

health

Mental Health Carer Support Fund: Department of Health guidelines

May 2013

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Contents

Carer Support Fund aim	6
CSF objective	6
Overarching CSF governance	6
CSF roles and responsibilities	7
Independent CSF Advisory Group terms of reference	9
Required governance arrangements for the Victorian Mental Health Carers Network (central CSF administrator)	11
Required CSF governance arrangements for AMHS (local CSF administrator)	12
Who can access the Carer Support Fund?	13
Eligible applicants	13
Ineligible applicants	13
Priority applications	13
Which expenses are covered under the CSF?	14
CSF exclusions	15
Assessing requests	15
CSF payment caps	16
Carer applications	16
Caps on voucher applications	16
Local AMHS administrator fee	16
CSF voucher policy	17
Voucher applications	17
Voucher distribution to carers	17
Voucher reporting	17
Other	19
VMHCN procedures for processing CSF applications	21
CSF payment pathway	22
CSF complaints policy	22
CSF overspend and underspend policy	23
Attachment 1: Alternative funding sources	24
Attachment 2: Reasonable price of goods	25
Attachment 3: CSF voucher distribution record template	27

Carer Support Fund aim

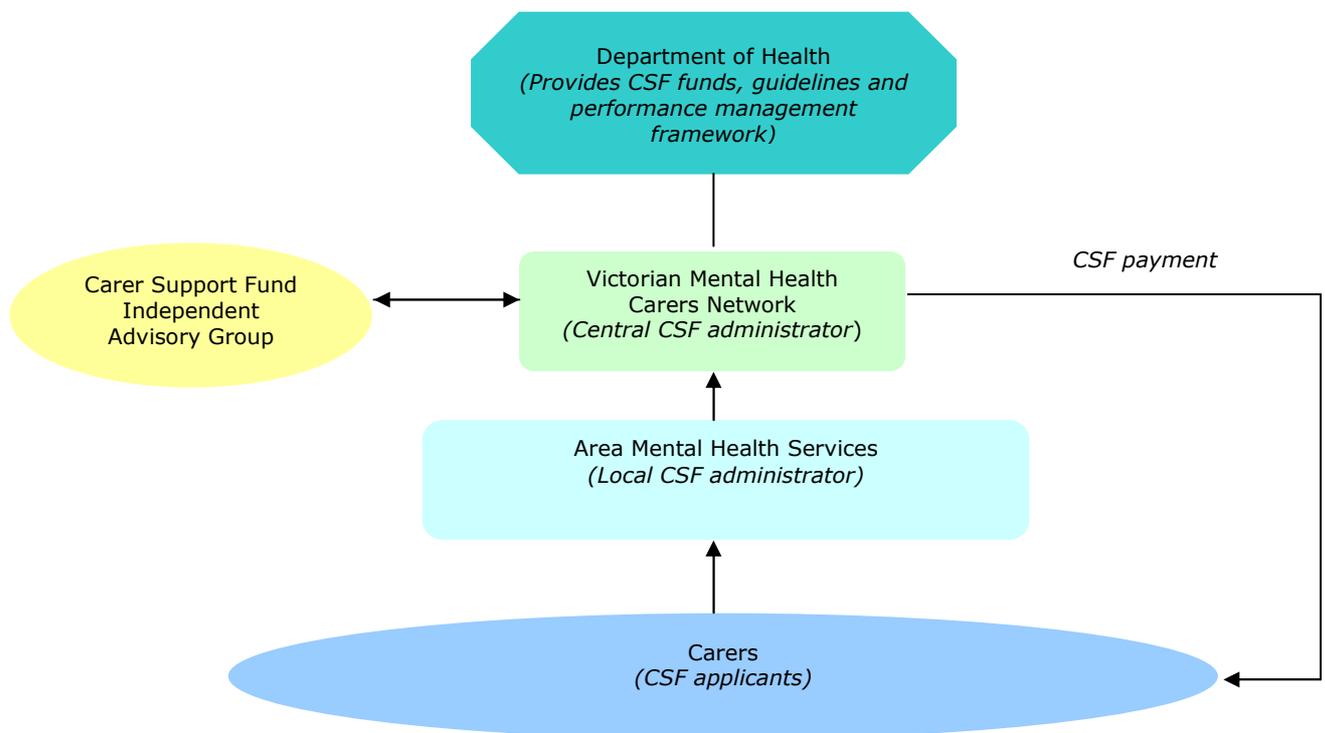
The aim of the Carer Support Fund (CSF) is to assist carers¹ in their role of caring for a person with a mental illness.

CSF objective

The Carer Support Fund will assist carers by providing financial support to reduce the costs associated with the caring role and maintaining the carer's health and wellbeing.

Overarching CSF governance

The following diagram outlines the overarching governance structure of the Carer Support Fund. Within this governance structure, carers are the applicants and thus recipients of CSF financial support. Area mental health services (AMHS), as local CSF administrators, submit online applications on behalf of carers (and with their involvement), and the central CSF administrator processes applications and distributes financial support.



¹ Carers are defined as a family member, partner or friend whose primary relationship with a person with a mental illness is a supportive, caring relationship.

CSF roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities assigned to the key parties of the CSF are outlined below. Four key parties are identified:

1. Department of Health
2. Independent CSF Advisory Group
3. Victorian Mental Health Carers Network (as central CSF administrator)
4. AMHS (as local CSF administrators).

