



National Health Reform Package: Next Steps for the NSW HACC Program

What impact does the national health reform package have on the HACC sector?

In 2 August 2011, NSW endorsed a new national health reform package, including a National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) with the Commonwealth Government and other States and Territories. This new agreement incorporates the April 2010 Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) decisions on aged care and disability services.

Under the NHRA, NSW has agreed to a split of responsibilities at age 65 (50 for Indigenous Australians) from 1 July 2011, for aged care and disability programs, including the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program.

What is being done in response to consultations with the NSW HACC sector?

Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) recognised the importance of keeping the sector informed about the reform agenda, and ensuring organisations had the opportunity to influence the reform process.

In 2010 ADHC engaged the Aged and Community Services Association of NSW and ACT Inc (ACS) to lead a state-wide consultation strategy with HACC stakeholders around the COAG reforms. ACS facilitated 17 consultations across NSW with more than 850 participants from a range of HACC funded organisations, peak bodies and other key stakeholders.

ACS has prepared a report that provides more details about the issues and opportunities raised by the sector around the aged care and disability reforms. This Fact Sheet responds to key issues raised through the consultations, noting that some issues are subject to further negotiation between the NSW Government and the Commonwealth.

What will the contractual arrangements be for HACC services from 1 July 2012?

From 1 July 2012 the Commonwealth will have full operational responsibility for basic community care services for older Australians and will directly contract with service providers in NSW. The NSW Government will be responsible for delivering basic community care services to clients under 65 (under 50 for Indigenous Australians).

This means that service providers that provide care to both younger and older clients are likely to have two funding agreements: one with the NSW Government for younger clients; and one with the Commonwealth for older clients.

NSW is working with the Commonwealth to align these funding agreements wherever possible. Advance notice regarding contractual requirements will be provided to HACC service providers by both governments.

Will governments contract with small service providers?

ADHC understands the concerns of the sector in relation to the future of small organisations and single service type providers. The NSW Government recognises that one of the key strengths of the HACC sector is its diversity. NSW will continue to fund small, medium and large service providers for the provision of basic community care services in NSW.

The NHRA provides that basic community care services will continue to be delivered through a mix of local government, State agency and non-government providers. As part of the NHRA, the Commonwealth has committed to not substantially alter service delivery mechanisms for HACC services before 1 July 2015, with no requirement for competitive tendering.

Will HACC Minimum Data Set (MDS) reporting requirements change?

Commonwealth, State and Territory aged and community care officials have agreed to continue to support the collection of HACC MDS data for national reporting, policy and planning purposes until at least 30 June 2012.

NSW is working with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories to clarify HACC MDS collection arrangements from 1 July 2012, with a view to minimising any changes. NSW is aware of the need to provide as much certainty as soon as possible to the sector in relation to future data collection arrangements.

Will the Community Care Common Standards (CCCS) be implemented in NSW?

The CCCS were developed to streamline administrative arrangements across community aged care programs. NSW agreed to commence CCCS and quality reporting on 1 March 2011. On behalf of ADHC, ACS has already commenced workshops for service providers across the state on the CCCS.

ADHC will maintain responsibility for monitoring HACC service providers against CCCS until the transition of HACC services for older people to the Commonwealth becomes effective on 1 July 2012. Wherever possible these reviews will be aligned with existing monitoring and risk management processes.

What will the new service system for younger people look like?

ADHC has started to explore possible future arrangements for community care services for younger people for which NSW will have full responsibility from 1 July 2012. Work is currently underway to develop a consolidated understanding of these clients and their support needs.

ADHC will further explore options for the future delivery of basic community care services to achieve the best possible outcomes for younger people with a disability, their families and carers.

Will there be changes to the way in which people access the aged care and disability systems?

Ensuring simple access to information and services is a key component of the national aged care and disability reform agendas. NSW is working with the Commonwealth to ensure that the future arrangements result in seamless transition of service provision, continuity of care for clients, and simple access to services.

The NSW Government is currently trialling elements of new access arrangements for aged care with the Commonwealth, building on the existing strengths of the NSW Community Care Access Point (CCAP). The CCAP has been providing a single point of intake and referral for services in the Hunter Local Planning Area since March 2008.

Has there been a change in eligibility for Indigenous Australians accessing HACC services?

In NSW, Indigenous Australians of any age are currently able to access HACC services. In recognition of reduced life expectancy, Indigenous Australians have been able to access these services as a 'frail aged' person from the age of 45 years.

As a result of the national health reforms, NSW will be responsible for delivering basic community care services to Indigenous Australians aged less than 50 years and the Commonwealth will be responsible for the delivery of services to Indigenous people aged 50 years and over.

Indigenous clients aged between 50-64 years are able to receive services from an appropriate provider under programs of either level of government. This will ensure that there will be 'no wrong door' for Indigenous Australians seeking community or residential care services. Targeted services will continue to be provided to meet the needs of Indigenous people and their communities by both levels of government.

How will the sector be supported through the transition?

NSW is aware of the need to support organisations through the transition. Existing sector support arrangements will continue under the HACC Program in 2011-12. The NSW Government and the Commonwealth have committed to minimal disruption for providers and to minimise any required increase in the regulatory burden for providers.

Will there be further consultation with the sector on the reforms?

ACS is currently undertaking additional consultations focusing specifically on organisations that provide services to Aboriginal clients and clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Further consultations on the new arrangements for the HACC sector will be held as required.

How can I access the ACS Consultation Report?

Electronic copies of ACS's report *NSW HACC Transition Consultation Project* have been sent to all service providers via ADHC's Service Provider Portal. Electronic copies are also available upon request from coagreforms@facs.nsw.gov.au

How can I stay up to date on the implementation of the COAG reforms?

Throughout the transition period, ADHC will provide regular updates to stakeholders and maintain information on its website at: http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/coag_reforms.