Expression of Interest (EOI)

Strengthening Virtual Care Capability in Residential Aged Care Homes

EOI Guidelines

Western NSW Primary Health Network

March 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) respectfully acknowledges First Nations people as the Traditional Custodians of the nations and countries on which we work, and commit to building relationships, respect and opportunities with all First Nations Peoples in our region. We pay respect to Elders past and present and extend recognition to all First Nations people reading this message. We respectfully acknowledge the following nations:

Wiradjuri

Gamilaraay / Gamilaroi / Kamilaroi

Wailwun

Wongaibon

Ngemba / Nyemba / Ngiyampaa

Murrawarri

Barkindji

Barindji

Barundji

Nyirrpa

Karenggapa

Wadigali

Wilyakali / Wiljali

Wandjiwalgu

Danggali

Muthi-Muthi

Kureinji

Gunu

Barranbinya

Bandjigali

Malyangaba

Dadi Dadi

We acknowledge Elders who are the knowledge holders, teachers and pioneers, the youth who are the hope for a brighter future and who will be the future leaders. We acknowledge and pay our respect to First Nations people who have gone before us and recognise their contribution to First Nations people and community.

WNSW PHN's Commitment to Reconciliation

WNSW PHN is committed to reconciliation and demonstrates its commitment by building meaningful, sustainable initiatives in partnership with First Nations communities that close the gap and achieve equitable health outcomes First Nations people. WNSW PHN is committed to leading this journey through its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which is built on respect, relationships and opportunities. This reconciliation journey is grounded in truth telling, listening, learning, and partnering with First Nations communities.

You can find out more about WNSW PHN's commitment to reconciliation in its Innovate RAP **HERE**.

Contents

About the Western NSW Primary Health Network

The **Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN),** is one of 31 Primary Health Networks across Australia, established to support frontline health services and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care. Our focus is people who are at risk of poor health outcomes and working to improve the coordination of their care, so they receive the right care in the right place at the right time. We work closely with key stakeholders including general practice, other health care providers, Local Health Districts, hospitals and the broader community to align services with the health needs of the region.

WNSW PHN is a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded by the Australian Government.

WNSW PHN covers both Far West and Western NSW Local Health Districts across a total area of 433,379 square kilometres, making it the largest PHN in NSW (at 53.5%). The total population is estimated to be over 312,000 people, with 20.3% over the age of 65 years. Approximately 11.36% of people in the WNSW PHN region identify as First Nations (ABS, 2021).

The geographic region covered by WNSW PHN is captured in Figure 1 below. You can also check to see if you fall within the WNSW PHN region, using the PHN Location Map found **HERE**.

Figure 1- WNSW PHN Geographical Footprint

1. Strengthening Virtual Care Capability in Residential Aged Care Homes

Residential Aged Care Homes play a critical role in supporting the health and wellbeing of older people. In regional, rural, and remote areas, access to timely healthcare services can be challenging due to workforce shortages, distance, and service availability.

Virtual care provides an opportunity to improve access to clinical services, support earlier intervention, and reduce avoidable transfers, while enabling residents to receive care in a familiar environment.

This initiative builds on learnings from previous Telehealth Grants delivered in 2023, which supported the adoption of virtual care technologies in residential aged care settings

This Expression of Interest (EOI) aims to strengthen virtual care capability in Residential Aged Care Homes by providing fit-for-purpose equipment and targeted workforce support. The initiative focuses on embedding virtual care into everyday workflows and building staff confidence and capability to use digital health tools safely and effectively.

1.1 Initiative Details

This initiative provides Residential Aged Care Homes with practical support to strengthen their use of virtual care, including access to fit-for-purpose equipment and workforce capability support in 2026. Participating homes will also be supported through a time-limited Community of Practice for nominated Virtual Care Champions, focused on skill development, shared learning, and embedding virtual care into routine practice.

Initiative Value - Equipment packages, typically valued between **$7,000 and $13,000** depending on configuration, will be supplied **at no cost** to successful applicants.

Please note that support is provided **as equipment and workforce capability support only** and does not include direct funding or direct funding options.