The Department of Health, as funder of the Carer Support Fund, is responsible for:

- providing funding to the central CSF administrator for timely administration of the CSF
- chairing quarterly CSF meetings with the central CSF administrator
- providing CSF guidelines which articulate:
 - the aims and objectives of the CSF program
 - governance arrangements for the CSF, including the roles and responsibilities of key parties
 - administrative processes including funding criteria, applicant eligibility and reporting arrangements
- timely communication to the central administrator regarding AMHS allocations
- supporting the promotion of the CSF to carers, carer consultants and area mental health services.

The Independent CSF Advisory Group is responsible for:

- meeting quarterly to monitor, provide input, ideas and feedback regarding CSF administration
- offering advice on emerging issues impacting the uptake and administration of the CSF
- reviewing and resolving CSF appeals escalated to the group. A minimum of three group members (excluding VMHCN representatives) will manage appeals and a majority decision will apply. Appeals will be completed within 14 days and can be processed out of session.

The VMHCN, as central administrator of the CSF, is responsible for:

- administering the CSF equitably, responsibly and transparently, in accordance with the Department of Health CSF guidelines
- coordinating, chairing and minuting quarterly meetings of the Independent CSF Advisory Group
- supporting independent CSF appeal processes via the Independent CSF Advisory Group
- ensuring appropriate representation on the Independent CSF Advisory Group
- identifying and addressing gaps in the promotion of the CSF to carers, carer consultants and AMHS
- timely communication with AMHS regarding annual CSF allocations
- supporting Victorian AMHS to implement the CSF, including training in the use of the online CSF application
- providing detailed monthly, quarterly and annual CSF expenditure reports to AMHS, identifying overspend and underspend issues on a quarterly basis
- maintaining the online CSF system
- maintaining positive working relationships with Victorian AMHS
- participating in quarterly CSF meetings with the Department of Health regarding administration of the CSF
- providing timely quarterly reports to the Department of Health on CSF administration, and annual expenditure reports

- seeking clarifications from the department, in writing, to inform decision making.

Area mental health services, as local CSF administrators, are responsible for:

- establishing an internal CSF committee of registered CSF approvers, which is led by a coordinator and includes carer consultants to:
 - raise awareness of the CSF among mental health staff, carer consultants and carers
 - review and monitor CSF applications, approvals and expenditure
 - maintain an electronic voucher distribution record (see Attachment 3)
 - establish a local appeals process at the AMHS consistent with CSF guidelines, and process external appeals through the VMHCN, as appropriate
 - provide support to carers to engage in the CSF application process
 - promote the use of the online CSF application system
 - ensure compliance with CSF guidelines
 - inform the central CSF administrator (VMHCN) of relevant CSF contacts at the AMHS, (that is, CSF coordinator and registered CSF approvers)
 - ensure that carer consultants are involved in the management, decision making and administration of the CSF committee.

Independent CSF Advisory Group terms of reference

The CSF helps carers in their role of caring for a person with a mental illness.

The fund assists carers by providing financial support to reduce the costs associated with the caring role and maintaining the carer's health and wellbeing.

The purpose of the **Independent CSF Advisory Group** is to provide advice and guidance in relation to CSF administration.

Membership of the Independent CSF Advisory Group includes the following:

- two representatives of the central CSF administrator (the Victorian Mental Health Carers Network), including the CSF manager² and the Victorian Mental Health Carers Network (VMHCN) executive director (chair)
- three representatives of the Victorian Carer Consultant Network (VCCN), inclusive of the Chair or delegate of the VCCN and at least one metropolitan and one rural representative
- two AMHS managers (including one metropolitan and one rural representative)
- two AMHS clinicians
- one community-managed mental health service (psychiatric disability rehabilitation and support service) representative
- one representative of the Victorian Carer Services Network (VCSN)
- at least one carer representative
- representation from services in rural and metropolitan settings and for a range of consumer age groups, wherever possible.

Independent CSF Advisory Group members will:

