



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Programme Information

Disability, Mental Health and Carers
Community Mental Health

Preface

The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) will have a suite of Programme Guidelines which provide information relating to the Programme. They will provide the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in a programme and form the basis for the business relationship between DSS and the grant recipient.

DSS recognises and supports the work of civil society organisations. The DSS approach to working with civil society is based on reducing red tape, providing greater flexibility and respecting the independence of the sector. This approach recognises that civil society organisations should be supported to self-manage the delivery of support to our communities rather than being burdened with unnecessary government requirements.

The Programme Guidelines will aim to foster collaboration and innovation in the community across civil society freeing up resources to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Programme Guidelines will provide an overview of the Programme and the Activities relating to the Programme including specific information on the Activity, Selection Criteria, Performance Management and Reporting. This part should be read in conjunction with the [Terms and Conditions](#) and the grant agreement.

DSS reserves the right to amend these documents from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

Table of Contents

DISABILITY, MENTAL HEALTH AND CARERS.....	1
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH.....	1
1 PROGRAMME OVERVIEW.....	4
1.1 PROGRAMME OUTCOMES	4
1.2 OBJECTIVES	4
2 ACTIVITY OVERVIEW – COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH.....	4
2.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	4
2.2 SUB-ACTIVITIES	5
2.2.1 ASSISTANCE FOR PEOPLE SEVERELY IMPACTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS	5
2.2.2 EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SHOWING EARLY SIGNS OF, OR ARE AT RISK OF DEVELOPING, MENTAL ILLNESS	5
2.2.3 SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR CARERS AND FAMILIES OF PEOPLE WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS.....	5
2.2.4 MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY	5
2.3 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY.....	5
2.4 PARTICIPANTS/CLIENTS/RECIPIENTS/TARGET GROUP	5
2.5 FUNDING FOR THE ACTIVITY	7
2.6 ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.....	7
2.7 ACTIVITY LINKS AND WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND SERVICES	8
2.8 SPECIALIST REQUIREMENTS (E.G. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS)	9
2.9 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.....	10
2.10 ACTIVITY PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING.....	10
2.11 FINANCIAL REPORTING.....	10
2.12 DSS’S RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES UNDER THE ACTIVITY	11
2.13 GRANT RECIPIENTS RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES UNDER THE ACTIVITY	11
2.14 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	11
2.15 SPECIAL CONDITIONS APPLYING TO THIS ACTIVITY.....	11
3 APPLICATION PROCESS	11
3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS	11
3.2 SELECTION CRITERIA	13
3.3 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION	14
3.4 APPLICANT’S RESPONSIBILITIES.....	14
3.5 WHAT NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED?.....	14
3.6 WHAT SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED?.....	14
3.7 WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU PROVIDE MORE THAN THE SPECIFIED NUMBER OF WORDS?.....	14
3.8 CLOSING DATE AND TIME	14
3.9 LATE APPLICATIONS.....	14
3.10 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DURING THE APPLICATION PERIOD	15
3.11 QUESTIONS AFTER THE APPLICATION PERIOD.....	15
3.12 APPLICATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	15
3.13 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.....	15
4 TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLYING TO SELECTION/S	15
4.1 LIABILITY ISSUES.....	15
4.2 DSS’S RIGHTS	16
4.3 DISCLAIMER.....	16
4.4 FRAUD	16
4.5 PERSONAL INFORMATION	16
4.6 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION.....	16
5 FINANCIAL AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.....	17
5.1 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS	17
6 COMPLAINTS.....	17
6.1 APPLICANTS/GRANT RECIPIENTS	17
6.2 CLIENT/CUSTOMER	18
7 CONTACT INFORMATION	18
8 GLOSSARY.....	18

1 Programme Overview

1.1 Programme Outcomes

The Department of Social Services (DSS) funds Community Organisations to develop and maintain a cohesive Australian community and improved independence and self-sufficiency recognising that government contributions are only one source of funding for the operation of community services .

The Disability, Mental Health and Carers Programme (Programme) provides:

- support and advocacy for people with a disability and carers;
- disability employment; and
- community mental health services.

The following five priority areas, which sit within the Programme, have been identified as capturing DSS business, in line with the Australian Government's priorities and responsibilities:

- Disability Employment;
- Disability Carer Support and Advocacy;
- Disability, Mental Health and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support;
- Community Mental Health; and
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Transitioning Grants.

