



Higher Everyday Living Fee

The Higher Everyday Living Fee replaces Extra Service Fees and Additional Service Fees.

The Higher Everyday Living Fee

The Higher Everyday Living Fee (HELF) is an optional fee for people who choose to receive a higher standard of everyday living services in permanent or respite residential aged care.

The HELF can be charged for services that are of a higher standard, or in addition, to what is required to be provided under the Aged Care Rules 2024 and the Residential Care Service List.

The HELF cannot be charged for accommodation costs, which are included in accommodation pricing.

The provider can determine the cost of higher everyday living services. They do not have to seek approval from the government or the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA).

Higher everyday living services can be provided as a bundle. However, services in a bundle must also be available separately, and a person cannot be worse off than if they separately paid for the services they will use.

Providers will be permitted to offer ad-hoc services, for example coffee at an on-site café.

Consumer protections

Providers must demonstrate that the services offered as part of the HELF are not those they are already obligated to provide.

The HELF provides important new consumer protections:

- Higher everyday living services cannot be agreed before a person has entered care or be a condition of entry. A HELF agreement must be separate from the service agreement and accommodation agreement and cannot be entered into before these agreements are signed.
- A HELF agreement must outline the cost of each higher service to be delivered, the standards and frequency at which they will be delivered, and how they will be charged.
- People cannot be asked to pay for a service that they cannot or will not use. This does not prevent a bundle from including a service a person cannot use, but they must not be worse off than if they paid only for the services they can use.
- There is a 28-day cooling off period after signing a HELF agreement. This means someone can cancel or vary their higher everyday living services within this period without a cancellation fee. The provider needs to be notified of this, but there is no minimum notice period.

- After the initial 28-day cooling off period:
 - if the person chooses not to use the service, or is no longer able to use the service, it can be cancelled with 28 days' notice.
 - if the person initiates cancellation, the provider can pass on expenses incurred beyond the 28-day period if they are unavoidable (for example, subscription fees) for up to 90 days. Providers must be able to demonstrate this and cannot pass on an amount greater than they have incurred.
 - if the provider can no longer deliver the service, it must be cancelled immediately.
- The provider must acknowledge receipt of the individual's request to vary or cancel a service, including the date of effect.
- The HELF agreement must be reviewed at least once a year to ensure the person still wants the services and is able to use them.
- Once the charges for higher everyday living services have been agreed they can only be increased by indexation.

An individual may agree to pay a HELF regardless of the room they are in. Current protections that restrict when an individual may be asked to move rooms remain in place.

Replacing Extra Service Fees and Additional Services Fees

No new Extra Service Fee or Additional Service Fee arrangements can be entered from 1 November 2025 onwards.

Existing Extra Service Fee and Additional Service Fee arrangements can continue until 31 October 2026 for people who agreed to these fees prior to 1 November 2025. Providers can increase fees in line with existing contracts. This will not require approval by IHACPA.

Providers should not unreasonably refuse a resident's request to exit an extra or additional service fee arrangement. Providers should also have a conversation with each extra and additional service fee resident prior to 1 November 2026.

More information about the higher everyday living fee and the changes to additional and extra services can be found at health.gov.au/our-work/residential-aged-care/charging/higher-everyday-living-additional-and-extra-service-fees