



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

4/6/2020

What is the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)?

The CHSP is an entry-level home support program. It assists people to live safe and independent lives in their own homes and communities. It helps people aged over 65 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to be aged over 50 years. The CHSP funds a number of subsidised services, 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, and
- allied health and therapy services.

The CHSP also supports people caring for older Australians through planned respite services for older people. These respite 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).

For support for yourself or a loved one you can 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?

Your health is the Australian Government's priority. The CHSP promotes and supports the safety and welfare of older Australians in their home. This includes helping to protect you from coronavirus (COVID-19).

The aged care worker visiting your home must take all necessary measures to ensure you stay safe. They will be following advice from Australia's Chief Medical Officer.

Can I access CHSP Services without an assessment?

Yes, if you require urgent services.

You do not need an assessment if you need:

- urgent CHSP services
- for a limited time due to COVID-19, and
- your services will end by 31 July 2020.

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

If you need permanent care or care beyond 31 July 2020, you need to 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 to discuss your needs. 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 Department of Health cancelled all CHSP in-person group activities. This was done 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 of their state or territory. They must continue to maintain physical distancing and infection control measures. Providers also need to have a COVIDSafe plan for their work place and service delivery model.

If your social support activities stopped due to COVID-19, contact your CHSP provider for advice.

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

What do I do if I feel lonely or am concerned about my mental health?

The Australian Government understands CHSP clients may experience loneliness or concern during the pandemic. This might be because you are unable to participate in your preferred social and recreational activities at the moment.

Support is available.

- The [Head to Health website](#) supports people to cope with anxiety or worry about COVID-19.
- Digital resources and a phone counselling service are led by Beyond Blue (1300 224 636). Accredited mental health professionals are available 24 hours, seven days a week.
- Extra funding is available for phone and online support services, including Lifeline (13 11 14), to meet demand.

To find out more about mental health supports visit the Department's website.

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

- internet or phone-based welfare checks, or
- 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** (\$50 million for CHSP meal providers) to help expand service delivery 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. Essential services should continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. Group activities may be postponed during the pandemic due to physical distancing rules.

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 service delivery, CHSP providers must contact their clients as soon as possible.

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

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](https://www.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 email announcements and newsletters to receive regular updates.

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