1.1 Objectives

- **Improve Timely Access**: Ensure residents receive clinical support when in-person care is unavailable.
- **Deliver Person-Centred Care:** Provide care in familiar surroundings, preserving resident's dignity and choice.
- **Enhance Continuity of Care:** Enable regular monitoring and quick access to clinicians, reducing delays.
- **Reduce Unnecessary Transfers:** Minimize hospital transfers through virtual consultations.
- **Increase Operational Efficiencies:** Reduce clinician travel and streamline coordination.
- **Support Capability Building:** Strengthen staff skills, knowledge and processes to align services with digital health best-practice.
- **Futureproof Care Delivery:** Build digital maturity through technology integration and staff capability development.

1.2 Expected Outcomes

- **Virtual Care Accessibility:** Increased resident access to virtual care services and models of care.
- **Uplift in Staff Capability & Digital Maturity:** Increased knowledge, confidence and competence in delivering virtual care safely & effectively.
- **Virtual Care Utilisation:** Greater adoption of virtual consultations and digital-first care models.
- **Reduction in Avoidable Hospital Transfers:** Fewer unnecessary transfers enabled by timely virtual care.
- **Resident Satisfaction:** Improved comfort and dignity through care delivered in familiar surroundings.

1.3 Approvals Required (Important)

Submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) indicates that applicants have discussed this initiative within their organisation and are aware that, if successful, a signed Participation Agreement (contract) with WNSW PHN will be required to participate.

The contract must be signed by an authorised representative and the relevant Head of IT (or equivalent) before onboarding, procurement, or delivery can proceed. Early engagement with IT and the appropriate approving authority is strongly recommended prior to submitting an EOI.

2. EOI Scope of Support

To support the safe and effective integration of virtual care into everyday practice, participating Residential Aged Care Homes will receive a comprehensive virtual care package. This package focuses on improving access to care and strengthening workforce capability.

2.1 Virtual Care Equipment:

- 1 × medical-grade cart (workstation on wheels)

- 1 × All-in-One Computer or Laptop or Tablet (depending on workstation selected)

- 1 × High-definition general examination camera

- 1 × Microphone and speaker mounted on the cart

- 1 × Keyboard and mouse (not included with Options E and F, as these cart configurations do not require separate peripherals). A keyboard and mouse may be requested for Option F if required.

Virtual care equipment is suitable for use within standard Windows based IT environments and supports commonly used operating systems and browser-based videoconferencing platforms, with local configuration managed by the Residential Aged Care Home.

Ownership of the virtual care equipment provided under this initiative will transfer to the participating Residential Aged Care Home upon delivery and acceptance.

Where a participating Residential Aged Care Home does not meet its participation obligations under the initiative, WNSW PHN reserves the right to require the return of the equipment or otherwise recover it, in accordance with the terms of the participation agreement.

2.2 Videoconferencing Software for Virtual Care:

A healthdirect Video Call account is included. healthdirect Video Call is a browser-based platform that many clinicians are already familiar with. The healthdirect videoconferencing platform is purpose-built for healthcare use and designed to align with Australian healthcare privacy, information security and data sovereignty expectations. It requires no software installation and operates via a supported web browser and clinic URL, providing continuity and flexibility for virtual consultations if required. healthdirect Video Call is provided under current Commonwealth arrangements. Ongoing availability at no cost is subject to Commonwealth policy.

2.3 Workforce training & Capability Support

Dedicated digital adoption coach delivering a short virtual Community of Practice series for elected Virtual Care Champions (scheduled mid 2026).
   Benefits include:
- **Reduce staff stress**: A mentor/coach makes technology adoption easier
- **Improve compliance & efficiency:** Best-practice policy development and correct use of digital health tools reduce errors
- **Enhance resident care:** Safe technology adoption supports better health outcomes
- **Strengthen accreditation readiness:** Digital proficiency support compliance with aged care and digital health standards.

2.4 Virtual Care Equipment Selection and Options

There are seven virtual care equipment options available for this EOI to support different care settings and workflows. These include powered and non-powered medical carts that can be used with a tablet, laptop or all-in-one computer.

Please review the options and choose **(tick) one (1) option in the online application form** that best meets your residents' virtual care needs and workflows for virtual care delivery. Additional information is available via the links shown in the images below and in the FAQ.

