



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.

Providers must ensure services required under the Residential Care Service List are delivered in line with the Aged Care Quality Standards. While HELF services can enhance standard offerings, they cannot be counted toward meeting these standards.

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

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

Consumer protections

The HELF provides important new consumer protections.

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

HELF 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.

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 should not be asked to pay for a service that they cannot use. This does not prevent a bundle from including a service a person cannot use, but they must not be financially 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.

Once the charges for HELF services have been agreed they can only be increased by indexation once a year.

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

Protections for residents in care prior to 1 November 2025

The Government has amended the Aged Care Rules 2024 to protect individuals who were receiving higher standard services free of charge before 1 November 2025. These individuals must not be charged a HELF for any additional services they were receiving free of charge prior to 1 November 2025.

The service must continue to be provided free of charge for as long as the service (or a substantially similar service) is offered to other individuals within the home.

This rule change will commence on 1 November 2026.

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.