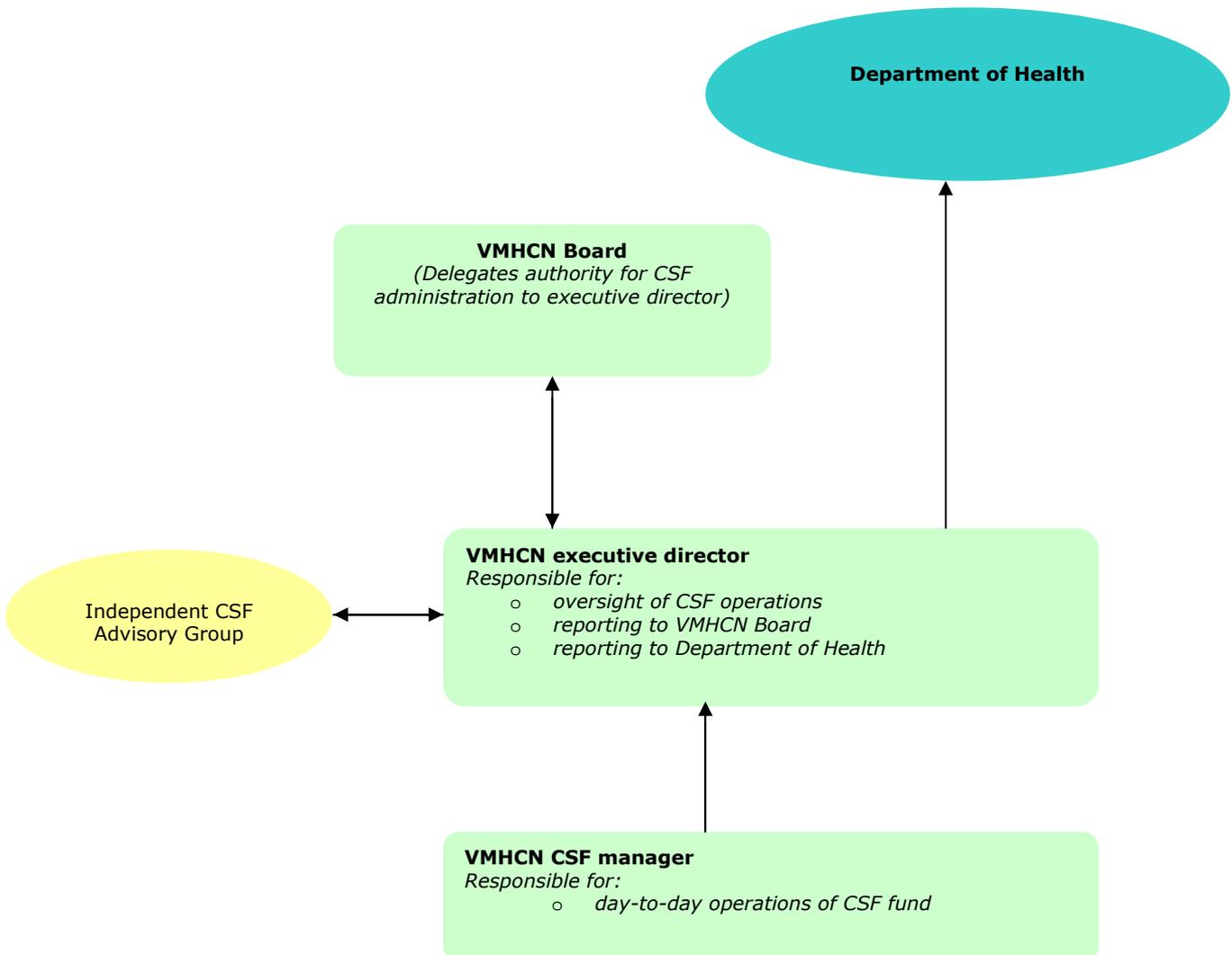
- meet quarterly to monitor and support the administration of the CSF
- provide input, ideas and feedback regarding administration of the CSF
- offer advice on emerging issues impacting on the uptake and administration of the CSF
- receive updates and monitor the number of CSF applications, appeals and expenditure
- review and resolve CSF appeals escalated to the Independent CSF Advisory Group:
 - a minimum of three Independent CSF Advisory Group members will manage appeals (excluding VMHCN representatives)
 - appeals will be processed out of session and completed within 14 days
 - a majority decision will be applied to appeals
 - the CSF Manager will be notified of the outcome of appeals and rationale.

Other issues

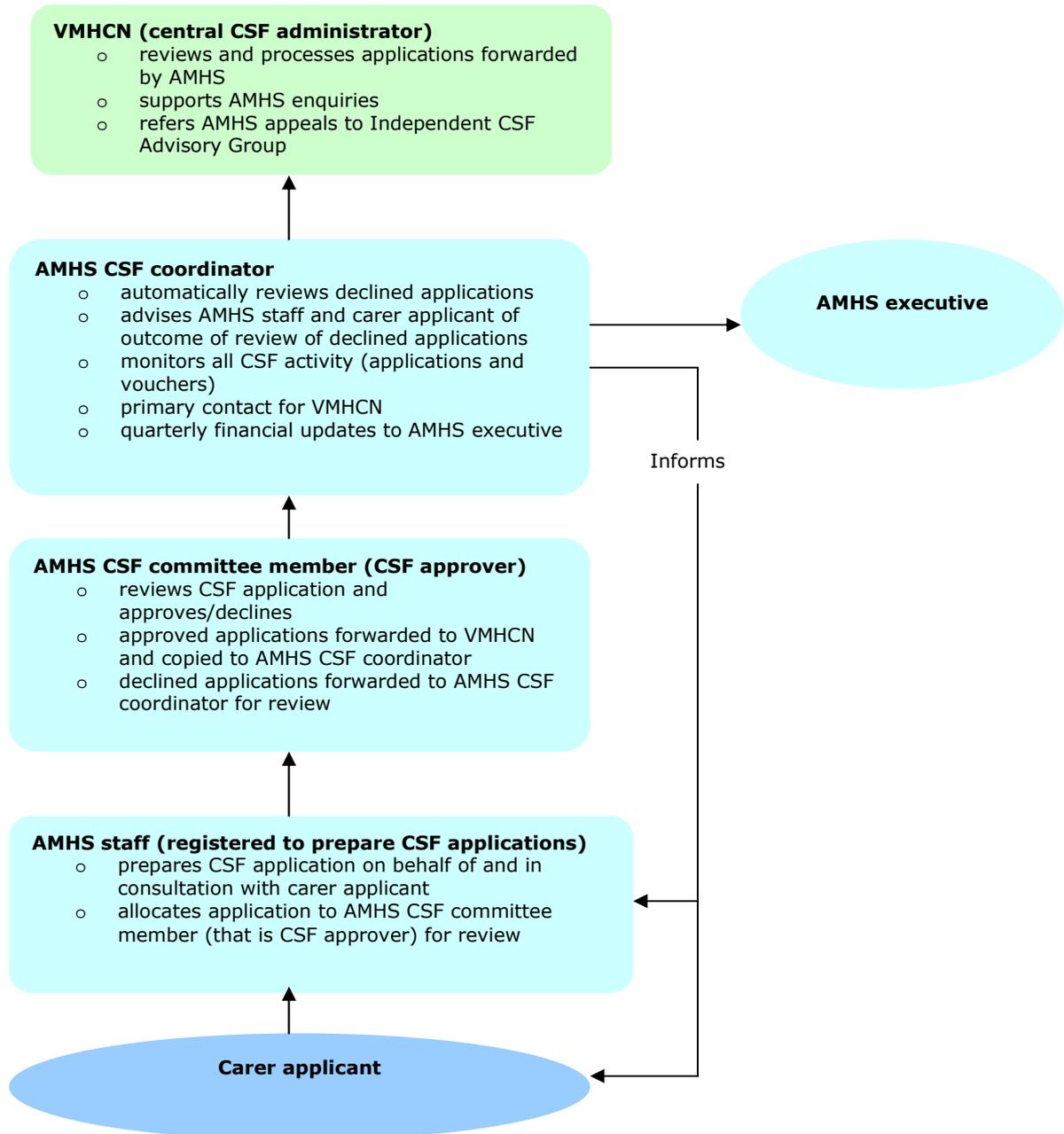
² The CSF manager refers to the day-to-day administrator of the CSF.

