



Disability Support for Older Australians (DSOA) Program service providers fact sheet

From 1 July 2021, the DSOA Program has replaced the Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme.

What are the key changes under the DSOA Program?

- All clients receive tailored support under an Individual Support Package (ISP).
- A DSOA service coordinator oversees all support services for the client. This includes making arrangements with other service providers for the client's disability services.
- Clients may apply for increased support as their needs change
- The Department of Health (the Department) may arrange for a client to undertake an independent assessment to inform their change of needs application for additional funding
- Clients and providers will benefit from disability service funding that is consistent across all states and territories and is better aligned with the NDIS.
- The DSOA Program offers two-year funding agreements with DSOA service coordinators.
- The DSOA service coordinator will receive a management fee equal to one per cent (1%) of each client's total funding to help meet the costs associated with preparing and amending the client's ISP, reviewing client needs and meeting program reporting requirements. The management fee calculation is based on the DSOA Service and Pricing Schedule set out in [Appendix A of the DSOA Program Manual](#).

What is not changing under the DSOA Program?

- The DSOA Program will remain a closed program with no new clients.
- Existing quality and safeguard arrangements, as outlined by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, remain in place for all service providers.
- Services excluded under the CoS Programme will remain excluded under the DSOA Program.
- Client contribution arrangements that were in place under the CoS Programme can continue under DSOA and may increase each year in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- DSOA service coordinators are required to submit annual performance reports and financial acquittals, change of need requests, notifications of client exit and support clients to transfer to an alternative service coordinator or to aged care services if appropriate.
- Funding is provided via a grant funding arrangement and payments will be quarterly in advance.

Please refer to [Appendix B of the DSOA Program Manual](#) for a detailed comparison of the CoS Programme and DSOA Program.

Who is eligible to become a DSOA service coordinator?

As a closed program, the DSOA grant opportunity was opened to CoS service providers who were funded by the Department and had proven capability to deliver the program's objectives.

It is a requirement that all DSOA service coordinators and subcontractors are registered with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

If a client wishes to transfer to an NDIS registered service provider who is not funded by the Department to deliver DSOA services, the Department may consider on a case-by-case basis the service provider's suitability to become a DSOA service coordinator.

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

The main responsibilities are:

- Develop an (ISP) with the client or their carer, advocate, or representative.
- Deliver disability services directly to the client and/or subcontract other disability service providers to deliver services under the client's ISP.
- Review the services provided to the client annually (or more often if required) to ensure they are meeting the client's needs
- Organise change of needs applications, including confirmation of appointment for independent assessments, where appropriate.
- Manage the administration of grant funding (including reporting).
- Ensure the quality and safeguard requirements of the DSOA Program are met.

As a 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.

Does the NDIS Commission regulate DSOA service providers?

Yes. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission regulates providers under the DSOA Program, as it did with the CoS Programme.

DSOA service coordinators and any subcontracted service providers need to register with, and meet the requirements set by, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. Further information is available at the [NDIS registration site](#) and the [DSOA Program Manual](#).

Is case management funded under the DSOA Program?

Yes. Case management services are funded under the DSOA Program as a discrete service type. Case management services help clients to maximise their independence and participation in the community through working with the person, family and/or carers in care planning and/or facilitating access to appropriate services. Please refer to the [DSOA Program Manual](#) for further information.

Can clients receive community access supports under the DSOA Program?

Community access supports are not funded under the DSOA Program. However, where clients were accessing these services under CoS, their funding may be preserved at CoS funding levels under the DSOA Program and categorised as “Extended CoS Services - Other Supports”.

If a client was residing in an aged care facility when they transitioned to DSOA, the Department will work with service coordinators to determine whether community access supports can be funded from their aged care package and exit the client from the DSOA Program.

If a DSOA client is approved through a change of needs application for community access supports, they will be assisted to seek funding for those services from the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). In this instance, the client can simultaneously access the DSOA Program and community access supports through the CHSP, they will not need to exit to the DSOA Program.

Why have independent assessments been introduced?

Where a change of needs application amounts to \$20,000 or more over a rolling 12-month period, the client may be referred for an independent assessment.

Independent’s assessments provide impartial evidence to support funding additional services for a client’s change in needs, and ensure clients are getting the right mix of supports. Assessments will also indicate whether an aged care assessment is appropriate for the client’s changed circumstances.

How do I arrange an independent assessment for my client?

The Department funds the University of Sydney’s Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) to undertake independent assessments. CDS uses the Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs [or I-CAN Assessment] which has been customised for the DSOA Program.

The Department may refer your change of needs application to CDS for an independent assessment. CDS will work with you to schedule the independent assessment with your client.

For further information, please contact your DSOA Funding Arrangement Manager on 1800 048 998.

When will the DSOA online portal be available?

The online portal is currently under development. Updates on the portal will continue to be provided to DSOA service coordinators via the regular DSOA communication emails.

Where can I get further information on the DSOA Program?

Your Funding Arrangement Manager is your first point of contact and is available to assist by calling 1800 048 998.

You can also refer to the DSOA Program Manual which is available on the Department's website at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/disability-support-for-older-australians-program-manual>