

Home Care Packages

Changes to home care for the aged came into force on 1 July 2015, but there is still much confusion about the new arrangements. Services are now provided by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS), under the name "My Aged Care" (MAC). There are now two different programs available for home care - Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Home Care Packages.

Commonwealth Home Support Program

CHSP is designed to address early needs, and offers services such as cleaning, washing, hanging out clothes, showering, meals and basic home maintenance like changing light bulbs. It is currently free, but that is expected to change during 2017.

Home Care Packages

The Home Care Package Program provides packages of care and services to meet higher level care needs while still helping people to live independently in their own home. They include:

- support services such as help with washing and ironing, house cleaning, gardening, basic home maintenance, home modifications related to your care needs, and transport to help with shopping, visits to doctors or attending social activities;
- personal care such as help with showering or bathing, dressing and mobility;
- nursing, allied health and other clinical services, such as hearing and vision services; and
- care coordination and case management.

There are four levels of Home Care Packages to provide needed care and services: level 1 supports those with basic needs, level 2 those with low-level care needs, level 3 those with intermediate care needs and level 4 those with high-level care needs.

Each package level has a different amount of funding (subsidy) that is paid to the service provider by the Australian Government. You can find out more on the subsidy rates at the DSS website www.dss.gov.au.

You can tailor a Home Care Package to best support your needs and goals by working in partnership with a home care provider to co-produce your care plan. This is an important part of the process, and will help you to get the most out of the care and services available to you.

The process for taking up a Home Care Package involves five steps:

1. Check your eligibility
2. Find a Home Care Package provider
3. Work out the costs
4. Accept a Home Care Package
5. Begin your services.

Other care

Out of home care may be available in some circumstances:

- If you are being looked after by someone, **respite services** can help you or your carer to take a break.
- If you are in hospital and are ready to leave, but you still need support to recover before you return home, you may be eligible for **transition care**.
- Care in an **aged care home** lets you live in a supported environment where help is available 24 hours a day.

This is of necessity a brief summary of the aged care services now available. Much more detail is included in a booklet "Five steps to accessing a Home Care Package", available from MAC. To obtain a copy, and for all other information, you can:

- call the MAC contact centre on **1800 200 422** between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday or between 10am and 2pm on Saturday; or
- visit the MAC website at www.myagedcare.gov.au.

If you are a veteran or war widow/er, you may be eligible for Department of Veterans' Affairs services or programs. MAC can provide further information.

Tony Barnett

Chairman

Kangaroo Valley Seniors Accommodation & Support Committee