Note: Images are examples only and the final cart setup may vary.

Options	Image	Key Features & Accessories
Option A Battery Powered Cart		Height adjustable cart Adjustable monitor arm Ail-in-One computer Keyboard & Mouse Handheld HD General Exam Camera Microphone Speakerphone Rear storage basket Optional single drawer Lithium Iron Phosphate battery located in base of cart
Option B Battery Powered Cart		Height adjustable cart All-in-One computer Patient facing camera on telescopic pole Keyboard & Mouse Handheld HD General Exam Camera Speakerphone Single drawer Power-Cell cart battery-requires mounting on rear of cart
Option C Battery Powered Laptop Cart		Height adjustable cart Laptop computer Keyboard & Mouse Handheld HD General Exam Camera Microphone Speakerphone Rear storage basket Optional single drawer Lithium Iron Phosphate battery located in base of cart

Option D **Laptop Cart**		Height adjustable cart Laptop computer Patient facing camera on telescopic pole Keyboard & Mouse Handheld HD General Exam Camera Speakerphone Single drawer
Option E **Laptop cart**		Light duty medical cart Height adjustable Laptop computer Handheld HD General Exam Camera Microphone Speakerphone
Option F **Tablet cart**		Lightweight mobile tablet cart - weighted base Articulated arm- tablet height adjustment 360 degree rotating tablet mount Tablet computer Utility box Handheld HD General Exam Camera Microphone Speakerphone Optional- Worksurface or keyboard tray with wireless keyboard & mouse
Option G **Tablet cart**		Lightweight Mobile tablet cart Tablet computer Patient facing HD Camera Wireless keyboard & mouse Handheld HD General Exam Camera Speakerphone

2.5 Responsibilities of Participating Residential Aged Care Homes

While WNSW PHN will provide virtual care equipment, software access, and workforce capability support as outlined in this Expression of Interest, participating Residential Aged Care Homes are responsible for the local implementation and ongoing management of the equipment.

Participating Residential Aged Care Homes are expected to:

- Ensure appropriate local Information Technology (IT) support is available to configure, implement, and maintain the equipment in line with organisational policies and security requirements
- Comply with relevant privacy, cybersecurity, and data governance obligations
- Use the equipment for its intended purpose to support the delivery of virtual care within the participating Residential Aged Care Home
- Nominate at least one Virtual Care Champion to participate in Community of Practice activities and support local adoption
- Support staff participation in the virtual Community of Practice and associated capability-building activities

3. Implementation Overview and Exclusions

This section provides context to support local planning and clarifies what is included and not included as part of this initiative. WNSW PHN will provide virtual care equipment, an account to enable access to the healthdirect videoconferencing platform, and workforce capability support as outlined in this Expression of Interest. The implementation and use of the equipment will occur within each participating Residential Aged Care Home's existing clinical, operational, and Information Technology (IT) environment. Responsibilities relating to local implementation, IT configuration, privacy, cybersecurity, and governance are outlined in **Section 2.5**

Exclusions: To support clear planning and manage expectations, the following are **not included** as part of this initiative:

- Internet, Wi-Fi, or local network upgrades
- Electrical works, cabling, infrastructure modifications, or building works
- Internal IT staffing, onsite support, or ongoing technical support
- Day-to-day operational management of the equipment following deployment
- Test and tag services
- Replacement consumables or accessories
- Software licences or subscriptions beyond those explicitly specified in this EOI
- Supplier liaison, fault reporting, warranty claims, repairs, replacement of equipment, or asset lifecycle management.
  Any additional infrastructure, configuration, resourcing, operational support, or management required to support the use, maintenance, or replacement of the equipment will be managed locally by the Residential Aged Care Home in accordance with organisational policies.

4. Participation Requirements

All successful applicants are required to participate in the following program activities and commitments as part of this initiative.

