April 23, 2020

Principles of Service Substituion during the COVID-19 pandemic

Context

As part of Care Connect's response to COVID-19, Care Connect is implementing strategies in reducing the transmission of the virus to clients, and staff at Care Connect and its service providers. Care Connect has commenced substituting non-contact alternate services in place of non-essential face-to-face services where possible. This allows clients to remain connected to their care workers wherever possible in a safe and effective manner.

Providers are empowered to have discussions directly with clients around substitution as is appropriate. Approval is to be sought via the usual channels of communication.

Principles

The principles of substituting a service must be met. The substitute service must:

- be provided safely for the client, support worker and any others involved
  - arrange services without physical contact if it is possible to do so
  - if physical contact is unavoidable, arrange services with minimal contact and appropriate social distancing and hygiene
- be effective, and meets the client's care needs
- fit within the program requirements and guidelines
- be personalised to the client's preferences where possible, without neglecting the above criteria.

While Care Connect encourages creativity in finding solutions, we will anchor any requests to the above criteria. Maintaining realistic expectations will be important. We would not want a client to be disappointed if we are unable to achieve a substitute service particularly if the service substitution is suggested by the client or their family.   If in doubt about a substitution against the principles, please seek guidance from Care Connect.

Program guidelines and financial controls vary, e.g. CHSP funding and reporting is different from HCP. This needs to be taken into consideration for service substitution.

Approval

Prior to delivering a substitute service, please go through your usual approval channels to ensure that Care Connect is able to record the substitution in the client's record. This is important for the accuracy of funds available and subsequent invoicing.

Examples

The following example could be considered, keeping in mind each client has different needs.

- *Social Support*
  - *Over the phone/device instead of in person (privacy of phone numbers required)*
  - *General chat, newspaper quiz, crossword, etc*
  - *Book discussion*
  - *Listening to music*

- *Supported shopping*
  - *On-line shopping*

    Care Connect has partnered with Woolworths to obtain on-line tokens to fast track accounts for vulnerable people. Discuss with Client Advisor first if you require a token as the client may already have one.
  - *Shopping pick up for a client / shopping by list*
  - *Shopping by list*