

Functional Area:

Community Care Services [Aged Care]



Client Contribution and Fee Reduction Policy CHSP

Purpose

This policy is to ensure a consistent approach to the application of client contributions or payments towards their aged care community services and consideration of fee reduction to applicable clients. This policy supports fairness and transparency and ensures no client is denied essential CHSP services because of inability to pay. It aligns with government requirements (CHSP Manual and Contribution Framework).

Scope

This policy applies to all CHSP clients receiving services from GOCSA Community Care Services:

- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) – all service types, including Social Support Group,

This policy is applied as an update to the GOCSA CCS Client Fees Policy and supersedes all the other policies and procedures dealing with client's fees for the GOCSA CCS.

Principles

GOCSA CCS will apply reduction in client fees based on the following principles:

- There will be consistency and transparency in the operation of fee reductions throughout the Community Care Services Division, GOCSA.
- All clients assessed as having capacity to pay to be charged fees. No client will be refused a government funded service due to their inability to pay.
- A single determination of an application for fee reduction will have an effect on all GOCSA Community Care Services provided to the client.
- Clients experiencing financial difficulties because of the need for services may be eligible to apply for their government subsidised service fees to be reduced in part or in full. Four levels of fee reduction are available – 25%, 50%, 75% or 100%.
- In special circumstances, consideration may be given to the needs of clients who, by refusing to accept services, will be at risk of living in unsafe or extremely inappropriate conditions.
- All client fee approvals must include a date for review which must be within the next twelve (12) months.
- All clients will be advised in writing with a minimum of two weeks in advance of a fee increase.

1. Fees Charged/Your CHSP client contributions

Fee increases may be undertaken once a per year in (June) in accordance with Australian Government recommendations.

1.1 Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

The funding that CHSP registered providers receive when they deliver services has two parts:

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- The grant funding as per the National Unit Price Ranges and set out in the grant agreement between GOCSA and the Commonwealth, and
- The client contribution, which is determined by each provider based on the National CHSP Client Contribution Framework and paid by the client (section 286 of the Act).

As per the above, we may charge you a client contribution towards the delivery of your services. In such cases, the amount must be agreed in writing between you and GOCSA.

There is no formal means testing for CHSP client contributions.

GOCSA has a document that explains the client contribution fees and how they are calculated. We will provide this information to you before you sign this Service Agreement and before your services commence.

Fees are reviewed at least annually and endorsed by the General Manager GOCSA.

2. Client Rights and Responsibilities

This policy ensures that all clients have the right to:

- Access affordable CHSP services regardless of ability to pay
- Receive written information about fees and any changes
- Request a review of fees
- Seek reductions confidentially
- Make complaints without fear of retribution
- Use an advocate

And responsibilities to:

- Pay agreed contributions when able
- Inform GOCSA if circumstances change
- Contact GOCSA if an invoice is unclear or unaffordable

3. Non-Payment and Arrears

Before taking any action regarding unpaid fees, staff must:

- Contact the client to understand any contributing factors
- Offer a review of fees or discuss hardship options
- Check for indicators of risk, vulnerability, or crisis
- Ensure that inability to pay does not result in sudden withdrawal of essential services

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If arrears continue despite support, the matter may be escalated to the Finance Manager for further review, always in line with CHSP equity principles.

3. Fee Reduction

A fee reduction will be available to a client who satisfy one of the following criteria –

- 3.1.1 Where proof is provided that the client has had their fees reduced by another aged care provider within the last 6 months an automatic reduction will be available for 12 months only, after which a new application must be completed.
- 3.1.2 Upon financial difficulties (see Claim for Fee Reduction/ Fee Waiver Form)

Existing CHSP Clients experiencing financial constraints and/or unable to afford their continuing CHSP services may also apply the fee reduction. Existing CHSP Clients are encouraged to apply for fee reduction in writing.

In case of financial difficulties, please contact GOCSA to discuss alternative payment arrangements for your contribution. Please note that you will not be denied CHSP services due to inability to pay.

4. Client accessing more than one GOCSA service

- Where a client access more than one GOCSA CCS service and those services are from different funding sources (e.g., CHSP and Support at Home), the determination of a fee reduction will be based on the Department of Health's directions as outlined in the relevant Government Operational Manuals.
- The Community Care Services Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the assessment outcome is communicated to the client's Care Partner.

4.1 Special Conditions

A fee reduction may be available in extraordinary circumstances for New CHSP Clients and must be approved in advance by the Community Care Services Manager. An "Application for Special Consideration" will usually be completed by the GOCSA Care Partner will require written evidence from the client or their representative.

As Commonwealth Home Support Programme is 'entry level support' services, existing CHSP Clients will be provided with an alternative opportunity to seek GOCSA CCS CHSP Fee reduction.

GOCSA CCS acknowledges that existing clients may have been accessing GOCSA CHSP services for some time and may decline to complete a formal assessment of income and expenditure.

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This alternative process aims to provide a sensitive approach to clients who may be financially constrained or unable to afford to continue to access their existing CHSP services.

Existing CHSP clients who genuinely cannot afford the published GOCSA CCS CHSP Pricelist may write to the Community Services Manager, stating their situation and that cost is an issue to them continuing to access their existing services. The fee reduction or waiver will be at the stated 25%, 50%, 75% or 100%.

Criteria for considering a reduction as a result of Special Consideration may include:

4.1.1. People who are reluctant to accept services due to mental health and/or cognitive impairment or special needs, and the issue of paying fees becomes a barrier to them accessing services and, in doing so, places them at increased risk of health and safety deterioration and/ or the likelihood of extremely inappropriate or unsafe living conditions.

4.1.2. People who are unwilling to pay for services and are extremely socially isolated, and at high risk of institutionalisation (for example, very old and frail, living alone, no other supports or networks, limited capacity to make decisions).

4.1.3. People who have been accepted for a Fee Reduction from another service within last 6 months.

4.2 Complaints and Appeals

Clients and their representatives have the right to appeal against a given fee determination and will be referred to the GOCSA Complaints Procedure and outlined in the Client Information Booklet. Where complaints cannot be resolved within GOCSA, clients and advocates will be given information about external advocacy agencies.

Related Documents

- Complaints Resolution Policy
- Complaints Resolution Procedure
- Claim for Fee Reduction / Fee Waiver Form
- Client Information Booklet

Further References

- Aged Care Act (2024)
- CHSP Program Manual (2025 October)
- CHSP Client Contribution Framework
- Aged Care Act principles related to affordability and equity