

Aged Care Employment - Productivity Commission submission

Country Home Advocacy Project Inc. (CHAP) has operated in the in-home aged care services sector since 1989. CHAP originally traded as CHAP, though now trades at Country Home Services (CHS).

CHAP has never directly employed service delivery staff, all services have been delivered by independent contractors (ICs). Hundreds of ICs have been utilised over this 33 year period and we call it the 'Contractor Model'. We primarily deliver home maintenance, domestic assistance, social support and personal care services.

ICs have been utilised in preference to direct employees for a number of reasons, including:

- Flexibility – ICs liaise directly with clients to arrange mutually convenient times for services. Direct communication also occurs for any rescheduling requirements without the need for third party intervention.
- Client centricity – The contractor model better enables short service times for clients. Some personal care services only require 30 minutes per day which could be challenging to deliver economically in a direct employment model.
- Stability – ICs have high longevity in caring roles with many delivering services consistently to clients for many years on end.
- Quality – ICs as well as CHAP are responsible for ensuring the quality of services. ICs are running their own businesses and are highly motivated to maintain a positive business reputation.
- Fixed pricing – As ICs quote for each client in a competitive tender process all parties are assured of fixed pricing for budgeting purposes. Prices can be varied through negotiation though there is no pricing volatility due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Complementary incomes – We operate exclusively in country South Australia. Many of our ICs live in small country towns with minimal employment opportunities. In many cases they rely on multiple revenue streams to provide an adequate overall income. Independent contracting allows them to do this simply across multiple principal clients and industries.

We routinely survey both clients and workers on their experience with us. In 2021 we conducted a Client Experience Survey and received 781 responses. A summary of responses is included as an appendix. Overall responses were very positive with 98.97% of responses indicating they would recommend CHS. We take this as a very strong endorsement of our current operating model exclusively utilising ICs for the delivery of services.

In February 2022 we conducted a worker wellbeing survey and included ICs as well as direct staff. Our direct staff roles include administration, client care coordination, support services such as quality, WHS and marketing, and management. Generally high ratings were received for both direct staff and ICs, though for all measures ICs indicated higher ratings than direct staff. This validates to us that the contractor model provides high levels of worker alignment, engagement, support and financial sustainability. A summary of ratings is provided in Table 1.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Difference</i>
At the start of my work day I usually feel...	4.06	3.4	4.2	-0.8
The connection I have with clients makes me feel...	4.54	4.13	4.62	-0.49
The amount of individual responsibility and control of my time that I have makes me feel...	4.25	3.87	4.32	-0.45
When I think about how engaging and rewarding my work is I feel...	4.44	4.2	4.48	-0.28
The relationship I have with CHS, colleagues and managers makes me...	4.18	4	4.21	-0.21
The individual recognition I receive makes me...	4.09	3.67	4.18	-0.51
CHS safety systems and requirements make me feel...	3.94	3.67	4	-0.33
My access to wellbeing information and support makes me...	3.93	3.33	4.06	-0.73
The work-life balance I currently have makes me feel...	3.99	3.8	4.03	-0.23
My ability to influence and improve CHS makes me feel...	3.66	3.47	3.7	-0.23
CHS communication methods and frequency makes me...	3.86	2.73	4.1	-1.37
The CHS purpose of Improving the lives of country people makes me feel...	4.48	4.4	4.5	-0.1
At the end of my work day I usually feel...	3.68	3.2	3.78	-0.58

Table 1. All ratings are out of 5 with 5 being the highest rating.

In summary, we have over thirty years of experience exclusively utilising hundreds of independent contractors to deliver in-home aged care services. Our experience and ongoing feedback continually indicate high levels of client and worker satisfaction with the contractor model. In the interests of client, workers and local communities we have a strong preference to continue using a contractor model. Should mechanisms be implemented to discourage the use of contractors for in-home aged care, many hundreds of workers and clients may be significantly disadvantaged.

Appendix

Client Experience Survey 2021: Results Summary

The survey was sent with the winter edition of the Valley to Coast magazine.

- [A letter introducing the survey.](#)
- [A copy of the survey](#)
- A reply-paid envelope.

Clients had an approximately a 6-week turnaround to complete the survey.

An additional 6 questions were added to the survey and 2 removed from the previous survey sent in 2019.

1892 surveys were mailed to all clients. This number was inflated by once off services that proved difficult to remove from ongoing services. As we were unable to remove once off service delivery, we asked respondents to nominate their frequency of service.

Table 1: Respondents Frequency of Service

Frequency of Service	Percentage
Ongoing services – daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly	95.00%
Once off services - annual	05.00%

781 or 41.69% surveys were returned slightly down from the previous survey completed in 2019, 46.43%).