1.2 Objectives

The Programme aims to provide a foundation for integrated, community led programme delivery that understands and meets local needs and promotes innovation and collaboration. This will include the establishment of a platform for continued improvement in the way DSS does its business, clarifying and strengthening Commonwealth and State/Territory government responsibilities and fostering stronger relationships with civil society and partnering with service providers.

The Programme provides support and community-based initiatives for people with disability, mental illness, and for carers so they can develop their capabilities and actively participate in community and economic life.

2 Activity Overview – Community Mental Health

Under the Community Mental Health Activity, eligible organisations are funded to provide:

- assistance for people severely impacted by mental illness, including services with an employment focus for those who have employment as a primary goal;
- early intervention support to vulnerable families with children and young people who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness;
- a range of flexible support options for carers and families of people with severe mental illness, including services with an employment focus for those who have employment as a primary goal; and
- mental health promotion, education and advocacy.

2.1 Aims and objectives

The objective of the Community Mental Health Activity is to provide early intervention and other support through community-based initiatives to assist people with mental illness and their families and carers to develop their capabilities, increase their wellbeing and actively participate in community and economic life.

The Activity will provide accessible, responsive, high-quality and integrated community mental health services that improve the lives of people with severe mental illness, provide support for families and carers of people with a mental illness, and intervene early to assist families with children and young people affected by, or at risk of, mental illness.

2.2 Sub-Activities

2.2.1 Assistance for people severely impacted by mental illness

This Sub-Activity includes practical one-to-one assistance to people with severe mental illness aged 16 years and over, to help them access services and participate economically and socially in the community, increasing their opportunities for recovery.

2.2.2 Early intervention support to vulnerable families with children and young people who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness

This Sub-Activity includes:

- intensive, long-term, early intervention support, based on a Family Action Plan, specifically for children and young people up to the age of 18, and their families;
- short-term information, referral and assistance for families; and
- community outreach and group work.

2.2.3 Support options for carers and families of people with severe mental illness

This Sub-Activity includes:

- relief from the caring role, through in-home or out-of home respite or social and recreational activities;
- carer support, including counselling, practical assistance, social inclusion activities, advocacy, peer support and case management; and
- education, information and access, including community mental health promotion.

2.2.4 Mental health promotion, education and advocacy

This Sub-Activity includes funding for peak bodies, research, health promotion, lobby groups, etc. It provides opportunities for people with mental illness, carers, policy makers, researchers, national organisations, service providers, business and community organisations to undertake work to improve the lives of people with mental illness, their families and carers.

2.3 Applicant eligibility

The following entity types meet the eligibility requirements to be invited to apply for a grant for this Activity:

- a. Incorporated Associations (incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc.' in their legal name);
- b. Incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under State/Territory legislation, commonly have 'Cooperative' in their legal name);
- c. Companies (incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* – may be a not-for-profit or for-profit proprietary company (limited by shares or by guarantee) or public companies);
- d. Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*);
- e. Organisations established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation (public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions etc);
- f. Partnerships; and
- g. Trustees on behalf of a Trust.

The following entity types may be invited in special circumstances:

- h. State and territory Governments; and
- i. Local Governments.

2.4 Participants/clients/recipients/target group

Assistance for people severely impacted by mental illness

This Sub-Activity supports people with severe mental illness, whose capacity to participate in the social and economic life of their community is severely impacted by their mental illness. Services can assist people with mental illness whether or not they have a current formal clinical diagnosis.

This Sub-Activity identifies a number of groups of people as facing additional disadvantage. These include but are not limited to:

- Indigenous Australians (including Stolen Generation);

- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Humanitarian Entrants and recently arrived migrants and refugees;
- young people aged 16 to 24 years;
- people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- people who have previously been institutionalised (including Forgotten Australians/care leavers and child immigrants);
- young people leaving out-of-home care;
- people who have been previously incarcerated; and
- people with drug or alcohol co-morbidity.

Services are required to prioritise and actively target these special needs groups, or others identified locally, for which there are significant populations in their service coverage areas, or which are inadequately supported.

Services with an employment focus are required to target people with severe mental illness who have employment as a primary goal.

The Department expects services to develop the relevant expertise to be able to focus on these special needs groups and to manage their caseloads to ensure that uptake is representative of special needs groups in the local community. Targets for special needs groups will be negotiated with service providers on a case-by-case basis and specified in funding agreements.

