Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Support at Home assurance

Pricing review summary report

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Key Points

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the department) conducted the Support at Home pricing assurance review (the review) between March and July 2026.

This report helps Support at Home providers understand the review findings and assess whether they need to improve their pricing or claiming practices.

The department contacted 46 providers with prices for key service types that were very high compared with similar providers and asked them to justify those prices. The review found that most of the apparent very high prices identified in the selected sample of claims were due to claiming issues. Incorrect quantities or unit types often made the recorded price per unit appear higher than the actual price charged for the service delivered.

The review identified opportunities for providers to strengthen pricing and claiming practices, including by improving their ability to justify and evidence pricing decisions, make accurate claims and maintain effective oversight of associated provider arrangements.

Providers engaged constructively with the review and most took corrective action in response to the findings. Providers noted that the review's educative approach helped clarify program requirements and strengthen internal practices.

Three providers could not sufficiently justify their high prices and were referred to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) for further regulatory assessment. Across these matters, regulatory action has resulted in refunds, improved pricing practices or further investigation. A further six providers were referred to the Commission through established intelligence-sharing arrangements due to issues identified with their pricing practices. The Commission will consider this information and determine an appropriate regulatory response.

The review findings have informed updates to program guidance and will continue to support the department's monitoring of Support at Home pricing and claiming practices.

Key messages:

1. Most apparent high prices were caused by incorrect claiming, which made the recorded price per unit of service appear higher than the actual price charged.
2. Providers should maintain evidence showing how prices were determined and ensure claims are accurate.
3. The Department and Commission will continue monitoring pricing and provider compliance.

Review context

Support at Home is in its first year of implementation. This has been a significant reform for the sector and providers are still building and refining their knowledge and making adjustments to their approach to delivery.

Providers continue to set their own prices under Support at Home. Government has deferred the implementation of formal price caps until there is greater confidence in the stability of the market. Support at Home has also changed how providers structure their prices compared to the Home Care Packages program, with service prices now required to include all fees and charges. This means providers can no longer charge separately for administration, overheads or travel. Care management funding also changed, with the maximum amount of a participant's budget available for care management reducing from up to 20 per cent to 10 per cent and care management funded through a separate flexible pooled funding arrangement. As a result of these changes, some price increases were expected. However, prices must be reasonable (section 273-15 of the *Aged Care Rules 2025*) and should reflect the cost of delivering the service. These costs can include:

- labour
- package management
- administration (e.g. human resources)
- travel
- sub-contracting, if applicable
- a margin to cover the cost of capital used in delivering the service.

The department undertakes risk-based assurance reviews to assess whether Support at Home funds are being used efficiently, effectively and for approved purposes. This review focused on whether providers could justify some of the very high prices being claimed through Support at Home. It complements broader work underway to understand pricing trends across the sector, monitor provider pricing practices and consider where additional consumer protections may be needed.

Review scope and approach

How providers were selected

Providers were identified using a risk-based analysis of claims data. The department analysed the hourly rates of key services for providers operating in comparable geographic areas. A sample of 46 providers, representing around 5 per cent of Support at Home providers, was selected based on those who had claimed the highest hourly rates for multiple clients for identified services. Providers with very high prices across multiple services were more likely to be selected.

Provider Sample (n=46)			
Location		**Size**	
Metropolitan:	35 (76%)	Small:	7 (15%)
Regional:	11 (24%)	Medium:	33 (72%)
		Large:	6 (13%)

As the highly targeted sample of 46 providers is not representative of all Support at Home providers it is not possible to determine the prevalence of issues raised across the provider population.

Services in scope

The review focused on eight services from the Support at Home service list:

- care management

- personal care: assistance with self-care and activities of daily living
- personal care: assistance with self-administration of medication
- domestic assistance: general house cleaning
- home maintenance and repairs: gardening
- nursing care: registered nurse clinical care
- social support and community engagement: group social support
- allied health and other therapeutic services: physiotherapy.

