

Carer Gateway Service Provider Operating Manual

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This publication may contain images of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Where the word 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Carer Gateway Service Provider Operating Manual

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Carer Gateway Service Provider Operating Manual provides guidance to organisations engaged by the Department of Social Services to perform the role of Carer Gateway service provider under the Australian Government's Integrated Carer Support Service. The service provider Operating Manual forms part of the Grant Agreement and should be read in conjunction with the Grant Agreement, Standard Grant Conditions and Supplementary Terms and Conditions.

Specifically, the service provider Operating Manual defines:

1. **HOW** service providers are required to operate;
2. **WHAT** activities service providers are required to deliver;
3. **WHO** activities are intended for;
4. **WHY** activities are being delivered; and
5. **HOW** success will be measured.

The service provider Operating Manual is not intended to provide organisations with a prescriptive model of operation. Instead it is designed to identify the core operational elements and the department's associated requirements, considered essential to achieving the Australian Government's objectives for the Carer Gateway.

1.2 Feedback

This Manual is a living document and will be updated as required. Service providers will be notified when any updates occur.

Feedback on the document can be sent to carersupport@dss.gov.au

2 Background

2.1 Carer Gateway Overview

The Integrated Carer Support Service focuses on services designed specifically for carers. It is designed to make the Government's carer supports and services easier to navigate and more accessible. More importantly, it is designed to increase the Australian Government's investment in services proven to improve a carer's quality of life and ability to perform their caring role.

The Integrated Carer Support Service Blueprint (**Appendix A**) outlines the Carer Gateway business model and service pathways.

2.2 Carer Gateway Services

The Carer Gateway introduces a new range of tailored supports and services to help carers manage their daily challenges, reduce stress and plan for the future. This includes national and regionally based services.

At a national level, some services will be delivered centrally and the system as a whole will be supported by national infrastructure and managed by the Australian Government. National services include:

- the Carer Gateway website
- phone counselling
- online self-guided coaching
- an online peer support community forum, and
- online skills courses.

At a regional level, service providers will respond to the specific needs of their communities by providing:

- carer support planning
- in-person peer support
- in-person counselling
- carer directed packages
- emergency respite care, and
- in-person carer coaching.

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7.9 Complaints

Service providers must establish and publicise the existence of a complaints process, which must be used to deal with any complaints. The following practices should be implemented:

- create and maintain a Complaints Register which includes the following materials and information:
 - details of all complaints received directly by the service provider
 - details of all complaints referred to the service provider by, or through, the department
 - each record in the Complaints Register should include:
 - o details of the parties to the complaint, including the name of the complainant (if provided) and if relevant, the name of the person being complained about
 - o any subcontractor or consortium parties involved in the complaint
 - o the name of the staff member(s) handling the complaint
 - o the date(s) upon which the complaint was made
 - o the nature of the complaint

- whether the complaint was referred between the service provider and any government agency (including the department)
- details of contact with the complainant
- the action taken, including dates and details
- the outcome of any action taken (including any investigation)
- the date of finalisation or resolution of the complaint
- any follow-up action required, and
- any changes to policies, or procedures, or other action to be taken, resulting from the complaint.

Each service provider must ensure that its partners and subcontractors have these policies in place and understand how to practice these procedures.

The service provider must supply information on the nature of complaints, action taken and dates if requested by the department. The department retains the right to conduct audits related to privacy and privacy complaints.

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8 Target Cohort

8.1 Carers Definition

The target cohort for service provider services is carers, as defined in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*, which states under Section 5, as follows:

- (1) For the purpose of this Act, a carer is an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual:
 - (a) has a disability; or
 - (b) has a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness); or
 - (c) has a mental illness; or
 - (d) is frail and aged.
- (2) An individual is not a carer in respect of care, support and assistance he or she provides:
 - (a) under a contract of service or a contract for the provision of services; or
 - (b) in the course of doing voluntary work for a charitable, welfare or community organisation; or
 - (c) as part of the requirements of a course of education or training.
- (3) To avoid doubt, an individual is not a carer merely because he or she:
 - (a) is the spouse, de facto partner, parent, child or other relative of an individual, or is the guardian of an individual; or
 - (b) lives with an individual who requires care.

Within the cohort of carers, service providers should prioritise their activities (using the defined Carer Support Planning Process (described in Section 9) towards those carers most at risk of not being able to continue in their caring role.

Carer Gateway services are available to all types of carers as per the definition including:

- The primary carer. The service provider should focus on supporting primary carers.
- Couples. Service providers can assist couples who both need support, where the roles of carer and person receiving care may shift over time. A couple may provide mutual support, and one may take a more active carer role at different times depending on the other person's needs.
- Multiple carers. Service providers can assist multiple carers. Sometimes in a family situation where two or more family members share the caring responsibilities, it might be difficult to consider carer arrangements separately. Service providers may need to tailor support services accordingly, taking care to preserve the integrity of the family unit and the existing caring relationships.
- Young Carers. Young carers are people aged up to 25 who meet the definition of a carer above. Service providers should recognise the unique challenges faced by young carers. They should develop and provide tailored supports, including financial support packages, which seek to reach this often hidden carer group, and facilitate continued engagement in education or employment.

8.2 Eligibility Considerations

The service provider should consider eligibility to receive Carer Gateway services based on the carer conforming to the definition of carer in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (see above section).

In addition to considering the carer's role there are some specific eligibility rules that the service provider should also apply:

- Ongoing care. To be eligible for services, the carer's role must be ongoing, or likely to be ongoing, for at least **six months**. This expectation of six months or more does not apply to a carer of a person who needs palliative care.
- Overseas visitors, permanent residents and others who are not Australian citizens. There is no citizenship, residency or specific visa requirement to be eligible for service provider services .
- Carers who receive free board and lodging. A carer who is not paid or employed by the person who receives care and who receives free board and/or lodging in return for providing care, is eligible for assistance provided they meet the other eligibility requirements.
- Carers who are recipients of other government supports are eligible to access service provider services and should be appropriately assessed to identify carer needs. Carer Gateway funding is independent of other government supports.
- End of care role. Transition out of a care role can be emotional, complex and challenging. While the Carer Gateway is primarily aimed at unpaid carers who are actively caring, the provision of support can also be provided in a situation where a person's caring role ends.

If the service provider is uncertain about eligibility, the FAM should be contacted for advice.

9 Service Provider Services and Activities

Service providers are responsible for delivering the following Services and activities in their designated Service Area.

9.1 Carer Support Planning

Carers can contact their service provider by:

- completing an online form (via Carer Gateway Website) and requesting a call back from their local service provider
- calling the Carer Gateway national 1800 number (which will automatically route the caller to their local service provider)
- contacting the service provider directly (in-person), or
- transfer from another service.

On first contact with a carer, service providers are responsible for determining if the carer requires:

- emergency Respite Care, as a matter of urgency
- information only (e.g. how to apply for the Carer Payment), and
- other Carer Gateway services, as determined through the Carer Support Planning Process.

Carer Support Planning Process

The Carer Support Planning Process provides guidance to ensure that carers receive a consistent experience when seeking support. The process includes, but is not limited to:

- intake
- registration
- needs assessment (incorporating Carers Star™)
- support planning
- coordination
- support, and
- monitoring.

For detailed information on Carer Support Planning, please refer to the Carer Support Planning Framework at **Appendix F**.

9.1.1 Available Resources and Support

- Carer Support Planning Framework (Appendix F)
- Carer Support Planning Framework online learning modules
- Carers Star™ training, licensing and support
- Carers Star™ online learning module
- User Journeys (see Appendix G).

9.2 In-Person Peer Support

The In-Person Peer Support service is a free facilitated peer support forum specifically designed to assist carers to:

- connect with people in similar circumstances;
- learn from their peers through the sharing of lived experiences, and
- experience relief from carer stress through forming personal connections and sharing of personal stories and experiences.

Service providers have two roles in the delivery process:

- to act as a registration point for the service, and
- to coordinate and facilitate the peer support groups.

The In-Person Peer Support includes four structured facilitated sessions. In some cases, a peer support group may evolve into a self-organising community of carers that no longer rely on the service provider to schedule and facilitate meetings. Service providers may support informal groups by covering basic meeting costs e.g. venue hire.

Service providers will be responsible for ensuring there is maximum coverage across their Service Area to limit the need for long commuting and wherever possible, support carers to gain access to sessions.

Service providers may also refer carers to In-Person Peer Support Groups run by other organisations which they are aware of within their Service Areas.

9.2.1 Available Resources and Support

- In-Person Peer Support Service Design and Guidelines (Appendix I)



Case Study 1: Mrs Clarke

Mrs Clarke is a full time carer for her husband who has late stage chronic heart failure. She assists her husband with everyday living tasks, accompanies him to all of his medical appointments, and coordinates all of his care needs.

Mrs Clarke wishes to seek additional support to better understand end-of-life planning and her legal obligations at this stage in her caring journey. She would also like some guidance about getting her finances in order and wishes to engage with other carers who may be in similar situations.

Mrs Clarke visits the Carer Gateway website and uses the online form to request a call back.

A service provider Care Support Worker in Mrs Clarke's region contacts her and they agree to meet in person at the hospital while Mr Clarke is undertaking one of his medical treatments. Together, Mrs Clarke and the Carer Support Worker complete the Carers Star and discuss Mrs Clarke's carer situation and needs.

Based on the Carers Star™ results and discussion with Mrs Clarke, the Carer Support Worker suggests that they develop an Action Plan, which includes a facilitated coaching on finances, and joining an in-person peer support group. Mrs Clarke agrees with this approach and the Carer Support Worker makes the necessary arrangements for Mrs Clarke to receive coaching and join a support group.

Mrs Clarke is also directed to information about end-of-life planning and legal matters, which is available on the Carer Gateway website. She is also advised that free in-person or telephone counselling is available to her should she wish to use it.

The Carer Support Worker agrees to follow up with Mrs Clarke in approximately six weeks to see how she is going.

9.3 In-Person Counselling

The In-Person Counselling service is a free counselling service for carers who are experiencing difficulties with anxiety, stress, depression and low mood as a result of their caring role. The service will assist carers to manage their own health in order to remain effective in their caring role and avoid crisis events through in-person counselling sessions with a professional counsellor.

Carers can access the Service by registering for a call back online or by calling the Carer Gateway 1800 number, with the service providers acting as the referral point for entry into the service. The Service can be delivered either by in-house service provider qualified counsellors, or by third-party counsellors brokered by the service providers.

To maximise consistency, service providers should refer to the *In-Person Counselling Delivery Guidelines (Appendix P)*, which describe the different types of counselling that should be made available to carers through the service and set the expectations for service delivery with brokered counsellors.

Service providers delivering counselling needs assessments and sessions in-house, must ensure their counsellors:

- are accredited within a relevant Australian professional association (Australian Counselling Association, Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia, Australian Association of Social Workers)
- are a qualified counsellor, psychotherapist or social worker for relevant service modes (qualifications recognised in Australia), and
- have minimum three years' work experience in Australia.

9.3.1 Available Resources and Support

- In-Person Counselling Delivery Guidelines ([Appendix H](#)).



Case Study 2: Mary

Mary is a carer for her two elderly parents, who currently live with her. She also lives with her husband and two children. She works full-time.

Mary is experiencing considerable stress at home and sometimes feels overwhelmed in trying to balance the needs of her caring role, her relationship with her husband, and the needs of her children. She would really like to talk to someone about how she can build strategies to improve her own wellbeing and that of her family.

Mary heard about her local service provider at a community fair and decides to contact them directly. She is assessed by a Carer Support Worker and together they develop an Action Plan which includes in-person counselling. The Care Support Worker discussed the choice to undertake counselling by phone (national digital service) or in-person through the service provider, and Mary preferred to meet with a Counsellor in person.

The support worker sets up the initial counselling session for Mary with a counsellor based on her prioritised needs. The Carer Support Worker also provides Mary with additional information about the online services that Mary might wish to access from home. The Support Worker seeks Mary's permission to check in with her again next week to see how she is going after her first counselling session.

Mary attends her first counselling session and is assessed using the DASS21 clinical tool. The service is provided in line with Carer Gateway In-person Counselling Guidelines.

Mary is contacted by her service provider Carer Support Worker six weeks later to see how she is going and if she requires any further support.

9.4 Facilitated Carer Coaching

The Carer Coaching service is a free psycho-educational service specifically designed to assist carers to acquire the skills and resilience needed in their caring role.

In conjunction with two selected service providers, the department will pilot the Carer Coaching service before making the service available nationally through all service providers. The Facilitated Carer Coaching Pilot will be conducted from April 2020 to October 2020. It is anticipated that national roll-out of the service will commence from February 2021.

During facilitated coaching, carers will engage with a coach (a service provider staff member) across a defined period of time, to build and develop skills identified during consultation with the coach. Engagement may be in-person, via telephone and/or through online channels.

Modules and content for the facilitated coaching sessions align with the online self-guided carer coaching modules. service provider clients will therefore be able to choose to do a combination of facilitated and self-guided modules in accordance with their individual circumstances.

9.4.1 Available Resources and Support

Training and resources for facilitated coaching will be provided to service providers following the conclusion of the pilot and prior to national roll out of the service.

9.5 Carer Directed Support

The Carer Directed Support service is a consumer directed approach to supporting carers in their caring role. It gives carers a greater say and more control over the design and delivery of the support provided to them and the person/s they care for.

Carers who receive this funding in one year, are not guaranteed funding in subsequent years.

