



In-home aged care reforms – Frequently Asked Questions

Reforming in-home aged care webinar - 18 May 2023

Thank you to everyone who attended and submitted their questions in the [fourth reforming in-home aged care update webinar](#). This document provides answers to frequently asked questions from the webinar.

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1) Support at Home Program

1.01 – Why has the date been postponed?

The Australian Government has postponed the commencement of the new Support at Home Program to 1 July 2025. This will allow for an extra 12 months to further refine the program design, with input from experts across a range of design elements and further consultation with older people and in-home aged care providers.

The 1 July 2025 start date will ensure providers have the time they need to be well prepared for the changes and avoid disruption to care recipients.

The Support at Home Program design will continue to be developed through:

- advice from the new Aged Care Taskforce on funding arrangements and options to make the system fair and equitable for all Australians
- a pricing study conducted by the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority to determine fair and efficient prices for home care
- a study to develop an inclusions and exclusions list for assistive technology and home modifications and advise on the assistive technology needs of older people with progressive conditions
- a study into the provision of higher levels of care in the home, to support people to stay independent and in their own homes for longer
- a trial of the new integrated assessment tool, tested with up to 20,000 older people entering aged care
- a trial of an assistive technology loans program to be conducted in association with states and territories
- continued consultation sessions with older people, their families and carers, as well as aged care providers and peak bodies

1.02 – Will all the existing in-home aged care services continue until 30 June 2025?

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), Home Care Packages Program (HCP) and Short-Term Restorative Care Programme (STRC) will all continue until 30 June 2025, along with referrals to residential respite

The CHSP has been extended until 30 June 2025, and an additional 9,500 HCPs will be funded in 2023-24 to support more older people to stay in their own homes for longer.

1.03 - Are there any upcoming consultations for the Support at Home Program?

We will continue to conduct consultations to inform the new Support at Home Program. Older people, their carers, families and aged care providers and health professionals are invited to sign up to the [Aged Care Engagement Hub](#) to stay informed about consultation opportunities.

1.04 - When can older people accessing in-home aged care services expect to receive additional information on next steps?

We will release a fact sheet in the second half of 2023 to help people stay informed about the reforms to in-home aged care.

We will prepare additional fact sheets and other resources as we get closer to the start of the Support at Home Program on 1 July 2025.

1.05 – Will Support at Home provide higher levels of care in the community?

The department is engaging with Deloitte and Applied Aged Care Solutions to conduct a feasibility study on providing higher levels of in-home aged care, beyond what is currently available under a Level 4 HCP. The study will look into care requirements, safety considerations and assess the cost-effectiveness of supporting older people with complex needs in their homes.

1.06 - What is the difference between the terms ‘care partners’ and ‘care management’?

Care managers currently deliver care management within in-home aged care programs. During consultation on care management, ‘care partner’ was the preferred terminology put forward by stakeholders and so it has been adopted within the proposed Support at Home design. Care partners will deliver care management services under the new Support at Home Program.

1.7 - Would the department consider options for shared care in the community?

The department is considering the possibility to support older people living in close proximity to each other to pool together some, or all, of their home care funding to maximise their services under the Support at Home Program. For example, residents of a retirement village sharing the cost of an on-site personal care worker or nurse.

1.08 - How will the Assistive Technology Loans Scheme work?

Design of a possible loans program as part of the Assistive Technology and Home Modifications Scheme is underway, including through consultation with state and territory governments. The intention of a loans program would be to add an additional avenue for older people to access assistive technology.

The department recognises that not all items are suitable for a loans program, such as customised items or items with a limited lifespan. It is proposed that older people who are assessed as needing assistive technology will have the option to access these supports through private providers if items are unavailable through the loans program, or if purchase of the item using an older person's aged care budget presents better.

2) Single Assessment System

2.01 - When will the Single Assessment System commence?

As planned, the Single Assessment System (formerly called Single Assessment Workforce) will be mobilised from 1 July 2024 to simplify and improve access to services for older people.

This will involve expanding the role of existing assessment organisations through direct negotiations with states and territories on the role of Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs), and a limited tender with Regional Assessment Service (RAS) organisations and Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) assessment providers.

2.02 – How will the new assessment tool consider cognitive issues?

The Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) includes basic screening questions and activities to assess an older person's cognitive ability. Assessors may also conduct a Rowland Universal Dementia Assessment Scale (RUDAS) assessment to test cognitive performance.