Requirement	Description
Virtual Care Champion commitment	**Commit to nominating at least one Virtual Care Champion** to lead implementation and participate in small group Community of Practice sessions throughout 2026. **Provide the nominated Champion's work email address in the application form** to enable onboarding, communication, and access to coaching and Community of Practice activities. **Managers submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI)** are responsible for ensuring the nominated Virtual Care Champion's attendance and active participation in all required Community of Practice sessions and implementation activities.
Digital Health Maturity Assessment Survey	**Complete the WNSW PHN Digital Health Maturity Survey during the 2026 survey period** or as otherwise advised by WNSW PHN. Individual Digital Health Maturity Survey results will be provided directly to participating Residential Aged Care Homes for their own use and may be used to support quality improvement activities and accreditation readiness. All responses are handled in line with relevant privacy legislation. Deidentified and aggregated data may be shared with the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing or other authorised government bodies or program partners for reporting, evaluation, audit, or program improvement purposes.
Progress Reporting	**Provide brief progress updates at intervals during the initiative as determined by WNSW PHN.** Updates will be kept minimal and limited to high-level information relevant to implementation. Templates and guidance will be provided to minimise workload. All information will be managed in accordance with privacy legislation, with any shared data de-identified and aggregated.
Post-Initiative Evaluation	**Participate in post-initiative feedback and evaluation activities**, including providing reflections on program impact, benefits and positive outcomes achieved (including potential case examples), barriers, and opportunities for improvement. These activities will be brief and conducted through mechanisms determined by WNSW PHN (e.g., Community of Practice, surveys, or short feedback sessions)
Privacy & Compliance	All reporting and evaluation activities must comply with relevant privacy legislation. Data will only be reported in de-identified, aggregate form, ensuring the confidentiality of individual Residential Aged Care Homes.

5. Definitions

- **Applicant Residential Aged Care Home (RACH)** means the individual Australian Commonwealth-funded residential aged care service submitting this Expression of Interest.

- **Approved Provider / Organisation** means the legal entity approved under the Aged Care Act 2024 that operates the Applicant Residential Aged Care Home.

- **WNSW PHN** means the Western NSW Primary Health Network.

- **Initiative** means the Strengthening Virtual Care Capability in Residential Aged Care initiative delivered by Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN), which is a time-limited activity and not an ongoing program.

- **MPS** means a Multi-Purpose Service operated by NSW Health.

- **Virtual Care Champion** means a staff member of the Residential Aged Care Home who helps lead telehealth use, joins Community of Practice sessions in 2026, and is the main contact for support and coaching.

6. Eligibility Criteria - Strengthening Virtual Care Capability in Residential Aged Care (2026)

To be eligible to apply under this initiative, the applicant Residential Aged Care Home must meet **all mandatory eligibility criteria** and **at least one eligibility basis** outlined below.

Mandatory Eligibility Criteria : Applicants must:

- be an Australian Commonwealth-funded Residential Aged Care Home operating within the Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN) region, and not a Multi-purpose Service (MPS) operated by NSW Health;

- be operating in accordance with applicable legislative and regulatory requirements under the Aged Care Act 2024, including any applicable transitional provisions;

- not be currently subject to any investigation, sanction or suspension by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission or any other relevant regulatory authority that would preclude participation in this initiative; and

- have no outstanding enforcement action, compliance notices requiring remediation, or serious breaches under the Aged Care Act 2024 (including any applicable transitional provisions) that would preclude participation in this initiative.

Applications that do not meet all mandatory eligibility criteria will not be considered. Eligibility must be met at the time of application.

Eligibility Basis *(At least ONE must be met)*

In addition to the mandatory criteria, applicant Residential Aged Care Homes must meet **at least one (1)** of the following eligibility bases:

Option 1 – New or Non-participant in 2023 Telehealth Grants

The Residential Aged Care Home has not previously applied for the 2023 WNSW PHN Telehealth Grants.

Option 2 – Previous Participant with Demonstrated Virtual Care Uptake

The Residential Aged Care Home previously participated in the 2023 WNSW PHN Telehealth Grants and confirms that approximately 50% or greater of residents currently access healthcare services via virtual care, including general practitioner (GP) and/or allied health consultations.

Option 3 – Virtual Care Research Participation

The Residential Aged Care Home is participating in a formally approved virtual care research, evaluation, or quality improvement project, conducted under appropriate ethics and/or governance authorisation (e.g. university-led or health system-endorsed initiatives such as the Sydney University Woundview Project), and demonstrates a need for additional virtual care equipment to support participation.