What providers were asked to do

Providers were asked to explain how they set their prices and provide evidence to support the prices charged.

Where the department considered a provider had not sufficiently justified their prices, the provider was referred to the Commission for further assessment and consideration of a regulatory response.

Providers were offered entry and exit meetings and received individual reports outlining the findings relevant to their organisation.

What did the review find?

Claiming issues made prices appear higher

Accurate claims are important because claims data is used to monitor pricing trends, support program integrity and improve transparency for participants. In 43 cases, or 93.5% of providers reviewed, the apparent high prices identified in claims data were caused by claiming issues. This meant the prices recorded in claims data did not accurately reflect the prices charged for the services delivered.

Common claiming issues identified in the review	
Quantity of service units incorrect For example, a 3-hour group social support activity costing $150 was claimed as 1 unit/hour at $150 per unit/hour, rather than 3 units at $50 per unit/hour.	**Multiple service episodes combined** For example, domestic assistance delivered across several dates was combined into one claim, rather than entered as separate claims for each delivery date with the relevant quantity and price per unit/hour.
Incorrect unit type For example, a return transport service was entered as a quantity of 1 trip, even though the unit type for transport is a one-way trip.	**Incorrect service identifier** For example, a home maintenance and repairs service to fix a broken door was entered under gardening, resulting in the service being recorded against the wrong service identifier.

The review found that claiming issues were often caused by providers not fully understanding their claiming obligations under Support at Home.

A common contributing factor to claiming issues was that associated provider invoices lacked sufficient detail to support the registered provider submitting an accurate claim. For example, invoices did not always clearly separate service dates, service types and how many units of a service were delivered. Registered providers should ensure they have enough information from associated providers to support accurate claiming and issue accurate, sufficiently detailed monthly statements to participants.

Software issues also contributed to claiming issues. Some providers updated their software as part of the transition to Support at Home and have experienced issues with how service quantities and unit types are recorded or transmitted in their systems when making a claim.

Inaccurate claims often flowed through to monthly statements given to participants, with services not always described, dated or itemised correctly.

Providers were responsive to feedback and most took steps to improve their claiming practices once issues were identified. Actions included staff training, stronger checks before claims were submitted, requesting more detailed invoices from associated providers and working with software vendors to address system issues.

In response to the review findings, the department has:

- updated the claiming guidance in the Support at Home program manual
- increased provider communications
- incorporated findings into future assurance activities.

The review has also informed ongoing work to strengthen data quality, price transparency and program integrity.

The review found that incorrect claiming can make prices appear higher than the amount actually charged for a service. Accurate claiming supports the department's ability to monitor pricing across Support at Home and helps ensure participants receive clear and accurate information about how their budget has been spent.

When making claims under Support at Home, providers must:

- separately itemise service episodes
- specify the service delivery date, service type, service unit type and service unit price
- include the correct unit of measurement, such as an hour, meal or trip
- record the appropriate quantity.

Registered providers are responsible for accurate and compliant claiming, including where services are delivered by associated providers. Providers should check claims carefully before submitting them.

Find out more

- Chapter 16, provider claiming and payment arrangements, in the Support at Home program manual, updated August 2026
- Services Australia guidance on claiming Support at Home services
- Services Australia Aged Care Provider Portal support resources and eLearning

Providers can strengthen how they justify pricing decisions

While most apparent high prices identified through the review were caused by claiming issues, all providers in the review were asked to explain how their prices had been set and provide evidence to support their pricing approach. Providers should be able to clearly explain and justify their prices to older people, the department or the Commission.

The review identified opportunities for providers to strengthen pricing practices, including by improving their ability to justify and evidence pricing decisions.

Review rating of providers' pricing methodology explanations		
24 **Satisfactory explanation** Clear, supported and aligned with guidance	17 **Partial explanation** Some explanation, but with gaps or weak evidence	5 **Minimal explanation** Limited or generic explanation, with little supporting evidence

Most providers were able to describe factors that influenced their pricing. Cost components included expenses like staff wages, compliance, technology, administration, overheads, profit and associated provider charges. Circumstances that may affect delivery included location, organisation size and structure, participant mix, specialised or high-complexity services, thin market conditions and workforce availability.