Early intervention support to vulnerable families with children and young people who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness

This Sub-Activity supports children and young people up to the age of 18 who are showing early signs, or at risk of developing, mental illness, and their families. Services must maintain a child-centred and family-focussed approach. Highest priority is given to vulnerable children, young people and their families, including:

- Indigenous Australians;
- people from CALD backgrounds, including humanitarian entrants and recently arrived migrants and refugees;
- families experiencing homelessness, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, history of trauma, etc.;
- children in contact with the child protection system; and
- young people leaving out-of-home care.

Services are required to prioritise and actively target these vulnerable groups, and others identified locally that may form a significant population in the service coverage area, or for whom there are limited support services.

The Department expects services to develop the relevant expertise to be able to focus on the target groups and to manage their caseloads to ensure that uptake is representative of the vulnerable groups in the local community. Targets for vulnerable groups will be negotiated with service providers on a case-by-case basis and specified in funding agreements.

Support options for carers and families of people with severe mental illness

This Sub-Activity supports carers, and other family members, who are providing care to a person because of his/her mental illness (as defined in the Carer Recognition Act 2010). Highest priority will be given to carers without access to similar respite or carer support through other government-funded services (e.g. state disability services or the National Respite Carer Program).

The Sub-Activity identifies a number of groups of carers facing additional disadvantage including:

- Indigenous carers, including Stolen Generations and Indigenous kinship carers;
- carers with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including humanitarian entrants and recent migrants;
- older parent carers;
- young carers;
- carers needing urgent assistance or support, including those at risk of homelessness; and
- special-needs-group carers specific to the service coverage area, such as:
 - carers in rural and remote communities;

- Forgotten Australians; and
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex carers.

Consideration must be given to the needs of carers in special-needs groups so they receive appropriate information and services. Those services should be accessible and delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Service providers should be aware of the full range of needs within their regions and ensure that their client bases reflect the regions' demographics.

Services with an employment focus are required to target carers and family members of people with severe mental illness, who have employment as a primary goal.

Mental health promotion, education and advocacy

This Sub-Activity provides funding for peak bodies, research projects, health promotion activities, consumer and carer representative groups, etc. This Sub-Activity supports organisations to deliver services to promote mental health and de-stigmatise mental illness in the general population, provide support and advocate on behalf of the mental health sector, and undertake other projects to benefit mental health service consumers, carers and service providers.

2.5 Funding for the Activity

The Minister for Social Services has overall responsibility for the Community Mental Health Activity.

Where DSS has invited applications for grants, the final decision about Activity Delivery Areas, sites and proposals for service delivery will be made by the Minister or a delegate.

DSS may negotiate grant agreements ranging up to a five year term based on the grant purpose, degree of risk, and priorities for funding.

As a part of the Community Mental Health Activity, organisations may choose to use up to 10% of their funding for innovative projects. This will be negotiated as part of the grant agreement.

Under the Community Mental Health Activity, distribution of funding is based on Government policy priorities and the needs of individuals and families. A number of factors can be considered, including the number of recipients receiving certain Australian Government payments or allowances (e.g. Carer Allowance, Disability Support Pension), statistical data on vulnerable populations (e.g. Indigenous populations, numbers of children rated as developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)) and indices of disadvantage (e.g. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)).

In accordance with the Fair Work Australia decision of 1 February 2012 to increase wages in the Social and Community Services (SACS) sector, DSS will provide supplementation funding to organisations employing SACS workers delivering the Community Mental Health Activity. To be eligible for supplementation funding organisations must be delivering in-scope Australian Government funded programmes and have employed staff under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SACS Modern Award), specifically under one of the following Schedules:

- Schedule B – Classification Definitions - Social and Community Services Employees; and
- Schedule C – Classification Definitions - Crisis Accommodation Employees.

Organisations affected by the Western Australia Industrial Relation Commission (WAIRC) SACS Decision of 29 August 2013 may also be entitled to SACS supplementation.

2.6 Eligible and ineligible activities

Funded organisations are required to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with DSS, which specifies a range of contractual obligations, including in relation to record keeping and retention, performance reporting and financial expenditure and acquittal.

Funding for the Community Mental Health Activity may be used for:

- staff salaries and on-costs which can be directly attributed to the provision of Community Mental Health services in the identified service area or areas as per the grant agreement;

- employee training for paid and unpaid staff including Committee and Board members, that is relevant, appropriate and in line with Community Mental Health services; and
- operating and administration expenses directly related to the delivery of services, such as:
 - materials and equipment directly relating to service delivery;
 - marketing of services;
 - costs of service evaluation;
 - telephones;
 - rent and outgoings;
 - computer / IT/website/software;
 - insurance;
 - utilities;
 - postage;
 - stationery and printing;
 - accounting and auditing;
 - travel/accommodation costs; and
 - assets as defined in the Terms and Conditions that can be reasonably attributed to meeting agreement deliverables.