Exclusions: The following services are not eligible to apply:

- Multi-Purpose Services (MPS) operated by NSW Health; and
- Residential Aged Care Homes that do not meet the mandatory eligibility criteria outlined above.

7. How to apply

Residential Aged Care Homes interested in participating in this initiative are invited to submit an Expression of Interest using the online application form.

Step1: Complete the online Expression of Interest application form in full.

Step 2: Submit the application before the closing date.

Applications will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria and assessment framework outlined in this EOI. Successful applicants will be notified and provided with further information on next steps, including contract execution, equipment procurement, and onboarding to workforce capability activities.

Approvals and sign-off

- **Expression of Interest (EOI):** Submitted by the Residential Aged Care Home manager or authorised delegate.

- **Participation Agreement (contract):** Requires organisational approval, including sign-off by the appropriate organisational authority and Information Technology (IT) delegate, prior to equipment procurement.

Applicants are encouraged to begin internal discussions early, including with relevant organisational and IT stakeholders, to support timely execution of the Participation Agreement (contract) if selected.

8. Assessment Method and Selection

Applications will be assessed on an **eligibility basis only** against the mandatory eligibility criteria set out in **Section 6** of this EOI.

Information provided in the application form will be used to assess whether applicants meet each of the mandatory eligibility criteria, including:

- **Eligibility Criterion 1 – Research participation:** assessment will be based on responses provided to the research participation question(s);

- **Eligibility Criterion 2 – Service scale:** assessment will be based on resident numbers provided in the application; and

- **Eligibility Criterion 3 – Virtual care delivery:** assessment will be based on the proportion of residents receiving virtual care as identified in the application.

Applications that do not meet, or cannot be confirmed as meeting, all mandatory eligibility criteria, will not be progressed. Where required, WNSW PHN may seek clarification of information provided solely for the purpose of confirming eligibility.

Oversubscription

Equipment packages valued at approximately $7,000–$13,000 will be available to successful applicants, based on an estimated number of participants. Applications will be reviewed for eligibility as they are received.

Meeting eligibility criteria does not guarantee approval.

If the number of eligible applications exceeds available capacity for procurement and delivery, WNSW PHN may manage oversubscription by adjusting funding amounts within the stated range, staging participation, or placing eligible applicants on a reserve list.

Where staging is required, implementation may be sequenced to support equitable access across the region and feasible delivery. Sequencing may take into account service context factors such as reliance on virtual care, access to inperson services, equity of access for residents, and readiness to implement, for implementation planning purposes only.

Final participant numbers and equipment allocations will be confirmed following consideration of overall demand and are subject to available funding and organisational approvals.

9. Use of Equipment and Support

9.1 Permitted Uses of Equipment and Support

The virtual care equipment and associated support provided through this initiative are intended to support safe and appropriate delivery of virtual care within participating Residential Aged Care Homes.

☑ **Intended uses of equipment and support**	☒ **Non-permitted uses of equipment and support**
☑ Virtual clinical consultations (e.g. GP, allied health, specialist services)	☒ Administrative or business activities unrelated to resident care
☑ Care planning and multidisciplinary team meetings	☒ Personal or entertainment use
☑ Family consultations, where clinically appropriate	☒ Transfer, resale, or relocation of equipment outside the participating Residential Aged Care Home
☑ Secure access to the Residential Aged Care Home's Clinical Information System (CIS), where enabled locally	☒ Use by unauthorised individuals or services
☑ Workforce training and Community of Practice participation	☒ Any use that does not align with applicable privacy, security, or regulatory requirements
☑ After-hours or urgent clinical advice, where available	
☑ Use of interoperable peripheral devices (e.g. examination camera)	
☑ Participation in approved virtual care projects, pilots, or research activities	

9.2 Governance and safe use

Use of the equipment and support is expected to align with relevant clinical, privacy, information security, and aged care regulatory requirements. Local organisational policies and procedures apply to device configuration, user access, and cybersecurity arrangements.

9.3 Conditions of Participation

The following conditions outline the requirements for successful applicants for this initiative.