Survey Questions and Results -

1. *Do the workforce treat you with dignity and respect?*

Always	727
Most of the time	17
Some of the time	3
Never	1



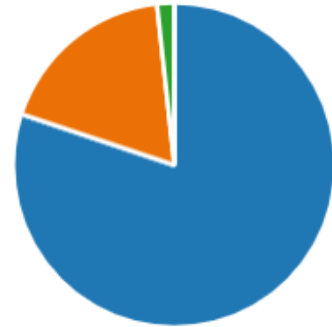
Total 748

<i>Always</i>	<i>97.19% ↑</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>0.40%</i>
<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>2.28%</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>0.13%</i>

** Never response - services are currently on hold, due to client's health. Client comments and other responses on the survey are all positive. No issues identified at previous review with last review being completed 20/9/2021, survey completed 21/8/2021 online.*

2. Do the workforce know what they are doing?

Always	603
Most of the time	137
Some of the time	13
Never	0



Total 753

Always	80.08% ↓	Some of the time	1.73%
Most of the time	18.19%	Never	

3. Do the workforce follow up when you raise things with them?

Always	596
Most of the time	104
Some of the time	16
Never	2

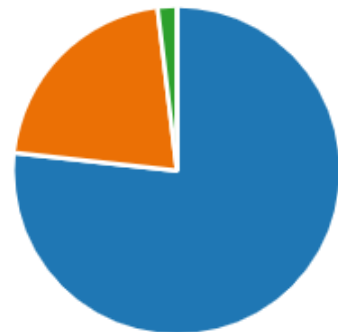


Total 718

Always	83.00% ↑	Some of the time	2.23%
Most of the time	14.49%	Never	0.28%

4. How often does your contractor attend on time?

Always	564
Most of the time	157
Some of the time	14
Never	0



Total 735

Always	76.74% ↑	Some of the time	1.90%
Most of the time	21.36%	Never	

5. Do you participate in making decisions about what services that you receive from Country Home Services?

Always	503
Most of the time	127
Some of the time	51
Never	33



Total 714

Always	70.45% ↓	Some of the time	7.15%
Most of the time	17.78%	Never	4.62%

6. Do your services help you to live the best life you can?

Always	559
Most of the time	165
Some of the time	13
Never	1

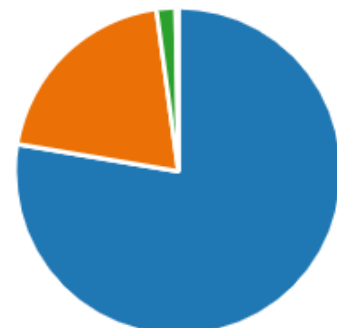


Total 738

Always	75.75% ↑	Some of the time	1.76%
Most of the time	22.35%	Never	0.15%

7. Is the information you are provided by Country Home Services easy to understand?

Always	577
Most of the time	150
Some of the time	14
Never	2



Total 743

Always	77.65% ↑	Some of the time	1.89%
Most of the time	20.19%	Never	0.27%

8. Do your services represent value for money?

Always	544
Most of the time	137
Some of the time	17
Never	0



Total 698

<i>Always</i>	<i>77.93% ↓</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>2.45%</i>
<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>19.62%</i>	<i>Never</i>	

9. Do you trust Country Home Services to do the right thing by you?

Always	608
Most of the time	76
Some of the time	8
Never	0



Total 692

<i>Always</i>	<i>87.86% ↑</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>1.16%</i>
<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>10.98%</i>	<i>Never</i>	

10. Do you know how to provide feedback on the services Country Home Services provide to you? ** New Question

Always	369
Most of the time	239
Some of the time	47
Never	22



Total 677

<i>Always</i>	<i>54.50%</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>6.95%</i>
<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>35.30%</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>3.25%</i>

11. Are you comfortable providing (negative or positive) feedback? ** New Question

- Always 440
- Most of the time 192
- Some of the time 45
- Never 9

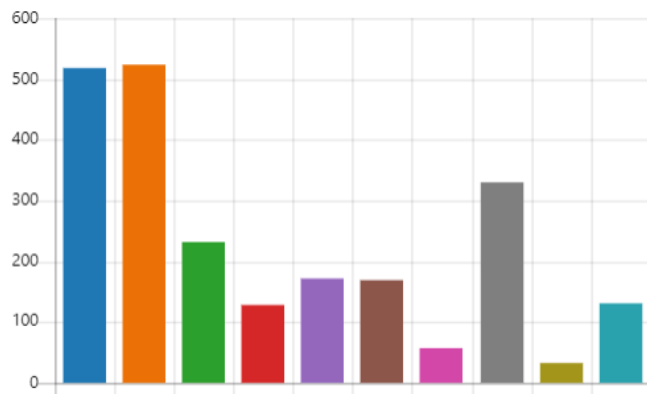


Total 686

Always	64.18%	Some of the time	6.55%
Most of the time	27.97%	Never	1.30%

12. What are the 3 most important things to you when receiving home care services? ** New Question

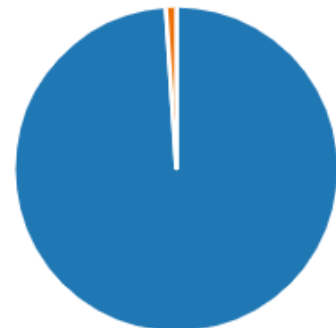
- Service reliability 518
- Friendly caring workers 525
- Cost of services 233
- Having choice and control 129
- Respect my dignity 172
- Consistent care workers 168
- Knowledgeable coordinators 56
- Quality of service 331
- Being able to provide feedback 34
- Good communication about s... 131



** Top 3 – Friendly Caring Workers, Service Reliability, Quality of Service

13. Would you recommend Country Home Services? ** New Question

- Yes 751
- No 8



Total 759

Yes	98.97%	No	0.13%
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