



Centacare

Commonwealth Home Support Programme
Client Contribution Policy

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| Approved by | Pauline Connelly, Director, Centacare Catholic Family Services |

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1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) is one consolidated programme that provides entry-level home support for older people who need assistance living independently.
- 1.2.** This policy has been developed to provide a standard framework (promoting equality) for Centacare to collect a contribution towards client support. The National guide to the CHSP client contribution framework allows for a flexible approach on a per client basis that also considers financial hardship.
- 1.3.** The objectives of this policy are to ensure compliance with legal and statutory responsibilities, describe Centacare’s client contribution structure, and a CHSP fee reduction/waiver process.
- 1.4.** This policy applies to the Commonwealth Home Support Programme only.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. Executive Manager, Care and Support Services

- Ensure adherence to legislative and client contribution principles as outlined in this policy.
- Support and guide workers on the client contribution principles and operational processes.

2.2. Program Manager, CHSP

- Assist Executive Managers to ensure legislative and best practice processes are followed and support client contributions principles and operational processes.
- Ensure procedures are reviewed, updated and current information is provided to workers.
- Ensure Client Contribution Fee Waivers (where applicable) are approved and signed.

2.3. Intake Coordinator and Program Coordinator

- Ensure clients are informed of the client contribution fees, and of fee reduction and waivers where applicable.
- Support clients in completion of documents as applicable, ensuring approval processes are completed.

3. Client Contribution Principles

Centacare is committed to supporting the following principles within the Commonwealth Home Support Programme Client Contribution Framework (as cited in the CHSP Programme Manual 2020-2022).

The words 'client' and 'person' are used interchangeably and refer to the person using the service.

- 1. Consistency:** All clients who have the capacity and can afford to contribute to the cost of their care are required to do so.
- 2. Transparency:** Centacare's Client Contribution Policy is publicly available, includes information in an accessible format, and is given to, and explained to, all new and existing clients.
- 3. Hardship:** Centacare recognise that some people are in genuine financial hardship and may be unable to pay the contribution due to circumstances beyond their control; in which case the contribution level can be adjusted. If financial circumstances change, a review of the client's contribution can occur at any time.
- 4. Reporting:** All dollar amounts collected from client contributions/fees will be reported as program income under the grant obligations.
- 5. Fairness:** Consideration will be taken into account as to the client's capacity to pay and will not exceed the actual cost to deliver the services. In administering this, Centacare will consider partnered clients, clients in receipt of compensation payments and bundling of services.
- 6. Sustainability:** Revenue from client contributions will be used to support ongoing service delivery and expand the services Centacare are currently funded to deliver.

4. Policy

4.1. Client Intake

- Centacare will inform clients of the CHSP client contribution structure, payment requirements, feedback and complaints processes, and the financial hardship process during their first contact with the service. To ensure clients understand these processes, Centacare and the client may consider interpreter support.
- Centacare will establish a Service Agreement with clients, including written information regarding the above.
- Clients will be encouraged to raise any difficulties they have in paying fees or financial hardship during their intake process during their intake process, and though their services within the CHSP program.

4.2. Client Contribution Structure

- The schedule of fees will be based on criteria including (but not exclusive to) the actual cost of service and nature of service.
- Centacare will review the contribution rate every 12 months and communicate any increases with a minimum of 30 days' notice in writing. Written communications will inform clients of the process of enquiring or seeking support about the contribution adjustment. When speaking with clients via telephone, the CHSP Intake and Program Coordinator will also communicate any increases.
- Persons requesting services will be asked whether the contribution will be difficult. Inability to pay will not exclude clients from receiving a service. When necessary, services will be prioritised to those in greatest need, considering the comparative need for a service and not the individual's capacity to pay.

4.3. Multiple Service Access (Bundling)

- The fee contribution schedule will be bundled when a client receives multiple services from Centacare.
- When a service is received from another provider concurrently, Centacare will liaise with the client and, where possible, the external provider concerning the client contribution amounts. This is to accommodate clients receiving multiple services appropriately, so the client is not disadvantaged.