The Terms and Conditions outline how funds must be spent, acquitted and repaid (if necessary).

Ineligible activities under Community Mental Health are:

- purchase of land;
- funding to cover retrospective costs;
- costs incurred in the preparation of a funding application or related documentation;
- major construction/capital works;
- overseas travel; and
- activities for which other Commonwealth, State, Territory or Local Government bodies have primary responsibility.

2.7 Activity links and working with other agencies and services

The Community Mental Health Activity is designed to provide holistic and flexible support and therefore organisations applying to deliver under this Activity must demonstrate how well established they are in local community networks.

Sub-Activity links

Assistance for people severely impacted by mental illness – for this Sub-Activity, services should complement and intersect with other services in the local area, including both clinical and non-clinical community services. This approach is designed to build on existing arrangements and ensure services are coordinated to provide holistic and flexible support.

Service providers are therefore expected to form partnerships and establish formal links with a range of local networks, services and other stakeholders. This may include:

- developing referral processes and managing referrals to other services, including to housing support, employment and education, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, independent living skills courses, clinical services and other mental health and allied health services;
- participating in inter-agency meetings to ensure better services for participants; and
- participating in case coordination and related meetings (as required).

Services should also refer carers of participants, and children, young people and other family members to other Community Mental Health services, where appropriate.

Employment-focused services are required to have formal parallel servicing arrangements in place with local employment providers, including Disability Employment Services (DES), Job Services Australia (JSA) agencies and other employment services such as social enterprises. These could take the form of memoranda of understanding or an exchange of letters that sets out how the arrangements will operate, the process for managing referrals, and the respective roles and responsibilities of each party.

Early intervention support to vulnerable families with children and young people who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness – for this Sub-Activity providers are required to develop and maintain close links with other services including: family support services;

'First-to-know' agencies, such as childcare centres, schools and general practitioners; child protection agencies; Centrelink; housing agencies; and youth services. Service providers also work closely with local clinical services.

This approach is designed to build on existing arrangements and ensure services are coordinated to provide holistic and flexible support to meet the needs of children and young people and their families.

Support options for carers and families of people with severe mental illness – for this Sub-Activity providers are required to develop relationships and have referral processes in place with a wide range of mental health, family support, community and other support services.

Organisations applying to deliver services must demonstrate how well established they are in local community networks. Funded organisations are required to maintain and foster relationships with the full range of community, welfare and mental health sector organisations necessary to comprehensively cater to the needs of carers and their families.

In keeping with the Government's emphasis on improving social and economic participation for vulnerable Australians, providers are also encouraged to develop and maintain close links with Centrelink, housing, employment and other family support services that can assist families and carers to achieve greater social participation, safety and stability. Services must also work closely with local clinical and mental health specialist services.

Employment-focused services are required to, in particular, develop relationships with services in the local area relevant to improving employment outcomes for carers. They must liaise closely with other organisations providing support to carers of people with mental illness, to identify carers who have training and employment outcomes as personal goals in their individual carer support plans.

Mental health promotion, education and advocacy – for this Sub-Activity, requirements for linking and working with other agencies and services are negotiated with the grant recipient on a case-by-case basis and then specified in the individual grant agreements.

2.8 Specialist requirements (e.g. Legislative requirements)

Service Providers funded under the Community Mental Health Activity are to ensure that services are delivered in accordance with all relevant Commonwealth and State and Territory legislation.

These include, but are not limited to:

- State and Territory mental health acts;
- State and Territory child protection acts and the *Family Law Act 1975*;
- *Privacy Act 2012* and the National Privacy Principles (NPPs);
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*;
- *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of Racial Discrimination Act) Act 2010*;
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*;
- *Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 2013*;
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*;
- National Standards for Disability Services 2013;
- National Standards for Mental Health Services 2013;
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011;
- Any applicable state or territory law relating to discrimination; and
- Any state or territory laws regarding young people who are under 18 years of age.

In delivering the Activity, organisations are required to:

- comply with all relevant laws; and
- comply with DSS Policies as specified at Doing Business with DSS - www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/doing-business-with-dss; and
- ensure that workers (paid and voluntary) undertake training appropriate to the service they deliver.