- Independent CSF Advisory Group meetings will be held quarterly, with a quorum of six representatives (reflecting diverse representation wherever possible).
- Teleconference and video link opportunities will be provided to members wherever possible.
- CSF Advisory Group meetings will be minuted by a representative of VMHCN and disseminated to members and the Department of Health at least one week prior to the next scheduled meeting.

Required governance arrangements for the Victorian Mental Health Carers Network (central CSF administrator)



Required CSF governance arrangements for AMHS (local CSF administrator)



Who can access the Carer Support Fund?

Eligible applicants

CSF applicants must be carers (see footnote 1) of a person who is receiving services from a Victorian public mental health service or program.³ Applicants may have previously applied to the CSF. An upper limit of \$1,000 per applicant per year applies (refer to payment caps below).

Carer consultants may apply for the CSF. Preparation of a CSF application by a carer consultant should occur in conjunction with their line manager. Carer consultants may not approve their own application.

Applications may also benefit the person with the mental illness, provided the carer is the main beneficiary.⁴

Ineligible applicants

A person employed to care for a client is **not eligible** to apply for this assistance. Examples include disability support workers, personal care attendants and staff from supported residential services and rooming houses.

Priority applications

Priority processing of CSF applications may be warranted in specific cases of carer need. AMHS consideration of priority might occur where:

- CSF applications at an AMHS exceed the annual CSF allocation for that service, requiring prioritisation of applications accord to need
- the CSF application demonstrates significant and immovable time pressures that require a faster than usual response from the AMHS and the Central Administrator (VMHCN).

In prioritising CSF applications, AMHS should consider:

- periods of heightened carer need, such as consumer admission or instability
- previous CSF payments to the carer and consumer
- the principles of fairness and equity.

³ Registered mental health consumers are identified by a unit record (UR) number.

⁴ Consumers may apply for material aid through the Psychiatric Illness and Intellectual Disabilities Donations Trust Fund (PIDDTF), Centrelink and other funding sources (Attachment 1).

Which expenses are covered under the CSF?

Applications for the CSF may be made for the following expenses, if they are related to the caring role and the maintenance of the carer's health and wellbeing.

Eligible CSF expenses*	Examples
Accommodation	Accommodation costs associated with visiting the person with a mental illness in hospital or accompanying them to medical appointments as appropriate; accommodation brokerage service fees
AMHS administration fees	Available to AMHS for administration of the CSF, capped at five per cent of annual allocation
Carer conference, education and training and meeting expenses	Carer conference and training registration fees and expenses (note exclusions below)
Carer peer support	AMHS already employing a carer peer worker via the CSF may maintain status quo until 30 June 2014. No guarantee of funding after this date
Clothing and shoes	
Food and groceries	
Funeral expenses	
Health and wellbeing expenses	Physical, dental, optical, mental health, pharmacy expenses Short-term counselling for a carer provided by a practitioner outside the mental health service to address the emotional and relationship impacts of caring for someone with a mental illness Wellbeing activities for carers, either individually or in groups, to access yoga, meditation, sport, art, music or other social/recreational activities, to support their personal wellbeing
Household items	Bedding, electrical appliances, white goods, computers (including hardware, internet fees, software)
Household repairs and maintenance	Cleaning, lawn mowing, repairs
Household utility bills and rates	Telephone (mobile and landline fees, rental), gas, electricity, water, rates, other
Insurance/health memberships	Health, home and contents, income, Ambulance Victoria membership and charges, other
Rent payments	
Respite expenses	Opportunities for carers to have a break from the caring role
Sitting fees	Sitting fees for carers who participate as carer representatives on advisory groups and at other forums, including catering for carer functions
Support services	Practical assistance for carers through services such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • home help • childcare • accommodation brokerage services
Transport	Airfares, train, bus, tram, taxi or other transport costs associated with visiting the person with a mental illness in hospital or accompanying them to medical appointments

Vehicle expenses	Insurance, repairs, registration, petrol
Vouchers	Vouchers for immediate use including taxi and petrol vouchers, store cards and movie tickets. Voucher caps apply to carers, consumers and AMHS – refer to CSF voucher policy

*It is not a requirement that the carer assist with any financial contribution.

Where an initial application has been unsuccessful, applications may be revised and resubmitted. Carers and staff should ensure that such applications fall clearly within the CSF Guidelines.

CSF exclusions

The fund may **not** be used for the following:

- to fund expenses beyond the eligible CSF expenses (identified in the table above)
- to fund a service or activity already funded by the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services or the Commonwealth
- to fund costs covered by other material aid providers (see Attachment 1)
- for services which are the responsibility of the AMHS
- to benefit consumers only
- for items or activities arising from criminal activity or in breach of the law
- to fund carers employed by mental health services to attend professional development activities or work-related conferences. Note, however, that the fund **may** be used to fund applications where a case has been made, in writing, for attendance on personal grounds.

