



## Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA)

This fact sheet informs current Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme service providers about the new Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA).

With the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rollout now complete, from 1 July 2021, the Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA) will replace the Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme.

In consultation with service providers, a review of CoS identified the need to modernise the Program. This was to better align with the NDIS pricing and service delivery rules.

### What are the key changes under the new DSOA Program?

- All clients will receive tailored support under an Individual Support Plan.
- A single DSOA service coordinator will manage the disability services a client receives.
  - In most cases, the DSOA service coordinator will be the client's primary (largest) service provider.
  - The DSOA service coordinator will coordinate and oversee all support services for the client, including making arrangements with other service providers.
- Clients can access increased support as their needs change.
  - If a submitted change of needs application amounts to \$20,000 or more over a 12 month period, the client will receive an independent assessment to ensure they're getting appropriate support. The Commonwealth will cover the cost of the assessment.
  - The Department of Health can also request an independent assessment.
- Clients and providers will benefit from disability service funding that is better aligned with the NDIS and nationally consistent across states and territories.
- The DSOA Program will offer two-year funding agreements with DSOA service coordinators.
  - The DSOA service coordinator will receive a management fee equal to one per cent of each client's total funding.
- A new online system will make it easier to meet the DSOA Program's reporting requirements. This includes annual performance reporting and financial acquittals, client transfers, exits and change of needs applications.

### What is not changing under DSOA?

- DSOA will remain a closed program with no new clients.
- Existing quality and safeguard arrangements as outlined by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
- Services and costs excluded under the CoS Programme will remain excluded under the DSOA Program.

- Existing client contribution arrangements under the CoS Programme can continue under DSOA and may increase each year in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- DSOA service coordinators will still be required to submit annual performance reports and financial acquittals, change of need requests, notifications of client exits and support clients transfer to an alternative service coordinator.
- Funding will still be provided via a grant funding arrangement and payments will be quarterly in advance.
- Support for client transition to aged care services.

Table 1 below outlines the key differences between the CoS and DSOA Programs. Table 2 below lists the service types under the DSOA Program.

## Who is eligible to become a DSOA service coordinator?

As a closed program, DSOA grants will only be open to CoS service providers with existing relationships with the program's client cohort and proven capability to deliver the program's objectives.

In assessing suitability of DSOA service coordinators, the Department will consider:

- organisational performance over previously funded years
- past value for money
- compliance with the grant agreement
- progress towards meeting grant activity milestone/s, including a history of unspent funds or under delivery, complaints, quality and any performance concerns.

If you have outstanding acquittals to submit under CoS, we strongly encourage you to submit these as soon as possible as this may have adverse implications for your DSOA eligibility.

All DSOA service coordinators and subcontractors must register with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – unless a written exemption from the Department is already in place.

## How will DSOA service coordinators for each client be determined?

Where a client has only one CoS service provider, this provider will become their DSOA service coordinator.

Where a client has more than one CoS service provider, subject to the client's consent, the primary (largest) service provider will become their DSOA service coordinator.

## What are the roles and responsibilities of the DSOA service coordinator?

The DSOA service coordinator will:

- coordinate disability support services
  - develop an Individual Support Plan with the client or their family, carer, or advocate
  - subcontract other providers to deliver services under the client's Individual Support Plan.
- review the services provided to the client (annually or more often if required) to ensure they're meeting the client's changing needs.
- arrange independent assessments associated with change of needs applications.
- manage the administration of grant funding (including reporting).

- ensure the quality and safeguard requirements of the DSOA Program.

## As the primary service provider, do I have to be the DSOA service coordinator?

No. We'll work with the client to determine an alternate option.

## As a secondary service provider, will I have a funding agreement with the Department of Health?

No. Only DSOA service coordinators will have a funding agreement with the Department of Health. In consultation with the client, the DSOA service coordinator may subcontract your services under the DSOA program.

## What compensation will DSOA service coordinators receive?

The DSOA service coordinator will receive a management fee equal to one per cent of each client's total funding. The management fee is calculated based on the new uplifted DSOA service funding amounts.

