

# Carer Gateway Service Provider: — what to expect from September 2019



## What is the ICSS and Carer Gateway?

As reported in the last *Carers News*, the Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) is a Commonwealth reform of services for family and friend carers. Under the new arrangements, funding for existing services, such as funding for Carers associations, and the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (CRCCs) are being merged into a single Carer Gateway.

From September 2019, the Carer Gateway will commence rolling-out a network of providers delivering local and targeted services for carers across Australia.

In each state and territory, one or more Carer Gateway service providers (CGSPs) will be established under the ICSS. For example, in South Australia and Victoria there will be two CGSPs (Adelaide and regional SA, and Melbourne and regional Victoria), whilst in Tasmania there will be a single service provider.

## What will the Carer Gateway service provider (CGSP) do?

The CGSP will be responsible for ensuring family and friend carers are supported in their caring roles, no matter the location within the service area. They will either work directly or work with other organisations to provide services locally.

## What does this mean for carers?

In implementing these reforms, the Commonwealth wants to focus on preventing carer strain and loss of wellbeing arising from your caring role. The Government also recognises the financial impact of caring and wants to place greater emphasis on remaining in or returning to employment where possible. It is expected that the CGSP will understand carer needs and be able to provide the right supports to achieve these outcomes at a local level.

## What carer services are continuing?

If you are using carer services now, you can keep using those services.

You can continue to access existing carer services funded by the Department of Social Services through your usual service providers until the new Carer Gateway service providers commence in September 2019.

Current carer services will remain in place until November 2019 to support you while you move to the new Carer Gateway service providers.

Under the new arrangements important carer services will remain, including:

- Information and advice — supporting carers to understand available services and 'navigate the maze'.
- Peer support — access to peer support groups with carers going through the same situation.
- Counselling — up to six sessions with a skilled, professional and qualified counsellor.

Peer support groups will change slightly. Under the Carer Gateway service provider, a staff member will facilitate the group meeting and support the group to be self-sustaining over a period of up to 12-months.

## What's changing?

Carer Directed Support packages will be available under the new service model.

The concept of the Carer Directed Support package is that it works similarly to the Carer Directed Respite Care (CDRC) packages currently offered.

The packages will be delivered either as a one-off practical support or a range of practical supports provided over a 12 month period. The value of the packages will range from \$1,500 up to a maximum amount of \$3,000, depending on the needs and individual circumstances of each carer receiving support.

Practical one-off supports will take the form of a tangible item that directly contributes to supporting the carer in their caring role or supporting the carer to access education or employment.

The provision of ongoing practical supports will involve a Carer Support Worker engaging with a carer and actively planning on a quarterly basis what those supports might look like. Where a carer is able to, they are encouraged to actively manage the supports themselves. Practical supports may include services such as respite and assistance with transport.

## What's new?

From July 2019 carers will have access to these new Carer Gateway services:

- Phone Counselling — where you can get one-on-one support with a professional counsellor over the phone if you feel stressed or overwhelmed.

- Online Community Forum — where you can be part of a supportive community with other carers.
- Self-Guided Coaching — where you can work through interactive coaching at your own pace.
- Skills Courses — where you can study online courses and learn new skills to help you in your caring role.

These services will be available via [carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au) from July 2019.

From July 2020 you will have access to face-to-face coaching. You will be able to select from a suite of topics and receive one-on-one coaching from a carer support officer. The topics will likely relate to the areas that are causing you most concern.

## What if I prefer to access services online?

All of the ICSS supports will be available online through the National Carer Gateway. From July this year, carers will be able to access counselling, peer support, education resources and, from July 2020, individual coaching.

## How will the CGSP identify my needs?

From September 2019 you will be offered assistance with identifying appropriate support needs, help to access those supports and advice on future support planning through the Carer Gateway service providers.

The Carer Support Planning process involves a carer support officer engaging in a conversation with you to understand your needs (similar to what happens now), measuring your wellbeing, co-creating an action plan to address your needs and arranging the services identified in the action plan.

A key tool in this planning process will be the Carer Star™. This international approach enables a conversation between you and the carer support officer across seven dimensions to zero-in on your key challenges and work with you to provide supports to address them.

## How will I access the Carer Gateway?

The Carer Gateway is changing to make it easier for you to get the help you need.

From September 2019 you can call just one number to find the help you need. Calling **1800 422 737** will enable you to speak with your local Carer Gateway service provider. You can request a call-back on [carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au).

Your Carer Gateway service provider will talk you through what you need and help you find services and support in your area.

## How do I keep up-to-date about all the changes?

Visit your State Carer Association's website to subscribe to their e-news and social media. As we know more news, we will share it through these channels. If you have a question, send it using the email for your State or call **1800 242 636**.

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