Service providers should also be aware of any case-based law that may apply or has an effect on their service delivery. Providers must also ensure that the services meet health and safety requirements and all licence, certification and/or registration requirements in the area in which they are providing services.

2.9 Information technology

Community Mental Health Activity grants recipients must have systems in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their Schedule.

Performance information (e.g. client characteristics and service delivery information) will be required to be collected by service providers at the client level and entered directly into the department's client data capture system, its predecessor or via a DSS approved alternative mechanism.

Where collection of client level data is not appropriate for instance due to the Activity involving a large group, aggregate reporting will be permitted.

The Data System protocols and requirements are available at [the DSS website](#).

The new application will:

- Be a web based portal;
- Allow submission of data through external approved third party applications; and
- Support submission of data through other approved methods.

Performance information required to be collected may include (but is not limited to):

- Client content (where required);
- Client identity characteristics;
- Client demographic characteristics;
- Service delivery information; and
- Client outcomes.

2.10 Activity Performance and Reporting

DSS focuses on outcomes; however, other information, not related to outcomes includes information that can be used to monitor ongoing operation of the grant recipient's service delivery/project; and track issues that may affect the operation of the grant recipient's service delivery/project.

DSS's Performance Indicators focus on three key questions:

- 1) Are we achieving what we expected?
- 2) How well is it being done?
- 3) How much is being done?

Performance Indicators based on these questions may be included in the grant agreement for the grant recipient.

Performance against agreed targets for the indicators, and additional information needed to evaluate service delivery/project performance, must be reported in progress reports and a final report as outlined in the grant agreement with DSS.

Full details of reporting requirements will be listed in the grant agreement for each grant recipient.

2.11 Financial Reporting

The Community Mental Health Activity will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles; the DSS grant agreement and will aim to maintain viable services and act to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth.

Acquittal documents must be provided to DSS as outlined in the grant agreement.

Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided.

2.12 DSS's responsibilities and accountabilities under the Activity

The Minister for Social Services has overall responsibility for the Disability, Mental Health and Carers Programme.

DSS will:

- meet the Australian Governments terms and conditions of the grant agreement established with organisations;
- ensure that services provided under the Activity are accountable to the Australian Government under the terms and conditions agreed in the grant agreement;
- administer the operation of the Activity in a timely manner;
- identify suitable providers to deliver the activities required as per the grant agreement;
- work in partnership with the provider to ensure the Activity is implemented and will provide the service provider with constructive feedback;
- ensure that the outcomes contained within the Programme Guidelines are being met and evaluate the provider's performance against the Activity outcomes; and
- Information on the successful grants will be published on the [DSS website](#) within the required timeframes.

2.13 Grant recipients responsibilities and accountabilities under the Activity

In entering into a grant agreement with DSS, the grant recipient must comply with all requirements outlined in the suite of documents that comprise the agreement including these Programme Guidelines, the grant agreement and the Standard Agreement Terms and Conditions ([available at the DSS website](#)).

Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring:

- the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met;
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted;
- highest standards of duty of care are applied;
- services are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all state and territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations;
- Indigenous Australians have equal and equitable access to services;
- they work collaboratively to deliver the programme; and
- they contribute to the overall development and improvement of the programme such as sharing best practice.

2.14 Risk management strategy

All DSS Grant Agreements are managed according to their level of risk. Organisations will be subject to a Provider Capacity Risk Assessment prior to the negotiation of Grant Agreements. Organisations may also be required to participate in a Financial Viability Assessment during the Assessment process of an application. A periodic monitoring process is undertaken during the term of an agreement which monitors service delivery and is used to provide evidence for ongoing risk assessments.

2.15 Special conditions applying to this Activity

Not applicable.

3 Application Process

3.1 Overview of the application process

All grant processes will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines (Commonwealth Grant Guidelines will cease 30 June 2014 and will be replaced with Commonwealth Grant Rules 1 July 2014) and will be for purposes that are consistent with the objectives and priorities of the Activity.

Applicants wishing to seek a Community Mental Health Activity grant through a grant process will need to demonstrate/address the following, across all selection criteria:

- appropriateness of the proposal to the objectives of the activity;
- potential for the proposal to meet the objectives of the activity;
- the need for the proposal to be carried out;
- the governance, expertise and capacity of the applicant, including the applicant's financial, risk and audit/fraud strategic plans, and evidence of sound governance;
- the applicant's track record in delivering quality Activity services, where applicable;
- relevant stakeholders (target groups, communities, government etc);
- evidence base, where applicable;
- the applicant's viable and sustainable financial model;
- value for money (of the proposed outcomes, projected deliverables, location, community benefit and the amount of funding sought);
- the broad assessment requirements outlined in the relevant attachment; and
- other assessment criteria specifically relating to the activity being funded.

