MULTICULTURAL AGED CARE 27 MAY 2020 - CHSP UPDATE

Contents

1 General COVID-19 Information

The Department of Health has published a [collection of resources](#), including responses to [frequently asked questions](#), for the general public and industry about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on its website. This information is updated regularly. Many of these resources are [translated](#) into other languages, including Chinese, Korean, Farsi and Italian. This information is updated regularly.

A number of [COVID-19 preparedness webinars](#) are available on the Department's website for on-demand viewing.

In addition, providers should ensure they are subscribed to the normal aged care sector email announcements and newsletters https://www.health.gov.au/news/newsletters To receive regular email updates, subscribe at: https://www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/subscriptions/subscribe-to-aged-care-sector-announcements-and-newsletters

The Australian Government has also established a dedicated [website, mobile phone app](#) and the 24-hours/seven days a week National Coronavirus Helpline (1800 020 080 free call) to communicate essential information and key updates on the COVID-19 pandemic.

2 Urgent Provision of CHSP Services without a My Aged Care Assessment

If CHSP services are required for urgent and immediate care needs, a service provider may commence delivering services to a client to ensure their safety before they have contacted the My Aged Care Contact Centre and received an assessment. This provision is only intended to take effect **where it is clear that urgent and immediate care is required to ensure client health or safety** (e.g. the unplanned absence of a carer or the provision of essential support to a client in isolation due to COVID-19). The delivery of these services should be **time-limited** with the service provider assisting the client to contact and register (where necessary) with My Aged Care as soon as possible.

Where urgent CHSP services are put in place for a limited time due to COVID-19, an assessment (or support plan review for existing clients) will not be required. Services can be put in place if the services cease by **31 July 2020** (*Note: the timeframe "for up to 6 weeks" is in longer applicable*).

Where urgent services are required beyond 31 July 2020, the My Aged Care Contact Centre or CHSP provider must arrange for a follow up assessment (or support plan review). A request from My Aged Care will be identified as 'COVID-19 circumstances'.

In non-urgent circumstances, services should not commence before an assessment. CHSP providers must continue to only deliver services they are funded to deliver (e.g. they cannot start delivering domestic assistance when they are only funded for home maintenance).

3 CHSP Flexibility Provisions during COVID-19

https://www.health.gov.au/news/further-arrangements-for-chsp-providers-during-the-covid-19-pandemic

CHSP service providers now have complete flexibility to re-allocate up to 100 per cent of their funding **between their already funded service types in 2019-20 and 2020-21**. Providers may only use flexibility provisions to transfer funding between already funded services.

This **does not extend to transferring funds between aged care planning regions** (ACPRs). Requests to transfer funds between regions in exceptional circumstances must be approved by the department.

4 Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) - Emergency support for COVID-19 and Unsolicited CHSP Proposals

Note: The announced $70.2 million for **unsolicited proposals** by CHSP providers made on 24 March 2020 is now at **Group A** below.

> **Close Date & Time: 30-Jun-2021 2:00 pm (ACT Local Time)**
> **NOTE: To access funding in 2019-20 by COB 01-June 2020 (see below)**

The Australian Government has committed a total of **$120.2 million** made up of $70.2 million in 2019-20 and $50 million in 2020-21 to better enable CHSP service providers to **meet increasing demand for their service types**, *retrain key workforce* and adapt to the changing aged care environment.

The objective of this grant is to provide assistance through limited financial support to existing CHSP service providers to enable them **to respond to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances** that directly impact on existing service delivery arrangements that are beyond the control of the grant recipient.

This grant opportunity will provide grant funding for two groups of CHSP Providers:

- Group A CHSP Providers delivering **any activity type**(s) and

- Group B CHSP **meals** providers.

Group A: Providers Delivering Any Activity Type(s)

An additional $40 million in 2019-20 and $30.2 million in 2020-21 to help fund short-term support for CHSP services to respond to the impact of COVID-19. To access this funding, CHSP providers will need to complete an application form outlining how their proposal meets the aims and objectives of the program and represents good value for money.

Additional funding will **be awarded to those responding to COVID-19 pressures based on need**, as demonstrated by applicants in their responses to the assessment criteria; the specific activities proposed by the applicants; and the expected grant activity outcomes.

Group B: Meals Providers

This funding includes $30 million in 2019-20 and $20 million in 2020-21 for CHSP meals services to address the impact of COVID-19. Funding offers are now being made to existing CHSP meals providers based on their response to a survey conducted on 30 March 2020. Those meals providers who did not complete the survey are being offered a 50% increase in funding between April and September 2020 by default.

