

# CARE SEEKERS

## **About Careseekers**

The Careseekers digital platform links individuals, families and organisations to aged care and disability support workers. Promoting choice and control over care and support, and work opportunities for care and support workers. The Careseekers platform is easy to use and supports individuals to find and communicate with workers, create contracts, and pay workers.

Careseekers is an innovative, dynamic provider of services to people with disabilities and older Australians wanting to remain at home as they age. We combine our passion for helping people and making a difference with technology to create a service that no one in the industry is offering.

The platform provides connection and access to thousands of care and support workers who have been safely onboarded and thoroughly checked. The platform is a great way to manage your own care and supports if you are an individual and family. It is also a great way for aged care and disability providers to access workers.

Established in 2017, by sisters Marissa Sandler and Lauren Hockley Careseekers is a nationwide community of over 14,000 workers.

At Careseekers we value choice, control and affordability.

## **What are the pros and cons of independent contractors and platform workers in aged care for:**

### **Aged care recipients (in terms of quality of care and consumer choice)**

Central to digital platforms is the idea that the aged care recipient, or their representative can choose their own workers.

- This is a very easy process whereby the aged care recipient or their representative view worker profiles, which set out the following information about a worker - qualifications, work experience, language/s spoken, areas of expertise, services they can provide, personality traits, interests, hourly rates. The worker also writes a free text blurb to describe themselves and what type of work they are looking for.
- The advantages of the aged care recipient being able to choose their worker in this way is that they can identify workers who have the exact right skills and experience to meet their requirements, this will improve the quality of care delivered to them.

- A barrier to respite can be a carer feeling worried about whether the aged care worker will meet the needs of their elderly family member. Careseekers allows the carer to choose the worker, as outlined above.
- Aged care can be very personal and is delivered in the person's home. By being able to identify common interests or personality traits they like in a worker, the relationship between the worker and aged care recipient can become more meaningful for the aged care recipient. This is important as with ageing can come social isolation. Over seventy percent of services delivered to older people are for/include social support.
- Using a digital platform aged care recipients or their representatives can choose exactly when they want to receive services i.e day and time of day. This improves quality of life for the aged care recipient as it means they are in control of how their day is structured, which impacts quality of life. For example, using a digital platform an aged care recipient can find a worker to assist them to shower at the time of day that they like to shower as opposed to a time of day when the provider is able to deliver the service.

#### **Aged care workers (in terms of employment conditions and worker preferences)**

- Workers on Careseekers are independent contractors using ABNs to deliver services. Workers must deliver services in accordance with our Code of Conduct and Terms of Service. There are significant penalties for those that breach the code.
- Careseekers take a 9% fee out of the worker's hourly rate on each hour of care delivered. In return we provide workers with the following:
  - access to work/people needing care services
  - support setting up their service provision - online contracts are put in place on the Careseekers platform between the worker and care recipient/their representative.
  - Insurances - Careseekers provides the workers with personal accident, public liability and professional indemnity insurance coverage.
  - Mechanisms for creating invoices and a place to record service provision notes.
  - Support to follow up any unpaid invoices - workers can advise if invoices have not been paid and the Careseekers accounts team will follow up and deal with any issues that arise.
  - Access to account managers - where workers can make complaints/raising issues of concern.
  - Access to support around running their own business - we have a business hub with information on tax and super and also have a partnership with AirTax (a PWC venture that assists independent contractors to pay tax correctly). Further, we run a series of webinars, CS Talks, where we cover topics including managing your finances as an independent contractor.
- Working through Careseekers an aged care worker takes home on average \$39 per hour (pre-tax/super).
- On Careseekers, workers can choose which clients they service and therefore which services they provide. Having choice and control over these aspects of work results in workers experiencing higher job satisfaction, which in turn makes them more reliable, and creates better outcomes for the care recipient.

- In a survey of workers using the Careseekers platform undertaken in 2020, 80% of independent aged care and disability support workers surveyed said they felt fortunate to provide aged care and disability support and expressed pride in their work.
- On the Careseekers platform requests for workers clearly state the days and times a worker is required. Workers are therefore able to identify roles that suit their availability and fit this work within their schedule.
- This flexibility provides job opportunities for carers, who have been unable to access the workforce due to their caring responsibilities. It is an opportunity to use their skills in a flexible work environment because they can choose their own work location and hours.
- Our service model increases economic security for care and support workers as they set their own hourly rates and keep almost all of what they earn when working through the Careseekers platform.
- Careseekers is also providing employment opportunities for demographics of people that are often struggling to find the flexibility around employment such as women and is a solution that supports the growing area of aged and disability which takes pressures of high cost care such as institutions and other government services.

### **What role can technology play in providing support in aged care?**

Technology plays a very important role in providing support in aged care. It provides us with real time data as to whether a worker can do a shift, confirms a shift and actually delivers the service. It allows communication to be delivered between client/provider and worker with ease and accountability. It allows up to date information to be shared across organisations where a client is managed by a provider but services are being provided by a worker not from that information. The old ways of massive email communication and file transfers cannot keep up with the fast pace of today's world and the speed at which services need to be delivered to clients.

### **How have digital platforms changed the way aged care workers are sourced?**

Digital platforms have been a game changer for the way care workers are sourced. Firstly, the 24/7 nature of an online platform means that potential workers can create profiles and connect to clients when it suits them and not just in the 9am -5pm business hours.

Platforms enabled Careseekers to grow a workforce in a relatively small amount of time due to efficient systems and technology automation. During Covid our workforce doubled as people with transferable skills ( e.g. flight attendants and hospitality staff) saw care work as a secure, pandemic proof type of income. Our values based service delivery also sees the retention of both workers and those seeking care at high rate

**What other forms of technology are used to engage aged care workers? How can technology be used to improve the efficiency and quality of care.**

Social media and digital content is a fantastic medium to get people inspired about working in the aged care industry. This will be essential to solve the issue of supply that is currently occurring and will only grow in the coming years and decades.

Technology can be used to improve the efficiency and quality of care in a number of ways. Technology allows workers schedules to be optimised so that they are matched to the perfect client, meaning they will stay with them for longer, that they are doing jobs that are in the area they live or wish to work and that their day or week is optimised to find jobs when it suits them.

The quality of care can be improved by technology in the following ways:

- Ensure that the most up to date information about the client and their environment reaches the worker efficiently.
- Ensure that the right worker with the most suitable skills and personality match is matched to the client.
- Real time updates about the worker attending the shift, or having to cancel etc. so that it doesn't affect the well being or safety of the client.