

How do I apply?

Carer Support Fund applications are made by the Area Mental Health Service where the person you support is receiving a service. The service staff will complete an application for you after consulting with you.

Tandem and the Carer Support Fund

Tandem administers the Carer Support fund on behalf of the Area Mental Health Services. Tandem is the peak body for mental health carers in Victoria.

Benefits of joining Tandem

By joining Tandem you will add your voice to those of other people in Victoria impacted by mental health issues. Tandem will keep you updated about changes in the mental health system, and provide education opportunities for family and friends.

Subscribe to Tandem eNews on our website to receive:

- the latest news
- information and education opportunities
- invitations to participate in consultations
- alerts for mental health and other events.

Support and Referral Service

Family members or friends who are supporting a person with mental health issues are eligible to use Tandem's Support and Referral Service.

The Support and Referral Service provides Tandem members with individual advocacy, support and referral through an Advocate.

About Tandem

Tandem is the Victorian peak body representing families and carers supporting people living with mental health issues. Tandem's members include carers and former carers, regional carer networks and support groups, organisations with a significant mental health focus, and workers from programs which support mental health carers.

We advocate for carer involvement in planning and care, participation in system change, and support for family and friends.



Tandem Inc.

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Tandem acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



Tandem Inc. acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of the lands and waters of Australia. Tandem is committed to working in partnership to support the principles of self-determination and ensure the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health carers are heard and considered.

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Carer
Support
Fund

The Mental Health Carer Support Fund

Information for carers

The Mental Health Carer Support Fund is for family and friends supporting a person who is receiving services from a Victorian Area Mental Health Service.



Recognising carers

Family and friends (carers) are important contributors to the care of a person with mental health issues.

What is the Mental Health Carer Support Fund?

The Carer Support Fund (CSF) meets the needs of mental health carers by providing funding to assist in their support role, and improve their wellbeing.

Who is eligible?

Family members or friends* who are supporting a person who is receiving services from an Area Mental Health Service (AMHS) are eligible to apply.

The Fund should only be used to meet consumer costs in situations where the carer derives the main benefit.

***Professional carers are not eligible to apply for this assistance.**

What can the CSF be used for?

(Mental Health Carer Support Fund: Department of Health and Human Services Guidelines)

- **Transport** and/or costs associated with visiting the person with mental health issues in hospital or accompanying them to medical appointments as appropriate in your supporting role.
- **Carer education programs** and **conferences** that promote knowledge and understanding of mental illness and the mental health system; and to support carer resilience, self-care and wellbeing.
- **Respite.** Opportunities for the carer to have a break from the caring role.
- **Educational expenses.** Opportunities for the carer to pursue vocational opportunities through short-term educational activities.
- **Counselling.** Short term counselling, provided by a practitioner outside the mental health service, to address the emotional and relationship impacts of caring for someone with mental health issues.
- **Reimbursement of costs** (that cannot be claimed through other Department of Health concessions or other funding sources for carers) incurred by the carer on behalf of the person for whom they care.
- **Wellbeing activities** for carers, individually or in groups, to access opportunities such as yoga, meditation, sporting activities, art, music or other recreational activities to support their personal wellbeing.
- The Fund may be used to support an **activity for a group of carers** such as attendance at a conference or sporting event.
- **Sitting fees** for individual carers or members of the Carer and Family Advisory Group who participate in systemic carer participation activities on behalf of the mental health services.

Who can I talk to about the Carer Support Fund?

You can get more information from Area Mental Health Service staff including case managers, carer peer support workers, carer consultants and other family support workers. You will be asked some questions to determine the best way to assist you in your caring role.

It is important to note that funds are limited. Applications are assessed and approved on an individual basis by your AMHS.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your application and you believe you have grounds for appeal, contact the relevant mental health staff members at the service to discuss the appeals process.

Funds will **not** be provided for services that are the responsibility of the AMHS. However short-term counselling for the family or carer, beyond that usually provided by the public mental health system, may be supported.