



# Personal Helpers & Mentors Program

## What is the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program?

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program is one of the key initiatives of the Australian Government's mental health reform package announced in the 2006 Federal Budget, and is also part of the Australian Government's contribution to the COAG National Action Plan on Mental Health.

A key element of the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program is its emphasis on community support and social connection as an integral component of recovery.

## How much funding is available?

Total funding of \$284.8 million over 5 years from 2006 has been allocated to fund approximately 900 full time equivalent (FTE) Personal Helpers and Mentors, across Australia, including rural and remote areas.

This funding provides for:

- 2006-07 – approximately 140 FTE
- 2007-08 – additional 260 FTE (approximately)
- 2008-09 – additional 400 FTE (approximately)
- 2009-10 – additional 100 FTE (approximately)

## How will the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program be delivered?

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program will be delivered by non-government organisations who have demonstrated experience in, and capacity for, achieving outcomes for people with severe functional limitation as a result of a severe mental illness.

## Program eligibility

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program will assist people aged 16 years and over whose ability to manage their daily activities and to live independently in the community is severely impacted as a result of a severe mental illness.

A person does not need to have a formalised clinical diagnosis of a severe mental illness to initially access the program. Participants will be offered a clinician as part of the program and will be helped to connect to appropriate medical and health supports for assessment and treatment.

## The role of a Personal Helper and Mentor

Personal Helpers and Mentors will support program participants in their recovery journey, building long-term relationships and providing holistic support. They will ensure that services accessed by program participants are coordinated, integrated and complementary to other services in the community.

A Personal Helper and Mentor will:

- help participants to better manage their daily activities and reconnect to their community
- provide direct and personalised assistance through outreach services
- provide referrals and links with appropriate services such as drug and alcohol and accommodation services
- work with participants in the development of Individual Recovery Plans which focus on participants goals and recovery journey
- engage and support family, carer and other relationships
- monitor and report progress against the participants Individual Recovery Plan.

## Participation in the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program

Participation in the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program will require a functional assessment. This assessment will determine an individual's level of functioning in managing their daily activities and living independently in the community.

This assessment process is intended to assist both the Personal Helper and Mentor and the participant to develop an Individual Recovery Plan. This Recovery Plan will be regularly reviewed by the service provider and the participant, using the functional assessment instrument, to see if there has been a positive change in the participant's level of functioning and progress in their recovery journey.

For further information, contact [mentalhealth@facsia.gov.au](mailto:mentalhealth@facsia.gov.au)

