



Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre/CarerLinks North Mental Health Carer Support Program

A guide to Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North services for carers of people with mental health issues in the Northern Metropolitan Region

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: Banyule, Darebin, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra and Hume - except Sunbury (Mental Health Program only).

The Mental Health Carer Support Program

- The Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre/ CarerLinks North Mental Health Carer Support program is funded by both the State and Federal Governments
- Priority target group is older or ageing parents of people with mental health issues and/or an intellectual disability who are caring for children (including adult children) at home
- All carers of people with mental health issues and/or an intellectual disability are able to access the program
- Funding aims to deliver a range of flexible respite options for carers
- The Mental Health team is made up of a Team

Leader, Carer Support Workers and a Service Development Worker.

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. Carer Support Workers

Short term support service for carers who require additional support and/or have complex needs.

Carer Support Workers:

- Work with the carer to identify and explore their needs
- Provide information on available support options

- Respond to short term emotional and practical support needs
- Provide short term supportive counselling
- Provide information regarding the mental health system
- Access funding to organise respite and other relevant supports
- Refer and link carers to a range of services.

Reasons for referral to a Carer Support Worker include:

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

3. Types of respite available

- In home respite - A trained Respite Worker provides support to the consumer at home to allow the carer to have time away
- Out of home respite - A Respite Worker accompanies the consumer on an outing or activity
- Centre based respite - The consumer accesses overnight support for a limited period of time
- Contributions towards accommodation - Short breaks away from home for the carer and/or consumer
- Group activities and outings - Support carer wellbeing through a range of targeted programs
- Education programs/conferences - Partial funding for carer specific education
- Transport assistance - Taxi voucher, met tickets (limited availability)

- Carer health and wellbeing activities – Therapeutic massage, yoga, meditation.

Referral Process

Please contact our 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 & Carelink Centre/CarerLinks North

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

Phone: 1800 052 222 or (03) 9495 2500

Fax: (03)9495 2599

After Hours: 1800 052 222

Email: clnintakeworkers@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.