



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

**NOTES FOR
ALLIED HEALTH PROVIDERS
SECTION 2(m)
SOCIAL WORKERS (GENERAL)**

This section of the Notes for Allied Health Providers must be read in conjunction with Section 1 – General

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Providing social work services

These Notes should be read in conjunction with Notes for Allied Health Providers Section One: General.

1. DVA has two provider categories for social workers: general social workers and mental health social workers. Different registration arrangements apply to these provider categories.
2. To be eligible to provide **general social work** services to an entitled person, you must:
 - be a member, or be eligible for membership, of the Australian Association of Social Workers;
 - be a registered DVA provider at the time the service is provided; and
 - complete the Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) Agreement for DVA [refer to Notes for Allied Health Providers Section One: General [clauses 109-111].
3. For more information on registering with DVA as a general social worker contact:
Postal: Medicare Australia Liaison and Contract Management Section
Department of Veterans' Affairs
GPO Box 9998
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Phone: 1300 550 457 – (option 3, then option 2)

Facsimile: (02) 6289 6764
4. To be eligible to provide **mental health social work** services to an entitled person, you must:
 - be registered with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide focussed psychological strategies (allied mental health) services, and
 - complete the RCTI Agreement for DVA [refer to Notes for Allied Health Providers Section One: General [clauses 109-111].

For more information visit:

www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/dental_allied/socialwork_mentalhealth

Providers can be registered as both a general social worker and a mental health social worker but cannot make a claim for service/payment for social work and social work (mental health) services to the same entitled person on the same day. If a social worker sees a client for a general social work consultation and identifies an untreated mental health condition, they should report this issue to the referring general practitioner (GP).

Treatment Cycle

5. For information on the treatment cycle arrangements, which came into effect on 1 October 2019, refer to Notes for Allied Health Providers Section One: General.

Services to be provided

6. Eligible social workers are responsible for determining the number, type, frequency and duration of services to be provided to meet the clinical need of the entitled person.
7. Social workers help entitled persons to overcome a range of problems in relation to stressful life events such as death or divorce and assist them to deal with family, health, employment, income support or accommodation related issues. The services provided by eligible social workers may include but are not limited to:
 - general counselling and case management;
 - service co-ordination and facilitating access to community services;
 - referral and advocacy;
 - discharge planning (where it is of such complexity that it is deemed outside the scope of the discharge planner's role and responsibility);
 - education and information;
 - vocational and employment counselling or rehabilitation;
 - accommodation and placement assistance; and
 - family therapy with specific focus on veteran wellbeing.

Fees

8. Payment for social work services is based on the DVA Schedule of Fees for Social Workers available at:
http://www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/Fee_schedules/Pages/Dental_and_Allied_Health.aspx
9. Under DVA arrangements a gap fee or co-payment cannot be charged for the provision of social work services to an entitled person. The Notes for Allied Health Providers Section One: General states that by accepting an entitled person's Gold or White Card and billing DHS, a health care provider agrees to accept the DVA fees as full payment for health care services without making any additional charges to the entitled person.
10. Social workers cannot claim from the DVA Social Workers Schedule of Fees and the Social Workers (Mental Health) Schedule of Fees for the same entitled person on the same day.

Prior financial authorisation

11. The specific item numbers requiring prior financial authorisation are indicated by shading and an asterisk (*) in the DVA Social Worker Schedule of Fees. Please refer to this document to identify items requiring prior approval. Fee schedules are available at:
http://www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/Fee_schedules/Pages/Dental_and_Allied_Health.aspx
12. For information on how to seek prior financial authorisation, refer to Notes for Allied Health Providers Section One - General [clauses 51-56].

Related DVA services

13. The families of entitled persons are unable to access the services of a DVA registered social worker at DVA's expense unless they themselves are a Gold or White Card holder (see Notes for Allied Health Providers). Therefore social workers are encouraged to increase entitled persons' awareness of the services provided by DVA that are designed to assist them and their families seeking counselling. See information below on Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) [clause 18 and the Veterans Line Clause 21].

Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling

14. Open Arms (formerly Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service) provides counselling and group programs to Australian veterans, peacekeepers and their families. It is a specialised, free and confidential Australia-wide service. Veterans, peacekeepers and their families can refer themselves to Open Arms. Current serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members can request a formal referral from the ADF. Individuals do not need to be DVA treatment card holders to access the services provided by Open Arms.

15. Open Arms can be contacted on 1800 011 046.

16. Open Arms provides:

- individual, couple and family counselling after-hours crisis telephone counselling via Veterans Line;
- case management services;
- group programs for common mental health issues including anxiety, depression, sleep and anger;
- psycho-educational programs for couples including a residential lifestyle management program;
- Stepping Out, a two-day transition program for ADF members and their partners preparing to leave the military;
- Changing the Mix – a self-paced alcohol reduction correspondence program. To register call 1800 1808 68;
- Operation Life suicide prevention workshops; and
- Resources – information, education and self-help resources.

Veterans Line (after hours crisis counselling)

17. Veterans Line - phone 1800 011 046 - is the after hours crisis counselling service provided by Open Arms. The service assists veterans and their families in coping with crisis situations outside of Open Arms office hours. Counselling is provided free of charge.

Resources for social workers

- *DVA Factsheets* for health providers can be accessed at:
www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/Pages/factsheets.aspx

- *Mental Health Advice Book* – information for providers helping veterans with common mental health problems available online at:
www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/www/html/251-contents.asp?intSiteID=1
- *At Ease* website (www.at-ease.dva.gov.au) to improve veterans' mental health by raising awareness and understanding of how and where to seek help, and encouraging veterans to take action to optimise their health and wellbeing. A range of factsheets and products are available for providers to use with veterans.
- The Right Mix website (www.therightmix.gov.au) provides veterans with:
 - a range of resources to help them recognise if they have the right balance of alcohol in their lives
 - tips on actions to take if they need to reduce their drinking
 - help on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The website also contains a range of resources for professionals including a training manual on alcohol screening and brief intervention for the veteran community.