1. Only one application may be submitted per eligible Residential Aged Care Home (RACH). Where an organisation owns or operates multiple Residential Aged Care Homes — including homes located on the same site or address — a separate application may be submitted for each eligible RACH.

2. Submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) does not guarantee selection.

3. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Participation Agreement (contract) with WNSW PHN prior to participation in this initiative.

4. Applicants must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that could reasonably be seen to influence their participation in this initiative.

5. Participating Residential Aged Care Homes may be publicly listed by WNSW PHN as part of communications, reporting or evaluation activities related to this initiative.

6. Participating Residential Aged Care Homes agree to comply with any reporting or data-sharing requirements specified in the Participation Agreement.

7. Participating Residential Aged Care Homes must comply with all applicable privacy, information security, and regulatory obligations, including those outlined in the Participation Agreement and relevant legislation.

8. Public references to equipment or support received through this initiative should acknowledge WNSW PHN in accordance with any branding or communication guidelines provided.

9. Ownership of the physical equipment will transfer to the Residential Aged Care Home upon delivery, subject to the terms and conditions of the Participation Agreement. Any software, platforms, or licenses associated with the equipment remain subject to their respective terms and conditions.

   Important: All key participation requirements must be met by the Residential Aged Care Home by the end of 2026 (unless otherwise agreed in writing by WNSW PHN). Failure to meet these requirements may result in WNSW PHN requiring the return of equipment.

10. Provision of equipment is subject to available funding and supply. Where demand exceeds capacity, WNSW PHN reserves the right to prioritise applications in accordance with the objectives of the initiative.

11. WNSW PHN reserves the right to withdraw, recover, reallocate, or otherwise manage equipment where a participating Residential Aged Care Home is found to be non-compliant with the initiative or key participation requirements.

10. Timelines

The following timeline is provided as an indication only and may be subject to change.

- **Expression of Interest period:** 23rd March – 13th April 2026

- **Participation Agreement (contract) execution and procurement:** Following approval

- **Equipment delivery:** Coordinated with participating RACH May 2026

- **Workforce capability and Community of Practice activities:** Commencing mid 2026

- **Digital Health Maturity Assessment:** July - Dec 2026

Note: All dates are indicative and will be confirmed in the Participation Agreement (contract).

WNSW PHN will provide detailed scheduling for delivery, training and evaluation activities following acceptance.

11. EOI Application

To apply for this initiative:

1. Review the conditions outlined in this Expression of Interest (EOI)
2. Complete and submit the Application Form **HERE** or use the QR Code.
3. Submit your application by Monday 13 April 2026 to confirm acceptance of the EOI conditions.

12. Further Information

Lisa Boes
Digital Health Support Officer
📞 0474 263 516 lisa.boes@wnswphn.org.au

Attachments

➢ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Strengthening Virtual Care Capability in Residential Aged Care Homes Initiative

Western NSW Primary Health Network (WNSW PHN)
Expression of Interest (EOI) – Virtual Care Equipment & Workforce Capability Support Initiative
March 2026

1. At a Glance Summary

What is this?

An Expression of Interest (EOI) to support eligible Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs) to strengthen virtual care capability through the provision of virtual care equipment and workforce capability support.
No direct funding is provided.

What is provided?

- Purpose-designed virtual care equipment for use in regulated healthcare settings
- Access to a secure, browser-based videoconferencing platform (Healthdirect Video Call)
- Workforce capability support through a short series of virtual Community of Practice sessions

Security and compliance

- Equipment is intended for use in regulated healthcare settings
- Secure videoconferencing platforms are used to support virtual care delivery
- All equipment must be implemented and managed in line with the service's existing IT, privacy, cybersecurity, and data governance requirements
- Local IT governance and controls remain in place at all times

What this initiative is not

- A cash or funding grant
- A replacement for local IT governance or controls

Who is this for?

Eligible Commonwealth-funded Residential Aged Care Homes located within the WNSW PHN region.

2. Understanding the Digital Health Maturity Assessment

What is the Digital Health Maturity Assessment?

The Digital Health Maturity Assessment is a short, online survey that provides a structured snapshot of an aged care home's current digital capability, including systems, workflows, workforce confidence, and readiness for digital and virtual care.

