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Guideline for the
South Australian
Lymphoedema
Compression Garment
Subsidy Scheme

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Lymphoedema Compression Garment Subsidy Scheme Guideline

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Introduction

Lymphoedema is a chronic, progressive, high-protein form of oedema resulting from an abnormality in the lymphatic system.

Best practice management of lymphoedema is holistic and multidisciplinary. There are many treatment modalities available for lymphoedema management. Medical grade compression garments are an integral component of lymphoedema management in every stage of treatment from risk minimisation to early development and long-term management for many people.

Compression garments are custom made or ready to wear garments that are designed to provide compression to a limb or body part. A clinical prescription is a written description of specific parameters of compression garment style, class, fit and fabric size for the purpose of sourcing through a supplier/vendor.

Wearing correctly measured and prescribed compression garments can support people with lymphoedema to reduce the development of complications from lymphoedema and improve their health outcomes. Compression garments are available in a wide variety of designs, fabrics and compression levels.

Clinicians need to be highly skilled in the assessment of lymphoedema, and appropriately trained in the prescription, measurement and fitting of compression garments to ensure appropriate, comfortable, effective and well-fitting garments. Ill-fitting garments may cause tissue trauma, exacerbate swelling and lead to permanent tissue damage.

When garments are worn daily, people usually need at least two effective and appropriate garments per affected body part and to follow the supplier's directions about the care of garments to maintain hygiene and garment tension.

Purpose

The South Australian Lymphoedema Compression Garment Subsidy Scheme (the Scheme) is designed to provide eligible South Australians living with lymphoedema with access to up to two subsidised compression garments per affected body part at least each six months.

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The Scheme only accepts orders from Approved Prescribers who may be physiotherapists, occupational therapists or registered nurses.

Garments for the Scheme are supplied by a panel of Suppliers of high-quality medical grade compression garments under contract with SA Health.

The purpose of this Guideline is to provide guidance about the administration and functioning of the Scheme for the provision of garments.

Background

The Scheme is supported through joint commonwealth and state funding.

Prior to transition in April 2021 to Department for Health and Wellbeing, Wellbeing SA completed;

- establishment of the scheme and providing reports and briefings as required
- publicising the Scheme, including launch and web presence, International Lymphoedema Day (6 March 2021)
- establishment the SA Advisory Group and SA Working Group
- collaboration with PHNs around HealthPathways, and consumer, academic and clinical groups
- a consumer survey.

Scope of the Lymphoedema Compression Garment Subsidy Scheme

The Guideline does not set requirements for the clinical treatment and management of lymphoedema.

Clinicians providing lymphoedema therapy and treatment are required to act within their professional scope of practice and undertake the professional development and training necessary to deliver their clinical role.

Implementation of the Scheme is not intended to change existing pathways or clinical relationships and where possible, clients should continue to seek services available via existing clinical relationships, in the LHN closest to their residency or via a private provider.

The scope of the Scheme may evolve as the scheme matures. This Guideline will be updated accordingly.

Roles and Responsibilities

Procurement Supply Chain Management (PSCM) Department for Health and Wellbeing is responsible for;

- establishing a panel of preferred providers of medical grade compression garments through an open tender process. Contracts for the supplier panel will be awarded in June 2021.
- reviewing agreements, and future applications to join the panel
- maintaining an intranet page with information for Approved Prescribers (including a buyers guide and Suppliers price/product pricing lists and prescription order forms)

NGO Performance Management, Department for Health and Wellbeing is responsible for;

- monitoring that the Scheme is accessed by eligible people and approved prescribers, and operates within available funding
- establish a system to respond to queries regarding the Scheme from the public, prescribers, referrers and suppliers
- ensuring good communication with, and advice received from key stakeholders, including the Local Health Networks (LHNs), private prescribers, consumers, PHNs,

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referrers, and other relevant stakeholders through convening the SA Advisory Group and the SA Working Group

- ensure that current information about the Scheme is available
 - maintaining currency of information on internet and other communication channels
 - assist Procurement/Contracts to maintain currency of the intranet page for the Scheme
- establishing a system for collecting relevant financial, utilisation, quality, performance data
- establishing and monitoring the processes for order, approval, supply and payment of compression garments with the assistance of Procurement Supply Chain Management (PSCM);
- provide briefings and reports for CE and Minister as required
- provide reports to Commonwealth according to the Commonwealth Project Agreement under Clause 3.5 – Administration and Authorisation;
- procuring and providing training for prescribers, managers as required
- manage the contracts with Suppliers under the Panel Agreement.

