



Australian Government

Department of Health

Dear Approved Home Care Provider

RE: Your ongoing responsibilities as an approved home care provider and support available adjusting to new payment arrangements

The Department of Health would like to remind all approved home care providers of their responsibilities to the Home Care Packages (HCP) Program. Meeting these responsibilities supports care recipients through quality and safe care, while maximising the HCP funding available to provide vulnerable senior Australians with necessary services.

The recently updated Home Care Manual provides guidance for you as a home care provider to meet your responsibilities and can be found [here](#).

Your ongoing responsibilities include:

- Publishing your service prices on My Aged Care and reviewing them yearly
- Notifying the department of any changes to services
- Keeping your contact details with the department up-to-date
- Notifying Services Australia of any unspent funds when a care recipient exits home care

The department would also like to inform you of how your organisation may be supported if help is needed in adjusting to the improved payment arrangements for home care. A factsheet to remind you of the changes to how subsidies are paid can be found [here](#).

Publish and carefully review your prices on My Aged Care

Pricing transparency is essential for senior Australians, their families and carers, when choosing a home care provider. Providers must publish on My Aged Care all prices for care management, package management and the common services a person may be able to access in an HCP.

To further improve the transparency of HCP pricing for senior Australians, their families and carers, the department has published national median prices for common home care services, care management and package management. The published prices can be found [here](#). The department will also write to providers with prices above the 95th percentile.

You must review your prices on My Aged Care at least once a year. When reviewing prices, please remember they should be an all-inclusive price of delivering the service, including charges for administration, and must be clearly reflected in home care agreements.

As a provider of home care, you are responsible for ensuring care recipients are informed of, and helped to understand, the terms of their home care agreement, including the fees. Home care agreements can only be varied following **mutual consent with the care recipient**. Further information can be found [here](#).

Notify the department and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) of any changes to your service

Please ensure you notify the department of changes to home care services and notify ACQSC of material changes to your organisation **within 28 days** after the change occurs. A material change is one that is substantial or considerable in nature. More information can be found in chapter 15 of the Home Care Manual or on the ACQSC website at www.agedcarequality.gov.au.

Notify Services Australia of any unspent funding and retain all essential records

When a care recipient exits the program, the Commonwealth portion of unspent home care funding must be returned so it can be allocated to other senior Australians. The department is contacting providers that have not notified Services Australia of unspent amounts and will work with the ACQSC when there are compliance issues. It is important that you continue to retain all essential records of your care recipients so you can meet your reporting obligations.

Improved Payment Arrangements

The way home care subsidies and supplements are paid is changing through the Improved Payment Arrangements reforms. If you require assistance to adjust to the new arrangements, you may be eligible for support through a free, independent and confidential service through PricewaterhouseCoopers. Through the service, PwC will undertake an independent evaluation of your organisation and provide advice to support its operations. For further information please go to www.pwc.com.au/health/aged-care-advisory.html.

Rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care providers can apply for assistance to improve service delivery and administration through the department's Service Development Assistance Panel (SDAP). The panel can also provide training and mentoring to help maintain financial viability and meet regulatory obligations. Further information can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions about the information in this letter please contact the department at homecarebranch@health.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

[authorised for electronic transmission]

Chamandeep Chehl
Acting Assistant Secretary
Home Care Branch
21 May 2021

Additional reminders to support the Home Care Packages (HCP) Program

Thank you for focusing on the needs of your care recipients and meeting the important responsibilities of being an approved home care provider. Below are some additional reminders to support the ongoing success of the HCP that you might find helpful:

- All delivered care and services need to be included in a home care agreement.
- HCP funds are not for the purpose of supporting care recipients with their daily living costs. For example, paying for car registrations, utility bills, internet and Pay TV charges is not an acceptable use of HCP funds. The Home Care manual has a detailed exclusions/inclusions framework.
- Thankyou for having challenging conversations with care recipients and their carers about whether a type of care, service or item can be included or not.
- All approvals must continue to be documented for any program assurance (by the department) or regulatory/compliance purposes (by the ACQSC).
- The Australian Government expects the majority of package funds to go towards direct service delivery.
- You can report suspected fraudulent use of HCP funding by calling the department's fraud hotline [1800 829 403](tel:1800829403). Further information, can be found by searching 'fraud' at www.health.gov.au.
- The updated Home Care Manual will be reviewed again before the second phase of changes to the Improved Payment Arrangements. If you would like to send feedback, please send it to hcpmanualsfeedback@health.gov.au