



Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North Aged Programs

A guide to Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North services for carers of people over 65 (or carers of people with an ageing condition such as dementia)

The Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North is:

- Auspiced by Merri Community Health Services (formerly Moreland Community Health Service)
- Has been operating in the Northern Metropolitan Region since 1997 and is based in Preston
- Covers seven local government areas: Darebin, Banyule, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra, Moreland and Hume – except Sunbury (Mental Health program only).

Aged Programs

- The Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre/ CarerLinks North Aged programs are funded by both State and Federal Governments
- Funding aims to deliver a range of flexible respite options to carers
- Funding aims to provide education and training to carers regarding dementia issues
- The Aged Team is made up of a Team Leader, Carer Support Workers and a Community Development Worker-Dementia.

Services available to Carers

1. Information and Response team

Services offered by the Information and Response team include:

- Information on respite options for carers
- Telephone assessment based on identified carer need
- Flexible funding to purchase respite and other relevant services
- Emotional support to carers
- Coordination of referrals for relevant services
- Information on residential respite, including emergency respite.

2. Face to Face Appointments

- Are offered to carers who may benefit from meeting with a worker to discuss referral information in more detail
- Can be useful to carers who require general information about respite, are new to caring and/or want to discuss the emotional impact of the caring role
- A carer may be referred to a Carer Support Worker after the Face to Face appointment.

3. Carer Support Workers

Work with carers to:

- Assess what supports are required to assist the carer in their role
- Provide information on community services
- Access funding to organise respite and other relevant supports
- Respond to short term emotional and practical support needs
- Provide short term supportive counselling
- Refer and link carers to a range of services.

Reasons for referrals to a Carer Support Worker include:

- High levels of stress
- Carers who are isolated with limited or no supports
- Crisis situations where the carer's health may be at risk
- The caring relationship and/or family system is at risk of breakdown
- Presenting family issues including difficulties with boundary setting and conflict, communication difficulties with services and/or family members
- Assistance with short term service coordination.

4. Community Development Worker – Dementia

- Can tailor training and education for carers of people with dementia
- Is currently conducting a scoping project regarding prevalence of, and services for, carers of people with Younger Onset Dementia (diagnosed before age 65).

Types of Respite

- In home respite - where the carer may require in home support for the care recipient
- Out of home respite - where a respite worker accompanies the care recipient on an outing or

activity

- Facility based respite – where the care recipient stays in an aged care facility. This respite can be short stay 'cottage style' respite at a facility such as Kilby House or longer stay respite in a low or high level aged care facility
- Group activities which support carer wellbeing
- Education programs/conferences - partial funding for courses relevant to the caring role
- Transport assistance - e.g. taxi voucher, met tickets (limited availability)
- Carer health and wellbeing activities - such as therapeutic massage, yoga, meditation.

Referral Process

Please contact the Information and Response team by phone or email.

Service providers are required to complete a SCTT form including 'Part B' Carer referral form.

How to contact the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre/CarerLinks North

You can contact the service by phone, fax or email :

Phone: 1800 052 222 or (03) 9495 2500

Fax: 9495 2599

After Hours: 1800 052 222

Email: clintakeworkers@mchs.org.au

Website: www.mchs.org.au

Hours of operation:

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

An after hours response service is also available.