The assessment is designed to support improvement and planning, not compliance or regulation.

Why are aged care homes asked to complete the assessment?

The assessment builds on digital health maturity work undertaken across the region in 2023 and supports an updated understanding of current digital capability and readiness for digital and virtual care.

It helps ensure that workforce support, capability activities, and resources are appropriate, targeted, and responsive to current needs, rather than based on assumptions or outdated information.

How will assessment results be used?

- Individual results are provided directly to each aged care home to support quality improvement, planning, and discussions with leadership or head office about digital priorities
- Aggregated and de-identified results are used by WNSW PHN to understand digital capability across the region and to target support and investment where it will have the greatest impact

Results are not used for compliance or regulatory purposes.

3. About the Initiative

What is the Strengthening Virtual Care Capability initiative?

This WNSW PHN initiative supports Residential Aged Care Homes to strengthen their ability to deliver safe and effective virtual care through access to fit-for-purpose equipment and workforce capability support.

The initiative focuses on embedding virtual care into everyday workflows and participation is through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

Is this a funding or cash grant?

No. This is not a cash grant. Support is provided in the form of equipment, access to a videoconferencing platform, and workforce capability support at no cost to successful applicants.

Why is WNSW PHN delivering this initiative?

Virtual care can improve access to timely clinical services, particularly in regional, rural, and remote areas. This initiative aims to:

- Improve access to GPs, specialists, and allied health services
- Support earlier clinical intervention and continuity of care
- Reduce avoidable hospital transfers
- Build workforce confidence and digital capability
- Embed virtual care safely and sustainably into routine practice

4. What Support Is Provided?

What will successful RACHs receive?

Subject to execution of the Participation Agreement (contract) successful applicants will receive a virtual care support package, which includes:

- One virtual care equipment package (selected through the EOI)
- Access to a Healthdirect Video Call account (a secure, browser-based videoconferencing platform supported under current Commonwealth arrangements)
- Workforce capability support, including digital adoption coaching through a short series of virtual Community of Practice sessions during 2026

What equipment is included?

Each equipment package includes:

- A medical-grade workstation on wheels (cart)
- A computing device (all-in-one computer, laptop, or tablet, depending on the option selected)
- A high-definition general examination camera
- Microphone/speaker, keyboard, and mouse

Equipment is provided to support the delivery of virtual care within the participating RACH.

Can equipment be customised or changed?

No. Equipment options must be selected as presented in the EOI. Packages cannot be split, mixed, or substituted, and changes may not be possible once procurement has commenced.

5. Software and Technology

What software is included?

Access to a Healthdirect Video Call account is included as a secure, browser-based virtual care platform supported under current Commonwealth arrangements.

Who is responsible for IT setup and support?

Participating RACHs are responsible for:

- Local IT setup and configuration
- Network connectivity and Wi-Fi
- Secure access to clinical information systems (CIS)
- Privacy, cybersecurity, and data governance
- Ongoing local IT support and management

WNSW PHN provides equipment and general guidance only.

6. Workforce Capability and Support

What workforce support is provided?

Workforce capability support includes access to a digital adoption coach through participation in a virtual Community of Practice during 2026.

This support is designed to build confidence, capability, and safe use of virtual care.

What is a Virtual Care Champion?

A Virtual Care Champion is a staff member who:

- Leads local implementation of virtual care
- Acts as the main contact for this initiative
- Participates in workforce support activities, including the Community of Practice

At least one Champion must be nominated. More than one may be nominated.

7. Eligibility (Quick Guide)

Who may be eligible to apply?

You may be eligible if your Residential Aged Care Home:

- Is Commonwealth-funded and located in the WNSW PHN region (excluding Multi-Purpose Services), and
- Meets governance and compliance requirements, and
- Can nominate at least one Virtual Care Champion, and
- Meets one of the eligibility bases outlined below

Eligibility bases

You may be eligible if **any one** of the following applies:

- **New to PHN virtual care support**
  Your service did not participate in the WNSW PHN Telehealth Grants in 2023
- **Previously supported, now high virtual care use**
  Your service participated in the 2023 grants and approximately 50% or more of residents currently use virtual care (e.g. GP and/or allied health services)
- **Active in approved virtual care research**
  Your service is involved in approved virtual care pilots, research, or evaluation projects

Important to note

- Meeting one eligibility base alone is not sufficient — all general requirements must also be met. Applications that do not meet eligibility requirements cannot proceed

How is eligibility confirmed?