Assessing requests

As CSF funds allocated to AMHS are limited, the following are considerations that may assist in assessing requests:

- Has the availability of other sources of funds been considered? (See Attachment 1)
- Do the goods and/or services assist the carer in relation to their caring role and in maintaining their health and wellbeing?
- Does the assistance meet an immediate need or avert a potential crisis?
- Are the goods and/or services of reasonable standard and cost? (See Attachment 2)
- Is the application within the recommended carer cap, consumer cap and AMHS cap? (see CSF payment caps, below)

CSF payment caps

Carer applications

CSF applications from individual carers have a recommended cap of \$750 per application. Applications for carers must not exceed \$1,000 in a financial year.

Where a carer has responsibility for multiple consumers, the carer has a CSF entitlement (\$1,000 per year) for each consumer.

Where there are multiple carers of a single consumer, a recommended upper limit of \$1,000 applies per consumer each year.

Responsibility for ensuring compliance with the carer cap rests with the local AMHS CSF coordinator. Compliance will also be overseen centrally by the VMHCN.

Carer claims in excess of \$750 per application will be considered only where extenuating circumstances are documented. Written information in support of the extenuating circumstances will be required to support the application. AMHS staff should prepare this statement in consultation with the carer applicant.

Applications with extenuating circumstances are approved at the AMHS level. Part or full payment of the application beyond the recommended \$750 upper limit should be assessed according to what is considered reasonable and determined according to normal decision-making processes. Appeals against AMHS decisions may be progressed at the local AMHS level and escalated to the central administrator, as required.

Caps on voucher applications

CSF vouchers may be pre-purchased by AMHS for distribution to carers. AMHS applications for CSF vouchers must not exceed 50 per cent⁵ of the AMHS annual allocation. The VMHCN will calculate this amount for each AMHS and advise services accordingly.

Local responsibility for monitoring voucher distribution within the 50 per cent cap rests with AMHS. AMHS are required to electronically record every voucher distribution using the template provided in Attachment 3, pursuant to the policy below. Before distributing vouchers to carers, AMHS should check that caps have not been exceeded for the individual carer or primary consumer (identified by UR number). Compliance with voucher caps will be overseen centrally by the VMHCN.

Local AMHS administrator fee

Five percent of an AMHS CSF allocation may be used to support local CSF administration. This fee is disbursed by the VMHCN as a payment to AMHS upon request.

⁵ Voucher cap is subject to annual review.

CSF voucher policy

The CSF voucher policy outlines the core features of voucher application, distribution and reporting.

Voucher applications

- CSF vouchers include taxi and petrol vouchers, movie tickets and store gift cards, among others.
- CSF vouchers may be pre-purchased by AMHS for use by carers.
- AMHS applications for CSF vouchers are capped at 50 per cent of AMHS annual allocation.
- The VMHCN will calculate AMHS voucher caps and advise individual services accordingly.
- Responsibility for compliance with voucher caps rests with individual AMHS. Compliance with caps will be overseen by the VMHCN. Quarterly reports will be provided to the Department of Health.
- End of year voucher applications which seek to use unexpended annual AMHS allocations will only be supported where such applications represent less than 10 per cent of the annual AMHS allocation.

Voucher distribution to carers

- Vouchers are distributed to carers at point of service (that is, at the AMHS).
- Prior to distributing vouchers to carers, AMHS should check that caps have not been exceeded for the individual carer or primary consumer (identified by UR number).

Carer status	Cap per application	Cap per year
Carer of a mental health consumer	\$750	\$1,000
Carer of multiple mental health consumers	\$750	\$1,000 per consumer
Multiple carers of a mental health consumer	\$750	\$1,000 per consumer

Voucher reporting

AMHS will be required to electronically record all voucher distributions to carers (see Attachment 3 for a voucher distribution record template).

A spreadsheet⁶ should record the date, carer name, consumer UR number, voucher type, dollar value and carer signature (yes/no).

