



Provider Factsheet - Client Relocations

Hearing Service Program (program) clients have the right to choose where they receive their hearing services and can choose to relocate to a new service provider (provider) at any time.

Program requirements

Section 35 of the [Hearing Services Program \(Voucher\) Instrument 2019](#) (Instrument) outlines the program requirements regarding clients relocating between providers.

The [Service Provider Contract](#) (contract) at clauses 11.1(h), 12.6c (ii), and 27.3(c) also includes provisions related to client relocations. Item C, Schedule A of the contract requires providers to have a policy in place for the management of client relocations.

Providers are also required to comply with the [Privacy Act 1988](#), which includes the [Australian Privacy Principles \(APPs\)](#), any State/Territory privacy legislation, and relevant consumer law.

Relocation request

A client must give their informed consent to relocate to a new provider before the new provider processes their relocation and commences delivering services. If the client has a Power of Attorney (POA) or other legal guardianship arrangement in effect, then the consent must come from the POA or guardian.

The client must also provide 4 points of identity with their consent to allow a new provider to access the client's record in the Hearing Services Online Portal (the portal).

The points of identity include the client's:

- voucher number
- first name
- surname
- date of birth.

Accessing health information without consent is a breach of the *Privacy Act 1988* and the contract. Breaches may need to be reported under the [Notifiable Data Breaches scheme](#).

Consent format

The new provider is expected to obtain consent from the relocating client before processing the relocation.

Providers should refer to the Documenting Consent and Agreement section of the [Schedule of Service Items and Fees](#) for details.

The department has a [Client Relocations template](#). This template can be edited, but the information contained on the template must be retained.

Processing a relocation

Each client is linked to their chosen provider in the portal. Personal information is safeguarded by limiting access in the portal to the client's chosen provider. When a new provider initiates a relocation through the portal a link is created between the client and the new provider. This link allows their provider to view and update the client information.

When processing relocation requests, providers must ensure they are logged into the portal under the site requesting the client's record, as the record will be sent to the requesting site's address.

The previous provider will receive an automated email relocation notice to their registered contact email address. In accordance with Section 35 of the Instrument, the complete file must be transferred as directed by this notice.

The previous provider will no longer have access to the client's information in the portal. Information on how to process a relocation in the portal is available in the [Quick Reference Guide – Transfer, link and search for existing clients](#).

Providers must not ask clients to collect their file from a previous provider.

Client record

Providers must send complete client records to the department or a new provider when directed by the relocation notification. Providers must have a process in place to ensure the complete record is provided. If the complete file is not supplied, the new provider should contact the previous provider detailing missing information. If the file is still not provided after following up, contact the program for further assistance via email at hearing@health.gov.au.

If you do not receive the complete record within 7 business days of actioning the relocation in the portal, contact the previous provider to confirm they received the relocation notification.

If the previous provider has not received the relocation notification, the new provider should confirm their email address and email the program to have it reissued, allowing another 10 business days to receive the file.

If the new provider still does not receive the client file within an appropriate timeframe, they should email the program at hearing@health.gov.au. In this email they should briefly outline their efforts to resolve the issue and include names and voucher numbers of relevant clients, the date of follow up requesting the file and any relevant file notes.

Contacting relocated clients

Clients must not be contacted and pressured into staying with their previous provider.

Chapter 7 of the APP guidelines (under the Privacy Act 1988) allows clients to withdraw their consent to receive direct marketing communications from a provider and request no further contact. A client needs to contact a provider to withdraw consent.

Relocated Maintenance Claims

All outstanding claims for payment must be submitted by the previous provider within 20 business days of the date of the relocation notice. If a client wishes to continue with maintenance arrangements, the new provider can submit a relocated maintenance claim for that client (items 711/ 722).

If a client relocates and is not on a current maintenance agreement at the time of relocating, the new service provider may offer the client a new maintenance agreement and claim item 700 or 710.

Record Keeping

All client records must be managed in accordance with the program's [Management of Client Records](#) Provider Factsheet.

Compliance Monitoring

Program requirements are monitored in accordance with the [Compliance Monitoring and Support Framework](#). The program monitors relocation patterns and claiming and undertakes routine compliance checks in accordance with the contract, specifically clause 16.