



New services for carers

The Australian Government is investing an additional \$85.6 million to roll out a range of new early-intervention services for Australia's 2.7 million unpaid carers.

Getting help early can make a big difference to a carer's life. From October 2018, carers will benefit from a range of new services and supports to help manage daily challenges, reduce stress and plan for the future.

What is changing?

The Australian Government will introduce a range of new tailored supports and services for carers set to benefit anyone looking after a person with disability, mental illness, chronic condition, or an older person requiring support.

To fund the new services for carers, the Australian Government will introduce a \$250,000 family income test threshold to the Carer Allowance payment from 20 September 2018. The income test also applies to Carer Allowance Health Care Cards.

This brings Carer Allowance in line with other welfare payments including Carer Payment, which includes an income test. This change will only affect one per cent of Carer Allowance recipients.

How will the new services benefit carers?

Carers are unique and valuable members of our community with varying circumstances and needs.

The new services will be designed to help carers manage their daily challenges, reduce stress and plan for the future. They will help carers get the support they need before reaching crisis point.

Evidence shows us that getting help early can make a big difference to a carer's life. It can help to reduce emotional or physical strain, assist carers to stay in work or study, take breaks from caring responsibilities, and ultimately improve their health and well-being.

What new services will be available to carers?

From October 2018, new digital services for carers will be rolled out through [Carer Gateway](#), including:

- digital counselling services to help carers manage daily challenges, reduce stress and strain, and plan for the future

- online peer support, connecting carers with other carers for knowledge and experience sharing, emotional support and mentoring
- online coaching resources with simple techniques, and strategies for goal-setting and future planning
- educational resources to increase skills and knowledge of carers relating to specific caring situations, to build confidence and improve wellbeing.

From September 2019, the Government will establish a new network of Regional Delivery Partners across Australia to deliver and/or coordinate local and targeted services including:

- needs assessment and planning
- targeted financial support packages with a focus on employment, education, respite and transport
- in-person and phone-based coaching, counselling, training and peer support
- information and advice
- access to emergency crisis support
- assistance navigating relevant, local services available to carers through federal, state and local government and non-government providers including the NDIS, My Aged Care and palliative care.

Regional Delivery Partners will also conduct outreach activities, and link to social, health, education, community and cultural groups, to better understand regional needs.

Will existing services for carers be affected?

Carers can continue to access support through their usual service providers until the commencement of the Regional Delivery Partners from September 2019.

What is the difference between Carer Allowance and Carer Payment?

The Australian Government provides a range of payments, benefits and concessions for eligible carers. The two main payments are Carer Allowance and Carer Payment.

Carer Allowance is an income supplement available to people who provide daily care and attention in a private home to a person with disability or a severe medical condition. It can be paid in addition to a social security income support payment.

Carer Allowance recipients caring for a child under 16 receive a Health Care Card. A claimant who does not qualify for Carer Allowance, but still provides at least 14 hours of weekly care for a child under 16, will be entitled to a Health Care Card.

Carer Payment is an income support payment for people who are unable to support themselves through substantial paid employment because of the demands of their caring role. Carer Payment is income and assets tested and paid at the same rate as other social security pensions.

Who will be affected by the change to Carer Allowance?

An estimated 6,900 current Carer Allowance and/or Health Care Card recipients (around one per cent) will be affected by the introduction of the \$250,000 income threshold. Carers and their partner, where applicable, will be income tested.

Around 99 per cent of Carer Allowance recipients will have no change to their payment under this new scheme.

What is Carer Gateway?

The national online and telephone service - [Carer Gateway](#) - was launched on 14 December 2015 to make it easier for carers to find information, practical advice and services to support them in their caring role.

[Carer Gateway](#) has already connected over half a million carers with practical advice and information.

Carers can contact [Carer Gateway](#) by visiting the website at www.carergateway.gov.au or calling the 1800 422 737 phone number, Monday - Friday, 8am-6pm.

Key facts

- An estimated 2.7 million carers in Australia provide care to people with disability, people with long-term health conditions, mental illness, or those who are frail or aged.
- Research shows that 80 per cent of carers may not be aware of the support and services available to them.
- 625,452 carers were receiving Carer Allowance and/or a Carer Allowance (child) Health Care Card as at 30 September 2017.

More information

For more information about this measure visit the [Department of Social Services](#) website (www.dss.gov.au).