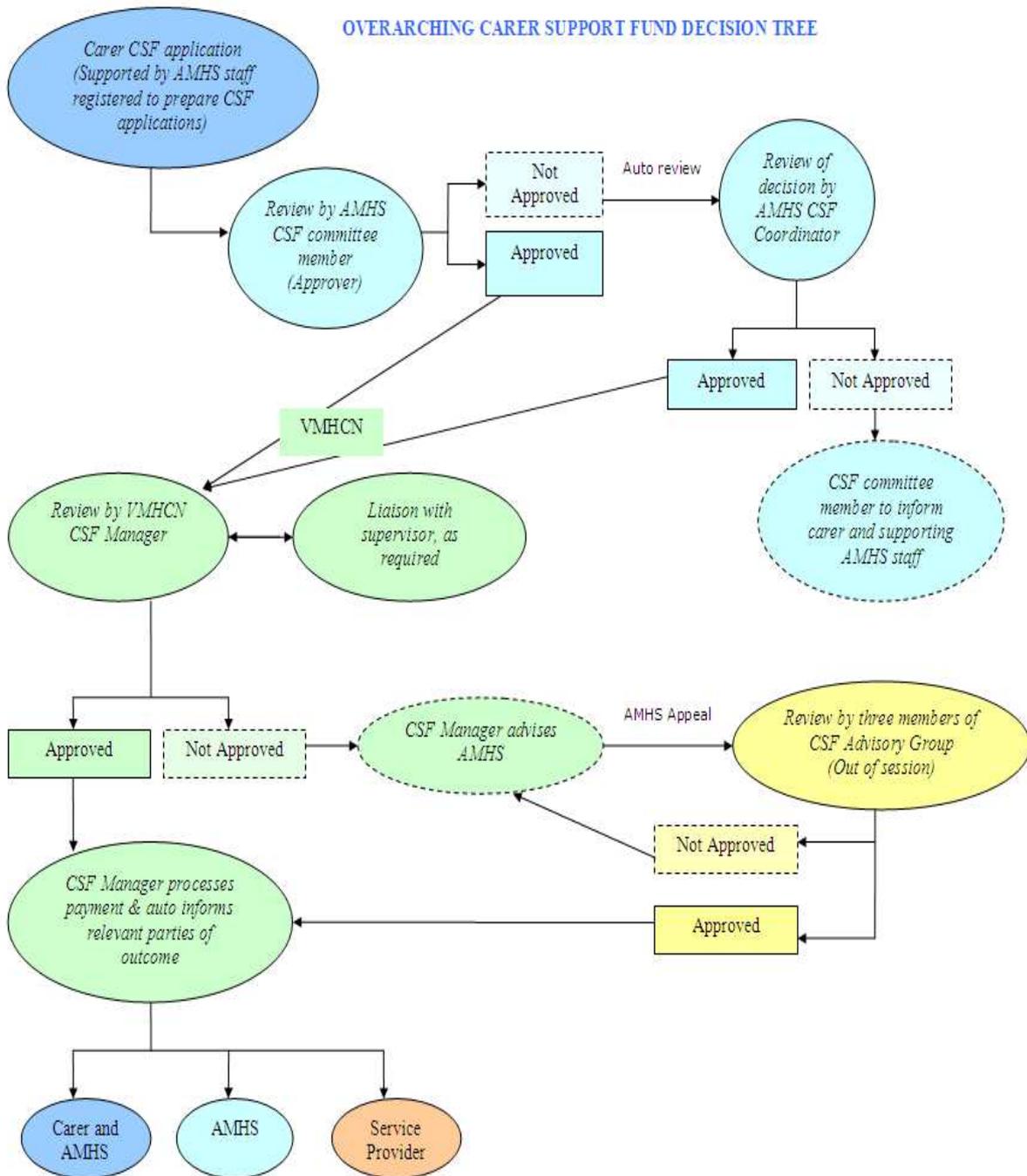
By recording the consumer UR number, AMHS will be able to monitor and comply with voucher caps for individual carers and consumers, and ensure equitable distribution of funds.

The voucher distribution record must be submitted to VMHCN (the central CSF administrator) at the end of each quarter, to account for AMHS distribution of CSF vouchers.

The VMHCN will collate and analyse voucher data to monitor organisational and statewide patterns of voucher use. Patterns of use will be reported to the Department of Health each quarter.

AMHS should review their own voucher data to determine whether the distribution of CSF vouchers to carers is occurring in a fair and equitable manner.

⁶ An Excel spreadsheet is recommended for recording CSF voucher distribution.



AMHS procedures for processing CSF applications

AMHS, as local CSF administrators, will be responsible for:

- establishing an internal CSF Committee of Registered CSF Approvers, led by a coordinator and including carer consultants, to:
 - raise awareness of the CSF among mental health staff, carer consultants and carers
 - review and monitor CSF applications, approvals and expenditure
 - maintain an electronic voucher distribution record (refer Attachment 3)
 - establish a local appeals process at the AMHS consistent with the **Department of Health CSF guidelines**, and process external appeals through the VMHCN, as appropriate
 - provide support to carers to engage in the CSF application process
 - promote the use of the online CSF application system
 - ensure compliance with **Department of Health CSF guidelines**
 - inform the central CSF administrator (VMHCN) of relevant CSF contacts at the AMHS, (**that is, the CSF coordinator and registered CSF approvers**)
 - ensure that carer consultants are involved in the management, decision making and administration of the CSF committee.

AMHS will comply with the following procedure:

- AMHS staff registered to prepare CSF applications will do so on behalf of and in consultation with carers via online or hard copy CSF application form
- staff will submit CSF applications to a CSF committee member (approver) for approval/decline
- the CSF committee member will review the application against CSF eligibility criteria, relevant funding caps, and available funds
- the CSF committee member will approve/decline the application within ten working days of receipt of application (via hard copy or online)
- where approved, the committee member will:
 - forward the application to VMHCN (the Central CSF Administrator) for processing
 - courtesy Copy the CSF Coordinator
 - advise the staff member who prepared the CSF application, who will in turn inform the carer applicant
- applications can be made online at the following link <http://carersupportfund.carersnetwork.org.au/dotnetnuke> or by fax or email
- where the application is declined, the committee member will refer the application and feedback to the AMHS CSF coordinator for review
- the AMHS CSF coordinator will review and approve/decline
- the AMHS CSF coordinator will provide feedback to the committee member, relevant staff member on the outcome of their review
- the carer applicant will be informed of the outcome by the relevant staff member.

Other

- The CSF coordinator is responsible for declaring and managing real and perceived conflicts of interest which might arise with respect to carer applicants and CSF decision makers (that is, committee members).

- Carer consultants may apply for the CSF. Preparation of a CSF application by a carer consultant should occur in conjunction with their line manager. Carer consultants may not approve their own application.

