



Australian Government

Department of Health

Ref No: MC16-031701

Janie Thompson
PO Box 3207
Murrumbeena, VIC 3163

Dear Ms Thompson

I refer to your correspondence of 31 October 2016 to the Minister for Health and Aged Care and Minister for Sport, the Hon Sussan Ley MP regarding concerns about My Aged Care and continence services. Your letter has been referred to the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP and the Assistant Minister has asked me to reply.

I am sorry to hear about the difficulties your members are reporting relating to My Aged Care and the Regional Assessment Services (RAS). My Aged Care has been introduced as a central entry point for aged care to help older Australians, their families, carers and other representatives to navigate and understand the aged care system.

Since 1 July 2015 the RAS has conducted holistic assessments of client eligibility and need for services under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) for those seeking access to new services. Clients with existing services in place at the time of the introduction of the RAS have not been required to be assessed to maintain access to these services. An important driver behind this assessment approach is a desire to ensure that client needs are considered across all available service types to allow them to remain living at home longer, should they choose to do so.

Under previous arrangements clients were assessed by service providers only for the services offered by that provider. This meant that clients often remained unaware of additional services which may have been of benefit, or that they had to arrange multiple assessments from service providers to try and access services.

Referrals for home support assessment are prioritised according to urgency so that clients with more immediate requirements are seen first, bearing in mind that the CHSP delivers low level home support services.

Information entered on to the Client Record as part of the assessment is available to service providers that are involved with the client through the Service Provider Portal. There should be no need for clients to repeat their story to service providers once the assessment is complete.

Clients and assessors discuss service options at the time that a Support Plan is created. Services other than those subsidised by the Australian Government are listed in the Service Finder when they meet certain criteria and may be considered by the client, but the ultimate choice about referral for service remains with the client regardless of a referrer's preferences. If your members' services are not included in the Service Finder, continence providers are

encouraged to network with their local RAS to raise awareness of their services. In addition, if the continence service is within the health system or other arrangements outside aged care, consumers should be able to access these services without the need to go through My Aged Care.

Once assessed by the RAS there is no need for a review or reassessment unless the client experiences a change in circumstances. Where the continence provider has an issue with the RAS, in the first instance they should discuss that issue with the RAS directly.

My Aged Care is a relatively new aged care reform and we always seek to improve the quality of the client journey. Recently the Department has engaged in co-design sessions with assessors and service providers focussing on improvements to My Aged Care. Issues raised will be considered for future enhancements to the system design and business processes.

If you or your members are aware that processes are not working well, you are able to provide feedback or make a complaint to the My Aged Care contact centre in the first instance for investigation. Complaints regarding My Aged Care can be made by:

- Submitting the [web form](#) on the My Aged Care website
- Calling the My Aged Care contact centre on **1800 200 422** for consumers/general public or **1800 836 799** for assessors/service providers (who use the My Aged Care provider portal)
- Faxing the contact centre on **1800 728 174**; or
- Post addressed to: My Aged Care, PO Box 210, Balwyn VIC 3103

I hope that these explanations help to clarify the roles of My Aged Care and the RAS.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Goddard
Assistant Secretary
My Aged Care Operations Branch
2 December 2016