When considering value for money as part of a selection process, value for money is not only a consideration regarding money alone. In considering the extent to which the application represents value for money, DSS will have regard to the following:

- the relative merit of each application;
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the funding;
- the relative cost of the proposal, or of elements of the proposal;
- the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated a lack of capacity to fund the proposal taking into consideration all possible sources of finance, including debt finance;
- the geographic location of the proposal;
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that the proposal will be located in a community with one or more of the following features:
 - the community is identified as a priority community by DSS;
 - the community has high levels of the target population or of a special needs group;
 - the community has high population growth in the target population or has anticipated high population growth in the target population.

Proposals which demonstrate two or more of these features will score more highly than proposals which demonstrate one of these features.

When undertaking a selection process DSS will consider the proportionality of scale, nature, funding amount, complexity and risks involved in the activity. DSS will consider proportionality to inform the choice of the application and selection process, the type of grant agreement to be used and the reporting and acquittal requirements.

The Community Mental Health Activity funds a diverse range of service types and other activities. Due to the size and complexity of the Programme, access to funding for the Community Mental Health Activity will be available through a variety of means and at various times throughout the funding period. DSS proposes to undertake a mix of the following processes to achieve the objectives and priorities for the Community Mental Health Activity.

The process may be an **open competitive** selection process.

An open competitive selection process is open to all providers operating in the market place. Open processes are advertised through the media, the DSS web site and other sources in order to attract as much interest as possible.

Open competitive grant rounds have open and closed nominated dates, with eligible applications being assessed against the nominated selection criteria.

OR

The process may be a **restricted** selection process.

A restricted (or targeted) selection process is used where there are few providers available due to highly specialised services being required, there are geographical considerations, specific expertise is required or there are time constraints. A restricted grant round is still competitive, but only opens to a small number of potential grant recipients based on the specialised requirements of the granting Activity

or project under consideration. Potential grant recipients are usually invited to apply and will still need to be assessed against nominated selection criteria.

OR

The process may be a **direct** selection process.

A direct selection process is a closed non-competitive process, where an approach is made directly to an existing, high performing provider to expand their current service delivery activities or deliver new services. It involves assessment of a provider's capacity to deliver an expanded service or capability to deliver a new service through use of selection criteria and/or an assessment of a provider's current performance.

OR

Expressions of Interest (EOI) process.

DSS may call for EOIs to test the market to ascertain the extent of potential applicants. An EOI will be advertised as the first in a two stage process. The second stage involves applicants selected through the EOI process applying in either a targeted or direct process.

DSS may advertise any funding process:

- in major national newspapers and other selected newspapers;
- on [the DSS website](#); and
- on the Government grants website at [the Grantslink website](#).

Any advertisement will inform potential applicants of where to obtain application information for the relevant process.

DSS from time to time may conduct a direct selection in the event that there is a change in government policy, a shift in demographics, unforeseen circumstances or due to service provider failure.

Expectation that if the service area changes then it's expected that the grant recipient will be able to meet the cost of delivering the Community Mental Health Activity in the revised area through its own efficiencies and within the funding provided.

3.2 Selection Criteria

This section sets out the full suite of selection criteria that may be used for any funding process under the Community Mental Health Activity. Some Sub-Activities may have specialist criteria applied.

Depending on the Activity/Sub-Activity and type of funding process, a reduced set of assessment criteria may be set by the appropriate departmental delegate exercising their ability to waive certain criteria. The final set of selection criteria will be reflected in the Application Form.

The equally weighted selection criteria are:

1. Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded Activity in <INSERT NAME> community and/or <INSERT NAME> target group.
2. Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the Grant funding.
3. Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring Activities to achieve Activity objectives for all stakeholders.
4. Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the Activity objectives in <INSERT NAME> community and/or <INSERT NAME> target group.

When applying for grant funding the following specialist criterion may apply.

5. Demonstrated connection with relevant service networks and social infrastructure operating in the <INSERT NAME> area.

3.3 How to submit an application

To apply under this process, applicants will need to complete the online Application Form and respond to selection criteria as detailed above. Applications must be received electronically by the closing date and time as detailed at 3.8.

All applicants including current service providers will need to respond fully to the Selection Criteria in the Application Form and provide the information required in the format and to the extent specified.

