



Submission to

Department of Social Services

On the

Home Care Packages Programme Consultation Paper

May 2015

About ECCV

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) is the voice of Multicultural Victoria. As the peak body for ethnic and multicultural organisations in Victoria, we are proud to have been the key advocate for culturally diverse communities in Victoria since 1974. For 40 years we have been the link between multicultural communities, government and the wider community.

Key messages

ECCV believes that access to free and appropriate language services for older people from non-English speaking backgrounds is integral to Consumer Directed Care's (CDC) core principles of choice and control. Access to free and appropriate language services is also fundamental to helping older people from non-English speaking backgrounds age healthily at home and in their community for longer. ECCV stresses that appropriate language services are integral to an efficient, equitable and accessible aged care system.

ECCV highlights that the current Government funding arrangement with the National Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS), to support approved aged care providers in the delivery of aged care services to people from non-English speaking backgrounds, fails to ensure access and equity for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in relation to CDC home care packages.

ECCV advocates free and fully funded access to a translation of the Home Care Agreement in the preferred language of consumers from non-English speaking backgrounds. ECCV further advocates equitable access to free and fully Government funded on-site and phone interpreting services for consumers from non-English speaking backgrounds when receiving services that have been agreed through the development of the care plan, regardless of whether they are delivered by approved providers or part of sub-contracted arrangements.

Key Issues

- Under current funding arrangements, providers can only access TIS free of charge to negotiate the Home Care Agreement, co-design the care plan and individualised budget, and discuss the consumer's monthly income and expenses statement.
- Under current funding arrangements, the costs involved in translating the Home Care Agreement into the consumer's preferred language is to be borne by the consumer through their home care package funds.
- Under current funding arrangements, when consumers from non-English speaking backgrounds require an interpreter outside of the operational requirements for the programme of the approved provider – for example when they access vital and preventative sub-contracted nursing assessment and allied health intervention – they must bear the cost through their home care package funds.
- There is a clear risk that consumers from non-English speaking backgrounds will achieve poorer health outcomes since they will often be forced to spend their budget on language costs at the expense of vital care services, thus exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities.
- Consumers from non-English speaking backgrounds will be economically disadvantaged relative to the general population since they will be forced to pay for necessary translating and interpreting services out of their individual budgets.

Recommendations

1. ECCV recommends that within the section – ***Consumer directed care - Consumer choice and flexibility*** – of the Charter, the following additional consumer right be inserted:
 - *to have the written Home Care Agreement translated into their preferred language at no personal cost.*
2. In order to guarantee the consumer's right 'to receive care and services that take account of his or her other care arrangements and cultural, linguistic and religious preferences', ECCV recommends that the following additional consumer right be inserted into the Charter:
 - *to receive care and services accompanied with interpreting services whenever requested/required at no personal cost.*
3. ECCV recommends that the Federal Government provide a specific financial subsidy to guarantee equitable access to language services as required throughout all stages and service tiers of the client's Consumer Directed Home Care Package.

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