The data validation exercise currently underway will inform the accurate calculation of the DSOA service coordinator's management fee.

Case management services can also be funded under DSOA if required by the client.

## What is the DSOA service coordinator management fee for?

The management fee is for costs associated with the managing client support needs. The way in which these funds are allocated is at the service coordinator's discretion.

## As DSOA service coordinator, can I subcontract other providers under the DSOA Program?

Yes. DSOA service coordinators can subcontract other providers to deliver disability services, including coordination and case management, in line with the client's preferences.

## Do subcontracted providers also need to be NDIS registered?

Yes. The DSOA service coordinator and any subcontracted service providers will need to register with, and meet the requirements set by, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. It is worthwhile noting that registration requirements under the NDIS Commission are designed to be proportionate to the size, scale and supports that a provider delivers. Further information is available at the [NDIS registration site](#).

## Will the NDIS Commission regulate DSOA?

Yes. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission will regulate providers under the DSOA Program, as it does with the CoS Programme.

## Will case management be funded under DSOA?

Yes. Case management services will be funded under DSOA as its own service type. Case management services assist people with disability to maximise their independence and participation in the community through working with the individual, family and/or carers in care planning and/or facilitating access to appropriate services. Case management services are targeted to individuals who require assistance to access necessary supports, including help with service coordination and with assisting services to respond to their service needs.

Case management service pricing is broadly aligned to NDIS service type “Support Coordination Level 2: Coordination of Supports.”

## Can clients receive community access supports under DSOA?

Community access supports do not feature in the DSOA program. However, where CoS clients are currently receiving funding for Community Access, their funding will be preserved at existing levels under DSOA and categorised as “Extended CoS Services - Other Supports” (i.e. these supports will be grandfathered under DSOA if the client was accessing these services under CoS).

DSOA clients that require community access support will be assisted to seek funding for those services from Aged Care programs. Clients can simultaneously access such aged care supports and DSOA supports – they will not need to exit to the DSOA program.

## Why are independent assessments being introduced?

Where a change of needs application amounts to \$20,000 or more over a rolling 12 month period, the client will receive an independent assessment. There may also be other cases where an independent assessment is required.

These assessments will provide impartial evidence to support funding the changed needs of DSOA clients, and ensure clients are getting the right mix of supports. They will also indicate whether an aged care assessment is appropriate for the client’s changed circumstances.

## Who will provide the independent assessments and what instrument will be used?

The Commonwealth is funding the University of Sydney’s Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) to undertake these independent assessments. CDS will use the Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs [or I-CAN Assessment] which has been customised for the purposes of the DSOA Program.

## How do I arrange an independent assessment for my client under the DSOA Program?

DSOA service coordinators will be responsible for arranging independent assessments for their clients. The Commonwealth Government will fund these assessments.

Further information about independent assessments will be available in early 2021.

## Can I continue to submit additional support applications under CoS?

Yes. You can continue to submit Additional Support Applications (ASA) under the CoS Programme until 15 June 2021.

However, we strongly urge providers to finalise client reviews and submit any ASAs by 31 January 2021 to ensure these supports can be factored into the DSOA service offers.

## Will Accommodation Management Grants be available?

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$14.6 million for Accommodation Management Grants (AMG) for 2020/21. It is anticipated that the AMG grant opportunity will be available in early 2021. There are no further AMG rounds under consideration at this stage.

## When will the online portal be available?

The online portal is currently under development. It will be made available to service coordinators ahead of DSOA Program commencement.

## When will the DSOA Grant Opportunity Guidelines be available?

DSOA Grant Opportunity Guidelines will be available on GrantConnect in early 2021. We encourage providers to register on <https://www.grants.gov.au/> to receive notification of when these guidelines are published.

## When will the new DSOA Program Manual be available?

The new DSOA Program Manual will be available on the Department's website by 31 January 2021 with further information on the new program.

## What are the next steps ahead of the commencement of the DSOA Program?

We have recently reached out to CoS providers requesting they (1) nominate a DSOA portal administrator and (2) confirm all services they are currently providing or overseeing under CoS and translating these to DSOA services.