Eligibility is assessed through the EOI process based on information provided in the application form. WNSW PHN may seek clarification where required.

What if applications exceed available capacity?

If eligible applications exceed available capacity, WNSW PHN may manage oversubscription in line with the EOI, including prioritisation, staged participation, or placement on a reserve list.

Meeting eligibility criteria does not guarantee selection.

Why is there a Readiness and Capability Assessment in the EOI?

The assessment helps WNSW PHN understand your service's current virtual care environment, including connectivity, existing equipment, workforce capability, and resident needs.

This information supports tailored implementation planning and evaluation. It is not a standalone scoring tool and does not, on its own, determine eligibility.

8. Application and EOI Process

How do we apply?

Applications must be submitted via the Expression of Interest (EOI) process using the online form provided by WNSW PHN before the advertised closing date.

Is head office approval required?

Head office approval is not required to submit the EOI. However, early discussions with head office and IT authorities are encouraged. Both must sign the contract if the application is approved.

Who can we contact for support?

For questions or assistance, contact: **digitalhealth.team@wnswphn.org.au**

9. Use of Equipment and Delivery Expectations

How can the equipment be used?

Equipment must be used to support the delivery of virtual care, including:

- GP, specialist, and allied health consultations
- Care planning and multidisciplinary discussions
- Family meetings related to resident care
- Workforce training and capability activities
- Approved pilots or evaluation activities

What is not permitted?

Equipment must not be used for:

- Non-clinical or entertainment purposes
- Administrative use unrelated to resident care
- Resale, transfer, or off-site use
- Any activity that breaches privacy, cybersecurity, or regulatory obligations

What happens if equipment is misused?

Equipment must be used in accordance with program conditions outlined in the EOI and contract. WNSW PHN reserves the right to recover equipment in cases of misuse, non-compliance, or material breach.

Who owns the equipment?

Ownership transfers to the Residential Aged Care Home once equipment is delivered and accepted, subject to terms and conditions of participation. WNSW PHN retains the right to recover equipment where obligations are not met.

What is not included?

The initiative does not cover:

- Internet or Wi-Fi upgrades or TAG testing
- Additional or replacement devices
- Consumables
- Local IT support or staff backfill
- Ongoing paid software licences beyond what is included

10. Key Commitments if Selected

Successful applicants must:

- Nominate at least one Virtual Care Champion
- Use equipment for its intended purpose
- Participate in workforce support, reporting, and evaluation activities
- Complete the mandatory Digital Health Maturity Assessment during 2026

11. Privacy, Data Use and Governance

Are reporting and evaluation required?

Yes. Participation in reporting and evaluation activities is a condition of participation. This includes:

- Completing the digital readiness assessment in the EOI application form
- Completing the Digital Health Maturity Assessment during 2026
- Providing progress updates
- Participating in post-initiative evaluation activities

All reporting is privacy-compliant and data is used in aggregated and de-identified form only. Service-level information is used for planning and implementation purposes and is not publicly reported.

12. Outcomes, Evaluation and Ongoing Support

The initiative is expected to strengthen readiness for virtual care, build workforce confidence and capability, and improve resident access to timely virtual health services.

Over time, this supports better continuity of care, earlier clinical intervention, and reduced avoidable hospital transfers, while enabling care to be delivered in familiar surroundings.

Evaluation focuses on learning and continuous improvement using aggregated and de-identified information only. Ongoing support is provided through workforce capability activities and engagement with the WNSW PHN Digital Health team.

Key Dates (Indicative)

EOI process

- **EOI opens:** Monday 23 March 2026
- **EOI closes:** Monday 13 April 2026

Post-EOI activities

- Equipment delivery: prior to July 2026
- Workforce support activities: mid 2026
- Digital Health Maturity Assessment: prior to December 2026

Dates are indicative and may be subject to change.