Support may be offered in one of two forms:

9.5.1 One-off practical support

This service is for one-off practical support (up to an amount of \$1,500) that enables carers, without the need for ongoing assistance and/or multiple supports, to access support.

It is expected that support of this kind would take the form of a tangible item that directly contributes to supporting the client in their caring role or supporting the client to access education/employment.

One off practical support might be used for items and services such as:

- purchase of small asset items to assist carers continue education. Eg. laptop
- payment for training courses.

One off practical support **should not** be used for items and services such as:

- carer holidays
- leisure activities
- entertainment items such as movie tickets
- restaurant meals.

Carers who choose to access one-off support will not be eligible for a Carer Directed Package in the same 12 month period.

9.5.2 Carer Directed Packages

Carer Directed Packages can be directed towards a range of practical supports to assist carers in their role. The total value of the package, to which each carer is entitled, is \$3,000 (over a 12-month period). It is expected that each carer would use the full package amount (i.e. \$3,000), however carers with fewer/simpler needs may only require a part-package (i.e. a package with a value less than \$3,000). Carers with the same or similar needs should receive comparable allocations of budgets and services by each service provider.

Carer Directed Packages might be used for items and services such as:

- planned respite (direct or indirect)
- cleaning services
- assistance with shopping
- cooking
- assistance with transport such as paying a taxi for transport to medical appointments or shopping.

Carer Directed Packages **should not** be used for items and services such as:

- household goods that do not directly relate to care needs
- holidays
- entertainment items such as movie tickets
- dining out
- general transport needs.

9.5.3 Service Provider Role

To meet the Carer Gateway outcomes, service providers are responsible for:

- **Selection of carers** – service providers should select carers on the basis of the carers' support needs and their suitability and willingness to participate in the service. Priority access to the Carer Directed supports should be given to those carers experiencing the highest level of need based on their Carer Support Planning, and not currently accessing alternative sources of funding or services. Special consideration should also be given to ensuring young carers are included in service providers selection of carers.
- **Care assessment and planning** – The service provider will be required to undertake an assessment of each participating carer's needs and work with the carer to develop an agreed individual plan. In formulating the plan, the service provider will provide the carer with clear information about the services available in the local region, and the potential uses for their package budget and the costs per item. When choosing supports, carers should not be limited to those supports offered directly by the service provider; additional supports can be brokered on behalf of the carer by the service provider.

- **Administration of carer supports** – the service provider will administer the budget for each Carer Directed Support Package (including one-off supports). This includes arranging and coordinating the provision of services as agreed to by the carer. Notwithstanding, where the carer is able to, they should be encouraged to actively manage the supports themselves (for example, booking of identified services).
- **Engagement with service providers**, where required – this will include:
 - subcontracting services as directed by the carer (and within the limits of the support package)
 - making payments from the package budget as confirmed and authorised by the carer within the limits of the package
 - providing the carer with a quarterly account balance, listing yearly expenditure to date and funds remaining, and
 - where necessary, liaising with brokered service providers in partnership with the carer (for example, to assist the carer negotiate the provision of in-home respite at a time that suits them).
- **Flexible service delivery** – service providers will need to be flexible in their approach to assisting support recipients, including assisting carers to access services from providers with which the service provider does not have an existing relationship.

The department has not set targets for the number of carers accessing each type of service. It is up to the service provider to determine how they distribute funds across all Carer Gateway services based on their understanding of the cohorts and carer needs within their service areas. A part of their annual activity planning process, service providers must provide anticipated annual service volumes.

Service providers should also endeavour to link appropriate carers in with other relevant supports such as aged care packages and the Young Carers Bursary Program.

9.6 Support for Young Carers

Targeted supports should be offered to the young carer cohort by allocating up to 25 per cent of targeted financial carer support packages to this group. Specifically, young carers who self-identify as recipients of income support payments, and can provide evidence of this, would be prioritised to receive a package. As part of a mutual obligation approach, young carers on income support payments would be able to access respite and other supports to enable their engagement and ongoing participation in education and/or employment.

Providers should engage a dedicated Young Carer Support Worker in each Carer Gateway regional delivery partner (RDP) service area to manage young carers in receipt of packages to ensure their engagement and ongoing participation in education, training or employment is supported, including the requirement that they undertake a needs assessment and develop a care plan.

The Young Carer Support Worker will need to identify and engage with young carers through intensive outreach services with schools and tertiary institutions, youth services, vocational training organisations and employers. Additionally, the Young Carer Support Worker should engage with and refer to already existing supports for young carers including the Young Carer Bursary Program and the Young Carers Network.



Case Study 3: Josie

Josie is a 17 year old primary carer of her 60 year old mother, who has advanced Parkinson's Disease. She lives in a rural community and is currently completing year 12 at school. Josie is feeling stressed as she is trying to manage her caring responsibilities and her study. She also feels isolated as she is one of only a few young carers in her small rural community.

Josie does not have a computer at home and often has to travel to her local community library to undertake her studies. This causes Josie considerable stress as she does not like leaving her mother unattended for long periods of time. Josie does not currently hold a part-time job due to her caring responsibilities and cannot afford to buy a computer.

Josie already receives counselling through her local service provider and has relatives who sometimes support her when she needs a break. Her service provider support worker has identified that purchase of a laptop computer would particularly assist Josie with her studies, upcoming search for employment and would also support her to participate in the online carer Community Forum, which has a specific group for young carers.

Working with Josie and her individual needs, the service provider supports Josie through the purchase of a laptop computer which she can use at home to complete her studies while caring for her mother. Josie also uses the laptop to access the Carer Gateway self-guided carer coaching and an online young carers support group, which is available through the Carer Gateway Community Forum. This helps Josie feel less stressed, more supported, and less alone in her role as a young carer.

The service provider Carer Support Worker also provides Josie with information about the Young Carer Bursary Program and Young Carer Network (YCN), both managed by Carers Australia.



Case Study 4: Mrs Smith

Mrs Smith is a 75 year old carer of her elderly husband, who has advanced dementia. She is a very social and independent women, who likes to manage her own affairs.

Mrs Smith is generally coping well but often finds her caring role emotionally draining and sometimes also struggles to balance her caring role with everyday tasks such as cleaning and shopping. She is increasingly feeling that her caring role is having a negative impact on her own wellbeing and often feels angry that her caring role prevents her from doing some of the things that she really wants to do, such as attending social events or her grandchildren's school events. Mrs Smith is particularly concerned that her declining mood is impacting her ability to care for her husband. She decides to contact her local service provider for some support.

A Carer Support Worker assessed Mrs Smith's situation and deems that while she does not require emergency respite, she would benefit from some regular breaks from her caring role. The service provider determines that Mrs Smith is high priority for receiving a Carer Directed Package.

Together, Mrs Smith and the Carer Support Worker devise a plan, which includes planned respite episodes, whereby on set dates and times a care worker will come into the home to care for her husband. It also includes a period of residential respite.

The Carer Support Worker also helps Mrs Smith to arrange an Aged Care Assessment to see what other supports she and her husband can access.

9.7 Emergency Respite Care

The Emergency Respite Care service is designed to offer support to carers who are experiencing an urgent, unplanned and imminent event that temporarily restricts their ability to continue caring when no other services are available, for example:

- an unplanned situation that prevents the carer from providing care required by the care recipient;
- an unplanned event that threatens the health and safety of the care recipient; or,
- an unplanned event that threatens the health and safety of the carer (including extremely high levels of strain and anxiety).

The Service is delivered or brokered by the service provider (on behalf of the carer) to secure replacement care for the care recipient in circumstances where all other options have been exhausted. Service providers may use the funding to contribute the full cost of care or part of the cost where a carer can afford to make a contribution (wherever possible, carers are expected to contribute a portion of the cost of replacement care subject to the capacity of a carer to contribute). Funds used through the service are intended to be used in times of emergency only and all other types of planned respite care should be funded through other support services.

The funding available for Emergency Respite Care can be used to access services for either the care recipient or carer (e.g. adult day care, in-home care and residential care). After the event, service providers will be expected to undertake the Carer Support Planning Process with the carer to determine if underlying issues can be addressed through other supports (such as the Carer Directed Support Service). It is also expected that the service providers will coordinate with other carer service providers (such as Aged Care, NDIS) if a need is identified.

Assessment of the carer and their care recipient's needs must be conducted to determine what respite needs are required. Specifically, service providers need to take account of:

- the carer's needs
- the care recipient's needs
- the risk of relationship breakdown between the carer and care recipient and the strengths of the relationship
- the carer's priority for services relative to other carers in that target population
- isolation and social connectedness for both the carer and care recipient
- current support provided to support the carer, both formal and informal
- last period of respite provision, and
- ability to partner with other services.

In an emergency, assessment may be brief however the quality of respite care must not be compromised. Once the emergency has passed, the service provider should re-assess the carer's needs to gain a better understanding of the carer's situation and their respite and support needs in the future.



Case Study 5: Mrs Rose

Mrs Rose is a primary carer for her 55 year old husband who has advanced multiple sclerosis and requires assistance with everyday tasks such as dressing, eating and bathing. She has a daughter living approximately two hours away, who is a single mother of two young children.

Mrs Rose's daughter unexpectedly becomes very unwell and is admitted to hospital. As next of kin, Mrs Rose is called and asked if she can take the children.

Mrs Rose calls the 1800 Care Gateway number seeking assistance with care for her husband so that she can tend to her daughter and grandchildren. She is put in contact with her local service provider Carer Support Worker who assess her as being in need of emergency respite care services.

The Carer Support Worker works with Mrs Rose to find a temporary respite care solution for her husband, for an initial period of two nights. Mrs Rose is encouraged to help choose the care provider and arrangements that she thinks will best meet her and her husband's needs. The service is brokered by the service provider and it is agreed that Mrs Rose will pay a contribution for the respite service.

Upon her return home, Mrs Rose is contacted by the service provider and the service provider intake and assessment process is completed in full. Mrs Rose is provided with additional information on available services for carers and indicates that she is interested in checking out the online services as these would fit best into her busy schedule. She does not wish to take up any in-person services.

10 National Carer Services

The department has commenced new online services to enable carers to access forms of support, without having to meet in-person. Service providers are responsible for actively promoting these services to clients based on their needs.

10.1 Carer Gateway website

The **Carer Gateway website**¹⁴ is a website for carers. It provides clear, practical advice to help carers with the challenges of their role. The Carer Gateway website also provides the channels by which carers can find and select the national online services that they wish to use. The Carer Gateway website is designed so carers will want to share the content to other carers, and have a feeling of being 'in the same boat' as many others like them¹⁵.

- service providers must link the Carer Gateway website as the primary online resource for carers whenever this is appropriate
- service providers should refer carers to the Carer Gateway website whenever they feel this is going to help the carer.

If there are any **feedback, questions, complaints** or **suggestions** from anyone about the website then they should use the **feedback form**¹⁶.

10.2 Community Forum (online peer support)

The Community Forum is a free online peer support forum (accessible via the Carer Gateway website) for carers. The Forum is specifically designed to support carers to:

- connect with people in similar circumstances
- learn from their peers through the sharing of lived experiences, and
- aid in decreasing carer strain through the connection and sharing of personal circumstances and experiences.

14 <https://www.carergateway.gov.au>

15 Social proof is a psychological phenomenon where people reference the behavior of others to guide their own behavior.

16 <https://www.carergateway.gov.au/feedback>

Carer Gateway

Home Help and advice Respite Financial help

Search

Do you need to call someone?

Practical advice and support for carers. We're here for you.

Carer support

- Phone counselling**
Get one-on-one support with a professional counsellor over the phone if you feel stressed or overwhelmed.
[Ask for a counsellor](#)
- Connect with other carers**
Register to join the online forum and be part of a supportive community with other carers. Share stories and advice and learn from each other in a safe space.
[Join the Forum](#)
- Self-guided coaching**
Explore online carer coaching sessions. You can reflect on how you are going, how you'd like things to be, and how you might take steps towards making that happen.
[Find out more](#)
- Skills courses**
Use these short downloadable PDFs or Word documents to help you to learn new skills in caring for someone and yourself.
[Explore the courses](#)

Connect with other carers

www.carergateway.gov.au

Australian Government | Carer Gateway

Search Term [] SEARCH

Community Forum LOGIN | JOIN

HOME GETTING STARTED ▾ DISCUSSIONS CARER GROUPS FACT SHEETS CONTACT US DO YOU NEED TO CALL SOMEONE?

Listen ▶

FEATURED DISCUSSIONS

START A DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTIONS SOCIAL SPACE SELF CARE

RELATIONSHIPS PARENTING MONEY & WORK

MANAGING HEALTH TOUGH TIMES GOOD RESOURCES

Introducing the Carer Gateway Community Forum

Title: Introducing the Carer Gateway Community Forum

Description: Caring for a loved one can bring joy but some days it can be lonely or a little bit confusing. The Carer Forum provides a safe, anonymous space to connect with other carers and support each other.

[Click here to view transcript](#)

<https://forum.carergateway.gov.au/s/>

s22 (not relevant)



10.3 Telephone Counselling

The Telephone Counselling Service a free short-term counselling service for carers experiencing difficulties with anxiety, stress, depression and low mood. The service will assist carers to manage their own health in order to remain effective in their caring role and avoid crisis events.

In order to deliver high quality, therapeutic counselling specifically aimed at carers, the service offers two types of interventions:

- an intervention designed to help carers over a longer period who require more intensive support to achieve the outcomes, and
- an intervention, delivered over a shorter period, for those carers who may not need as much support to achieve the outcomes.

Carers can access the service directly via the Carer Gateway website or via the national 1800 number (and selecting Phone Counselling option).

