



Office for the Ageing

March 2008 – *Edition 5*

From the Director

This is the fifth special edition, focussing on **Community Care Reform**, including an update on Access Points in South Australia (SA), ACAP Reform Projects, and National Service Standards.

In brief:

SA COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS POINTS - HOME CARE CONNECT

- The Community Care Access Points reforms in South Australia are progressing well in both of the demonstration sites - the Western Adelaide/Gawler region and the Lower North/ Barossa/Yorke Peninsula region. The main focus has been on developing the allocation approach from Access Point to the many service providers across the two areas, and the new business processes that are required to ensure streamlined operations from late April/early May 2008.

ACAP REFORM PROJECTS

- The National Review of ACATs is now complete. The ACAP Officials' response to the recommendations are available on the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing website www.health.gov.au. Updates are also provided on the National Training Strategy and Conference, the SA initiatives of the Mobile Assessment Response, and Best Practice Protocols.

NATIONAL SERVICE STANDARDS

- Seven Common Standards for community care programs have been agreed nationally and will soon be trialled. In the meantime, appraisals against existing HACC Standards continues, with a number of improvements and opportunities to better support the sector in train.

More comprehensive information about the above can be found in this edition of the newsletter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Anne Gale'.

Anne Gale,
DIRECTOR
Office for the Ageing

31 March 2008

COMMUNITY CARE REFORM

SA has recently received approval for the 2007-08 ACAP COAG Reforms Plan, and also for The Way Forward. The Implementation Plan for Common Arrangements has been approved by the SA Minister for Ageing, and it is understood that Commonwealth processes for approval are well advanced. This progress is welcome, and means that SA will be able to move forward more quickly with implementing reform projects.

Staffing

Merridy Pearce has completed her work on the Equipment and Continence projects. The Department for Families and Communities (DFC) Strategic Equipment Policy has now been drafted, and Merridy was instrumental in undertaking a Continence Review. OFTA has appreciated Merridy's contribution and enjoyed her as a team member over the past year. We wish her well on her long service leave.

Sylvia Brideoake will start as the Senior Project Officer on the SA Community Care Reform team and her focus will be on the SA Community Care Access Points, implementation of Home Care Connect in Western Adelaide and the Country demonstration in Lower North, Gawler, Barossa and Yorke Peninsula. She will join OFTA on 28 April after working in Senior Information Service (SIS) for a number of years.

Additional staffing to support Community Care Reform is currently being recruited.

For further information about national progress on common arrangements, please contact Cath McGee, Manager, Community Care Reform by email cath.mcgee@dfc.sa.gov.au or phone 8207 0418.

UPDATE ON SA COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS POINTS – *Home Care Connect*

The OFTA website, www.ageing.sa.gov.au, contains information and updates provided in previous editions of the OFTA Community Care newsletter in relation to the vision, consultation processes, stages of 'discovery', and 'road testing' of the SA Community Care Access Points project. We are still on track for full implementation around the middle of this year.

The SA Community Care Access Points will be referred to as "**Home Care Connect**". This title was approved following consultation with consumer groups in both regions.

Throughout the demonstration phase, the primary functions of the Access Points (APs), based on the agreed National and State functions, are to:

- identify client eligibility for community care;
- provide information to the client, carer and family on services available, including simple community care information on specific issues;
- apply an initial needs identification that specifies the level of client need, the client's risk of unnecessary admission to residential care and/or hospital, the client's capacity to be effectively maintained at home (including carer sustainability) and their priority for comprehensive/specialist assessment and care;
- identify the stream of care and possible types of service responses, including:
 - complex care involving more specialist, service specific or more "comprehensive"

- (HACC and ACAT) assessment/s
 - basic early intervention/“quick fix” often requiring only single, simple service type before complex care becomes available
 - no service now – not eligible or low priority
 - specific client groups that have priority status within the community care system, e.g. Aboriginal people and people who are SRF residents or homeless;
- identify the priority rating for the client. This will be developed by OFTA as a validated basis for classifying clients for care. The SA priority rating will mirror the National Priority work being developed with the ACCNA-R and CENA-R. The SA priority rating will be a trigger for specialist, service specific or “comprehensive” (HACC and ACAT) assessment and will also guide the choice of Service Provider (SP) to which the client will be referred;
- allocate clients to care based on the match between the service and client needs and the capacity of the service to accept new clients, undertake a service coordination role and link the client to services. The allocation will also consider client choice as far as is reasonably practicable; and to
- coordinate the referral process.

