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**My Aged Care**

# Home Care Packages

## What are Home Care Packages?

Home Care Package is an initiative of the Australian Federal government that aims to support Australians over the age of 65, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over to live independently in their own homes. It can also offer support to people with the transition into Aged Care facilities if required.

The types of services provided under a home care package will depend on your needs.

There are four levels of home care packages designed to give the care needed:

* + Level 1 supports people with basic-care needs (approx. $8,880 a year)
  + Level 2 supports people with low-level care needs (approx. $15,500 a year)
  + Level 3 supports people with intermediate-care needs (approx. $33,700 a year)
  + Level 4 supports people with high-level care needs (approx. $51,100 a year).

From 1 July 2015 all home care packages are delivered on a Consumer Directed Care (CDC) basis.

## How do I apply for a Home Care Package?

If you would like to apply for a Home Care Package, you will need to be assessed by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). To arrange an assessment, contact the My Aged Care Contact Centre on 1800 200 422 (Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm, Saturday 10am-2pm), and tell them you would like to be assessed for a Home Care Package.

When preparing for your assessment, try to remember the following:

* Consider the things you are finding difficult, and what services you need to make them less difficult. Are there things you want to be doing, but don’t currently have the support to do? Record your thoughts so you can refer back to them during your assessment.
* We recommend that wherever possible, you have an advocate or support person attend your assessment with you. Talk to this person about the sorts of services and supports you need ahead of time so you are both on the same page.
* Record key information like the name of the assessor, and any agreements that were made during the assessment.

## How does the program work?

Once approved, you will receive an allocated amount of funding that is based on the complexity of your needs. You will work with your case manager and/or service provider to develop a care plan that will set out how you will use this funding to support you to maintain your independence at home.

## What services can I access?

You can access services similar to those on an entry level Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) however, with your Home Care Package, you have more flexibility to determine how many hours of service you receive for a particular service each week. You can also incorporate additional needs into your care plan and access services that will allow you to meet these needs. You can advocate for any service/ equipment you feel is required to support your independence at home or in the community and is not covered in the generic list of services.

You can use the programme to access service such as:

* House cleaning and maintenance
* Yard and lawn maintenance
* Support with shopping and meal preparation
* Assistance with personal care and activities of daily living
* Support with transport and to access the community, Social support groups etc.
* Orientation and Mobility services
* Allied health services e.g. Physiotherapy, in-home podiatry etc.
* Vision-related specialist support services
* Any aids and equipment to support you with maintaining your independence and safety at home. This can also include any training requirements you might have in order to use any adaptive technology.
* Basic home modifications

## Can I choose my service providers?

Yes, you can choose your own service provider. If you are unsure, the My Aged Care website has a list of approved service providers available in your area. [Researching Home Care Providers](https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs/home-care/researching-home-care-providers-considerations-and-checklist) – considerations and checklist - This checklist provides people with a list of considerations to support their research of home care providers. This allows an individual to compare options, and prepare themselves for selecting a provider once they have been assigned a home care package.

Note: Service Providers have varying Case Management and administrative costs, so it is a good idea to do your research and shop around. You can ask service providers for their draft budget or price guide prior to help make your decision.

## What assistive technology can I access?

If there is assistive technology that you require it can be included in your care plan and you can utilise your funding to purchase them. For example, if you use a CCTV to be able to access the print material, you are able to add that piece of equipment in your care plan. You are also able to access any training you might require to be able to access the technology in order to maintain your independence. For example, if you have an iPhone or an iPad and you need support to be able to learn to use it effectively, you can access that through your package as well. This can include any apps you might need to purchase to increase accessibility.

## What support is available for my dog guide?

You can include dog guide maintenance in your care plan. You can then utilise this part of your funding to purchase food and health treatments as well as to cover the cost of veterinary expenses.

## Is there a waiting list for this programme?

Yes, there is currently a waiting list for Home Care Packages. For level 1 packages, this wait time is 3 to 6 months. For level 2, 3 and 4 packages, the wait time is over 12 months.

Once your Comprehensive Assessment is completed you will be referred for a package and you may be placed on the waiting list. You may initially receive a package at a lower level than you were assessed as being eligible for. You will continue to receive this level package until a higher level package becomes available.

## Will I have access to Case Management?

Case Management is available for Home Care Packages and will incur fees and charges that will be deducted from your funding. Organisations can provide you with a list of what their fees and charges will be.

Alternatively, you can manage your package yourself with minimum case management support. You are able to negotiate the amount of support you might require from your case manager and the things you are able to organise for yourself. With the upcoming legislative changes, service providers are encouraged to be more transparent and include information about their fees and charges on the My Aged Care website.

## What if my care needs change?

In the first instance, discuss your changing needs with your existing case manager or service provider. They may be able to accommodate these under your current home care package. You can ask them to work with you to change the goals in your care plan so that it better meets your changing needs.

If your needs are not able to be met through your current care plan, you may need to be reassessed for a higher level package. Your case manager or service provider will be able to refer you for appropriate assessment through My Aged Care.

## Do I have to pay a fee?

There are three different sets of fees you might be asked to pay, depending on your financial circumstances.

1. Basic daily fees (up to $10.63 from Sept 2019)
2. Income tested fees (up to $30.49 from Sept 2019)
3. Fees for additional services, also known as top up fees.

Refer to our “Fees and charges for Home Care Packages” facts sheet for further information.

## Do I get information in an accessible format?

Yes, your service provider should provide all crucial documents and information in your requested preferred format. Refer to our “Accessing Information in an Accessible Format” fact sheet.

## What are additional supplements?

In addition to the base level of funding for a home care package, you may be eligible for one or more of the following supplements. Supplements are paid to a home care provider, in recognition of the additional costs associated with the consumer’s particular care and service requirements.

These may include:

* Dementia and Cognition Supplement;
* Veteran’s Supplement;
* Oxygen Supplement;
* Enteral Feeding Supplement;
* Viability Supplement;
* Top-up Supplement; and
* Hardship Supplement.

## Key Points to Remember

When a Home Care Package has been assigned, you have 56 days to enter into an agreement with a service provider. If this timeframe can’t be met, you must ring My Aged Care and request an extension. The extension is for a further 28 days. If these deadlines are not met, the package will be withdrawn.

* You have the right to choose your home care provider.
* When signing up for home care, make sure you take the timeto find the best care for you.
* Never sign anything you don’t understand. If you need you can seek assistance from a trusted source, advocate or legal adviser.
* Avoid signing anything on the spot. Take your time, ask questions and make sure it’s right for you.
* Home care, like any services, should be delivered on time and with care.
* You have rights if something goes wrong. Speak up and use your consumer rights.
* If something goes wrong or seems unfair you should talk to your provider. If this fails, you should contact advocacy services.

If you have a concern or need to make a complaint in any part of this process, you are encouraged to do so. More information on how to make a complaint is available in the ‘Complaints Procedure’ fact sheet.