Application Form

A copy of the application form can be requested from the Community Grants Hub Funding Arrangement Manager or the Department of Health. Completed application forms should be returned to CHSPprogram@health.gov.au.

For more information about this funding opportunity, including information about applying for additional funding, please review the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, which are available for download from GrantsConnect. https://www.grants.gov.au/?event=public.GO.show&GOUUID=6C903322-0521-8405-245CDD56C93B7960

An ad hoc grant application form should only be submitted if the proposal cannot be funded through the new flexibility provisions. CHSP providers may only request additional funding for service types they are already funded to deliver.

This measure will enable providers to temporarily expand existing services to support the community through the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not intended to provide ongoing growth funding or to enable CHSP providers to expand into new services types or aged care planning regions.

The last date that CHSP providers can submit an AD HOC application through the CHSP COVID-19 emergency response round to access funding in 2019-20 is COB 1 June 2019.

This is to allow the Department of Health sufficient time to assess and process applications for **funding in 2019-20**. All applications to access funds in 2019-20 must be completed and submitted to the Department no later than **COB 1 June 2020**. The Department will still continue to accept applications for emergency COVID-19 funding after 1 June 2020, however funding for successful applicants may not be made available until financial year 2020-21.

All funds must be expended by 30 June 2022.

Restricted Flexibility provisions apply to the CHSP COVID-19 emergency meals or ad hoc grant funding provided to address COVID-19 pressures. In both cases, funds have been provided through a separate grant agreement, and funds can only be spent in accordance with that agreement.

Additional meals funding: Service providers who received additional meals funding must spend this funding on meals and meals-related activities. While providers have the flexibility to move **emergency meals funding** between aged care planning regions, they cannot re-allocate this funding to other service types.

Funding awarded through the ad hoc selection process: Service providers who received additional funding for one or more service types through the CHSP COVID-19 ad hoc emergency funding round may re-allocate emergency funds between aged care planning regions to meet local demand. Requests to move emergency funds between service types however, must be considered by the Department on a case-by-case basis. In the first instance, CHSP service providers should ensure demand cannot be met through the relaxed base funding flexibility provisions or underspends.

Note that the **restricted flexibility provisions** outlined above **do not apply** to a service provider's base funding.

5 Workforce

CHSP providers are not eligible for the workforce retention bonus or the COVID-19 Aged Care Support Program unless they are also an approved provider of home care packages or residential aged care. Only workers funded under Aged Care Act funded services are eligible for these initiatives. Proposals for retaining workforce can be considered under the Unsolicited CHSP proposals process in accordance with guidelines.

6 CHSP Social Support Group

https://www.health.gov.au/news/newsletters/protecting-older-australians-covid-19-update-21-may-2020

Only where state and territory restrictions permit, providers may re-commence delivery of face to face social support activities with appropriate safeguards in place. Any decision to recommence services must consider the following -

- Vulnerable people continue to be at risk of serious illness from coronavirus. This includes people who:

  - are aged 70 years or over

  - are aged 65 years or over and have a chronic medical condition

  - are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, aged 50 years with a chronic medical condition

  - have a weakened immune system.

- Each State and Territory will decide when and how to ease restrictions, considering their local circumstances. Individuals and businesses should look to local authorities for the most up to date information, or visit www.australia.gov.au to be linked to state and territory resources.

- To meet their Work Health and Safety obligations, all workplaces need to do everything they reasonably can to protect workers and others from COVID-19. Providers of face to face support services, therapies and/or group activities to vulnerable people should consider:

  - the restrictions currently in place in the state or territory, particularly restrictions in regard to gatherings

  - what advice the state or territory has given regarding vulnerable people

  - any particular characteristics or concerns relating to the client group.

- If your state or territory allows you to re-commence providing face to face support services, therapies and/or group activities to vulnerable people you must be able to strongly commit to:

  o developing a [COVID safe plan](#) for your workplace before re-commencing services

  o ensuring that activities enable all participants (staff and service recipients) adhere to social distancing and infection control requirements

  o staying 1.5 metres away from other people during these activities whenever and wherever we can

  o maintaining good hand washing and cough/sneeze hygiene

  o ensuring those participating (staff and clients) are well before they participate. Staff and clients should stay home when unwell, and get tested if they have respiratory symptoms or a fever

  o encouraging staff and clients to download the COVIDSafe app so we can find the virus quickly.

- Aged care service providers must also ensure that they revise, in consultation with consumers, the consumer care and services plan to include social support group activities in accordance with Standard 2 of the Aged Care Quality Standards and per the requirements of the Home Care Packages Program Operation Manual and Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) manual. Social Support Group activities must meet the consumer's needs, goals and preferences.