4.4. Financial Hardship

- Clients receiving services will be encouraged to contact the CHSP Program Manager at any time if they are experiencing difficulties with meeting the costs of services.
- The client experiencing financial hardship, together with their nominee and or carer or family where relevant, are responsible for completing the CHSP Fee Waiver or Reduction Application form.
- A fee reduction or waiver assessment is considered case-by-case by the assessing CHSP Manager and in consultation with the client and their preferred advocate.

4.5. Collection of Fees and Charges

- Clients are invoiced directly, and payments can occur via bank transfer.
- Centacare will temporarily place services on hold where payments are not received. This will only occur if there is no agreed CHSP Fee Reduction or Waiver Application or an understanding of financial hardship.

4.6. Feedback and Complaints

- Centacare welcomes feedback from clients and their advocates, especially where clients are experiencing difficulties meeting service costs or are dissatisfied with client contribution arrangements.
- Whether it is a compliment, complaint or comment, all feedback assists Centacare provide a better service for clients and others.

4.7. Reporting

- Grant agreement obligations require Centacare to report the dollar amount collected from client contributions. Centacare will also document contribution amounts in the DEX (Data Exchange) Reporting Schedule.

5. Definitions

The words 'client' and 'person' are used interchangeably and refer to the person using the service.

| Term | Definition |
|---------------------|---|
| Advocate | Describes a person or agency who acts or intercedes on behalf of another, whether they are related to them or not. Advocates may be a relative, friend, neighbour or a person from an advocacy service. |
| Care recipient | Refers to the recipient of a Centacare CHSP service. |
| Carers | People who have the principal responsibility of caring for someone with special needs. |
| CHSP | Refers to Commonwealth Home Support Programme. |
| Client contribution | Refers to the fee paid by the person using the service. |
| Financial hardship | Refers to circumstances affecting a person's capacity to pay the prescribed co-payment for services due to financial burden associated with medical and pharmaceutical costs, other support and care costs, cost of living pressures, outstanding debts, health status and any other identified contributing factors. |
| Guardian | Includes the person who is legally entrusted to manage somebody else's affairs on their behalf. |
| Program | Describes the group of services that support older people to stay at home and maintain their independence |
| Service | Describes the specific support that assists people in the home or community to maintain their independence. |

6. Related Documents

| Title | Source |
|--|-----------|
| Service Fees Policy and Procedure (SD1006) | Centacare |
| Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure (CRR2002) | Centacare |
| Client Induction Procedure (SD1003.1) | Centacare |

7. Legislation and Standards

| Title | Source |
|---|---|
| Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth) | Commonwealth |
| Aged Care Quality Standards | Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission |
| Carer Recognition Act 2010 | Commonwealth |
| Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) Manual 2022 - 2023 | Dept. of Health and Aged Care |
| Disability Services Act 1993 (SA) | State |
| Home and Community Care Act 1985 (Cth) | Commonwealth |
| National Guide to the CHSP client contribution framework | Dept. of Health and Aged Care |

8. Forms

| Title | Source |
|--|-----------|
| CHSP Fee Reduction or Waiver Application Form (CHSP02.5) | Centacare |

9. Monitor and Evaluate

This policy will be monitored for compliance and effectiveness by Centacare’s CASS Unit. Interim reviews will occur at any time as required in response to either feedback or changes in legislation, policy, or practices to ensure the information in it is current, useful, and easy to understand.

10. Version Control and Change History

| Version | Approved Date | Short Description for Development or Review (NEW/SCHEDULED/INTERIM) | Review Completed By | Consultation Process | Next Review |
|---------|---------------|---|--|---|-------------|
| V1.0 | 1-Sep-2022 | NEW – Adoption of Policy. As a Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) service provider, Centacare has developed a publicly available policy that aligns with the National Guide to the CHSP Client Contribution Framework. This Policy ensures that those able to contribute to the cost of services do so whilst providing safeguards for those who are financially disadvantaged. | CASS Exec. Mgr.; CHSP Program Manager; QIS Coordinator | CHSP Intake Coordinator; CHSP Program Coordinator | Sep-2023 |