Phone counselling
Get one-on-one support with a professional counsellor over the phone if you feel stressed or overwhelmed.

Connect with other carers
Register to join the online forum and be part of a supportive community with other carers. Share stories and advice and learn from each other in a safe space.

Self-guided coaching
Explore online carer coaching sessions. You can reflect on how you are going, how you'd like things to be, and how you might take steps towards making that happen.

Skills courses
Use these short downloadable PDFs or Word documents to help you to learn new skills in caring for someone and yourself.

Telephone counselling

www.carergateway.gov.au

Welcome to the Carer Gateway Counselling Service.

Caring for a loved one is important work. Some days caring brings great joy, but some days it can be lonely or a little overwhelming. No matter how you feel today, there is a counselling professional just a phone call away.

The Carer Gateway Counselling Service is a free service for carers. Each weekday, from 8am to 6pm, our professional counsellors are waiting to talk through the concerns you have and how you feel about your carer role. To learn more about how counselling helps carers, watch our video "Introducing the Carer Gateway Counselling Service" on this page.

To use the service, simply select 'Request a Callback' on this web page, fill in your details and we will call you back within one business day. You can also call 1800 422 737 and Select Option 1 to speak to our team.

Request a callback

https://counselling.carergateway.gov.au/s/

s22 (not relevant)



10.4 Carer Coaching (Self-Guided Format)

Self-guided Carer Coaching is a free online service for carers to:




- learn skills to assist them in their caring role
- build their capacity to self-identify needs and goals
- build their capacity to self-manage, and
- provide them with support and advice on a large range of issues relating to their caring role.

The Self-Guided Carer Coaching Service complements the Facilitated Carer Coaching Service that will be delivered by service providers, and carers may choose to do a combination of modules and formats.



Carers can access this service directly via the Carer Gateway website or may be referred to the self-guided format by the service provider following the Carer Support Planning Process.

The screenshot shows the Carer Gateway website interface. At the top, there is the Australian Government logo and the Carer Gateway logo. A search bar is located on the right. Below the navigation bar, there is a main heading: "Making sure you get the help you need. We're here for you." followed by a large image of a woman. Below this, there is a section titled "Carer support" with four cards: "Phone counselling", "Connect with other carers", "Self-guided coaching", and "Skills courses". The "Self-guided coaching" card is highlighted with a red border and a red line pointing to a label "Self-guided carer coaching" at the bottom left of the screenshot.

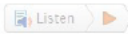
www.carergateway.gov.au

Coaching Service


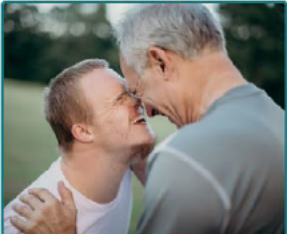






  Do you need to call someone?

Carer Coaching



The carer coaching service provides an opportunity for you to explore the impacts of your caring role on your life. Designed in partnership with carers, each coaching session will get you thinking about how you are going, how you'd like things to be and how you might be able to take steps towards making that happen. Each session includes evidence supported information, practical tips, resources, reflection activities and stories from real Australian carers.

There are eight coaching sessions available.

 <p>Your health and wellbeing</p>	 <p>Understanding the caring journey</p>	 <p>What makes for good support?</p>	 <p>Understanding inclusion and advocacy</p>
 <p>Work, study and volunteering</p>	 <p>Getting your finances in order</p>	 <p>Everyday Life</p>	 <p>How do you feel?</p>

<https://coaching.carergateway.gov.au>

s22 (not relevant)



s22 (not relevant)



s22 (not relevant)



s22 (not relevant)



s22 (not relevant)



s22 (not relevant)



s22 (not relevant)



Appendices

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Appendix F – Carer Support Planning Framework.....xiii

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Appendix A – Carer Gateway Blueprint

Refer Disability and Carers section of the department’s website.

<https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-carers-icss-implementation/icss-service-blueprint>

ICSS Service Blueprint



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

ICSS Service Blueprint

Version Number:	1.3
Date:	11 December 2018
Purpose:	This document is a blueprint for the Australian Government’s Integrated Carer Support Service. Its purpose is to describe the different service components (and their relationship) required to commission and operate the Integrated Carer Support Service.

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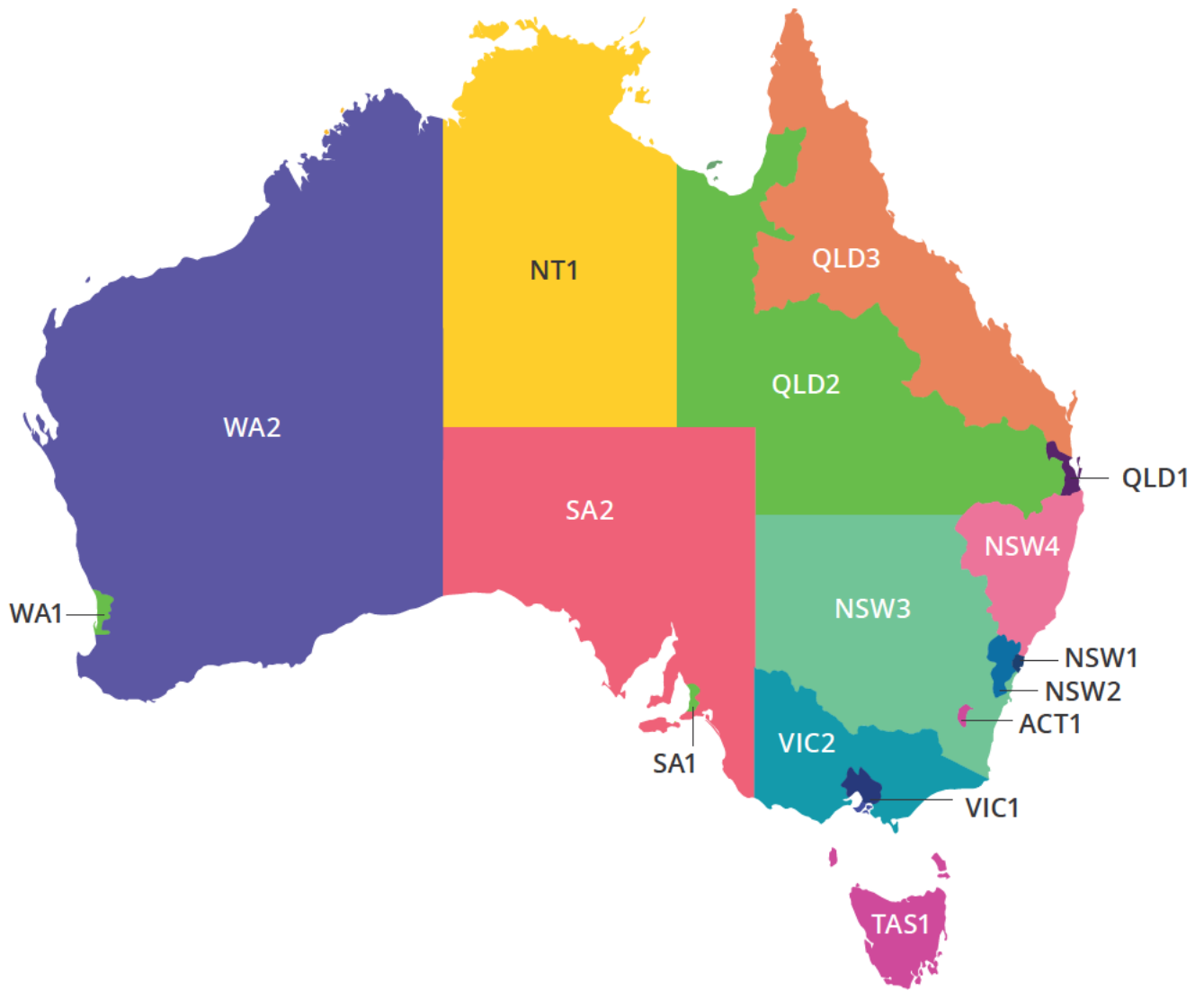
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Appendix E – Carer Gateway Service Areas



Carer Gateway Service Areas

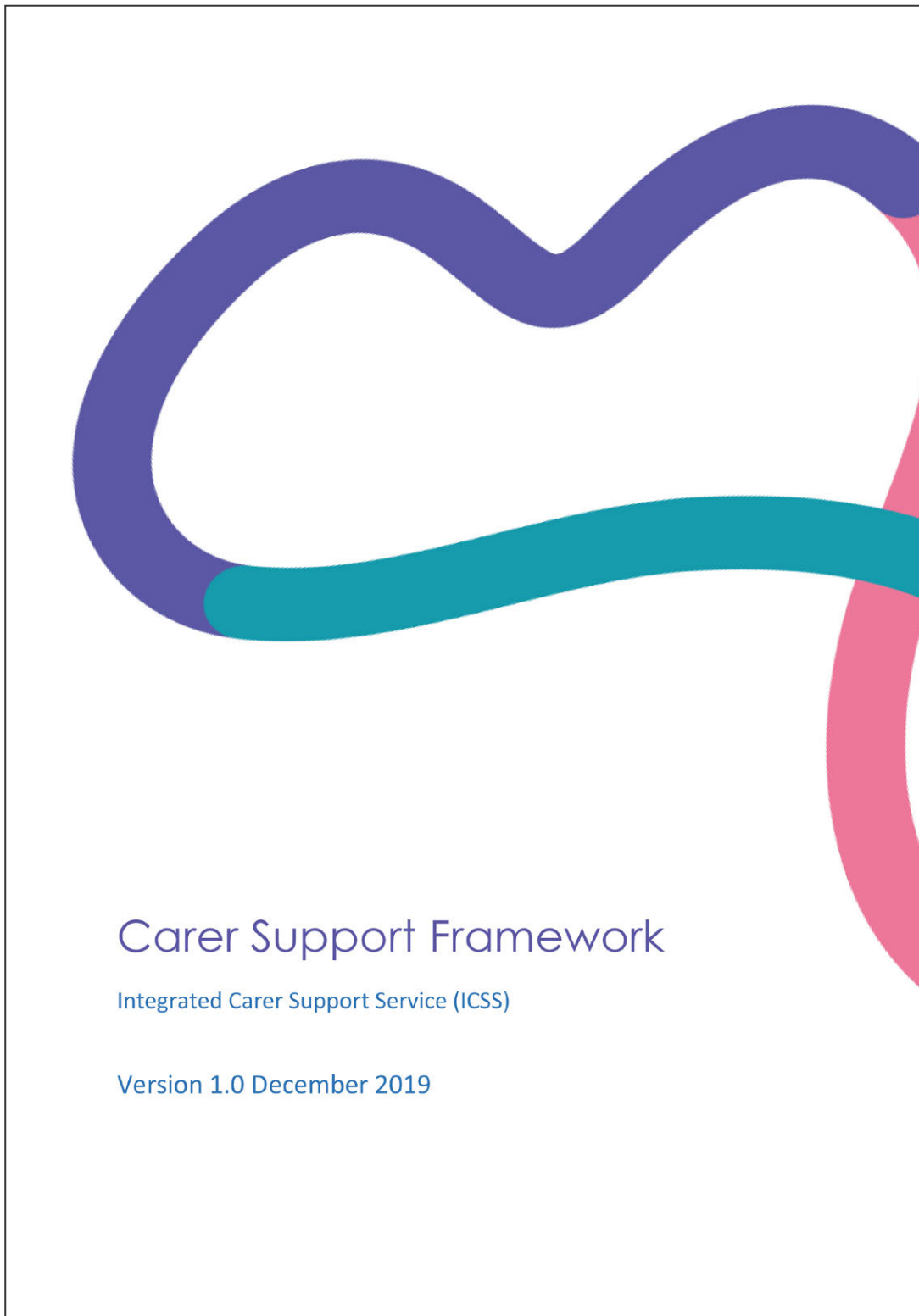
Service Area	Corresponding PHNs	Carer Population*
ACT 1	31 – ACT	44,700
NSW 1	1 – Central and Eastern Sydney 2 – Northern Sydney 3 – Western Sydney	345,054
NSW 2	4 – Nepean Blue Mountains 5 – South Western Sydney	175,074
NSW 3	6 – South Eastern NSW 7 – Western NSW 10 – Murrumbidgee	167,783
NSW 4	8 – Hunter New England and Central Coast 9 – North Coast	215,535
QLD 1	17 – Brisbane North 18 – Brisbane South 19 – Gold Coast	253,254
QLD 2	20 – Darling Downs and West Moreton 21 – Western Queensland	64,741
QLD 3	22 – Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast 23 – Northern Queensland	163,130
VIC 1	11 – North Western Melbourne 12 – Eastern Melbourne 13 – South Eastern Melbourne	526,051
VIC 2	14 – Gippsland 15 - Murray 16 – Western Victoria	216,939
SA 1	24 – Adelaide	177,676
SA 2	25 – Country SA	66,116
WA 1	26 – Perth North 27 – Perth South	149,032
WA 2	28 - Country WA	54,570
TAS 1	29 – TAS	85,508
NT 1	30 – NT	11,520
Total		2,716,683

* The carer population data is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey Disability Ageing and Carers data 2015.

Appendix F – Carer Support Planning Framework

Refer to the Program Materials section of the Carer Gateway Learning Management System.

