

Selecting Service Providers

Information for participants and their families on what to consider when selecting providers to deliver their approved services.

What is a Service Provider?

A service provider is any individual, company or organisation that Lifetime Care pays to deliver services to meet your treatment, rehabilitation or care needs.

Examples of service providers are doctors, physiotherapists, case managers, psychologists and attendant care providers.

Who selects service providers?

Just as you choose your own GP, dentist, hairdresser or house cleaner, you can also be involved in selecting your service providers. A good way to start is to think about providers in your local area and ask them if they have the right skills and experience to meet your needs.

You may like some help with locating service providers, especially in the early months or years following your injury. Support is available to help you find suitable providers to meet your needs. Sometimes the people working with you can recommend providers they have had experience with.

Can I just choose anyone?

Some types of service providers need to be on an icare-approved panel to be able to work with you. This includes private case managers and attendant care providers. Your icare support person will help you know which providers need to be selected from a panel.

To make it easier for you to choose approved private case managers and Attendant Care Providers, we have directories on our website where you can search the panel for people who have the skills to meet your needs and deliver services where you live.

We recommend that you meet or speak with providers before you make your decision to be sure they are the right fit for you.

We allocate an approved provider to deliver a specific service for some services due to the level of specialisation required. Examples of this are Building Modifications Occupational Therapists, Building Modification Project Managers, and Care Needs Assessors.

Other provider groups don't currently need to be approved by us, for example, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, doctors, dieticians, dentists. You can choose a local provider to meet your need for these services. The next section provides some guidance on finding these providers.

How can I find out my options?

Most service providers are publicly listed. Places to look include:

- Yellow Pages directory- www.yellowpages.com.au/
- Health Direct (an Australian government site) - www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services
- Search Google for the type of service and your suburb or region, e.g. “Physiotherapist Sydney NSW.”

For health-related service providers that have a professional association, there are directories on their professional association webpages. To be included in these directories, the provider must be registered or accepted as a member and work within a professional code of conduct.

Links to well-known directories are listed below:

Service provider type	Website link to directory
Occupational Therapists	www.otaus.com.au/find-an-occupational-therapist
Physiotherapists	choose.physio/find-a-physio
Speech Pathologists	www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/
Social Workers	www.aasw.asn.au/find-a-social-worker/search/
Dietitians	member.dietitiansaustralia.org.au/faapd
Exercise Physiologists/Exercise Scientists	www.essa.org.au/find-aep/
Chiropractors	www.chiro.org.au/find-a-chiropractor/

You decide how involved you want to be in selecting your service providers. You can speak to your icare coordinator or case manager for further advice and guidance.

What questions should I ask potential service providers?

Here are examples of questions you may want to ask about their service

- do you have experience working with people with similar injuries to me?
- what is your approach to working with people with my disability/needs?
- what days of the week/hours are you available?
- where is your business located, and does it meet my access needs?
- are you able to speak or understand my preferred language, which is...

Other questions you could ask of providers that aren't on an icare-approved panel, for example, when choosing a suitable therapist:

- Can you provide me with evidence of your qualification/s?
- Can you provide me with evidence that you have a current Working with Children Check certificate?
- Can you provide me with evidence that you are currently registered? (this is only relevant for registered professions listed on the AHPRA website - www.ahpra.gov.au/)
- Can you provide me with evidence that you have current professional indemnity and public liability insurance?

How much you explore all these things is up to you and the people around you. Remember you have the right to:

- ask as many questions as you like
- be given important and up-to-date information about the provider
- take your time in deciding
- be treated fairly during your enquiries

Who can help me with service provider selection?

Asking these questions can be hard if you haven't had to find health-related service providers before. But just remember, it is not so different to when you have chosen your GP or dentist in the past.

People around you, like family and close friends, are often good supports in selecting service providers because they know you and can help decide what questions to ask.

If you are getting ready to leave hospital, the treating team you have been working with can offer suggestions and assist you with interviewing providers. After you leave hospital, other practitioners working with you might be able to offer suggestions.

Your case manager or icare contact can suggest local service providers that can meet your needs based on their experience. They will usually know your local area and the service providers available. If they don't, they can assist you to explore who is available.

Identifying and selecting service providers is often discussed with you at the time of your My Plan development, so let the case manager know the level of involvement you would like to have in selecting providers. It's often a good idea to speak with providers to ensure they are the right fit for you before you make your final decision.

Does Lifetime Care have a list of service providers for me to choose from?

We only keep lists of providers we have approved for panels. Lists of approved private case managers and attendant care providers are available on our website, or your coordinator can provide a list of possible candidates to you.

We don't keep lists for providers not subject to approved panels. You will need to use local recommendations and the public databases listed above to identify options close to you.

What do I do if I am not happy with a service provider I have chosen?

Regardless of who was involved in choosing the service provider, or whether they are approved providers or not, if you are unhappy with the services you receive, there are many things that you can do.

Speak with the provider

It's usually a good idea to first speak with the provider about your concerns. They may be able to clear up any misunderstandings or change their service to better meet your needs and expectations.

Ask people from your network to support you if needed. Your family will have a good understanding of your expectations and may be able to assist you in a potentially difficult conversation.

Speak with your case manager or icare contact

Your case manager or icare contact can also help – either in speaking with the service provider on your behalf or in facilitating transfer to a new service provider.

Reflect on the service in your planning session

If you have a My Plan, your next planning session is a great opportunity for you to reflect on the services you've been receiving and your satisfaction with these.

Make a formal complaint

You may wish to make a formal complaint about a service provider. This may be:

- to Lifetime Care through your icare contact person
- by calling our complaints number 1300 738 586
- by completing an online *Feedback or Complaints Form* available on the icare website

You may feel strongly enough to take the matter up with an external body such as:

- the provider's registration or accreditation agency
- consumer protection agencies
- the NSW Ombudsman or even
- the Health Care Complaints Commissioner (HCCC)

For more information on making a complaint and to access online complaints forms, visit the icare website [Complaints and feedback about Lifetime Care and Workers Care | icare \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.icare.nsw.gov.au/complaints-and-feedback-about-lifetime-care-and-workers-care)

Who can I contact for more information about service provider selection?

For any questions or concerns about your treatment, rehabilitation or care services or providers, please contact your icare contact or case manager.

Lifetime Care
GPO Box 4052, Sydney, NSW 2001
General Phone Enquiries: 1300 738 586
Email: care-requests@icare.nsw.gov.au
www.icare.nsw.gov.au