to the impact of COVID-19.

Who is eligible?
Commonwealth funded approved residential aged care providers with one or more services significantly and directly impacted by COVID-19.

For example, this may include:
• a significant proportion of staff (eg. 50%) are infected or isolated due to COVID-19; and/or
• a significant number of residents are infected by COVID-19 or the spread of infection cannot be contained; and/or
• senior management (eg. CEO, Director of Nursing or other senior managers) are infected or isolated due to COVID-19 and are unable to continue to operate or provide quality care to residents.

How do I access an Emergency Response Team?
Let the Department of Health know that you are experiencing a case or outbreak of COVID-19 via agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au

Where a provider is significantly and directly impacted by COVID-19, a departmental officer will contact the residential aged care provider to discuss what support might be needed. If the Department assesses the provider is in critical need, the departmental officer will seek the deployment of an ERT.
Once this is activated, a Nurse Responder will contact the residential aged care provider to provide advice and support immediately over the phone and be on site within 24 hours (subject to travel time).

Once on site, the Nurse Responder will assess the situation at the facility with facility management to determine workforce requirements and arrange for appropriate staff to be deployed for an initial period of sixteen days.

This will allow the provider to continue delivering quality aged care services and to work on establishing longer-term strategies.

Remote Locum Workforce Support

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved providers of:</td>
<td>• Directly affected by COVID-19</td>
<td>• Inform the Department of Health of your Covid-19 case or outbreak at <a href="mailto:agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au">agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Residential aged care</td>
<td>• Exhausted all other usual recruitment avenues</td>
<td>• Departmental officer will be in contact with all providers directly impacted by COVID-19 and will seek Aspen to deploy remote locums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NATSIFACP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Home Care Packages, who operate in remote locations</td>
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What is Remote Locum Workforce Support?
Aspen Medical received funding from the Australia Government Department of Health to have pre-qualified and trained staff available for approved aged care providers in remote locations directly impacted by COVID-19. This will enable providers to access Remote Locum Workforce Support in the event that they are unable to find staff through their usual channels.

Who is eligible?
The following Commonwealth funded approved aged care providers operating in remote locations with one or more services directly impacted by COVID-19 are eligible:

- Residential Aged Care;
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP); and
- Home Care Package providers.

Directly impacted means services with one or more COVID-19 infected or isolated residents/clients/staff.
How do I access Remote Locum Workforce Support?
Let the Department of Health know that you are experiencing a case or outbreak of COVID-19 via agedcarecovidcases@health.gov.au

Where a provider providing services in a remote location is directly impacted by COVID-19, a departmental officer will contact the provider to discuss what support might be needed. If the Department assesses that the provider may need access to remote locums, they will seek support from Aspen to identify and deploy suitable locums.

COVID-19 Aged Care Support Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How to access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved provider of:</td>
<td>Reimbursement of expenses due to direct impact</td>
<td>Application form available on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential aged care</td>
<td>of COVID-19 once direct COVID-19 impacts are</td>
<td>GrantsConnect: <a href="http://www.grants.gov.au">www.grants.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATSIFACP</td>
<td>resolved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Care Packages</td>
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What is the COVID-19 Aged Care Support Program?
The COVID-19 Aged Care Support Program is a grant program that will reimburse eligible aged care providers for eligible expenditure incurred for managing direct impacts of COVID-19. The Program will run over 2 years from 2019-20 to 2020-21.

Who is eligible?
The following Commonwealth funded approved aged care providers with one or more services directly impacted by COVID-19 are eligible:

- Residential Aged Care;
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP); and
- Home Care Package providers.

Directly impacted means services with one or more COVID-19 infected or isolated residents/clients/staff in the period between 24 February 2020 and 31 May 2021.

Who is not eligible?
You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- an approved Residential, NATSIFACP or Home Care Package provider who plans and prepares to manage COVID-19 but does not experience a direct impact;
- an approved Residential, NATSIFACP, or Home Care Package provider with Business Interruption Insurance including COVID-19 coverage;
• an approved Residential Aged Care provider that is not directly impacted but has experienced a decline in the rate of entry resulting in reduced occupancy rates and financial viability issues;

Other providers not eligible to apply are:

• a Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) service. Other assistance is available for CHSP providers.
• a State Government funded and/or operated approved Residential, Flexible or Home Care Package provider; and
• a non-approved aged care service provider.

When can I apply?
The grant can only be applied for when the direct COVID-19 impacts on a service are resolved, that is, no infected or isolated residents, staff members or clients.

The grant is open now and the application form can be accessed at GrantsConnect: https://www.grants.gov.au