DSOA grant funding will only be allocated to approved service coordinators based on the information provided in this exercise. Timely provision of this information is key to ensuring continuous service provision to clients transitioning from CoS to DSOA. Please ensure you get this information to us as soon as possible.

Once this data validation exercise is completed, we will be in touch to confirm DSOA service coordinators (and grantees), including initial service offers under the new program.

## Who can I call for further information on the DSOA Program?

The Community Grants Hub is available to assist by contacting 1800 048 998.



**Table 1: Comparing the CoS and DSOA Programs**

Policy setting	Continuity of Support Programme (CoS)	Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA)
Eligible clients	CoS is a closed program, limited to those 65 years and over (or 50 years and over for Indigenous clients) receiving state-based disability services and were ineligible for the NDIS at the time of transition.	No change.
Quality and Safeguards	Provider maintains registration and meets requirements of NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.	<p>The DSOA service coordinator and other contracted service providers will be required to be registered with, and meet the requirements set by, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.</p> <p>The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission will regulate providers under the DSOA Program, as it does with the CoS Programme.</p>
Grant Recipients	All Service Providers were grant recipients under the CoS Programme and had a Funding Agreement in place with the Department of Health.	Each Client's designated DSOA service coordinator will be the grant recipient under the DSOA Program. Other service providers may be engaged by the DSOA service coordinator, in consultation with the clients.
Funding Agreement period	One year.	Two years.
Funding model	Block-funded and Individual Support Packages (Service Provider; Intermediary; and Direct Funding).	<p>All clients will have a DSOA service coordinator and an Individual Support Plan.</p> <p>Note, only clients currently on a Direct Funding arrangement (through Community Options Australia) will be able to continue on this arrangement.</p>

Policy setting	Continuity of Support Programme (CoS)	Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA)
Pricing and level of support	Generally reflects historical level of funding provided under state-based disability services.	<p>More in line with the NDIS/market pricing and is nationally consistent. Clients will receive the same level of funding or more under the DSOA Program.</p> <p>DSOA accounts for the location of service delivery – applying a loading for services delivered in remote and very remote areas. For most service types, rates will also vary depending on the time of day/day of week the service is delivered.</p> <p>The DSOA pricing schedule will be published alongside the DSOA Program Manual by 31 January 2021.</p>
Administration fee	Service providers could factor in up to 15% of the client's budget to cover administration costs.	Administration costs are factored into new service pricing. 1% management fee will also be made available to DSOA service coordinators.
Client contributions	Previous client contribution arrangements could be retained under the CoS Programme, with an annual CPI increase.	No change.
ISP Client Service Agreement	Needed for ISP clients.	DSOA service coordinator will need to agree an Individual Support Plan with the client or their family, carer, or advocate. A template will be provided.
Annual Review of Client Supports (or more often if required)	Undertaken by Service Provider for all clients.	Undertaken by the DSOA service coordinator for all ISP clients.
Service Provider changes	Managed by the client/carer/advocate, with support from the service provider and the Community Grants Hub.	Managed by the DSOA service coordinator in close consultation with the client/carer/advocate, with support from the Community Grants Hub.
DSOA service coordinator changes	Not applicable	Client or their family, carer, or advocate can request a change in service coordinator through the Community Grants Hub.

Policy setting	Continuity of Support Programme (CoS)	Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA)
Performance and financial reports (including annual acquittal of funds), client transfers and exits and change of needs applications	Manual submissions by CoS Service Providers.	Submissions via new online portal by DSOA service coordinators.
Change in Needs	Service providers can apply for additional support if there is a change of needs.	DSOA service coordinators can apply for additional support if there is a change of needs. Requests of \$20,000 and above within a 12 month period are supported by an independent needs assessment. Independent assessments will be funded by the Department of Health. Further information will be available soon.
Transition to Aged Care	Where a client has been assessed as eligible for aged care but does not wish to accept aged care supports, the client may choose to remain in the CoS Programme at their current level of service.	No change. Except, DSOA clients can access supports under the My Aged Care that are not in-scope for the DSOA Program (such as Community Access). In such instances, they can access these supports simultaneously to DSOA and will not be required to exit to the program.
Aids and Equipment and Transport Costs (in exceptional circumstances only)	State and Territory governments are responsible for supplying aids and equipment to people who are not eligible for the NDIS, including older people. State and territory programs should be exhausted before accessing funds through the CoS Programme.	No change.
Carryover of funds	Unspent funds cannot be carried forward and must be returned to the Department of Health.	No change.
Program exclusions	The CoS Programme Manual described a prescribed range of supports available under CoS. No other services were included in the program.	Like the CoS Program, DSOA will only cover a prescribed range of services and costs. A DSOA service coordinator cannot use DSOA funding for any other services.

