

31 March 2020

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What's New

SUPPORTING A STRONG AGED CARE WORKFORCE

Recently the National Cabinet announced additional funding of \$444.6 million for the aged care sector to ensure continuity of the aged care workforce.

You can read the Hon. Richard Colbeck, Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians statement at this [link](#).

The Australian Government Department of Health has been working on the mechanisms, processes and guidelines in order to release these funds for workers and providers. Below is a series of FAQs to assist workers and providers prepare during these challenging circumstances.

How will the retention bonus payment to eligible full-time direct care workers be administered?

Full-time direct care workers in residential care facilities, including personal care workers, registered nurses, enrolled nurses and allied health will receive a 'retention bonus' of up to \$800 per quarter, paid for two quarters.

Full-time home care workers will receive payments of up to \$600 per quarter, for two quarters. This includes workers providing clinical care, personal care, cleaning, home support activities and meal preparation, social support, shopping, community access and transport, allied health and respite.

The above rates are per Full-Time Employee (FTE). There will also be pro rata payments for eligible part time and casual workers.

When will payments be made?

Payments are expected to be made in June and September for the preceding three month period. Details about the exacting timing of payments and how they will be made will be advised in due course.

How can the additional funding to support continuity of workforce supply for residential care providers be accessed?

The Government has announced \$78.3 million in temporary additional funding for residential care to support additional costs and workforce supply pressures resulting from COVID-19. All residential aged care providers will receive a portion of additional funding. It is intended, for example, to help with the additional costs associated with hiring additional staff, covering workers while they're self-isolating etc.

It will be administered through uplift to subsidies paid through Aged Care Funding Instrument with effect from 1 March 2020 to 31 August 2020. Funding will start to flow to providers from April 2020.

What about the specific additional funding for support for in the home providers?

The Government has allocated an additional \$70.2 million for CHSP providers to support providers impacted by COVID-19. This is in recognition of additional

support that will need to be provided to care recipients because of the COVID-19 health emergency, including services for people in self-isolation.

How do CHSP providers access this funding?

All applicants must complete and submit an application form which can be requested from your Funding Arrangement Manager or by email from CHSPprogram@health.gov.au. In this application form you should outline and justify the business need and demand for services and clearly articulate which service types and aged care planning regions will be affected and how much funding will be required.

What can CHSP providers use these funds for?

Where there is evidence of a significant financial impact to service delivery or workforce retention, CHSP service providers may submit an unsolicited proposal to the Department for additional grant funding.

This funding can be used to expand high demand CHSP services (e.g. Social Support Individual, Domestic Assistance, Personal Care, Nursing and essential Transport services), implement new and innovative service delivery models and in the retention of staff and volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Will there be any restrictions on what providers can use these funds for?

An unsolicited proposal may only be used by CHSP providers who are ineligible for Flexibility Provisions (i.e. they only deliver one CHSP service type) or have already fully utilised their Flexibility Provisions.

Specific information about what CHSP grant money can and cannot be used for can be found in Part 8 of the [CHSP Grant Guidelines \(2018\)](#), which is available on the Department's website.

The Government has also allocated an additional \$22 million in temporary subsidy increases for Home Care Packages to support providers' additional costs and workforce supply pressures resulting from COVID-19. Funding will have effect from

1 March 2020 to 31 August 2020 and the additional funding will start to flow to providers from April 2020.

What about additional funding for services that support vulnerable or disadvantaged communities?

The Government has announced a temporary 30% increase to the Residential and Home Care Viability Supplements and the Homeless Supplement:

- 30% increase to providers eligible for the residential care viability supplement
- 30% increase to providers eligible for the home care viability supplement
- 30% increase to providers eligible for the Homeless Supplement
- Viability Supplement equivalent payment under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program
- Viability Supplement equivalent payment for Multi-Purpose Services

This additional funding recognises the particular cost and service delivery pressures eligible providers experience given their geography and/or the particular client groups they care for. This may be exacerbated by COVID-19 and the funding is available to support any additional cost pressures these providers face. Funding will have effect from 1 March 2020 to 31 August 2020 and the additional funding will start to flow to providers from April 2020.

STREAMLINED PROCESS TO INCREASE RESIDENTIAL RESPITE DAYS

To assist residential aged care providers respond to the increased demand for respite care as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health has introduced a streamlined process for providers to apply to increase (or vary) the number of residential respite days at a service.

As part of this simplified process, to apply to change the maximum number of residential respite days, providers can now make a request via e-mail to the Department's State or Territory office in which the aged care service is located.

A request to increase the number of respite days can be made by email and accepted with the following information:

- Service name
- Total Number of respite days required
- Date of effect

Providers will then be notified of the outcome by email from the state/territory office.

Please contact the relevant State or Territory via the appropriate email address below:

QLDPlaces@health.gov.au

NSWPlaces@health.gov.au (including applications from the ACT)

VICPlaces@health.gov.au

TASPlaces@health.gov.au

SAPlaces@health.gov.au

WAPlaces@health.gov.au

NTPlaces@health.gov.au

Resources

Four modules are available for completion as part of the Department of Health's new eLearning program for Aged Care workers. Modules are:

- **Module 1:** Personal Safety
- **Module 2:** Families and Visitors
 - Part A: Residential Care Facilities
 - Part B: In Home Care
- **Module 3:** COVID-19 and Aged Care
- **Module 4:** Outbreak Management

[Click here to register and access the training modules.](#)

If you would like to access the Aged Care training, users will need to register their workplaces as 'Aged Care'. If you have already registered for online training but

not with 'Aged Care' as your workplace, email support@covid-19training.gov.au for a priority response.

Coming Soon

- Further information on the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS)
- Additional resources on accessing and using PPE in Aged Care settings
- Updated Live FAQs

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