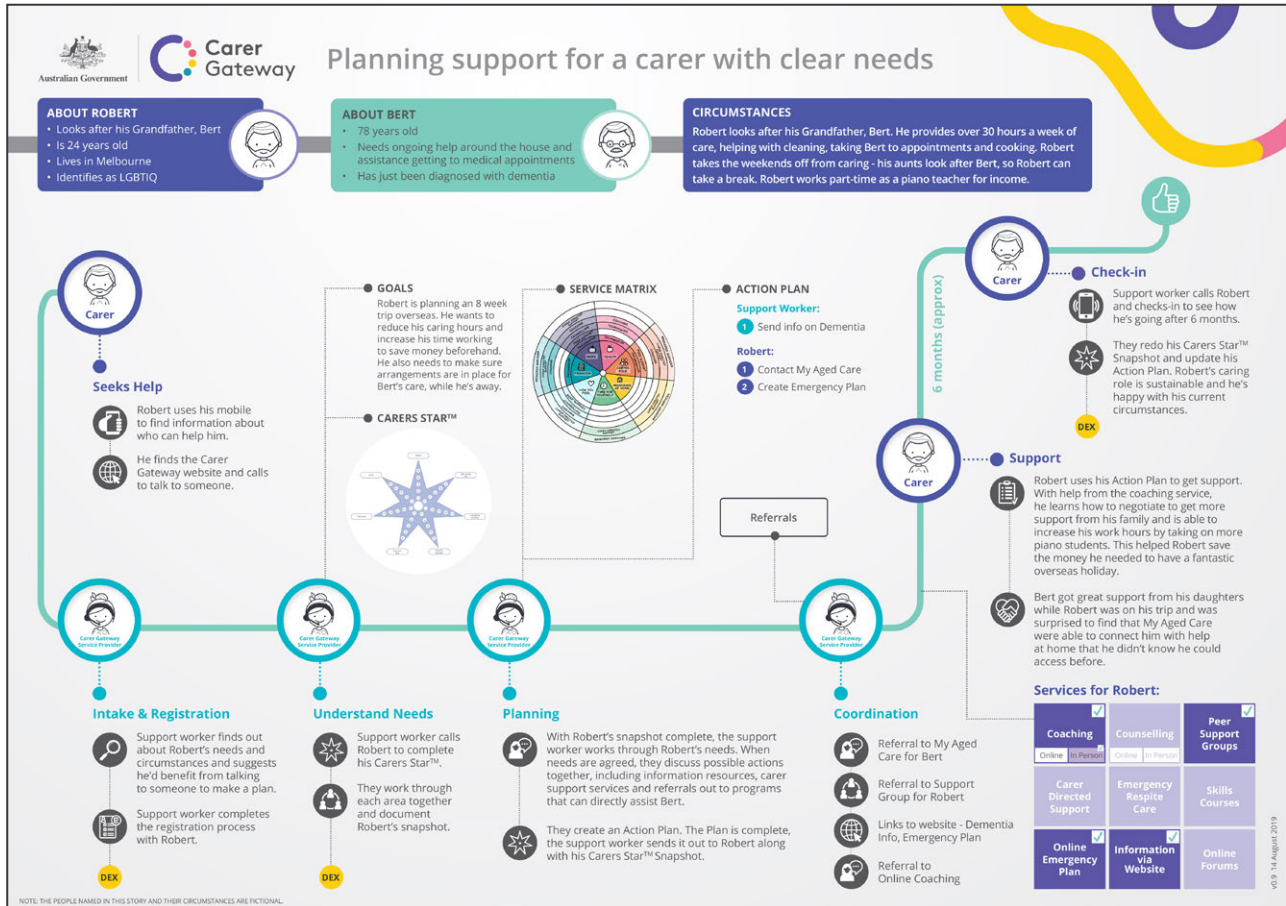
<http://providers.carergateway.org.au/docs/Carer-Support-Framework.pdf>



Appendix G – User Journeys

Refer to the Program Materials section of the Carer Gateway Learning Management System.

<http://providers.carergateway.org.au/docs/Carer-Journeys.pdf>



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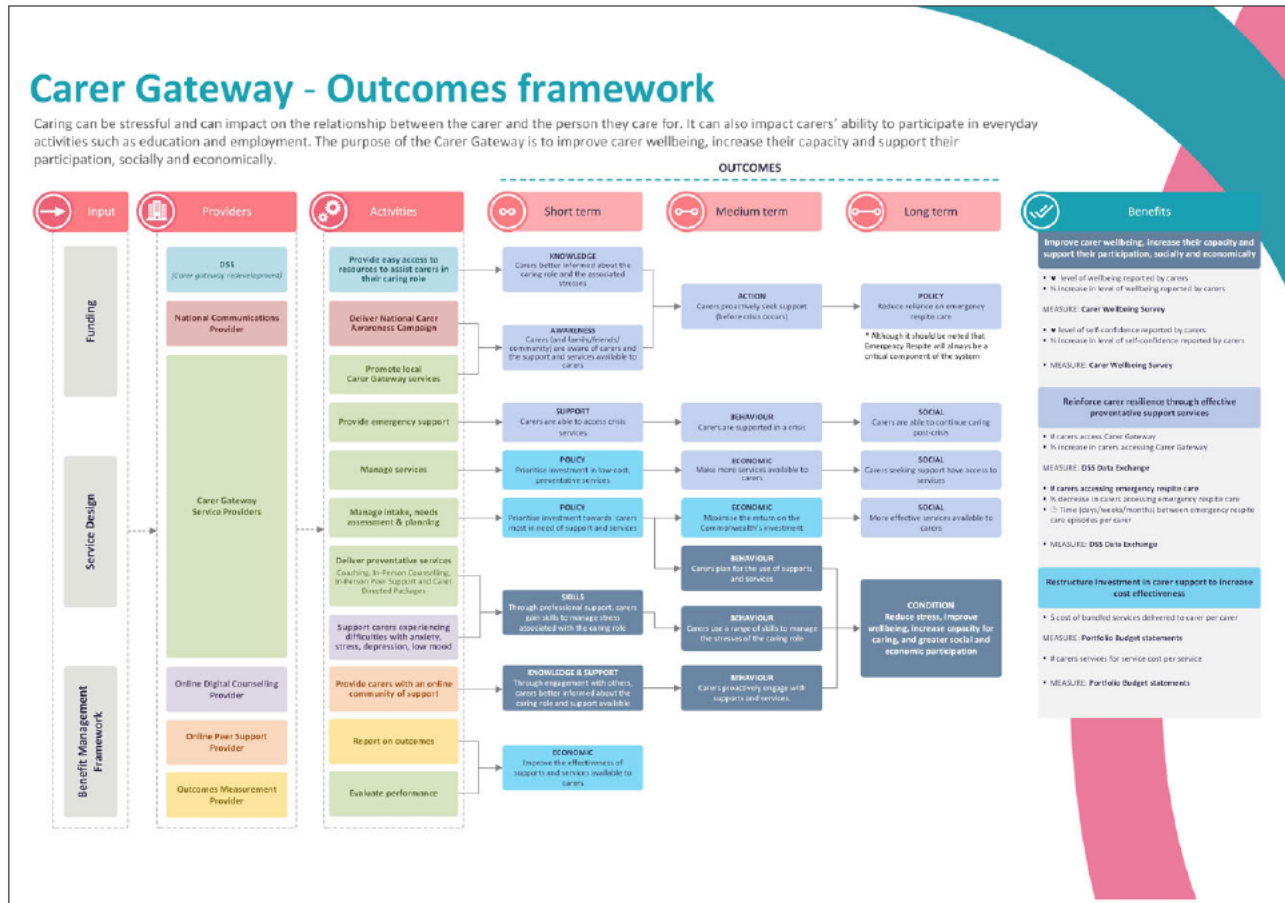
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Appendix J – Outcomes Framework

Carer Gateway - Outcomes framework

Caring can be stressful and can impact on the relationship between the carer and the person they care for. It can also impact carers' ability to participate in everyday activities such as education and employment. The purpose of the Carer Gateway is to improve carer wellbeing, increase their capacity and support their participation, socially and economically.



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Phone: 1800 422 737 (Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm local time)

Web: carergateway.gov.au

Follow us:

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[youtube.com: Carer Gateway](https://youtube.com/Carer Gateway)

Carer Support Framework

Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS)

Version 1.0 December 2019

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Overview

This document provides guidance on the Carer Support Framework¹ (the framework), which outlines how Carer Gateway regional delivery partners (RDPs) provide support to carers. The purpose of the framework is to ensure a consistent and effective experience for clients of the Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS).

The framework was tested and iterated through pilots undertaken by the Department in September 2018 and March 2019.

Carers Star™

A central component of the framework is the Carers Star™, an evidence-based tool that supports and measures change when working with people². The Carers Star™ is particularly used in the Understand Needs and Support Planning stages.

The Carers Star™ was developed in the UK specifically for use with carers, both full-time and part-time, and covers seven key areas³:

1. Health
2. The caring role
3. Managing at home
4. Time for yourself
5. How you feel
6. Finances
7. Work

Activities undertaken to design the framework

The Department has undertaken the following in the design of the framework:

- *User Research:* Working with carers and staff at carer support organisations to understand their needs, in context – **Complete.**
- *Ideation:* Exploring ideas to provide a guided, consistent approach to understanding the needs of carers and then connect them with support – **Complete.**
- *Concept development:* Creating an initial version of the framework for discussion with members of the sector – **Complete.**
- *Consultation:* Presentation of the framework to members of the sector for validation, feedback and iteration – **Complete.**
- *Development of an alpha version:* Preparation of the framework for use by carer support organisations in a limited pilot. Includes consultation with experts to successfully incorporate the Carers Star™ into the support planning process – **Complete.**
- *Pilot (September 2018):* Use of the alpha version of the framework with real carers to evaluate suitability and inform improvement – **Complete.**
- *Development of a beta version:* Creation of a framework version that is ready for broader use by the sector in preparation for live deployment from September 2019 – **Complete.**

¹ Formerly referred to as the *Carer Pathway Navigator*.

² ©Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd. 2018. *About the Star – Triangle*. [ONLINE] Available at: ["about the star" on the outcomesstar website](#). [Accessed 27 June 2018].

³ ©Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd. 2018. *Carers Star™ – Triangle*. [ONLINE] Available at: ["carers star" on the outcomesstar website](#). [Accessed 26 October 2018].

Principles underpinning design of the framework

The user research and subsequent consultation input from sector stakeholders informed the following as key principles to guide design of the framework:

Principle	Description
Holistic approach	Assessment needs to be comprehensive and holistic, considering all relevant aspects of the carer's circumstances.
Engage carers in a conversation	The most effective way to understand the needs of a carer is through a natural conversation between them and a Carer Support Worker.
Collect only what's relevant	To provide an efficient experience, only the information that is most useful should be captured when needed, building carer and care recipient records over time.
Outcomes for carers	The process of identifying services for a carer must consider their aims, as they relate to their caring role and support outcomes that are in line with their needs as a carer.
Empower carers to self-manage	Enable carers to direct and manage their own support arrangements, empowering them to choose how and when supports are utilised.
Inclusive support	Planning supports for a carer must accommodate needs and preferences for service delivery that are specific to their cohort (including but not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) people).
Sustainable outcomes	Supports must enable caring arrangements to be maintained in the long term. Measuring carer outcomes is required to confirm and respond, where adjustments are needed.
Nationally consistent, locally adjusted	The framework needs to support a common way of working for all RDPs but still allow variations that support carer needs and service arrangements specific to the region they live in.

Components of the framework

The following components have been developed to support use of the framework by Carer Support Workers, who work for an RDP:

- **Carer Support Planning Process:** The steps that RDPs follow to provide support to carers who need it. The support planning process also defines the inputs and outputs at each stage in the carer's journey.
- **Support Planning Process Guidance:** The criteria that should be met when supporting a carer through the process of accessing supports available under the ICSS.
- **Understand needs Guiding Questions:** Suggested approaches for Carer Support Workers when working through the seven Carer Star™ outcome areas to understand a carer's needs and circumstances.
- **Action Plan Guiding Questions:** Suggested approaches for Carer Support Workers to guide creation of a Carer Star™ Action Plan.
- **Service Matching Table:** Assists with the identification of appropriate ICSS services to address the needs of carers.

Carer Support Planning Process

The process model (refer page 6) sets out the process for RDPs to follow to ensure that carers receive a consistently good experience when seeking support. The Carer Support Worker will facilitate the process for each individual carer, including the following stages:

- **Intake:** Initial contact with a carer when they present with an enquiry or request. Includes:
 - Identifying the carer;
 - Understanding what has prompted them to seek assistance;
 - Determining their **eligibility** to access carer support services, by confirming their role as a carer and confirming they are located in the RDPs service region;
 - Assessing the **urgency** of their request, based on their request timeframe and if they have any emergency circumstances; and
 - Educating the carer about the RDP's role and available services.
- **Registration:** Capture of a carer's identifying information and basic information⁴ about the person they care for, where required. Registration establishes a record of the carer in the RDP's system to support ongoing management of support services and monitoring of carer wellbeing, post-delivery of services.
- **Understand needs (incorporating the Carers Star™)** : Undertaken to understand a carer's aims, responsibilities, care load, living circumstances, support network (including both current paid services and informal support from others) and general relationship with the person they care for. The process identifies the carer's needs and is the key input to successfully completing the support planning process.
- **Support Planning:**
 - Identification of the types of supports/services that will benefit the carer, in line with their needs as identified through a conversation.
 - Development of an individual action plan to document the carer's goals and the actions that will be undertaken (by the carer and others) to support them.
- **Coordination:**

Activities to put services in place for the carer either via:

 - Referral to appropriate providers;
 - Direct brokerage of services on the carer's behalf; or
 - Information to enable the carer to self-refer.
- **Support:** Delivery of services to the carer by appropriate service provider(s).
- **Monitoring:** Reconnecting with the carer to:
 - Check they have sustainable supports in place⁵.
 - Measure support outcomes by checking their wellbeing against their baseline Carers Star™ reading.