Further information about the Mental Health Carer Support Fund is available from the Victorian Mental Health Carers Network: www.carersnetwork.org.au

Email: carersupportfund@carersnetwork.org.au

Tel: 03 8803 5555

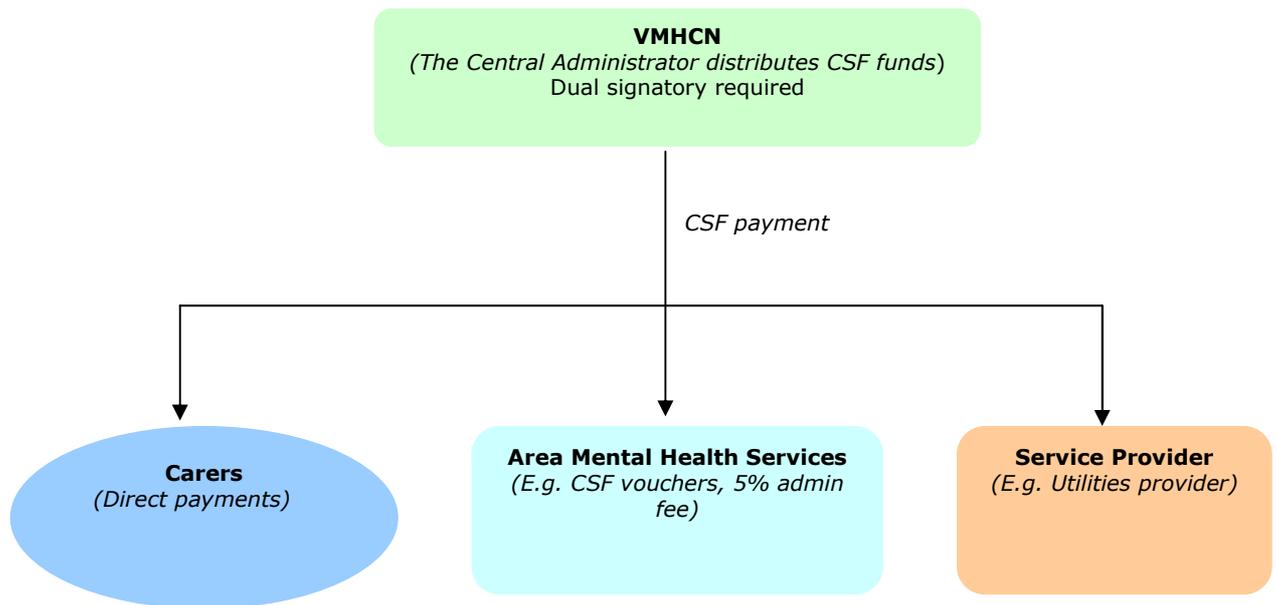
Fax: 03 8803 5599

VMHCN procedures for processing CSF applications

The VMHCN, as the central CSF administrator, will:

- respond to enquiries and issues within five working days
- receive CSF applications (online, postal, email and fax)
- review submitted applications against eligibility criteria and required fields, and approve/decline applications within ten working days of receipt of application
- advise AMHS when data fields (e.g. banking details) are missing or incomplete. AMHS may resubmit
- where approved, the central administrator will:
 - process payments for approved applications within ten working days of receipt of application (excluding applications requiring review)
 - advise AMHS (the Local Administrator) of outcome of application within ten working days
- where not approved:
 - the central administrator will provide written advice to the relevant AMHS that the application was unsuccessful, provide feedback and note the resubmission and appeal processes.
 - revised applications which clearly comply with CSF guidelines may be processed as usual by the AMHS via the CSF coordinator.
 - appeals against a VMHCN decision should be submitted by AMHS in writing to the central administrator
- where an appeal is lodged:
 - the central CSF administrator will forward the application and decision feedback to three members of the Independent CSF Advisory Group (excluding VMHCN representatives) for review and resolution within 14 working days
 - appeals will be resolved out of session, where necessary
 - a majority decision will be applied
 - the central CSF administrator will be notified of the outcome of appeals and inform the AMHS
 - where the application is successful, CSF payment will be processed within three working days
- the central administrator and Independent CSF Advisory Group are responsible for declaring and managing real and perceived conflicts of interest which might arise with respect to relationships between carer applicants and CSF decision makers (that is, the VMHCN and Independent CSF Advisory Group Members).

CSF payment pathway



CSF complaints policy

Complaints and concerns regarding local AMHS administration of the CSF may be directed to:

- the AMHS in the first instance
- VMHCN as central administrator of the CSF, if required – (03) 8803 5504 or carersupportfund@carersnetwork.org.au

Complaints regarding the centralised VMHCN administration of the CSF may be directed to:

- the VMHCN – (03) 8803 5504 or carersupportfund@carersnetwork.org.au
- the Independent CSF Advisory Group – via the VMHCN Executive Director (03) 8803 5555

CSF overspend and underspend policy

AMHS hold primary responsibility for managing their CSF expenditure. This includes the management and monitoring of CSF underspend and overspend throughout the financial year. The following applies:

- AMHS must monitor their cumulative CSF expenditure for over- and under-expenditure.
- The Central Administrator (VMHCN) will provide monthly, quarterly and annual expenditure statements to AMHS to assist with expenditure monitoring.
- The Central Administrator will also provide quarterly written advice to AMHS which are tracking at more than 30 per cent above or below expenditure during the financial year.
- Identification of underspend of more than 30 per cent at any point during the year requires AMHS action to ensure the full and equitable disbursement of the CSF to carers by financial year's end. The Central Administrator can provide advice and support re underspend issues.
- AMHS may not exceed their annual CSF allocation. CSF applications beyond the annual allocation will not be processed by the Central Administrator. AMHS should ensure that CSF applications fall within available budget allocation.