Public and Private Approved prescribers are responsible for;

- prescribing appropriate compression garments for eligible clients, as part of management of their lymphoedema
- complying with this Guideline and the processes required for ordering, approval and other data collection as requested by DHW
- maintaining currency of their skills and knowledge.

Local Health Networks are responsible for;

- participating in the SA Health Working Group
- providing support for LHN staff to undertake training and professional development to become Approved Prescribers as appropriate, and ensuring these employees maintain relevant knowledge, skills and recency of practice, and are supported to participate in a community of practice, mentoring and sharing of expertise
- providing clinical oversight/supervision of approved prescribers, and clinical approval of the orders placed
- notating under Scope of Practice in the Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice System (CSCPS) that the employee is a 'Lymphoedema Garment Prescriber'
- developing and maintaining health care records, data collection and/or data verification mechanisms relevant to the Scheme
- reporting incidents relating to harm to a patient from ill-fitting garments, or delays in provision of garments into the Safety Learning System, managing the investigation and open disclosure, and informing NGO Performance manager if there is a need to discuss with the garment Supplier
- assisting the NGO Performance Management team to
 - prepare quarterly reports detailing usage of the scheme/provision of garments;
 - provide data required for Commonwealth reports as needed
 - review data and information about the performance of the Scheme, and recommend improvement actions.

Allied and Scientific Health Office, Department for Health and Wellbeing is responsible for;

- providing advice via the SA Advisory Group, and Working Group
- providing advice relating to eligibility criteria and training requirements for public and private prescribers
- assisting with procurement of future training, if funding is available
- overseeing credentialing for private prescribers, and Chair the SA Health LCGSS Credentialing Panel

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Eligibility to receive compression garments via the South Australian CGSS

An FAQ with eligibility, inclusions and exclusions is available

Clients eligible to receive compression garments as part of the Scheme will meet all the following criteria:

- primary or secondary lymphoedema diagnosed by a Medical Practitioner
- have not received two subsidised (by the Scheme) garments for an affected body part in the past 6 months
- not admitted as an inpatient at a hospital
- resident of South Australia
- Medicare eligible
- not eligible for garments through other sources/programs ie. National Disability Insurance Scheme, DVA Gold Card, work cover, private health insurance* (or as assessed and determined on a case by case basis according to the level of cover provided)

(*Where Private Health Insurance does not include cover for compression garments, the client will be eligible for the Scheme if all other eligibility criteria are met.

For a person with partial Private Health Insurance coverage for compression garments a claim for consideration under the scheme can be made; the approved prescriber should include details of the circumstance with the prescription form to enable a case by case assessment to be undertaken.)

The Scheme excludes the following conditions:

- Lipoedema, Lipodermatosclerosis, chronic venous insufficiency or post thrombotic syndrome

The Scheme excludes the following items;

- Prophylactic compression garments including flight sleeves
- Structural therapy garments/hernia supports
- Devices, bandaging, dressings for Short term use (acute treatment ie. burns/Split Skin Grafts)
- Anti-embolic stockings
- Doff/Donning aids
- Electrical air compression pumps
- Inelastic or elastic lymphoedema bandages
- Adjustable compression devices ie. farrow wraps

Approved Compression Garment Prescribers

This Guideline sets the minimum requirement for a clinician to be an Approved Prescriber who is approved by DHW to prescribe medical grade compression garments under the Scheme.

All public and private prescribers who have met the requirements are listed scope of practice notation "Lymphoedema Garment Prescriber" in the Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice System (CSCPS) through the usual credentialing processes.

Private Approved Prescribers

A list of current private prescribers is [available](#).

Private clinicians seeking to become an approved prescriber must complete an [application form](#) and provide necessary evidence to support their application.

A private Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Podiatrist or Registered Nurse who holds a minimum Lymphoedema Training Certificate, from an ALA accredited training provider and is accredited under the ALA Accredited Lymphoedema Practitioner Program, and therefore eligible to be listed on the National Lymphoedema Practitioners Register (NLPR)

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Private clinicians who are not accredited under the ALPP will be considered for approval up to 30 June 2022, if they have a minimum Lymphoedema Training Certificate from an ALA accredited training provider and:

- are actively working towards ALPP accreditation; and
- are an experienced lymphoedema clinician with existing responsibility and expertise in garment measurement, prescription and fitting; and
- have evidence of the management of a minimum of 6 lymphoedema clients in the prior 12 months.

From 1 July 2022, all clinicians will be required to be accredited under the ALPP, and eligible to be listed on the NLPR and will need to provide evidence that they are currently accredited by the ALA Accredited Lymphoedema Practitioner Program prior to 30 April 2022.