Pathways for new Community Care (CC) clients

- **Access Points (APs) will, over time, be the primary way to access community care for potential new clients**, particularly those who are unclear of where to go, may have experienced a “system run around” and/or need a range of services. SPs will be encouraged to refer all new clients to APs to establish eligibility, perform the initial needs identification, and apply the national (standardised) priority and classification of relative need.
- Where clients seek access to simple/single services through APs, an initial needs identification will be undertaken prior to immediate allocation to a relevant SP. These clients/service types include clients requiring only meals, home modification, home maintenance, transport or basic equipment.
- Clients requiring specialist services, e.g. community nursing, allied health or equipment only, will be referred for specialist assessment and appropriate follow up care.
- New clients will be able to access simple/single CC services directly from SPs without the need to go through an AP if a simple service response is required. This includes clients approaching culturally appropriate services, particularly where the client would otherwise be at risk of not accessing community care services.

Over time the goal is to streamline access to Community Care for all new clients through Access Point pathways reducing confusion and duplication associated with current processes and will also minimise the use of direct approaches to service providers, commonly referred to as the “side doors”.

Priority for further assessment and community care services

- The priority rating and streaming processes undertaken by the APs will preserve some of the benefits currently delivered by the HACC program. That is, the HACC program

caters for people with a range of functional needs, including basic care. Therefore, the AP will support access to services for people:

- with high needs and high level of risk
- who could benefit most, and
- those who could be maintained at home for longer periods if minimal care or 'spot' services were provided i.e. early intervention.

The priority rating will also identify people:

- who are not eligible for community care
- who are eligible, but whose current needs are low. Given the available capacity in the community care system, these people will not be offered services. They will be invited to re-contact the AP if/when their circumstances change. This group would not be placed on a "waiting list".

Further Enhancements

A key part of the reforms is to explore how the client's information is captured and travels with the client. Issues being addressed include confidentiality, as well as ensuring that there are up-to-date service directories that provide an indication of the agency's capacity to accept clients after intake assessment.

From late April 2008, the Access Point reforms in SA will be "road tested" and adopted in stages. Important functions being refined for implementation include the procedures for *Home Care Connect* to set priority for the client, allocate fairly to the sector, and transfer relevant client information to the agencies (with the required privacy procedures), and for the agencies to receive this information.

Seniors Information Service (SIS) is being engaged to capture capacity information from the service providers (SPs) in the 'road test' regions. This information will be available to staff at the APs to assist in referring to the service that has the greatest capacity to undertake the next level of assessment/care coordination and to identify the services available to meet the client's needs. The capacity information will build on the work currently being undertaken at the regional levels through the Metro Collaborative Groups.

Streaming – basic and complex/comprehensive

The AP will stream clients into those requiring basic care (i.e. no further assessment needed and/or simple/single service/s required) and complex care (i.e. needing comprehensive or specialist assessment resulting in multi service responses).

When clients are streamed to complex care, the SP would provide care planning and care coordination (in line with the HACC definition). Where the SP is providing simple/single service/s and those focussed on early intervention and prevention, only limited care planning would be required. The majority of SPs are currently funded through HACC for these functions.

Evaluation

As part of the demonstration phase, National and State evaluations will inform the changes required throughout the demonstration period as well as those needed in order to ensure

the efficient and effective roll out of access points across SA.

Relationship with Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)

The APs will continue to provide access to the ACATs as is currently done by the Domiciliary Care SA Metropolitan Access Team (MAT). Clients requesting ACAT services at MAT will have a needs identification and then be referred by the AP to the ACAT for comprehensive assessment. Healthlink is also a primary point where clients can receive a needs identification before being referred to the ACATs at the Lower North/Barossa/Yorke Peninsula region and Northern Metro ACAT is a primary point for clients in the Gawler region.. This process reduces the number of unnecessary ACATs for clients requiring basic care.

For further information about APs and *Home Care Connect* in SA, please contact Janette Gay, Program Manager, Community Care Reform by email janette.gay@dfc.sa.gov.au or phone 8207 0269.

AGED CARE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (ACAP) REFORM

Since the last Community Care Newsletter, the ACAP National and SA reform projects have progressed in a number of major areas. These include:

National Projects

The National Review of the Aged Care Assessment Teams

The Final Report from this review has now been endorsed by ACAP Officials and the recommendations have formed the basis of an ACAP Officials work plan for 2008/09. The Final Report is now available on the Health and Ageing website www.health.gov.au.

Training Strategy

The six South Australian nominated ACAT Education Officers (AEOs) have now completed a five day workshop in modules from the new National 'Introduction to the Aged Care Assessment Program Learning Package'. The package is being finalised through the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). In April 2008 SA will determine the best method of rolling out this package across the state through the AEOs.

ACAP National Conference

Planning for the Conference 'ACAP in the 21st Century' to be held on 28 & 29 May 2008 at the Sydney Exhibition Centre is now well underway. Delegates and abstracts have been finalised, calls for registration have commenced and shortly we will be arranging accommodation and flights for our 53 SA delegates. The Conference will provide a great opportunity for ACAT members to network with their counterparts from other states and territories, share best and innovative practices, plus identify and contribute to future directions of the program.