Attachment 1: Alternative funding sources

In order to maximise financial support for carers it is important to utilise all available funding sources appropriately. Below is a list of alternate sources of funding for your information:

- Victorian Government Homewise, accessed through the Victorian state concessions website. This grant is to assist people who own their home and need fixed appliances either new or repairs.
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions/entitlements/hardship/home-wise>
- Hardship Utilities Fund – for gas, phone, and electricity assistance. Access through the Victorian State Concessions website, also via email to Centrelink
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions/entitlements/view-all/hardship/utility-relief-grant-scheme>
- Centrelink Crisis payment
<http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/crisis.htm>
- Young Carers Fund for secondary school students
<http://www.youngcarers.net.au/>
- Fitted for Work – assists women to return to the workforce
www.fittedforwork.org/women-looking-for-work.aspx
- Victorian Aids and Equipment Fund – brochure on web site
www.yooralla.com.au/pdf/AEPIInformation.pdf
- Good Sheppard
<http://www.goodshepvic.org.au/>
- **Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres** – the Australian Government has established a network of Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres around Australia. Centres provide a link to and information about a wide range of community care and support services available locally or across Australia, including services for older people, people with disabilities and people with mental health issues. Centres also provide information to those who provide care and services and operate a range of initiatives designed to support and assist relatives and friends caring at home for people who need assistance to remain living in the community. Centres can also assist carers with options to take a break through short-term and emergency respite services, based on assessed need, and provide advice on and coordinate access to respite services in a carer's local area.
www.comcarelink.health.gov.au. Freecall 1800 052 222
- **Victorian Government Carer card** – a collaboration between the government, businesses and the community, the Carer Card Program gives recognition, understanding and support to Victorian carers. The program has a wide range of discounts and benefits on offer from businesses, the local government and community organisations. Cardholders are also entitled to free travel on public transport on a Sunday plus two return off-peak travel vouchers each year. To find a business or type of offer you can browse the categories by rolling over the headlines then click through to the online directory. <http://carercard.vic.gov.au/>

Attachment 2: Reasonable price of goods⁷

Item	Recommended capped amount	Single person
Priority one items		
Fridge/freezer		\$499.00 – \$599.00
Bar fridge	\$300.00	
Oven/stove		\$595.00 – \$795.00
Bed – single	\$350.00	
Bed – king single	\$450.00	
Bed – double	\$500.00	
Bed – queen	\$800.00	
Mattress – single	\$300.00	
Mattress – king single	\$350.00	
Mattress – double	\$550.00	
Mattress – queen	\$650.00	
Heaters (portable)	\$150.00 – \$250.00	
Priority two items		
Microwave oven		\$200.00
Freezer		\$350.00
Washing machine – top or front loader		\$580.00
Television		\$450.00
Household items		\$300.00
Lounge		\$450.00
Sofa bed	\$450.00	
Table and chairs		\$350.00
Chest of drawers / tall boys	\$450.00	
General furniture	\$550.00	
Coffee tables	\$300.00	
Manchester	\$200.00	
Personal hygiene	\$100.00	
Vacuum cleaner	\$250.00	
Utility bills	\$500.00	
Priority three items		
	Capped amount	
Gym membership	Memberships for three months in first instance	
DVD player		\$150.00
Clothes dryer		\$450.00
Air conditioning unit		\$800.00
Air conditioning repairs		\$350.00
Dental	Should go through dental hospital	
Reading glasses		\$250.00 – \$300.00
Laptop computers		\$400 – \$600.00
Education and training		\$800.00
Wig	Only for loss of hair due medical treatment	
Bookcase		\$150.00
Fan		\$50.00 – \$100.00
Lawnmower		\$450.00
House hygiene/ maintenance		Upon request

⁷ Based on Draft PIIDTF guidelines (Oct 2012). Where the recommended amount is exceeded, written explanation will be required.

Priority four items	Capped amount
Printer	up to \$250.00
Computer desk	\$250.00
Computer software	\$200.00
Mechanical tools	\$300.00
Car repairs	\$800.00
Met tickets	\$100.00
Stationery	\$50.00
Car registration	One-off payment only
Insurance of any kind	One-off payment only
For items such as:	
CPAP machines	Victorian Ambulatory Classification System (VACS)
Wheelchairs	Statewide Equipment Program
Maternity clothing	Caroline Chisholm Society
Baby items	Caroline Chisholm Society
Hearing aids	Available through Department of Health and Ageing

Attachment 3: CSF voucher distribution record template

AMHS must record voucher distribution to examine whether the distribution of CSF vouchers to carers is occurring in a fair and equitable manner.

CSF vouchers may be pre-purchased by AMHS for use by carers. AMHS applications for Carer Support Fund Vouchers are capped at 50 per cent⁸ of the AMHS's annual allocation. The VMHCN will calculate the capped amount for each AMHS and advise services accordingly.

Local responsibility for monitoring voucher distribution within the 50 per cent cap rests with AMHS. AMHS are required to electronically record every voucher distribution using, at a minimum, the template provided below.⁹ Prior to voucher distribution to carers, AMHS should check that the individual carer, consumer and AMHS recommended voucher caps have not been exceeded. Compliance with caps is the responsibility of AMHS and will be overseen centrally by the VMHCN.

At the end of each quarter, AMHS will be required to provide voucher distribution records to the VMHCN (the central CSF administrator). The VMHCN will collate and analyse this data to monitor organisational and statewide patterns of voucher use. Patterns of use will be reported to AMHS and the DH quarterly and annually.

Submit Voucher Record quarterly to: The CSF Manager, VMHCN, 1/37 Mollison Street Abbotsford Vic 3067; carersupportfund@carersnetwork.org.au; (03) 8803 5599

AMHS Name: _____

Date	Carer name (first name, surname)	Consumer UR number	Voucher for... (e.g. Telstra bill, Woolworths, Taxi)	Voucher value (\$)	Carer signed for voucher Y/N

⁸ AMHS voucher caps are subject to annual review.

⁹ An Excel spreadsheet will allow for a search function, and calculation of total voucher expenditure x carer and consumer.