Public Approved Prescribers

A public Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Podiatrist or Registered Nurse who is employed by SA Health and meets all criteria under one of the following categories:

a) Experienced Clinician (pre-scheme equivalency)

- Employed in SA Health prior to commencement of the Scheme in a role with clinical responsibilities in a lymphoedema specific clinical service; and
- Has support from Line or Profession Manager confirming that the employee is an experienced lymphoedema clinician with existing responsibility and expertise in garment measurement, prescription and fitting; and
- Has evidence of management of a minimum of 6 lymphoedema clients in the prior 12 months.

b) Trained Clinician

- Has successfully completed an SA Health approved training program covering lymphoedema-related anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology and treatments focusing on compression, garment measurement and selection; or
- Has successfully completed a minimum Lymphoedema Training Certificate from an ALA accredited training; and
- Has evidence of management of a minimum of 6 lymphoedema clients in the prior 12 months.

SA Health employees approved to prescribe garments under the CGSS will seek scope of practice notation "Lymphoedema Garment Prescriber" through the usual credentialing processes relevant to their LHN.

LHNs are responsible for appropriate supervision, and for ensuring recency of practice is maintained for approved prescribers.

Other SA Health clinicians who do not meet all of the above criteria may prescribe compression garments under the supervision of an approved prescriber for example, an Allied Health Assistant prescribing under the supervision of an approved SA Health Physiotherapist. The supervisor will be required to co-sign the prescription form.

Compression Garment Prescription, ordering and supply

The approved prescriber must verify that the person is eligible for the Scheme.

A clinical prescription is a written description of specific parameters of compression garment style, class, colour, fit and fabric size for the purpose of ordering through a supplier. A copy should be retained as part of the health care/medical record.

Ready-to-wear garments should be considered where fit, compression and wear match the individual's needs.

In circumstances that a ready to wear garment is not able to provide the desired intervention goal, a custom-made garment can be prescribed.

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For custom made garments, detailed measurements must be recorded on the supplier's order form and sent to a supplier(s) to obtain a quote. For any new client, only one garment will be ordered in the first instance. When fitted and clinically assessed as suitable, a second garment may be ordered.

Six monthly reviews of garments are recommended however this may be extended to 12 months where the lymphoedema is relatively stable and the client reports no issues.

A panel of approved garment suppliers has been established and all garments provided by the Scheme will be supplied by these Suppliers.

A number of factors may influence choice of supplier including ability to:

- meet the clinical need of the client
- provide a cost-effective solution
- provide a garment in a timely manner.

Client and prescriber preference will not be the primary factor in determining the most appropriate supplier.

Suppliers product and price lists, and order forms are available on the SA Health Intranet page related to the Scheme (Contracts/Procurement), or by contacting to HealthContractNotices@sa.gov.au

Private prescribers will complete the required prescription form in addition to maintaining usual healthcare records. Send the completed form to HealthContractNotices@sa.gov.au . Once approval is received, orders can be placed with the garment Supplier, including the approval from DHW. Forms are available from HealthContractNotices@sa.gov.au . Suppliers send invoices to DHW for payment.

Public prescribers will record the garment measurement and prescription in the healthcare record. The order will be made by entry into the Oracle Smart form for Lymphoedema Compression Garment Subsidy Scheme. Note that garments ordered without using this Smart form will not be provided by the Scheme.

The order in Oracle should be directed to the clinical manager for authorisation by a nominated clinical manager within their LHN, then directed to DHW for funding approval.

There is a Buyer's Guide with further detail on the SA Health Intranet page related to the Scheme (Contracts/Procurement), or by contacting to HealthContractNotices@sa.gov.au

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring will be guided by the [Review and Continuous Improvement Framework](#) and by the reporting described in suppliers agreements.

DHW, through the NGO Performance Management team, will take the lead in preparing required reports, with the assistance of the LHNs. LHNs may be asked to verify data to ensure accuracy and correlation with local records.

Reporting will include data from;

- the Oracle system (Sharp reports)
- LHNs
- private prescribers
- Suppliers reports
- Safety Learning System (incidents involving patient harm relating to the use of compression garments provided by the Scheme). A guide is available.
- feedback, including consumer surveys.

Reporting will describe aspects of the Scheme, including but not limited to;

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- number of individuals who have accessed the Scheme in any given reporting period, their age, gender etc
- number of garments have been provided under the Scheme (custom-made and ready-made garments provided) and
- activity of the Scheme across LHNs
- cost/expenditure of the Scheme
- incidents, complaints.

Data requirements and frequency may change over time according to need as the scheme matures.

For more information

SA Health

<http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/LymphoedemaScheme>

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