
Flexible Care Fund Guidelines

for the

Community Connection Program

1. Background to the Community Connection Program

The primary purpose of Community Connection Program (CCP) is to improve the health and well being of people with complex needs who are homeless or at housing risk by proactively identifying, engaging and linking them to appropriate mainstream and/or specialist services. The CCP will target people who require an assertive outreach response in order to gain access to specialist and mainstream services.

On a strategic level the CCP will also work with local services to assist them to become more accessible and responsive to the needs of this vulnerable population group.

A key feature of the program is the provision of flexible brokerage funds which will be used by the CCP outreach workers in the event mainstream/specialist service providers are unable to adequately meet client need.

2. Purpose of the Flexible Care Fund

The aim of the Flexible Care Fund is to enhance the health and well-being of Community Connection Program clients. The Flexible Care Fund is to be used to:

- Link a client to a mainstream or specialist service.
- Provide assistance to overcome a critical episode or address a pressing need.
- Pilot innovative and collaborative responses to unmet client need where there is a lack of service responsiveness.
- Engage a particular client or client group to a service.

It is not intended that the Flexible Care Funds be used to provide or broker an ongoing service for CCP clients or to pay for services which are readily available to the client.

3. Eligible Target Group

3.1 CCP Client Population

The CCP target population includes people who:

- have complex or multiple needs **and**
- live in low-cost accommodation
- are homeless or at risk of recurring homelessness or
- are at housing risk.

Priority will be given to people within the CCP client population:

- Who need assistance due to the loss, or risk of loss, of their accommodation, with particular reference to residents of pension-level SRSs.
- Have unmet complex or multiple support needs.

3.3 Eligibility Criteria

CCP clients must be eligible for receipt of a full payment of one of the following benefits:

- Centrelink Pension/Allowance
- Veteran's Affairs Service Pension
- Austudy.

4. Definitions

4.1 Complex Need

People with complex needs who are homeless, at housing risk or living in low-cost accommodation who have a condition(s) or a disability(s) such as:

- Intellectual disability
- Physical disability
- Cognitive disability
- Serious mental illness and/or psychiatric disability
- Behavioural disorder
- Frailty
- Problematic drug or alcohol dependence use
- Chronic physical health problems

that seriously impair their ability to:

- Obtain or maintain safe, secure accommodation of an adequate standard.
- Gain access to mainstream and specialist health and social support services.
- Develop or maintain relationships with family and/or friends and participate in community life.
- Maintain basic levels of self or home care.

Within this client population it is likely that there will be a greater vulnerability to:

- Tenancy problems, including eviction.
- Recurring homelessness, sleeping rough and transience.
- Domestic and other forms of violence.
- A range of health problems, including poor dental health, poor nutrition and infectious diseases.
- Premature frailty.
- Involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Social isolation and poverty.

4.2 Low Cost Accommodation Settings

Low cost accommodation types include:

- Pension-level Supported Residential Services (SRS)
- Private hotels and rooming houses
- Caravan parks (excluding recreational users)
- Public housing (including rental general stock and community managed housing).

5. Use of the Flexible Care Funds

5.1 Eligible Activities

5.1.1 *Linking a client to a mainstream or specialist service*

Examples of possible uses include:

- Assist with payment for purchase of spectacles.
- Payment for private dental care to obtain dentures.
- Payment of initial fee to encourage client to attend a recreation program.
- Payment of taxi or tram fare to attend specialist appointment.
- Assistance to be put on methadone program ie first week's fee and payment for identification photos.
- Purchase of a specialist psychological assessment/consultation to develop a behaviour management plan that will assist a local Psychiatric Disability Support Service to take on a dual disability client with challenging behaviour.

5.1.2 *Providing assistance to overcome a critical episode or address a pressing need*

Examples of possible uses include:

- Relocating and providing transitional support and care to residents of a pension-level SRS that is closing.
- Purchase of emergency cleaning/home care service to prevent eviction.
- Purchase of a change of clothes for someone who is homeless and has lost all their possessions (in the absence of a local material aid service to provide this service).
- Emergency payment of prescription for asthma medication.
- Payment of rent in a private rooming house for a person who is frequently homeless and has already accessed Housing Establishment Funds from the local Transitional Housing Manager on several recent occasions. The rent payment enables the CCP service to stabilise the client's accommodation situation whilst longer term accommodation is organised.
- After negotiating with Office of Housing area office providing a payment towards rent arrears to avert immediate eviction whilst organising direct debit payment of rent through Centrelink.

5.1.3 *Piloting innovative and collaborative responses to unmet client need where there is a lack of service responsiveness*

Examples of possible uses include:

- Developing and piloting a social support program for pension-level SRS and rooming house residents with complex needs in collaboration with, for example, a local council, community health service and psychiatric disability support service.
- Piloting the purchase of meals from a local café for a client who has alcohol related brain injury whilst the client is on a waiting list for a community care package or equivalent.
- Purchase of an individually tailored social support program for a client with a history of recurring homelessness who has a dual disability and challenging behaviours.

5.1.4 *Engaging a particular client or client group to a service*

Assistance, activities or supports that will act to engage a potential client or group of clients with the CCP service. Some examples include:

- Payment for costs incurred in organising a barbecue for residents of a local caravan park which is frequently used to accommodate homeless people by local welfare agencies.
- Assistance to attend a family funeral.

Note: Consideration should be given to the capacity of a client to contribute to the purchase of any item or payment for any service.

5.2 Ineligible Activities

The Flexible Care Fund will not be used for the following purposes

- To assist a person who is not a client of the CCP service.
- To provide ongoing services or assistance to a client.
- To pay fees for HACC funded programs. These services are subject to the HACC Fees policy which states that eligibility for services be based on assessed relative need rather than ability to pay fees. CCP client if eligible should be exempt from fees for HACC funded services.
- To pay rent or bond unless all available sources such as Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) and Office of Housing Bond Loans for private accommodation are exhausted.
- To provide food or food parcels or furniture unless, in the case of an emergency, there is no readily available material aid service in the area that can assist.
- Long term attendant care or respite care.