Applications can only be submitted during the application round for the Activity and for the locations or sites as defined in the Application Form.

Your application is not an agreement or contract. Meeting the selection criteria does not guarantee funding. Funding is limited and applications will be assessed and prioritised according to the extent to which they meet the selection criteria. Only applications meeting the selection criteria to a high degree are likely to be considered for funding. All information requested on the application must be provided to enable your application to be fully considered.

DSS will **not** issue Application Forms or accept completed applications by fax or mail.

3.4 Applicant's Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information to DSS is a serious offence, applicants or their partners who do so may be prosecuted under section 137.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Make sure you keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers, either electronically or in hard copy, for your own records.

Only one application per organisation will be assessed. If more than one application is submitted, only the latest application will be considered.

3.5 What needs to be included?

DSS will not assess applications that do not contain all required attachments (see Application Form checklist) outlined in the Application Form where an Application Form is provided for completion by applicants.

3.6 What should not be included?

Any attachments to the Application Form which are not specifically requested in the Application Form will not be considered as part of the assessment process.

3.7 What happens if you provide more than the specified number of words?

The Application Form specifies a word limit for each selection criteria, text beyond the word limits will not be considered as a part of the assessment process.

3.8 Closing date and time

The timeframe for submission of applications for any funding process will be set out in the Application Form.

In order to be received by DSS, the application must be submitted in full via the method prescribed in 3.3.

The applications must be received by DSS within the application period to be considered.

3.9 Late Applications

DSS may reject any application lodged after the closing date. If an application is late, DSS may determine that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control that meant the

deadline could not be met. The applicant will need to supply documentary evidence to support any exceptional circumstances. DSS has no obligation to accept a late application. Any decision by DSS to accept or not accept a late application will be final.

3.10 Questions and answers during the application period

Details of 'Questions and Answers' facilities and contact details will be provided on the DSS website under the Grants and Funding tab. DSS will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

Note: A list of 'Frequently Asked Questions' is available on DSS's website. Responses to questions of interest to all applicants may be added to the list during the application period.

DSS will only respond to requests for information that seek clarification of issues to allow them to better understand the requirements of the Application Form and Programme Guidelines.

3.11 Questions after the application period

DSS will **not** accept or respond to any applicant's requests for information or correspondence about the status or progress of their application during the assessment phase.

3.12 Application Acknowledgement

Unless prior agreement has been reached with DSS an application will not be considered lodged until it is received by DSS. The applicant will receive email notification from DSS within 48 hours of an application being lodged correctly. If the applicant has not received notification in this timeframe, the applicant should contact DSS to confirm that the form has been lodged correctly.

3.13 Conflicts of Interest

Applicants must identify, in their application, any potential or actual conflicts of interest they believe will or may arise from submitting the application. This should address their responsibilities to the Australian Government and other parties in the course of the Community Mental Health Activity.

A conflict of interest can arise when an applicant's integrity, objectivity or fairness in performing the services is at risk due to a pecuniary interest of a person or organisation associated with the applicant or a conflicting business arrangement.

Applicants must specify in their applications how any actual or perceived conflict of interest will be addressed and monitored to ensure it does not compromise the outcomes desired for this grant process.

DSS reserves the right to assess the potential impact of the conflict or perceived conflict and what plans, if any, are proposed to address the conflict of interest in relation to the application for funding.

DSS may reject an application if DSS is not satisfied that there are arrangements in place to appropriately address/manage a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

DSS also has mechanisms in place for identifying and managing potential or actual conflicts of interest such as requiring assessment staff to sign conflict of interest declarations prior to undertaking the assessment of applications.

For more information on the Conflict of Interest Policy for DSS employees and contractors go to:

<http://www.dss.gov.au/about-dss/doing-business-with-dss#conflict>

4 Terms and conditions applying to Selection/s

4.1 Liability issues

DSS is not liable to the applicant in relation to the selection process, including without limitation, when DSS:

- varies or terminates all or any part of the selection process or any negotiations with the applicant

- decides not to acquire any or all of the services sought through the selection process
- varies the selection process
- exercises or fails to exercise any of its other rights under, or in relation to the Programme Guidelines.

