



COVID-19 – OTHER SUPPORT AND PROGRAMME INITIATIVES FOR CHSP PROVIDERS

22/2/2021

What information is available to support Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) providers?

The Department of Health has information for the public and industry about COVID-19. This includes:

- information on [COVID-19 vaccinations](#). This includes information about the vaccines and the phased COVID-19 vaccine rollout
- [resources](#) for the general public including responses to [frequently asked questions](#)
- fact sheets for CHSP providers on:
 - [CHSP Emergency Funding](#)
 - [CHSP Flexibility Provisions](#)
 - [Information for clients, families and carers](#)
- [webinars](#) are available on the department's website for on-demand viewing
- providers should [subscribe](#) to the aged care sector emails and newsletters for regular updates.

The Australian Government provides information and key updates through the:

- [australia.gov.au website](#)
- [Coronavirus mobile phone app](#)
- National Coronavirus Helpline (1800 020 080).

Every state and territory government has a dedicated COVID-19 website. The websites have the most up-to-date guidelines and restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Western Australia](#).

What does the Department consider an essential service under the CHSP?

The Department of Health considers all aged care services, including those delivered under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), as essential services.

All CHSP service providers should resume or continue to deliver services:

- where it is safe to do so
- in accordance with all state/territory COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines.

Are there any resources available for CHSP providers experiencing workforce shortages?

Any CHSP provider that requires additional support due to COVID-19, can access online workforce platforms. The online platforms may also assist to redirect underutilised staff to other CHSP providers who need workers to fill critical gaps. CHSP providers need to continue paying staff re-deployed to other providers. They will not be penalised for not achieving output targets. Support can be accessed through one of these organisations:

- Recruitment Consulting Staffing Association (RCSA) – a dedicated 24/7 concierge service. This service uses healthcare recruitment agencies to find appropriately skilled staff to support aged care services.

Email: healthworkforce@rcsa.com.au

Phone: 1800 943 115

- Health Care Australia (HCA) – a dedicated 24/7 concierge service to source and place appropriately skilled staff across nursing, allied health, personal care and domestic assistance.

Email: covid.agedcare@healthcareaustralia.com.au

Phone: 1300 749 333

Are there resources to help CHSP meals providers increase meals production and distribution?

Yes. The Department established a list of commercial meals producers and distributors who are willing to assist in mass production of meals.

CHSP providers with issues sourcing and producing meals should contact one of these suppliers. To discuss a partnership with a meals producer, email CHSPprogram@health.gov.au. The department will supply contact details.

Are CHSP providers eligible for the COVID-19 workforce retention bonus?

No. The retention bonus is only available to approved providers of Home Care Packages (HCP) and residential aged care.

CHSP providers with workforce concerns should use:

- their base funding
- the relaxed flexibility provisions
- apply for emergency funding through the CHSP - Emergency support for COVID-19 grant process.

For more information about the emergency COVID-19 funding, please download the Grant Opportunity Guidelines from [GrantConnect](#).

How can I access personal protective equipment (PPE) for my workforce?

CHSP service providers must adhere to all state/territory guidelines on the safe use of PPE when providing care to older Australians.

All staff and volunteers engaged in the direct delivery of CHSP services inside the household or in close exposure to a client, must wear a surgical mask if they are:

- caring for someone with symptoms of COVID-19
- caring for someone in quarantine
- caring for someone with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19
- live or work in an area where wearing a mask is mandatory.

The Department has committed \$70.2 million in additional funding through adhoc proposals to help CHSP providers meet increased costs of delivering services during the COVID-19 pandemic. If additional PPE is required to safely deliver services to clients, it is expected that CHSP providers will:

- use their existing base funding and flexibility provisions

- and/or apply for emergency funding
- not pass on the cost of necessary PPE to clients.

For more information about the emergency COVID-19 funding, please download the Grant Opportunity Guidelines from [GrantConnect](#).

Further information on the use of PPE including masks is available on the Department of Health's website:

- [Guidance](#) on when masks should be worn in the community
- [PPE video](#) which provides a demonstration on how to appropriately use PPE
- [Resources](#) for the health workforce on the use of PPE
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidelines for infection prevention and control in residential care facilities](#)

What if I have concern about my client's mental health during the pandemic?

Many CHSP clients are missing social and recreational activities.

CHSP providers should create new ways for their clients to maintain social connection and physical distancing. This could include regular telephone or internet contact or, where appropriate, establishing online group activities.

The Australian Government has the following mental health services to support people during the pandemic.

- Older Person's COVID-19 Support Line can provide help, support and resources to older Australians (**1800 171 866**)
- the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) is a free service aiming to provide friendship and companionship to older people receiving aged care services. Contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 for more information
- the [Head to Health](#) website for people who need help coping with anxiety or worry
- Beyond Blue offers dedicated COVID-19 [resources](#) and phone counselling service (**1300 22 4636**). Accredited mental health professionals staff this service 24 hours per day, seven days a week
- the Australian Red Cross (1300 885 698) can provide a daily telephone call to check on your wellbeing through a service known as "Telecross"
- the Suicide Callback Service is a free phone line and online counselling service that helps people with a range of issues related to suicide (1300 659 467)

- extra funding is available for phone and online support services, including Lifeline (13 11 14), to meet demand.

For more information about mental health supports, please visit the department's [website](#).

Can CHSP providers use unspent funds to purchase personal or home monitoring devices?

No. The program measure that allowed CHSP providers to use unspent funds to purchase personal and home monitoring alarms finished on **30 June 2020**. There are no plans to extend this program measure in the current financial year.

The only providers who can use CHSP funds to purchase personal alarms are organisations normally funded to deliver Goods, Equipment and Assistive Technology.