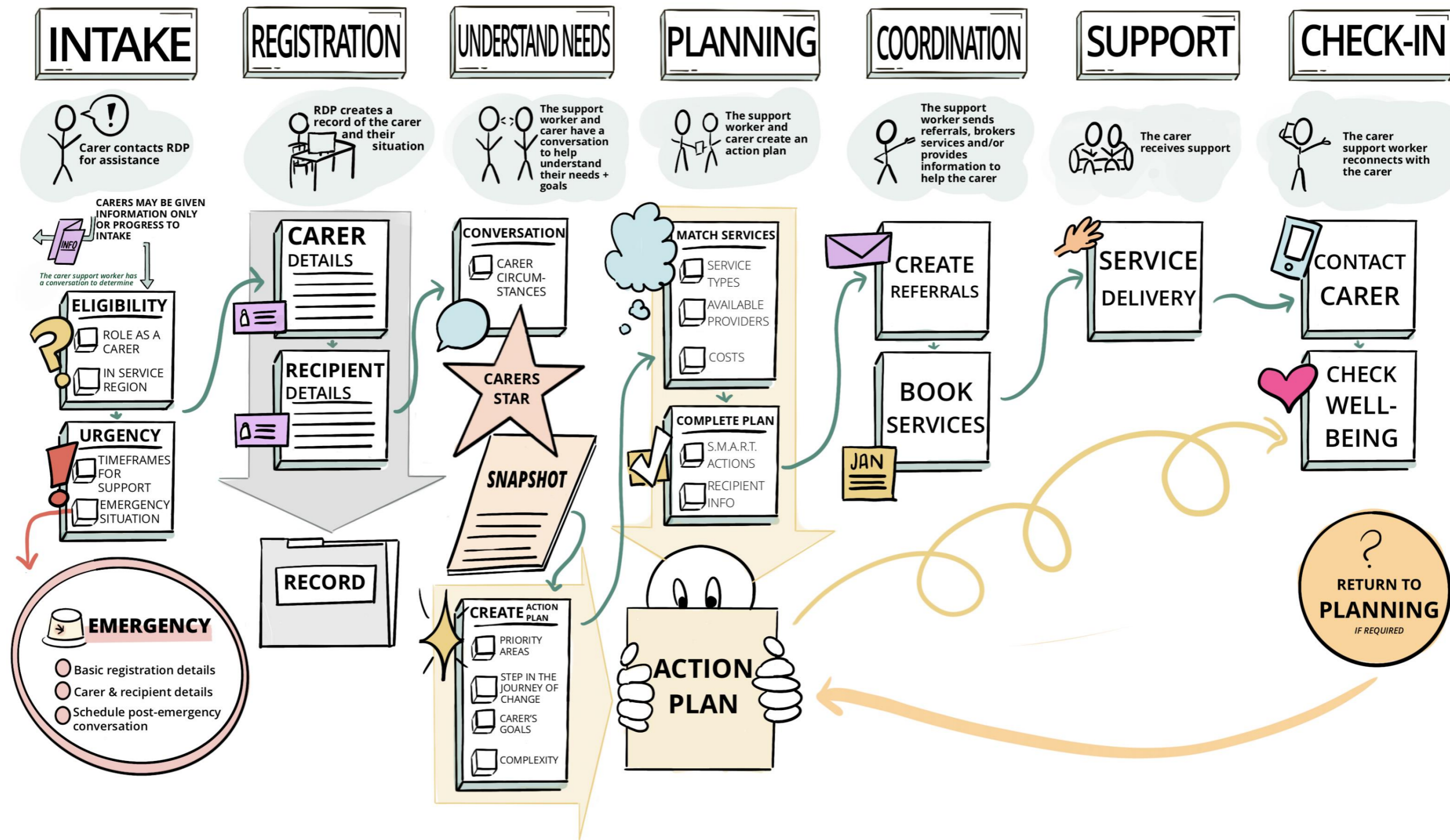
Return to Understand Needs Stage to revise Carers Star™ based on new circumstances.

⁴ The term "basic information" refers to a simple note or direction regarding the person receiving the care. An example might be – "Provides care for – Robert (Spouse). Condition – Dementia"

⁵ Checks may initially be scheduled close to the end of the carer's first round of services and then, with the carer's agreement, every three to six months, thereafter, by default.

Carer Support Planning Process

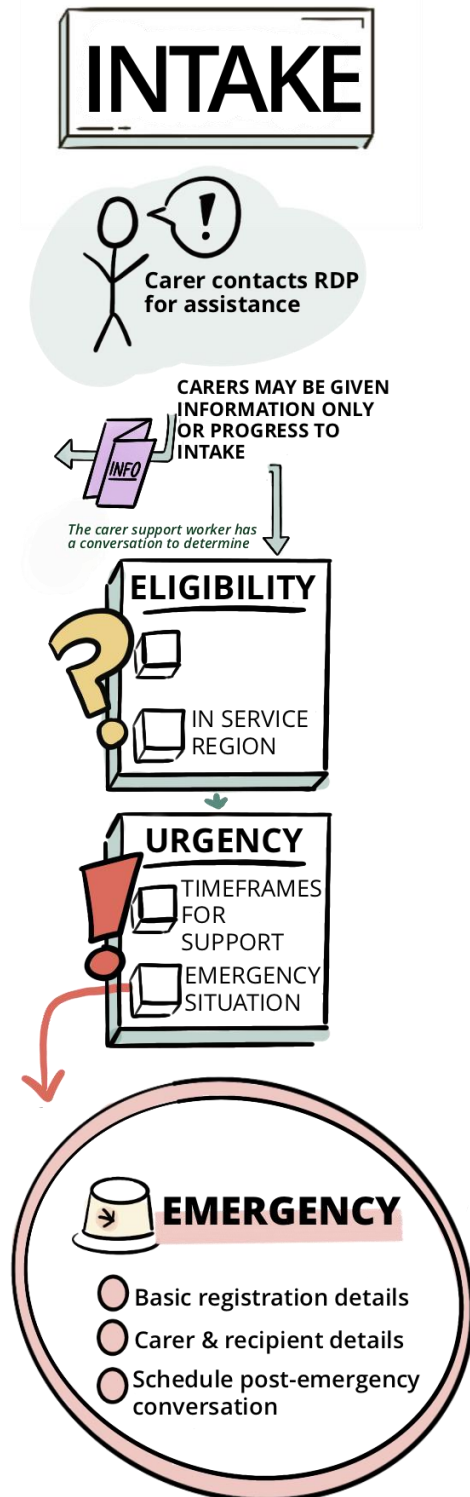
CARER SUPPORT PLANNING PROCESS



Support Planning Process Guidance

1. Intake

When a carer **contacts the RDP for assistance**, determine their **eligibility** and **urgency** for supports. Can occur over the phone or face-to-face. Undertaken by a carer support worker (trained in Carers Star) or office intake worker (not trained in Carers Star). May take between 5 to 15 minutes.



Carer contact

A carer may contact your organisation via phone, email, or through a third party, such as a health professional or other government service.

If the carer was referred by a third party, the information provided may not be a complete picture of the person's circumstances and needs. In this case you can:

- Contact the referrer (preferably by phone) to get a better picture; or
- Contact the carer directly to determine the nature of their request.

A person's contact with an RDP is often for information. Moving to the next step (registration) is only required for carers requesting support. However, requesting information is often the first step for people to recognise that they are carers and to build trust and rapport with your organisation. Many conversations that begin as a request for information end in a request for support.

Eligibility

- The person has taken responsibility for the care of another person who:
 - has a disability
 - has a mental health problem
 - has a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness)
 - is frail aged
- Or the person has ceased being a carer within the past 12 months
- Lives within the service area of the RDP

If the person meets these criteria, complete registration using your IT system.

Urgency

EMERGENCY: The care relationship is under high stress and breakdown has either occurred or will occur, if support is not received within 72 hours. If this occurs:

- Understand the driver for the contact
- Assist immediately
- Follow your organisation's emergency process

If the person is not experiencing an emergency, determine if their urgency is high, medium or low.

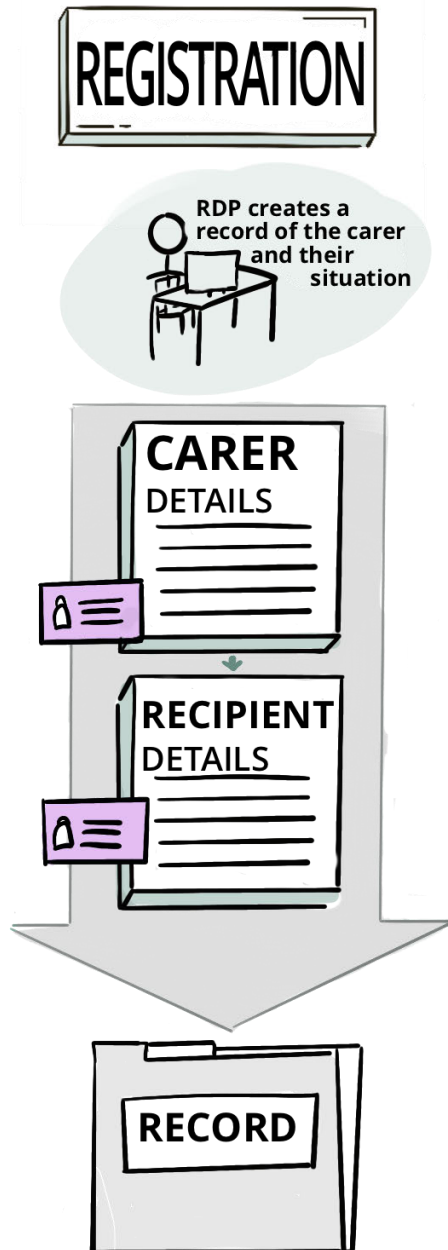
Urgency	Criteria	Next steps
HIGH	There is a high level of stress in the care relationship and there is a risk of breakdown if support is not received in the next 7 days (for less than 72 hours see 'EMERGENCY' above).	Contact carer for registration and/or understand needs within 24 hours
MEDIUM	The care relationship is under moderate stress and support is needed within the next 14 to 21 days.	Contact carer for registration and/or understand needs within 48 hours
LOW	The care relationship is under low stress.	Contact carer for registration and understand needs within 72 hours

When determining urgency, ask yourself:

- Is there anyone supporting the carer or the care recipient?
- Does the caring role seem sustainable?
- What would happen if there were no supports?
- Has a sudden event occurred such as a recent hospitalisation?

2. Registration

When a carer needs support, **record their details** and the **details of the person they care for**. Can occur over the phone or face-to-face. Undertaken by a carer support worker (trained in Carers Star) or office intake worker (not trained in Carers Star). May take between 5 to 15 minutes.



Record the carer's details

Registration may happen in the same conversation as intake. Alternatively, some people may provide an initial set of details (name, date of birth, phone number), and a more detailed registration may occur at understand needs.

Asking carers for their details will often prompt their whole story. When this happens:

- Take notes so that the information can be used later, or
- Steer the conversation into understanding needs, if the carer has time (60 minutes); and the person taking registration details is trained and able to undertake the conversation, or
- Gently remind the carer that their story will be covered later and redirect to capturing their details.

For registration to be complete, the following details should be recorded:

- Given name
- Family name
- DOB
- Gender
- Residential address
- Phone
- Indigenous status
- Country of birth
- Main/preferred language
- Consent (includes consent to act on recipient's behalf)
- Carer status (Primary/Shared/Other)
- Alternate carer's name
- Alternate carer's phone

Additional details will support further conversations with the carer and delivery of supports to them:

- Preferred name
- Disability/health condition (if any)
- Employment status
- Employment type (Full-time/Part-Time/Casual/Volunteer)
- Current Payment Type (Pension/Carer Payment)
- Carer status (Primary/other)
- Care recipients:
- Name of recipient 1
- Name of recipient 2
- Name(s) of other recipient(s)
- Relationship to recipient(s)

If this information is not captured at registration, it may be provided in later conversations with the carer. It's important to update the record with the information if this happens.

Record care recipient details

For each person the carer is caring for, the following details should be recorded at a minimum:

- Given name
- Family name
- DOB
- Gender
- Residential address
- Phone
- Disability/health condition
- Pension Type
- Indigenous status
- Country of birth
- Main/preferred language
- Consent (for each carer to act on their behalf)
- For each carer:
 - Carer's name
 - Carer's phone
 - Relationship to carer

Additional details will support further conversations with the carer and delivery of supports to them:

- Preferred name
- Program (My Aged Care / NDIS / Other)
- Type of funded plan/package

If this information is not captured at registration, it may be provided in later conversations with the carer. It's important to update the record with the information if this happens.

3. Understand Needs

Establish the carers needs through a **conversation** and record their goals, priorities and supports in an **action plan**. Can occur over the phone or face-to-face. Undertaken by a carer support worker (trained in Carers Star). May take between 30 to 90 minutes, 60 minutes on average.



Conversation

A full conversation including the Carers Star™ and action planning will take around 60 minutes to complete. For many carers, this is best scheduled a day or two after intake and registration, when they can:

- Make arrangements to be sitting comfortably, ideally without the person they care for in the same room, and
- Have had time to look at the Carers Star™ snapshot and scales before the conversation.

