

Maximising the benefits of an external consultant

This tip sheet has been developed to provide practical guidance on making the decision to engage an external consultant, as CHSP providers make strategic decisions and prepare for the Support at Home Program. This document outlines considerations for selecting the right consultant, defining the scope of the consultancy, and ensuring data privacy and security.

As the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) prepares for reform, providers face complex challenges and must make informed, data-driven decisions to ensure the quality and sustainability of their services. Engaging an external consultant can provide valuable expertise, objectivity, and resources to support CHSP providers in this process. An external consultant may also help CHSP providers make informed, data-driven decisions that support their long-term success and sustainability in the rapidly evolving aged care environment.

Considerations:

1. Rationalise your decision

CHSP providers may consider engaging a consultant to make strategic decisions for several reasons including:

- **Expertise:** Consultants bring expertise and experience in the aged care industry and can provide valuable insights and recommendations on navigating complex challenges and regulations
- **Objectivity:** Consultants bring an independent perspective and can provide objective analysis and recommendations free from internal biases or conflicts of interest
- **Resources:** Consultants have access to industry resources, tools, and best practices that CHSP providers may not have
- **Timesaving:** Engaging a consultant can save time and allow CHSP providers to focus on core operations while the consultant manages the strategic decision-making process
- **Access to broader knowledge:** Consultants have a network of industry contacts and can bring a broader range of knowledge and ideas to the table.

2. Define the Scope

Providers should define the scope of the consultancy by clearly outlining the following aspects:

- **Objectives:** Define the specific goals and outcomes the service is seeking to achieve through the consultancy
- **Scope of work:** Outline the tasks and responsibilities of the consultant, including data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and report writing, among others
- **Deliverables:** Specify the specific outputs expected from the consultant, such as a report, a presentation, or recommendations for action
- **Timeline:** Establish a timeline for completion of the consultancy
- **Budget:** Define the budget for the consultancy
- **Confidentiality and privacy:** Define the terms of confidentiality and data privacy, including access to data and protection of sensitive information
- **Communication:** Establish the channels for communication, including regular check-ins and status updates.

By defining the scope of the consultancy, CHSP providers can ensure that expectations are clear, resources are properly allocated, and the consultancy is completed on time and within budget.

3. Make an Assessment

To help decide who is the best fit for a provider, the following questions can be asked of consultants, either during or after the Request for Proposal (RFP) process:

- What is your expertise and experience in the aged care industry, specifically with CHSP, community aged care, and in-home aged care reform?
- Can you provide examples of successful strategic decisions you have helped organisations make in the past?
- How do you approach data analysis and decision-making in the aged care industry?
- How do you stay up to date with industry regulations, best practices, and emerging trends?
- Can you share your approach to working with stakeholders, including staff, clients, and government agencies?
- How do you ensure the privacy and security of client and organisational data?
- Can you provide references or case studies from previous clients in the aged care industry?

Answers to these questions can help CHSP providers assess a consultant's qualifications, experience, and approach to decision-making, and determine if they are a good fit for the organisation's needs and goals.