

Client Contribution Policy for Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) - Patches Australia

1. Purpose

The Client Contribution Policy aims to provide clarity on the expectations for contributions by clients towards the cost of services provided under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) at Patches Australia. This policy ensures that contributions are fair, transparent, and aligned with government guidelines, while taking into account each client's financial situation.

2. Principles

- **Equity and Fairness:** All clients will contribute according to their capacity to pay, ensuring that financial hardship is considered.
- **Transparency:** The method for determining contributions will be clear and understandable to all clients and their carers.
- **Consistency:** The contribution policy will be applied consistently across all clients receiving CHSP services at Patches Australia.
- **Affordability:** Contributions should not act as a barrier to accessing necessary services. No one will be denied services based on their ability to pay.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all CHSP clients receiving services through Patches Australia, including their families and carers involved in the contribution process.

4. Client Contribution Determination

- **Government Guidelines:** Contributions are guided by the CHSP Client Contribution Framework set out by the Department of Health. This framework outlines the recommended percentage or amount of client contributions.
- **Assessment of Capacity to Pay:** Clients will undergo an assessment to determine their financial capacity to contribute towards the cost of services. This includes considerations of income, assets, and any additional financial burdens.
- **Sliding Scale Contribution:** Patches Australia will implement a sliding scale of contributions to reflect each client's financial capacity, ensuring that those with higher capacity contribute more, while those with limited capacity contribute less or may be exempt.

5. Types of Services Subject to Contributions

Client contributions will be applied to the following types of services provided by Patches Australia under CHSP:

- Home Care and Domestic Assistance
- Personal Care
- Respite Care
- Allied Health and Therapy Services
- Social Support Programs
- Transport Services

6. Contribution Rates

- Contribution rates will be reviewed annually and aligned with the Department of Health guidelines.
- Clients will be provided with a fee schedule that outlines the cost of services and the expected contribution based on their assessed financial capacity.
- Clients on full pension or experiencing financial hardship may qualify for reduced contributions or full waivers.

7. Waivers and Hardship Considerations

Patches Australia recognizes that some clients may experience financial difficulties. In such cases:

- Clients may apply for a waiver or reduction in their contribution by providing information about their financial situation.
- Hardship applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the designated financial team at Patches Australia.
- Any client experiencing significant financial strain will not be refused service due to their inability to contribute.

8. Communication and Invoicing

- Clients will be informed in advance of their expected contributions and how they are calculated.
- Regular direct debit arrangements, or invoices will be provided detailing the services received and the associated contributions.

- Any changes in the contribution amount due to reassessment will be communicated promptly.

9. Non-Payment of Contributions

If a client is unable to meet their contribution requirements:

- A discussion will be initiated with the client to assess their financial situation.
- Flexible payment arrangements may be offered to assist the client in meeting their contribution.
- No punitive action will be taken, and service will not be discontinued due to non-payment, but clients are encouraged to communicate openly about any financial difficulties.

10. Review and Feedback

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with government regulations and the changing needs of clients.
- Clients and carers will be invited to provide feedback on the policy and any concerns they may have.

11. Complaints and Dispute Resolution

- Clients have the right to lodge complaints regarding their contribution assessments or any aspect of the policy.
- Complaints will be addressed through Patches Australia's formal complaints resolution process, ensuring fair and timely resolution.

This policy is designed to balance client affordability with the sustainability of service provision under the CHSP at Patches Australia.