The Carers Star™ materials can be provided to the carer by:

- Email (preferred)
- Text message (where the carer does not have access to a computer at the time of the conversation)
- Mail (in cases where there is low urgency / the conversation is scheduled to occur in a week or more)

If the carer cannot be provided with Carers Star™ materials, or they aren't ready to engage with the Carers Star™, the snapshot can be completed by the Carer Support Worker only, and in this instance a record of 'Worker Only', should be recorded in the star.

Once the carer is ready to have the conversation, use Carers Star™ to guide a conversation about their needs, and record where they sit for each domain, making notes on their responses.

Whilst most conversations can occur on the phone, face to face is appropriate or preferred when:

- The person is Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander, and it isn't culturally appropriate to engage over the phone.
- The person requires an interpreter to communicate, and the Translating and

- Interpreting Service (TIS) isn't available or appropriate.
- The person is a young carer under 18.

More guidance on using the Carers Star™ to have a conversation with carers is covered in the Carers Star™ user guides and training material.

Action plan

Through the understanding needs conversation you have identified the main areas of concern for the carer and may have already touched on the carer's goals and priorities. Building on what you've learned, have a conversation with the carer to establish some immediate goals and actions, and document these in a plan. A good way to start the conversation is to reflect back what they've said are their main priority areas and suggest actions, e.g. *"You mentioned that getting to sleep is an issue for you, particularly when you're caring for your mum the next day. Have you thought about trying a relaxation tape at bedtime?"*.

Depending on where the carer is at in their journey of change, actions may be undertaken by the carer support worker or by the carer themselves. Action plans are most effective when they reflect the carer's own priorities and include realistic, achievable actions that relate to a broader goal.

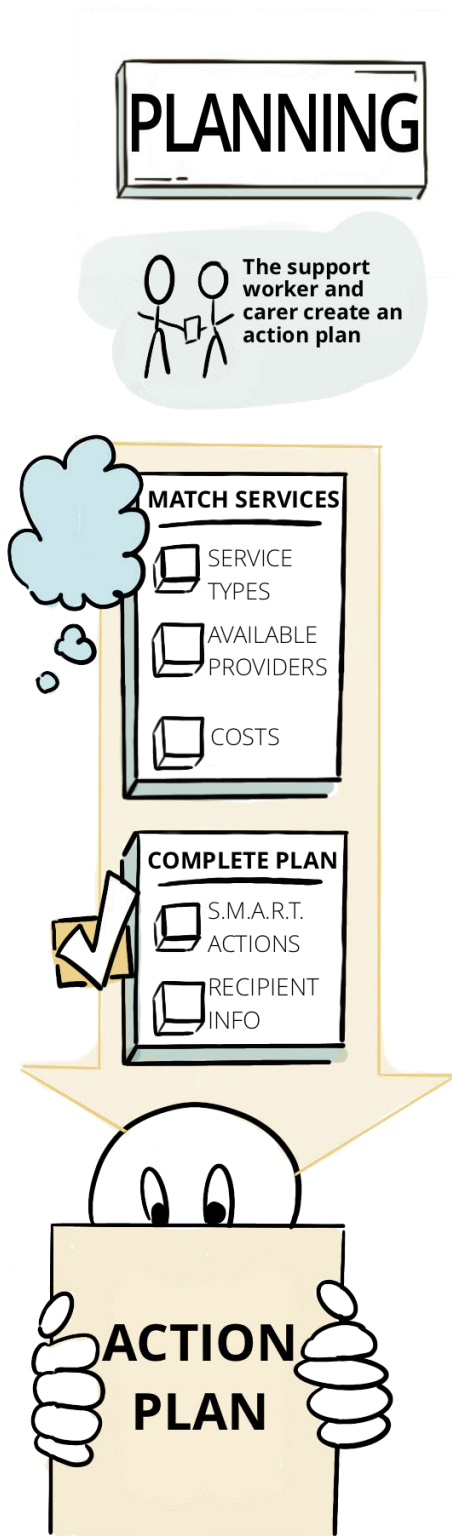
An action plan will generally include between 1-5 actions structured with the following information:

- The **priority area** from the Carers Star™ (e.g. 'Health')
- The **step in the journey of change** (e.g. 'Finding what works')
- The carer's **goal** (e.g. 'To sleep better so I have more energy in the day')
- The **action** to be undertaken, by **whom** and **when** (e.g. 'I will try streaming relaxation audio tapes at bedtime in the next week')

More guidance on using the Carers Star™ to build an action plan with carers is covered in the Carers Star™ user guides and training material.

4. Support Planning

Find supports for the carer and **finalise the action plan** with the carer. Can occur over the phone or face-to-face. Undertaken by a carer support worker (trained in Carers Star). May take between 10 to 30 minutes.



Find supports

The service matching wheel (page 19) may help in identifying available supports for the carer based on the domains of the carers star. However, your local networks and knowledge of informal supports should also be considered in forming the action plan.

When looking for supports, consider:

- The **service types** needed by the carer, *e.g. if the client requires more than one service, look for providers that will cover all;*
- The **availability** of the providers and the urgency of the client's needs, *e.g. does the provider have a three month waitlist for a service the carer needs next week;*
- The **costs** associated with the services, *e.g. if the carer has difficulty affording services, are there financial hardship provisions for fees*

The carer's communication and cultural needs should be strongly considered at this stage. Where possible, look for providers that caters to a specific cohort, or has indicated that they have additional supports to people with specific needs.

Finalise action plan

The action plan should reflect the conversations with the carer at understanding needs and planning, and should also include:

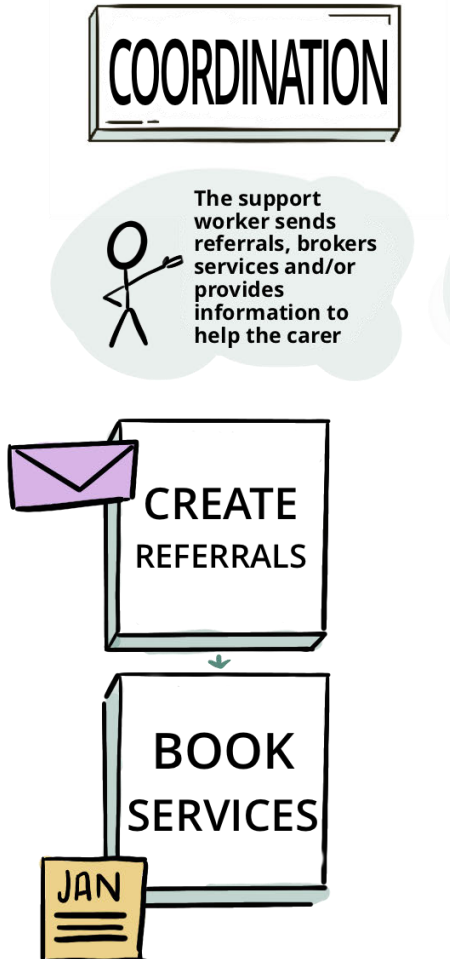
- Services that the carer has chosen to use.
- Actions for referral and/or purchase of the services.

When the action plan is complete, send a copy of their completed Carers Star™ Star Chart and action plan to the carer by email or post, depending on the carer's preferences. This is also an opportunity to send any information or brochures that you may have discussed with the carer, *e.g. information on local support groups.*

At finalisation, the carer's deidentified information should be recorded in DEX.

5. Coordination

Send referrals and **book or services** where required. Can occur over the phone, digitally (via email or eReferral system) or fax. Undertaken by a carer support worker (trained in Carers Star). Duration varies depending on action plan. May be completed the same day as support planning for simple action plans, or occur over 12 weeks for more complex plans requiring ongoing coordination.



Send referrals

If the carer intends to organise services themselves, or the services sit outside of the carer support system (e.g. My Aged Care) the Carer Support Worker creates/provides the appropriate referrals and contact details. Ensure that the carer has provided consent for their information to be provided to another organisation.

Book or broker services

If services can be booked directly, coordinate with the client to nominate a time and book the service using your system

If brokerage of services for the care recipient is required:

- Capture consent to share carer recipient's and the carer's *personal* information with the provider, if required for the services; and
- Ensure sufficient details of the care recipient's needs are captured if required for the services., e.g. *Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)* and *Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)*

Once services have been booked or brokered:

- Contact carer so they know what to expect; and
- Post or email the schedule of services, including contribution payment details (only for services where a co-contribution payment is permitted and the carer has agreed to a co-contribution for their service).

6. Support

Services are delivered by the applicable service provider(s). Can occur face-to-face, over the phone or digitally. Undertaken by the carer themselves (for self-supports), or by services. May be one off, time-limited or ongoing services.

7. Check-in

Contact with the carer, **check wellbeing** and **return to support planning** if required. Can occur over the phone or face-to-face. Undertaken by a carer support worker (trained in Carers Star). May take between 5 to 30 minutes.



Contact carer

Contact the client **3 months** after their initial understanding needs conversation to check their progress against the action plan.

A check in is usually an informal conversation with the carer about their current situation. During the conversation, refer to their action plan and check the progress of each item.

Check wellbeing

In most cases, a check in will naturally lead to a Carers Star™ conversation. If the check in does not naturally lead to a Carers Star™ conversation, ask the carer if they have time to undertake a review of their Carers Star™ snapshot.

Even if the carer is now fully supported and doesn't intend to seek further support, an updated Carers Star™ snapshot helps to measure the effectiveness of carer supports.

Guide the conversation against each of the domains and encourage the carer to reflect on their progress in the journey of change.

Record your notes and the latest scores in your system, and report the Carers Star™ scores into DEX.

Return to support planning

If the need for new actions arise from the conversation with the carer, create a new action plan (return to step 4 – Support Planning, page 13).

If there are no new actions, arrange a follow up with the carer in **12 months**.

Guiding Questions

Purpose

Guiding questions will be developed to inform Carer Support Workers who undertake understanding needs conversations with carers for the ICSS. The intent is to enable Carer Support Workers to apply the Carers Star™ consistently. Sector stakeholders have identified a need for materials that provide guidance on:

- **Understand Needs Guiding Questions:** Identification of appropriate topics to raise with a carer to understand their needs, in line with Carers Star™ outcome areas.
- **Support Planning Guiding Questions:** Explain how to correlate Carers Star™ outcomes with services to assist the carer.

The questions below are examples of the type of questions which may be used. They *are not intended to be read verbatim as a script* – their purpose is to prompt discussion about aspects of the carer's situation that inform a Carers Star™ reading and can be used in any order, based on the judgement of the Carer Support Worker conducting the conversation.

Examples of the Understand Needs Guiding Questions

1. Health

- In general how would you say your health is?
- Do you currently have any health conditions?
- What overall impact is there on your physical health because of your caring role?
- Would you say that you have a healthy lifestyle?
- How's your diet?
- Do you get enough sleep?
- Are you on any medications?
- Do you listen to what the doctor says?

2. The Caring Role

- Any challenges for you in providing support? Are you able to support your person in all areas where they need support?
- DO you understand everything you need to do to support your person? Do you have any questions about it?
- Have you made any plans for the future? Are there already any services in place (if not already asked)?
- Do family and friends provide support to assist you in your caring role (if not already asked)?
- Do you have any concerns about the future?
 - If you were unable to continue caring either in the short term or longer term what may be some of the options?
 - Have you discussed these options with the person or family?
 - Do you have any guardianship/power of attorney arrangements in place?

3. Managing at Home

- Overall how are you coping with day to day tasks in the home? Examples include cooking, cleaning and shopping.

- Is your/their home suitable at present? What would make it more suitable?

4. Time for yourself

- Do you feel like you currently get some time to yourself and are able to attend to your own needs?
- When was the last time you spent some time by yourself outside the caring role?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- Do you get enough sleep?
- Do you get the chance to spend time with friends/family away from your caring role?
- Do you have any hobbies or interests? Do you have time to do these?

5. How you feel

- What overall impact is there on your mental health because of your caring role?
- Do you feel supported by family and friends? Any stress on relationship with person you care for? Has caring caused any strain or impacted on your relationships with family or friends?

6. Finances

- Do you receive carer pension/allowance?
- Are you ok with paying bills and groceries?
- Does your person receive a government pension/benefit?
- Has your caring role affected your financial situation?

7. Work

- Any paid employment? Status of employment?
- For carers who are employed:
 - Is your employer aware of your caring role? Are they supportive?
 - Does your caring role impact your work?
- Any volunteer work or study currently?
- Are you wanting to get back into the workforce and if so how can we support you?