4.2 DSS's rights

DSS reserves the right to amend the Programme Guidelines by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

4.3 Disclaimer

DSS, its officers, agents and advisors:

- are not, and will not be, responsible or liable for the accuracy or completeness of any information in or provided in connection with the Programme Guidelines;
- make no express or implied representation or warranty that any statement as to future matters will prove correct;
- disclaim any and all liability arising from any information provided to the applicant, including, without limitation, errors in, or omissions contained in, that information;
- except so far as liability under any statute applies, accept no responsibility arising from errors or omissions contained in any information in this document and the Application Form; and
- accept no liability for any loss or damage suffered by any person as a result of that person, or any other person, placing reliance on the contents of these documents, or any other information provided by DSS.

4.4 Fraud

DSS is committed to the Commonwealth Fraud Control Policy and Guidelines. Applicants should familiarise themselves with [the DSS Fraud Control Policy Statement](#). The Fraud Control Policy Statement also underpins an applicant's respective fraud and risk minimisation responsibilities when dealing with DSS.

One key responsibility outlined in the DSS Fraud Control Policy Statement is to report all fraud concerns by:

- leaving an anonymous voicemail message on the DSS Fraud Hotline (1800 133 611); or
- emailing fraud@DSS.gov.au.

4.5 Personal Information

Any personal information you provide is protected under the *Privacy Act 1988*. It can only be disclosed to someone else if you have been given reasonable notice of the disclosure; where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if you have consented to the disclosure.

If you have questions or concerns about how your personal information is handled you can contact the Privacy Officer at DSS on 02 6244 1449, the Privacy Commissioner on 1300 363 992 (local call cost, but calls from mobile and pay phones may incur higher charges) or the Australian Government Privacy Officer by emailing: privacy@privacy.gov.au.

4.6 Freedom of Information

All documents in the possession of DSS including those in relation to the Activity are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

The FOI Act creates a general right of access to documents in the possession of DSS and this right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary for the protection of essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

Decisions regarding requests for access under the FOI Act will be made by an authorised decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

All FOI requests are to be referred to the FOI Coordinator, Public Law Branch, in DSS.

By mail:

FOI Coordinator
DSS of Social Services
Public Law Branch,
PO Box 7576
CANBERRA BUSINESS CENTRE
ACT 2610

By email:

foi@DSS.gov.au

For more information on making a request for access to documents in the possession of DSS under the FOI Act, [follow this link to the FOI information on the DSS Website](#).

5 Financial and Other Arrangements

5.1 Financial arrangements

DSS uses standard grant agreements. Grants will only be provided in accordance with an executed grant agreement. The terms and conditions of DSS's grant agreements cannot be changed. The grant agreement will contain the entire agreement between the parties. There is no binding agreement on any parties until the grant agreement is agreed to and signed by the delegate and the applicant's authorised representative.

The grant agreement is the legal agreement between DSS and the grant recipient over the grant period. In managing the grant provided, the grant recipient must comply with all the requirements of the grant agreement.

Grant recipients are responsible for ensuring that:

- the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met;
- service provision is effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted;
- highest standards of duty of care are applied; and
- services are operated in line with, and comply with the requirements as set out within all State and Territory and Commonwealth legislation and regulations.

Grant recipients should also be aware of any case based law that may apply or affect their service delivery.

The Terms and Conditions of the grant agreement [are available at this link on the DSS website](#).

6 Complaints

6.1 Applicants/Grant Recipients

Applicants and grant recipients can contact the complaints service with complaints about DSS's service(s), the selection process or the service of another of DSS grant recipients.

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by DSS. Applicants and grant recipients can lodge complaints through the following channels:

Telephone: 1800 634 035
Fax: (02) 6204 4587

Mail:
The Department of Social Services Complaints
PO Box 7576
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

If an applicant or grant recipient is at any time dissatisfied with DSS's handling of a complaint, they can contact DSS Ombudsman [via this link to the Ombudsman Website](#) or on 1300 362 072.

6.2 Client/Customer

It is a requirement of your grant agreement to have a transparent and accessible complaints handling policy. This policy should acknowledge the complainant's right to complain directly to you, outline the process for both dealing with the complaint and provide options for escalation both within your organisation and to DSS if necessary. Ensure that you provide information about your complaints handling policy and processes in all correspondence to guarantee it is readily available to the public.

7 Contact information

Contact information for the Community Mental Health Activity:

- Address: Tuggeranong Office Park, Soward Way (cnr Athllon Drive), Greenway ACT 2900
- Mail: PO Box 7576, Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610
- Phone: 1800 625 136. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can use the [National Relay Service](#) to contact any of DSS's listed phone numbers.
- Email: Grants@DSS.gov.au

8 Glossary

Not applicable.