



COVID-19 & THE CHSP – INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS

03/09/2020

What is the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)?

The CHSP is an entry-level home support program. It helps people over 65 years old to live safe and independent lives in their own homes and communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over 50 years are also eligible for the CHSP.

The CHSP funds a number of subsidised services to help older Australians, including:

- domestic assistance (such as house cleaning and linen services)
- transport
- meals
- personal care
- home maintenance (including gardening)
- home modifications
- goods, equipment and assistive technology
- social support
- nursing
- allied health and therapy services.

The CHSP also supports people who are caring for older Australians through planned respite services for older people. These services allow carers to take a break from their usual caring role.

To find out more about the services available, contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** (free call).

To get support for yourself or a loved one call the Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line on 1800 171 866. It is available Monday to Friday, except public holidays, from 8:30am to 6pm.

Is it safe to access CHSP services?

The CHSP promotes and supports the safety and welfare of older Australians in their home.

In the delivery of services to older Australians, CHSP providers should:

- Have suitable capacity
- Have qualified staff
- Adhere to appropriate infection control protocols.

The aged care worker visiting your home must take all necessary measures to ensure you stay safe. They will be following all the current advice.

Can I access CHSP Services without an assessment?

Yes, if you need urgent services.

You do not need an assessment if you need:

- urgent CHSP services
- short-term services due to COVID-19.

In all other, non-urgent situations, CHSP services should not start before an assessment has taken place.

If you need permanent care beyond the initial eight weeks you can arrange an assessment through [My Aged Care](#). Your CHSP service provider can help you with this.

For access to new or additional aged care services call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. My Aged Care can also create or update your client record and arrange for an assessment.

When can I go back to my social support group and other group activities?

In March 2020, the Australian Government cancelled all CHSP in-person group activities to help protect vulnerable people from COVID-19. Since then, a number of states and territories have started to ease restrictions. The way restrictions are easing is different in each state and territory.

When CHSP providers re-open social support services they must follow the guidelines, advice and restrictions in their state or territory. This includes maintaining physical distancing and infection control measures. Providers also must have a COVIDSafe plan for their workplace and service delivery model.

If your social support activities stop, contact your CHSP provider for advice on when they might recommence.

More resources and specific information on state and territory restrictions are available at www.australia.gov.au.

What do I do if I feel lonely or have concerns about my mental health?

CHSP clients may be lonely or anxious during the pandemic.

Support is available:

- The [Head to Health website](#) has a range of resources people to cope with anxiety or worry about COVID-19
- Beyond Blue provides digital resources and a phone counselling service (1300 224 636). Accredited mental health professionals are available 24 hours, seven days a week
- Lifeline (13 11 14).

CHSP service providers are developing new service delivery models to help clients stay socially connected. To maintain physical distancing this could be:

- Internet or phone-based welfare checks
- Online social group activities.

What if I am worried about going to the shops for groceries or have trouble preparing meals?

The CHSP may be able to help you with grocery shopping or preparing meals. This may include domestic assistance (unaccompanied shopping) and meals (delivered to your home). The Australian Government has provided **\$120.2 million** (with \$50 million for CHSP meal providers) to help expand this during the pandemic.

To find out more about these services contact **My Aged Care** on **1800 200 422**. They may refer you to a local CHSP provider who can deliver these services to you.

Can I still get my lawn mowed or my house cleaned during the pandemic?

Yes, most CHSP service types are essential aged care services and should continue. Group activities may be postponed.

CHSP providers must ensure the safe delivery of essential aged care services to protect their employees, volunteers and clients. If there is a change to your service delivery, CHSP providers must contact you as soon as possible.

You or your family may need help discussing service concerns with your provider. The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) is a free advocacy service that can provide this support. Contact OPAN on **1800 700 600** from 9:30am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday.

What in home help is available if I want to move out of aged care and live with my family during COVID-19?

There are two tiers of CHSP support available for residents of aged care who choose to temporarily transition to the community due to COVID-19. Support is available for up to eight weeks.

Tier 1 Clinical support for residents who re-locate from aged care significantly impacted by COVID-19

Temporary clinical support is available to residents who have had to relocate from a significantly impacted residential aged care home. Personal care and nursing services equivalent to a [Level 4 Home Care Package](#) can be accessed at no additional cost to the resident.

If an aged care home is significantly impacted by an outbreak of COVID-19, the home will advise residents what support is available to them.

The resident or their family can then call OPAN on **1800 700 600** to discuss their care needs. OPAN informs residents and their families on their eligibility, things to consider and the process for temporarily withdrawing residents from an aged care home. Once the resident and family chooses to transition to the community, OPAN can arrange for a referral to a suitable CHSP provider.