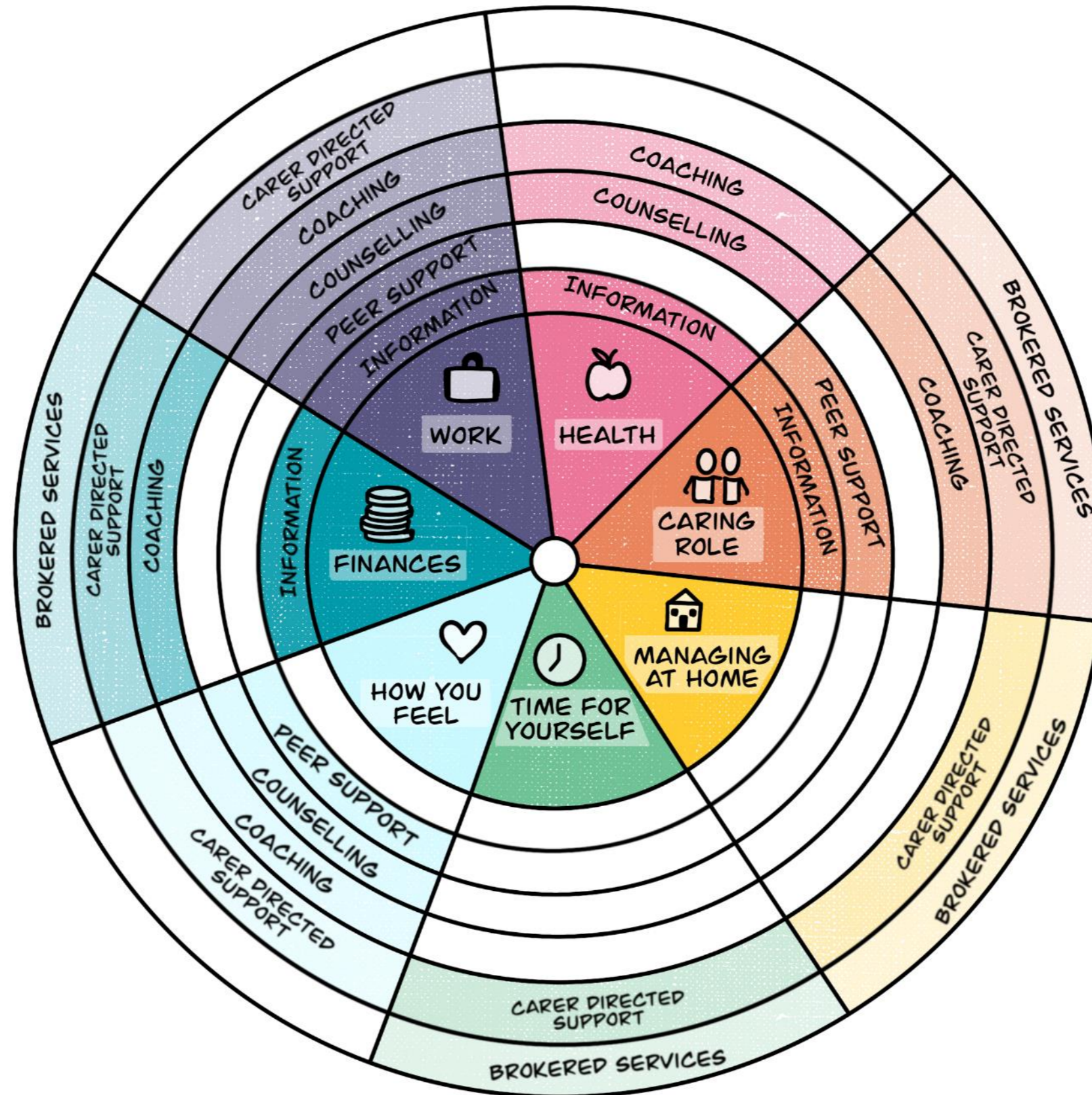
Examples of Support Planning Guiding Questions

Key questions to guide the creation of an Action Plan for the carer are as follows:

- What's important to you right now?
- Are you able to identify any goals that you would like to achieve in the near future?
- What kind of support would make the biggest difference for you now or into the future?
- Is there anything in your overall health and wellbeing you would like to change?

Service matching wheel

The following wheel matches the Carers Star™ domains against each of the services available within the ICSS.



Service Matching Table

This table suggests example ICSS services that may be appropriate to meet a carer's identified needs.

Area of Life		Need		ICSS Services							Emergency Respite	Other Actions	Referral	Brokerage of Recipient Services		
				Information		Peer Support		Counselling		Coaching					Carer Directed Support	
				Online Resources	Online	In Person	Digital	In Person	Self-guided	Facilitated						
Health	Mental Health				●	●										
	Nutrition	●						●	●							
	Fitness	●						●	●							
The Caring Role	Practical support with care									●			●			
	Access to information/educational resources	●							●							
	Training	●							●	●						
	Caring advice/mentoring	●							●	●						
	Legal advice	●							●	●			●			
	Advocacy	●											●			
	Equipment/aids									●			●			
	Transport services									●			●			
	Contact/connection with other carers		●	●									●			
	Temporary planned respite care									●						
Managing at home	Home repairs or modification									●			●			
	Support with cleaning									●			●			
	Support with shopping									●			●			
Time for yourself	Activities away from caring									●						
	Short breaks (less than a day)									●			●			
How you feel	To feel:															
	Supported		●	●												
	Connected		●	●												
	Secure				●	●	●	●								
	Less stressed				●	●	●	●	●							
Finances	To apply for Carer Payment/Allowance	●											●			
	Funded services for care recipient												●			
	Legal advice								●	●	●					
	Financial advice								●	●	●					
Work	Support to return to work	●							●	●	●		●			
	Support reduction of work hours									●	●					
	Strategies to communicate/negotiate with employer	●	●	●						●	●					
	Support post cessation of employment	●	●	●		●	●	●	●							

Framework for a Streamlined Carer Support Planning process

In response to the COVID 19 crisis, the Department is aware that carers may not be in a position to undertake the full carer support planning process – in particular the full Carer Star process.

Until further notice and as part of the COVID 19 response, the Departments advice is for Carer Gateway service providers to follow a streamlined Carer star process. This process is mandatory for a Carer Directed Support package (noting that where possible, it would be beneficial to use the full process). The following provides guidance regarding a streamlined process:

- Refer to the attached – Wellbeing worksheet as an example
- This document lets you capture some upfront information – noting you may need more depending on your respective organisations intake processes.
- The bottom half of the document shows the 7 domains of the carer star and provides the rating scale from 1 – 5.
- It is expected that in a streamlined process, a carer support worker would still be able to have a very light touch conversation around the 7 domains of the star, and gather the score ratings.
- The score ratings are then able to input to DEX via the SCORE mechanism as per the current process.
- As per the standard process, it is expected that a follow up / check in point is set with the carer (or in the CRM). It is expected that this follow up point would be within a shorter time period than under the full process (given the carer is under stress).
- Carer support workers should use their professional judgement to determine the appropriate level of detail they take in undertaking the Carer Support Planning Process with carers during the COVID-19 crisis.

My Wellbeing Worksheet

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Length of time in a caring role Best day/time for calls



5
As good as it gets



4
Finding what works



3
Making changes



2
Getting help



1
Cause for concern

Which step are you on for each area?

(Please circle one number from each line)

1	Health	5	4	3	2	1
2	The caring Role	5	4	3	2	1
3	Managing at home	5	4	3	2	1
4	Time for yourself	5	4	3	2	1
5	How you feel	5	4	3	2	1
6	Finances	5	4	3	2	1
7	Work	5	4	3	2	1



An Australian Government Initiative

carergateway.gov.au

1800 422 737 Monday-Friday 8am-6pm

Carer Support Planning Packages - COVID-19

In response to the impact that COVID-19 is having on carers, the Department of Social Services (the Department) recognises that there needs to be some flexibility in regards to service delivery under the current Carer Gateway model to give Carer Gateway service providers flexibility to respond to more immediate needs of carers at this time.

As such, Carer Gateway service providers will be able to provide flexible Carer Directed Support Packages to suit carer's individual needs in line with the following guidelines:

- The intent of the service remains.
- Carers must go through a support planning process in order to have a package assigned to them.
- For the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, the Department will relax the 12-month requirement for packages, to allow the timeframe for delivery to be within a 6-month period. Please note the Department has the right to review this at any time.
- Service providers must capture all support packages provided in DEX.
- Service providers must review carer needs during the allocated period.
- Services delivered under packages must be brokered by the Carer Gateway service provider (including consortia and sub-contractor arrangements).

In addition to Section 9.5.2 in the Operational Guidelines, additional Carer Directed Support Package options may include:

- Food (e.g. meal delivery subscription services – e.g. Hello Fresh, Marley Spoon, grocery delivery, takeaway)
- Equipment (e.g. nebulisers for carers of children with existing conditions)
- Medications (if not covered by PBS)
- Subscriptions to online health and wellbeing courses/channels (e.g. headspace, yoga)
- Entertainment options for care recipients (e.g. iPad apps), remote working programs and online skills development courses (where linked to carer wellbeing, education or employment goals).
- Hygiene supplies (toilet paper, sanitiser, soap)
- Continence aids (continence pads, adult diapers, wipes, toilet paper, catheters and associated accessories).

The guidance outlined in this policy advice will apply until the Department advises Carer Gateway service providers in writing.

ABOUT ROBERT

- Looks after his Grandfather, Bert
- Is 24 years old
- Lives in Melbourne
- Identifies as LGBTIQ



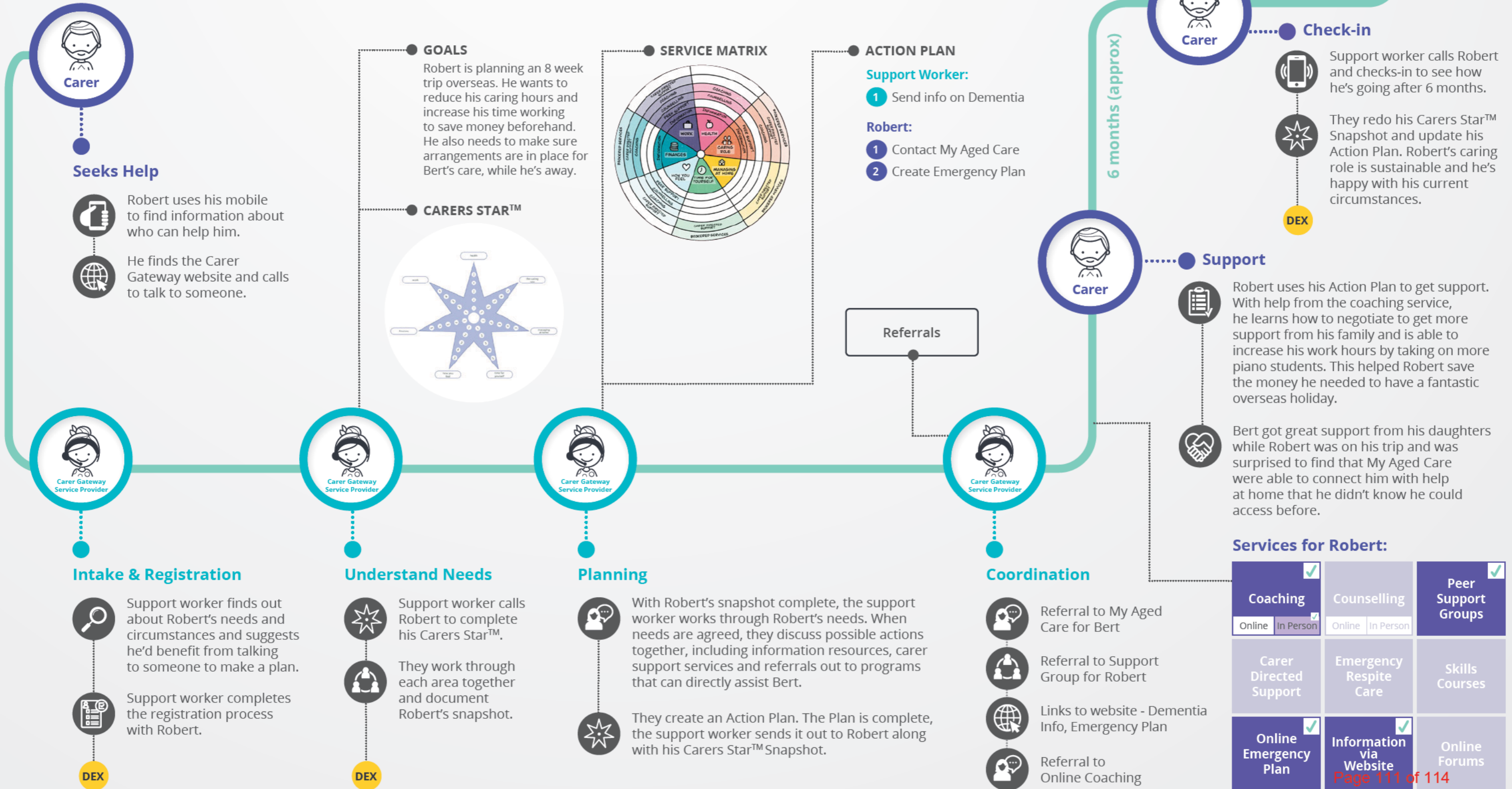
ABOUT BERT

- 78 years old
- Needs ongoing help around the house and assistance getting to medical appointments
- Has just been diagnosed with dementia



CIRCUMSTANCES

Robert looks after his Grandfather, Bert. He provides over 30 hours a week of care, helping with cleaning, taking Bert to appointments and cooking. Robert takes the weekends off from caring - his aunts look after Bert, so Robert can take a break. Robert works part-time as a piano teacher for income.