The level of detail and supporting evidence for these factors varied considerably. Responses assessed as satisfactory generally showed a clearer link between prices, the costs of delivering a service and the circumstances that may affect delivery. In some cases, providers were unable to demonstrate a documented pricing methodology and instead relied largely on published indicative prices, national medians or competitor pricing to justify prices charged.

These findings are broadly consistent with the Commission's financial and prudential review activities, which have identified similar concerns about some providers' capability to develop and evidence pricing methodologies under Support at Home.

As the program matures, it is important that providers ensure their prices are reasonable (based on costs plus a margin) and that they have sufficient evidence to support pricing decisions.

The review also identified other pricing findings:

- **Additional fees:** Some providers charged fees, such as separate administration fees, onboarding fees or loadings. Service prices must reflect the full cost of delivering the service.
- **Limited oversight of associated provider pricing:** Registered providers remain responsible for ensuring prices charged to participants are reasonable, even where services are delivered by an associated provider.
- **High administrative mark-ups:** Providers remain responsible for ensuring the final price charged to a participant for associated provider services are reasonable.
- **Incorrect GST charges:** Services delivered under Support at Home are GST-free for participants. GST should not be charged to a participant's budget, even where a

provider pays GST to an associated provider. Providers may claim GST credits through the Australian Tax Office.

- **Lack of pricing transparency:** This included not publishing their most frequently charged prices for all services offered or not publishing prices on both My Aged Care and their business website.
- **Minimum service times:** The department encourages providers to consider efficient scheduling and rostering arrangements that meet participant needs while complying with the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award.

Providers are responsible for setting their own prices. Prices must be all-inclusive and reasonable. Providers should be able to explain their prices to an older person, the department or the Commission, and must keep evidence to support their pricing decisions, including where services are delivered by associated providers.

Find out more

- Prices for Support at Home participants
- Support at Home pricing resources
- Financial viability and capability support for aged care providers

Review outcomes and next steps

Impact of the review on provider practices

The review supported practical improvements in provider pricing and claiming practices. For example, providers said the review:

- helped them better understand Support at Home pricing and claiming requirements
- provided constructive feedback and practical observations
- helped them identify improvements and develop action plans.

Examples of improvements made by providers included:

Improved pricing practices

A provider reconsidered its pricing model after the review found some prices were not sufficiently supported by evidence that reflected the cost of delivering those services. The provider engaged external aged care pricing expertise, lowered relevant prices and indicated it intended to refund participants where appropriate.

Improved claiming practices

A provider advised the identified claiming issues were caused by staff entering claim information incorrectly. This included claims not being recorded with the correct service dates, quantities or itemised details.

Once the issue was identified, the provider delivered staff training to improve understanding of accurate claiming requirements. This supported more accurate claim entry and helped ensure information flowing through to participant monthly statements was correctly dated and itemised.

Three providers were referred to the Commission for further assessment as the review team considered their prices may be unreasonable. The Commission's regulatory actions have resulted in participant refunds, improved pricing practices, or are subject to further investigation. An additional six providers were referred to the Commission through established intelligence-sharing arrangements due to a range of issues identified with their practices. The Commission will examine this information and determine an appropriate regulatory response.

Ongoing monitoring of prices

The department is continuing to monitor pricing under Support at Home.

The department has strengthened consumer protections and increased pricing transparency under the program, including by publishing a new National Summary of Support at Home Prices each quarter.

The Commission oversees provider compliance with Support at Home obligations, including the requirement for prices to be reasonable. It can investigate pricing concerns, enforce compliance and order refunds where providers have overcharged.

The review findings are informing broader work to support reasonable pricing, accurate claiming and provider understanding of Support at Home requirements. Feedback from the review has already informed updates to the claiming guidance in the Support at Home program manual and is helping identify further opportunities to strengthen guidance, systems and program settings.