



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

4/6/2020

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

The Department of Health (the Department) [resources](#) include [frequently asked questions](#), for the public and industry about COVID-19. [Translations](#) are available of many resources into other languages, including Chinese, Korean, Farsi and Italian. The Department often updates this information.

Fact sheets available for CHSP providers include information on:

- CHSP Emergency Funding
- CHSP Flexibility Provisions

There is also a fact sheet to address questions and concerns for CHSP clients.

[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 gives essential information and key updates through a:

- [website](#),
- [mobile phone app](#), and
- National Coronavirus Helpline (**1800 020 080**) available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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

The Department is working with Mable, an online workforce platform, to help CHSP providers recruit new staff and volunteers.

Mable can also help CHSP providers redirect underutilised staff to other providers needing workers to fill critical gaps. CHSP providers must continue paying staff re-deployed to other providers, noting they will not be penalised for not achieving output targets.

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

Yes. The Department is speaking with commercial meals producers and distributors willing to assist in the 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 service providers with workforce concerns should utilise:

- their base funding,
- the relaxed flexibility provisions, and/or
- 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 [GrantsConnect](#).

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

CHSP care workers do not need to wear extra PPE beyond the normal contact precautions for their particular service type. The exception is if they are caring for someone:

- in quarantine, or
- with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.

CHSP and HCP workers need to wear masks when dealing with symptomatic clients. Droplet spread is the primary mode of transmission. Surgical masks are adequate and much easier to fit than P2 masks. The current PPE guidelines and a video on how to wear PPE are available on the department's [website](#).

The National Medical Stockpile has prioritised access to PPE by hospitals, GP clinics and residential aged care facilities. CHSP and HCP providers cannot access PPE through the Stockpile, unless there is an outbreak among their clients.

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 during 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.

- The [Head to Health](#) website for people who need help coping with anxiety or worry.
- Older Person's COVID-19 Support Line can provide help, support and resources to older Australians (**1800 171 866**).
- Beyond Blue's 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.
- 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 available visit the department's [website](#)

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

Yes. CHSP providers may use unspent 2019-20 base funding to purchase up to \$1,000 worth of technology-based personal monitoring systems.

Visit the Department's [website](#) for more information on personal monitoring funding.

Note: This program measure is only available for 2019-20.