Policy setting	Continuity of Support Programme (CoS)	Disability Support for Older Australians Program (DSOA)
Access to Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)	Accessible to all Service Providers.	No change.

<b>Table 2: Comparing the CoS and DSOA Service Types</b>	
<b>CoS Service Type</b>	<b>DSOA Service Type</b>
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – Group Homes (usually <7 place)	<b>Assistance in Supported Independent Living</b> (Standard, Night, High Intensity)
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – Large residential/Institution (>20 places)	
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – Small Residential/Institution (7-20 places)	
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – Hostels	
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – Other accommodation support	
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – In-Home Accommodation Support	<b>Assistance with Self-Care Activities</b> (Standard, Night, High Intensity – Level 1, High Intensity – Level 2, High Intensity – Level 3)
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – Attendant care/personal care	
<b>Accommodation Support</b> – Alternate family placement	
<b>Respite</b> – Own home respite	<b>STA and Assistance (inc. Respite)</b> Assistance with daily life tasks in a group or shared living arrangement (1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4)
<b>Respite</b> – centre based respite/respite homes	
<b>Respite</b> – other respite	
<b>Respite</b> – host family respite/peer support respite	
<b>Respite</b> – flexible respite	
<b>Community Support</b> – Behaviour Specialist Intervention	<b>Specialist/Behavioural Intervention Support</b>
<b>Community Support</b> – Counselling (individual/family/group)	<b>Counselling</b>
<b>Community Support</b> – Therapy Support for Individuals	<b>Psychosocial Recovery Coaching</b>
	<b>Therapy Assistant</b> – Level 1
	<b>Therapy Assistant</b> – Level 2
	<b>Assessment Recommendation Therapy and/or Training</b> (inc AT) – Psychology
	<b>Assessment Recommendation Therapy and/or Training</b> (inc AT) – Physiotherapy
	<b>Assessment Recommendation Therapy and/or Training</b> (inc AT) – Other Therapy
	<b>Dietitian Consultation and Diet Plan Development</b>
<b>Exercise Physiology</b>	
<b>Community Support</b> – Other	<b>Audiologist hearing services</b>
	<b>Delivery of Health Supports by an Enrolled Nurse</b>
	<b>Delivery of Health Supports by a Registered Nurse</b>
	<b>Delivery of Health Supports by a Clinical Nurse</b>
	<b>Delivery of Health Supports by a Clinical Nurse Consultant</b>
	<b>Delivery of Health Supports by a Nurse Practitioner</b>
	<b>Community Nursing Care for Continence Aid</b>

<b>Table 2: Comparing the CoS and DSOA Service Types</b>	
<b>Community Support</b> – Case Management, Local Coordination and Development	<b>Case Management *</b>  <i>*While case management will be funded under DSOA, the service type will have a narrower focus than the existing “Case management, Local Coordination and Development” service type available under CoS. As DSOA will be client-centric, funding for local coordination and development will no longer continue.</i>
<b>Community Support</b> - Regional Resource and support teams	<b>1% Management Fee in the DSOA Agreement</b>
<b>Community Access</b> – Learning and life skills development	<b>Other Supports</b> – Extended CoS Services <i>** these activities are only available to those clients funded for this activity under CoS. Funding levels will be preserved for current clients of this activity but the activity will not be available for other clients under DSOA.</i>
<b>Community Access</b> – recreation and holiday programs	
<b>Community Access</b> – other community access	