Services that may be accessed through this program include:

- personal care: provides assistance to maintain appropriate standards of hygiene and grooming
- nursing: clinical care provided by a registered or enrolled nurse. This care includes treatment and monitoring of medically diagnosed clinical conditions.

The aged care provider will need to work with the family and the CHSP provider:

- to develop a care plan
- to determine a suitable care start and end date
- to plan any arrangements to transition the resident back to the aged care home.

The family will be responsible for care and safety of residents during their time away from aged care. This includes considering resident mobility and access to mobility aids. It also includes the capacity of the family to provide care for 24 hours per day and a suitable physical environment.

Residents who need more complex or higher level aged care services may need to remain in their aged care home. The aged care home may also temporarily transfer these residents to another suitable care home.

Tier 2 Entry-level services for residents who voluntarily decide to return to the community

Residents who are not eligible for the support outlined in Tier 1, but choose to return to the community can access entry-level home support. These residents can access services for up to eight weeks through the CHSP. For residents who access Tier 2 services, a client contribution fee may apply.

To access Tier 2 services residents or their family can contact My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**. My Aged Care provides information on the services available, the process for transition to the community and can arrange for a referral to a CHSP provider.

This support is available to all residents returning home from a residential aged care home. Services that can be accessed through the CHSP include:

- meals
- transport (essential trips to medical appointments only)
- social support individual
- unaccompanied shopping
- personal care
- nursing
- allied health and therapy services.

Tier 1 residents are able to access the additional services listed, except for personal care and nursing which is already provided.

It is important to understand that these services will be entry-level. They will not provide the same level or frequency of care available in an aged care home. Residents who need more complex or higher level aged care services may need to remain in their aged care home.

Things a family must consider before transitioning an elderly family member from an aged care home to the family home:

- accommodation requirements – they will need a separate bedroom, and if possible a separate bathroom; is the bed accessible, and the correct height
- internal and external access to the home – are there stairs, is a ramp required, are doorways/hallways wide enough for a walker, are there trip hazards
- mobility aid essentials – shower chair, walker, toilet rails, transport
- 24 hour care must be provided by the family and can be supplemented with some professional support by a CHSP provider
- PPE is required during the quarantine period, families must know how to use PPE – including gowns, face masks, eye protection and gloves
- PPE must be purchased prior to the family member coming home
- general day to day living assistance that may be required – toileting, showering, meals, dressing, administering medications
- how they will transition their family member back to their aged care home after their stay in the community.

Residents should not leave the aged care home until services have been put in place.

It is recommended that families stay in close contact with the aged care home. This is for discussions on the resident's care plan, any issues, and to organise for the family member to return to the aged care home. They should also be in contact with the CHSP provider to discuss the provision of services that have been organised.

Other specific requirements for Victorians

When a resident leaves a Victorian aged care home with an active case of COVID-19, or if the home is in an area with community transmission, the resident and **every household member** will need to quarantine:

- For 14 days after the resident enters the household (if asymptomatic)
- 14 days after the resident is released from isolation (for a confirmed case).

After quarantine, **all members of the household** will need a negative COVID-19 test result. Home testing can be organised through the general practitioner.

What happens if I do not want to go back to aged care?

If the resident decides to remain in the community on a long term or ongoing basis, they will need to give up their place in the aged care home. They will need to arrange for an assessment for home care services through My Aged Care. If the assessment indicates the resident requires a Home Care Package (HCP), families should be aware of the average wait time for a HCP. The My Aged Care [website](#) provides information on this.

Residents can access entry-level CHSP services while they wait for their HCP. Once they give up their place in residential aged care, they will not be eligible to continue accessing Tier 1 services. Residents and their families must carefully consider whether entry level services will be sufficient to support them while on the wait list for a HCP.

What if I have more questions about COVID-19?

To find out more, phone the **National Coronavirus Helpline** on **1800 020 080** or go to health.gov.au

If you need to find out more about support services, contact **My Aged Care** by phoning **1800 200 422**.

If you have any concerns about your care services, or carer, please contact your CHSP service provider.

Where can CHSP service providers find more information?

The Department of Health has published fact sheets for CHSP providers including information on:

- CHSP emergency funding
- CHSP flexibility provisions
- Other CHSP support and program arrangements.

Webinars are also available on the [Department of Health's website](#) for on-demand viewing.

Providers should subscribe to the normal aged care sector emails and newsletters to receive regular updates.

For more information, CHSP service providers should contact their Funding Arrangement Manager.