Services for Robert:

Coaching <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Counselling	Peer Support Groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online <input type="checkbox"/> In Person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Online <input type="checkbox"/> In Person <input type="checkbox"/>	
Carer Directed Support	Emergency Respite Care	Skills Courses
Online Emergency Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information via Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Online Forums

ABOUT JUNE

- Looks after her sister Maggie
- 64 years old
- Lives in Darwin



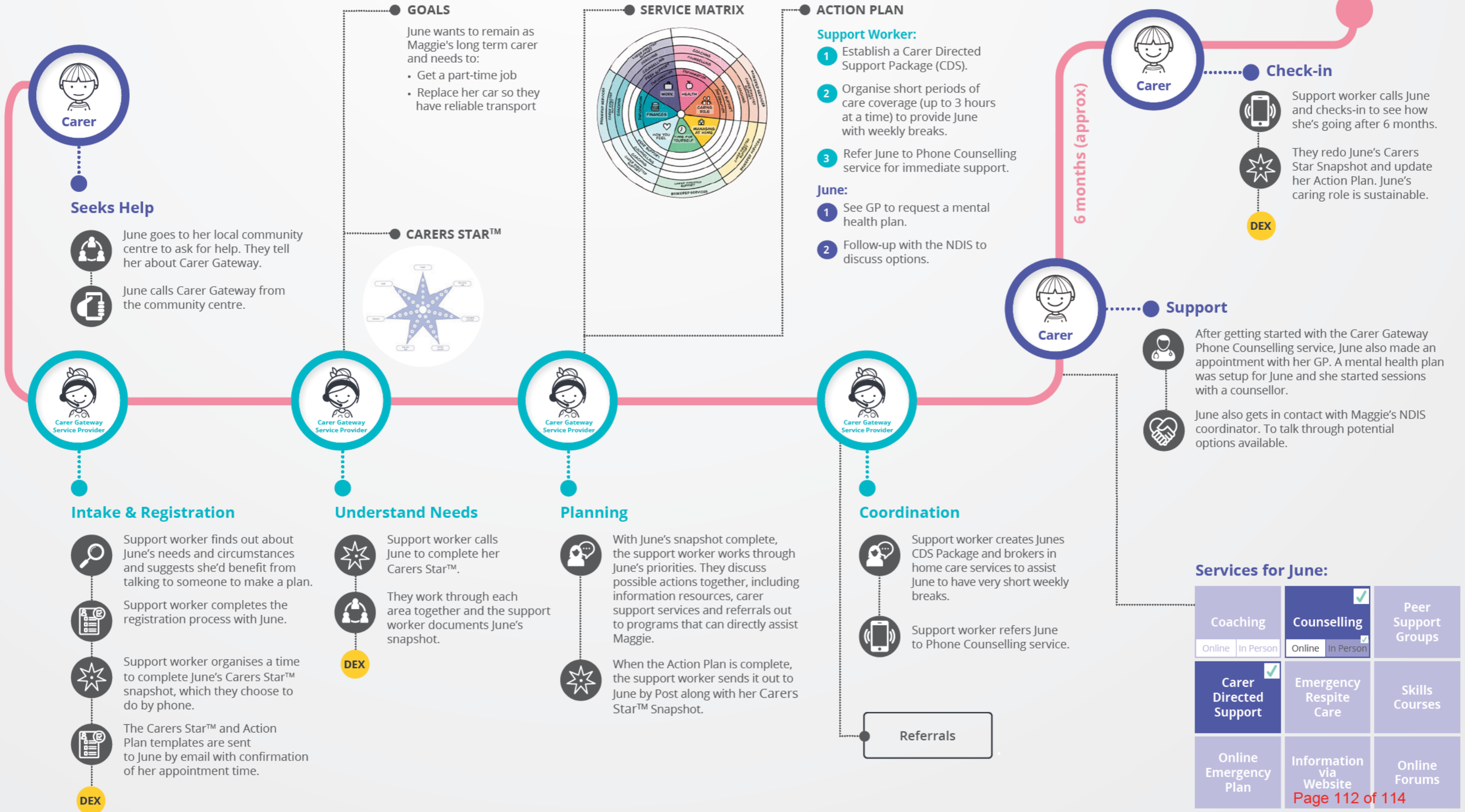
ABOUT MAGGIE

- 57 years old
- Maggie is intellectually disabled and needs full-time care
- Maggie needs help with meals, cleaning, some aspects of personal
- Lived with her brother James and her family previously but moved in with June after James died.



CIRCUMSTANCES

June looks after her younger sister, Maggie, who is intellectually disabled. June retired from work to become Maggie's carer just over two years ago and provides care full time. With no other support, June gets almost no time away from caring, except when she takes Maggie to her weekly social activities.



6 months (approx)

NOTE: THE PEOPLE NAMED IN THIS STORY AND THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES ARE FICTIONAL.

ABOUT GRACE

- Grace has three children aged 10 (Hamish), 7 (Emily) & 5 (Ava).
- Is the primary carer for her Ava.
- 31 years old.
- Lives in a town in regional WA but is moving to Perth.
- Is married to Todd who is an electrician and has his own business
- Grace was in contact with her local CRCC before CGSPs commenced and has been going to a support group for carers of children with autism.



ABOUT AVA

- Is 5 years old
- Ava has been diagnosed with autism.



CIRCUMSTANCES

Grace takes care of her three children. While Hamish and Emily are at school, Ava is at home and requires full-time care.

Grace contacted her local CRCC for support about twelve months ago. They arranged a short period of in home respite care during a very difficult time and also connected Grace with a support group for carers of children with autism.

Grace really enjoys attending the support group – the other carers who attend really understand her situation and Grace is learning a lot from them.



Carer

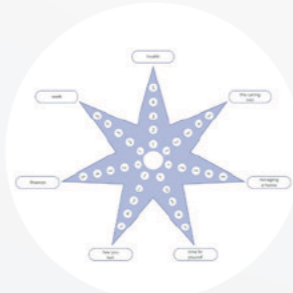
Seeks Help

- Grace wonders whether there's another support group available in her new area and decides to contact the CRCC she spoke to before.
- When Grace calls, the old CRCC number is diverted to her local Carer Gateway Service Provider.

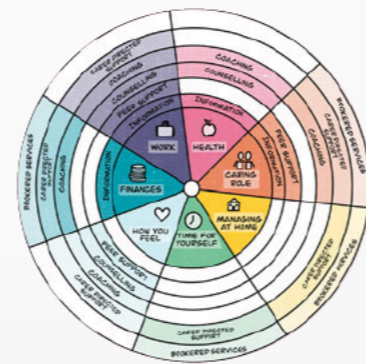
GOALS

Todd is finding that his business is really growing and he's picking up lots of work in Perth. He's travelling a lot and he and Grace decide that moving to Perth is best for their family.

CARERS STAR™



SERVICE MATRIX



ACTION PLAN

Support Worker:

- 1 Refer Grace to a support group in her new area.
- 2 Send Grace links to the Carer Gateway resources for carers of children with autism.
- 3 Send Grace link to create an Emergency Plan online.

Services for June:

Coaching Online In Person	Counselling Online In Person	Peer Support Groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carer Directed Support	Emergency Respite Care	Skills Courses
Online Emergency Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information via Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Online Forums



Carer

Check-in

- Support worker calls Grace and checks-in to see how she's going after 6 months.
- They complete a new Carers Star™ snapshot and update Grace's action plan.

DEX

6 months (approx)



Carer

Support

- Grace receives a call from the coordinator of her new support group, who welcomes her. Once the family is settled into their new place, Grace starts attending meetings and makes a new group of friends.
- Grace also creates an emergency care plan online, so there instructions to continue Grace's caring role if she's unavailable due to unexpected circumstances.



Carer Gateway Service Provider

Intake

- The support worker who takes Grace's call finds out what Grace is seeking to do.
- The support worker explains that its easy to refer Grace to a support group in her new area but also provides information about the support planning process.
- Grace would like to go through the support planning process and has time to do so now.



Carer Gateway Service Provider

Registration

- The support worker completes the registration process with Grace – they need to setup a new record for her.
- As they're completing the Carers Star™ straight away, the support worker sends Grace the Carer's Star and Action Plan templates by email.

DEX



Carer Gateway Service Provider

Understand Needs

- Support worker explains the Carers Star™ to Grace and they complete it together.
- They work through each area of the Star and document Grace's snapshot.

DEX



Carer Gateway Service Provider

Planning

- With Grace's snapshot complete, the support worker identifies her needs. When needs are agreed, they discuss possible actions together, including information resources and access to a new carer support group.
- When the Action Plan is complete, the support worker sends it out to Grace by Post along with her Carers Star™ Snapshot.



CGSP

Coordination

- Support worker issues referral out to the support group in Grace's new area.
- Support worker sends Grace links to the latest information about caring for children with autism via the Carer Gateway.
- Support worker sends Grace the link to create an Emergency Care Plan online.

ABOUT CHRISTINA

- 15 years old and lives with her Mum, Maria
- Looks after Maria and her younger brother Michael (aged 11)
- Is completing year 10 at school



ABOUT MARIA

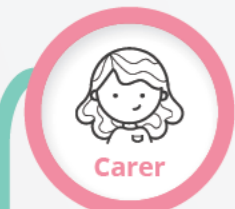
- 46 years old
- Moved to Australia from Malta in the 1990s
- Is a single parent with two children, Christina and Michael
- Maria suffered a stroke 12 months ago which has left her with speech difficulties and partial paralysis on her left side
- Maria receives ongoing rehabilitation support through the NDIS



CIRCUMSTANCES

Christina is balancing school and providing care for Maria who needs assistance with cooking, cleaning around the house, laundry and some aspects of personal care. Additionally, Christina takes responsibility for getting Michael to and from school, including organising lunches and helping him with homework.

Maria has an NDIS Plan which gives her access to rehabilitation services and transport to and from appointments (rehab and medical). Christina has never sought support for her caring role.



Carer

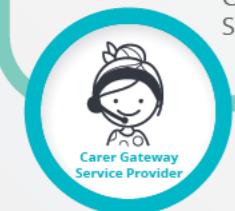
Seeks Help

Christina calls the Carer Gateway 1800 number and is diverted to her local Carer Gateway Service Provider.

GOALS

- Christina wants to:
- Complete school and go to University.
 - Reduce her caring role to fit in more time for school work.
 - Have a social life.

CARERS STAR™

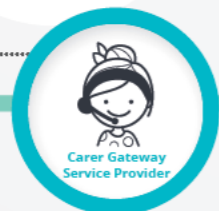


Carer Gateway Service Provider

Intake & Registration

- The support worker finds out a little about Christina's situation and explains that it would be best to register her with the Carer Gateway Service Provider. After that, they should meet in person to get a better understanding of how the Carer Gateway Service Provider can provide Christina with support.
- Christina had some time to register by telephone, so the support worker helps her straight away.
- They agree on a time when a support worker can visit Christina to discuss her situation and needs.
- The support worker sends out a welcome pack to Christina and confirmation of her appointment time.

DEX

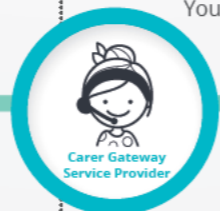


Carer Gateway Service Provider

Understand Needs

- When Christina attends her appointment at the Carer Gateway Service Provider, the support worker explains how the Carers Star™ works and they complete it together.
- They work through each area of the Star and the support worker documents Christina's snapshot.

DEX

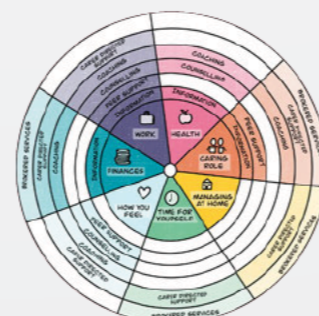


Carer Gateway Service Provider

Planning

- Now that Christina's snapshot is complete, the support worker discusses priorities. When needs are agreed, they discuss possible actions together.
- When the Action Plan is complete, Christina takes a copy with her so she knows what to do next.

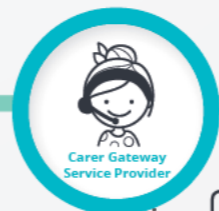
SERVICE MATRIX



ACTION PLAN

Support Worker:

- 1 Refer Christina to a **youth peer support group** in her area.
- 2 Send Christina links to **online resources** that will help her learn more about recovery from stroke.
- 3 Work with Maria's service coordinator to re-organise her **service appointments** to provide Christina with regular time away from caring (eg. 1 hour breaks).
- 4 Assist Christina with **advocacy**, including working with the school to negotiate work completion and coordinate appropriate support.
- 5 Setup **Carer Directed Support** package and assist Christina to apply for the Young Carer Bursary Programme.



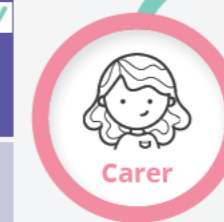
Carer Gateway Service Provider

Referrals

Coordination

- Issue support group referral
- Send Christina links to online resources
- Coordinate with NDIS on Maria's service appointments
- Arrange and facilitate meeting with Christina, Maria and Christina's school to agree on a plan for Christina's education needs.
- Coordinate Young Carer Bursary application.

Coaching	Counselling	Peer Support Groups
Online In Person	Online In Person	✓
Carer Directed Support	Emergency Respite Care	Skills Courses
✓		
Online Emergency Plan	Information via Website	Online Forums
✓	✓	
Young Carer Bursary		
✓		

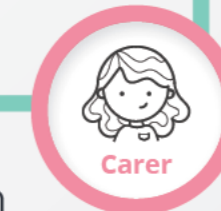


Carer

Check-in

- Support worker calls Christina and checks-in to see how she's going after 6 months.
- They complete a new Carers Star™ snapshot and update Christina's action plan.

DEX



Carer

Support

- Christina is able to partially reduce her time in the caring role when Maria's rehabilitation session appointments are adjusted to after school. This gives Christina more time to complete her school work as Maria gets picked-up by a provider, completes her session and is then driven home.
- With assistance from the support worker, Christina is able to agree a plan with the school that lets her complete her essential school work to a schedule that she can achieve.
- Christina joins a support group that introduces her to other young carers.
- The Carer Gateway Service Provider assists Christina with both a Carer Directed Support Package and access to the Young Carer Bursary Programme. This helps to relieve the family's financial burden, making it possible for Christina to access tailored carer support services and also cover additional education needs (like tutoring).