

Introduction

The implementation of the Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) is the third and final stage of the Government's 2015-16 Budget commitment to develop an Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services.

The ICSS is being rolled out in two key stages:

1. Carers can now access new online services:

- **Peer support** to assist you to connect with and learn from other carers. This online community forum will help carers share their stories, knowledge and experience with others.
- **Self-guided coaching** to support and teach you skills useful to your caring situation. The coaching modules will cover a range of topics and can be completed at your own pace online.
- A new phone-based **counselling service** to provide short term emotional and psychological support.
- Practical **skills courses** to improve your general skills and knowledge are being gradually rolled out. You can explore the first module, *Dealing with stress* now on www.carergateway.gov.au.

2. From April 2020, a new Australia-wide network of Carer Gateway service providers will give carers access to tailored services in their own right, no matter who they are caring for, including:

- **Carer support planning** – to help you identify what areas of support will best help you in your caring role and to develop a simple plan for ongoing support and service.
- **Tailored financial packages** – to give carers practical assistance. The packages will be arranged by your service providers and might be a:
 - one-off practical support in the form of equipment or an item to assist in your caring role
 - range of ongoing practical supports, such as respite or transport, provided over a twelve-month period.
- **In-person counselling** – for one-on-one support with a professional counsellor if you feel stressed or overwhelmed.
- **In-person peer support** – where you can meet with people in similar caring situations and share your stories, knowledge and experience.

- **In-person coaching** – where you can work one-on-one with a qualified coach to gain skills and resilience to help you as a carer. You can reflect on how you are going, how you would like things to be, and how you might take steps towards making things happen.
- **Emergency respite care** – to make sure the person you care for will be looked after if an urgent or unplanned event stops you from being there.

Implementation Approach

The department's approach to implementation encompasses the following principles:

1. *Ensuring continuity of services for existing clients and minimising the impact of business as usual activities during transition.*

A key factor in implementing this major reform is the inclusion of a transition timeframe to the new service system, for both carers and service providers.

Carers can continue to get support through their usual service providers and will be supported to access the new Carer Gateway service providers from April 2020.

Current services will be funded until 31 May 2020 to ensure continuity of support to carers during the important transition to the new Carer Gateway service providers.

This will ensure carers and the sector have time to understand the changes and are supported to transition to the new service system.

2. *Engaging with stakeholders throughout the transition.*

The department will support service providers and carers to understand the changes and engage with the new services. This includes equipping current and future providers (and related sector organisations) with resources to assist carers.

The department will be engaging with stakeholders, and ensuring the sector and carers are informed throughout the transition via a number of mediums including webinars, targeted emails, web updates and direct consultation forums. The department will also undertake national communications activities aimed at promoting the new services.

3. *Supporting carer service providers to transition to the new arrangements.*

The department will provide ongoing support to service providers to transition to the new arrangements. The department will undertake a program of establishment and decommissioning activities for service providers in the lead up to the new model going live as well as post go-live support.

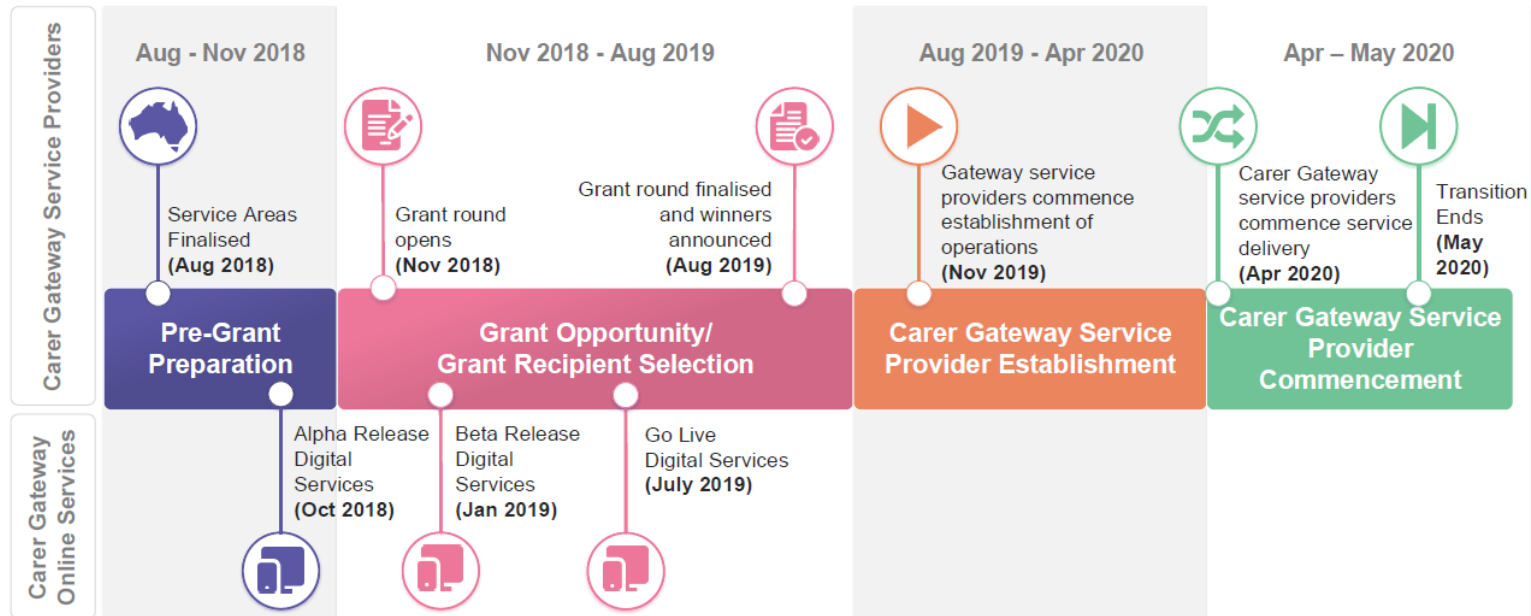
4. *Continuously monitor and refine the transition process.*

The department will continuously monitor the transition process and refine transition activities where required through regular consultation with the sector to gauge the effectiveness of implementation.

Implementation timeline

The diagram on the following page depicts the major phases planned for the implementation of the ICSS.

Integrated Carer Support Service: Implementation Timeline



Summary of Implementation Activities

Carer Gateway Service providers

- The existing carer service delivery model will be replaced with a new Carer Gateway service provider delivery system under the ICSS model.

Pre-Grant Preparation

- Release the service area model.
- Engagement with the carer sector to inform them for the upcoming Grant Opportunity.

Carer Gateway Service Provider Establishment

- The new Carer Gateway service providers are on board and commence operational set-up (from late 2019).
- Training and education for the Carer Gateway service providers
- Key information on transition provided to carers.
- Existing providers commence transition-out activities

National Online Services

- Alpha release of new national services: Digital Counselling, Peer Support, Coaching and Education Resources (October 2018).
- Redeveloped Carer Gateway website (July 2019)

Grant Opportunity/Recipient Selection

- Grant opportunity open for applications.
- Grant opportunity industry briefing.
- Assessment and selection process.

Carer Gateway Service Provider Commencement

- RDPs commence service delivery (April 2020).
- Existing providers continue transition-out activities
- National communication activities promoting Carer Gateway.