SA Reform Projects

The COAG Project Plan for 2007-08 has been approved and detailed project plans are being negotiated for a number of new initiatives. More details will be available in the next newsletter.

In the interim, we have been working on Phase 2 of two 2006/07 projects: The Mobile Assessment Response and the Analysis of Assessment Practice/Models of ACATs in SA – Development of Best Practice Protocols for ACAT assessment.

Mobile Assessment Response (MAR) Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands visit

In October 2007 two assessors from the Flinders & Far North ACAT and one AEO undertook the first of the annual visits to the APY Lands as part of the MAR. The assessors completed thirteen ACAT assessments, and trained four appropriately qualified staff members on the lands to undertake ACAT assessments between the annual visits. Feedback from the October visit has been very positive and learning from this initial visit will be used to improve future initiatives.

Country MAR Trial

A trial of the MAR has been conducted to assist country ACATs experiencing a period of depleted resources to gain access to support from other country, metropolitan or local assessors. The trial commenced on 19 November 2007. The MAR was designed to address the long standing issue of smaller teams being unable to meet demand at times of depleted resources.

Uptake for the MAR has been slow due to a variety of factors. A brief evaluation was undertaken during March, where issues such as, the current eligibility criteria for access to the MAR was revisited. From 25 March until 30 June 2008 the coordination of the MAR trial will move from Domiciliary Care SA to Country Health SA (CHSA). Key stakeholders are currently examining ideas to extend the MAR beyond this point to trial other models of providing support.

Best Practice Protocols for ACAT assessment

This project commenced on 17 March 2008. The development of the protocols will be based on findings from the 2006-07 project Analysis of Assessment Practice/Models of ACATs in SA. The project will be supported and informed by a team of six ACAT assessors who have formed a reference group to comment on drafts of the Protocols Document.

For further information on ACAP Reform, contact Vicki Hyde, Aged Care Assessment Program Reform Project Manager on 8207 0604 or email vicki.hyde@dfc.sa.gov.au.

HACC NATIONAL SERVICE STANDARDS

National Common Standards for Community Care Programs

Seven Common Standards have now been endorsed which will replace existing standards for HACC, Community Aged Care Packages, Extended Aged Care at Home and National Respite for Carers. The Standards will be piloted and refined in the short term, and it is anticipated that a field test of a new appraisal tool and action plan will be conducted towards mid 2008. Modification of the draft documents will occur to respond to feedback obtained through the trials. Agencies that will trial the Self Appraisal tool in SA have been contacted and invited to participate.

These new Common Standards are very similar to current HACC National Service Standards. The advantages of the new arrangements are that:

- There has been refinement of the tools and documentation;
- The standards will be common to a range of community care programs; and
- There will be one quality reporting framework across these programs.

Agency Appraisals

Pending the finalisation of the new National Common Standards and related tools, Round 2 of the HACC Appraisals has continued and is almost complete. There are just five more agencies to go. The next triennium of HACC Appraisals planned for the 2008–2011 years is also about to commence. All HACC funded agencies have been scheduled for the next three year round, and five agencies will be completing their appraisals prior to the commencement of the new financial year.

One of the benefits of the appraisal process is that areas which are most challenging for agencies and opportunities for improvement can be identified. Outcomes from Round 2 have identified some agencies that would benefit from additional support. OFTA is developing a process with Quality Management Services (QMS) to work with each of those agencies.

As well as this individual help, another tool OFTA anticipates that will assist agencies is the development of a website with Best Practice examples. This website will be available for all agencies to access, to enable providers to understand what each standard is intended to cover. Examples of templates and proformas which address a particular standard and links to resource materials will also be included. The planning phase is just commencing, and OFTA will keep you informed of progress, and we will certainly let you know with great excitement when it is up and running.

New Standards Requirements in SA

While there are no changes to the current standards, there have been additions to agencies' agreements in SA. As a result, Standard 3e requires all agencies to comply with certain State Government and HACC requirements. It has been necessary to modify the appraisal tools so that they include the new requirements.

HACC Agreements now include three areas in particular. These are listed here with relevant website links:

- **Disability Action Plans** – go to www.familiesandcommunities.sa.gov.au - *Disability Action Plans* is the second point under *Key Strategies and Initiatives*.
- **Carers Recognition Act** – go to www.familiesandcommunities.sa.gov.au/sacarers/
- **HACC Logo registration** – agencies must comply with Commonwealth Government due recognition requirements by using the HACC Logo on publications etc. Contact Toni Woehlert on 8207 0605 or by email toni.woehlert@dfc.sa.gov.au who will send relevant information and a registration form.

For further information on quality in community care, please contact Tanya Strokowsky, Chief Project Officer, Quality and Standards by email tanya.strokowsky@dfc.sa.gov.au or phone 8415 4247.