This information will support assessors to categorise the level of a person's cognitive ability. With the new classification framework, assessors will then match a person in the appropriate classification group, which allocates funding to support their specific care needs.

3) Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)

3.01 - Can you provide an update on how the Fair Work Commission Wage Decision will impact the CHSP?

On 4 May 2023, the Australian Government announced an investment of \$11.3 billion to fund the Fair Work Commission's decision for a 15% increase to award wages, including \$310 million for CHSP providers.

Aged care workers delivering CHSP services and employed under one of the in-scope awards or enterprise agreements will be impacted. These include:

1. Aged Care Award 2010
2. Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry (SCHADS) Award 2010
3. Nurses Award 2020.

The wage increase will take effect from the employee's first full pay period that starts on or after 30 June 2023.

CHSP providers generally pay staff with a mix of award wages and enterprise bargaining agreements, so the impacts from the FWC decision may differ across staff and service types. For example:

- Aged care workers delivering CHSP services and employed under one of the in-scope awards or enterprise agreements will be impacted.
- Aged care workers who are already being paid above the award wage rates will only be eligible to receive funding associated with the base award to 15% above.
- If staff are being paid above this, they are not eligible to any additional funding.

In July 2023, CHSP providers will receive a one-off early grant payment that covers 6 months from July to December 2023. This will ensure eligible aged care workers can start to receive increases to award wages from 30 June 2023. Providers will be expected to manage this funding sustainably until monthly payments recommence in January 2024. CHSP providers will still be required to undertake monthly reporting of their performance through the Department of Social Services' Data Exchange (DEX).

This one-off payment will support providers while we finalise a new grant opportunity for CHSP providers. The new grant opportunity will assist providers with funding to meet the new award wages and associated on-costs, including leave liabilities.

When we have further information about the grant opportunity, it will be available on [Grant Connect](#) and [CHSP news](#).

3.02 - Will the Government increase the CHSP home modification subsidy and investigate this cost? For example, many people in regional areas only have access to one builder so there is not enough competition.

CHSP providers are funded to deliver services across Aged Care Planning Regions (ACPR) as detailed in their grant agreement. The cost of home modification is determined by individual providers and should represent value for money. There may be additional costs with hiring a qualified tradesperson and insurances, which are necessary for regulatory and safety reasons. All CHSP providers are expected to comply with relevant Commonwealth and/or state/territory legislation and regulations and the Building Code of Australia.

The department appreciates feedback about service delivery issues. We will monitor these issues for service improvement purposes and performance conversations. We encourage clients to raise any concerns directly with their provider or raise a complaint with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) regarding service delivery or costs.

Under the Support at Home Program, we will introduce a new scheme for assistive technology and home modifications from 1 July 2025. The department has commissioned a study to develop an inclusions and exclusions list for assistive technology and home modifications and consider the needs of people with progressive conditions. The study will also consider reasonable costs for assistive technology and home modifications.

3.03 – Can you enable providers to refer CHSP clients directly to the My Aged Care Portal?

We expect CHSP providers to assist clients to contact My Aged Care, or their most recent assessor, if their care needs have changed and they need additional services. The My Aged Care Contact Centre can arrange a Support Plan Review or a new aged care assessment to determine their eligibility for additional CHSP services.

We are continuing to review and improve My Aged Care. The department acknowledges and is actively working to reduce the extended wait times we know clients and providers have experienced through the My Aged Care Contact Centre

Clients can make an in-person appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO) at select Services Australia service centres.

For more information about ACSOs, contact Services Australia on 1800 227 475 (Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm) or visit the [Services Australia website](#).

3.04 - Can you clarify what CHSP services are available to HCP recipients? How long can a CHSP provider support a HCP recipient who has exhausted their package funds?

Please keep in mind that CHSP providers are funded to deliver entry-level services across their Aged Care Planning Regions, which is generally the only in-home aged care support that CHSP

clients can access. The care needs of a HCP recipient should be addressed through their government-subsided package.

HCP care recipients who choose to access any CHSP service types (e.g. meals, transport, nursing) should be charged on a full cost-recovery basis from their budget package. This means that the CHSP provider will charge care recipients for the full cost of providing the service. For example, charging for meals would include the ingredients, preparation and distribution costs. HCP care recipients can also purchase additional services above the value of their package for an agreed fee with their provider.

Where a HCP recipient needs additional services as a short-term or time limited arrangement, they can access certain CHSP subsidised services under the following 6 circumstances:

1. Recipients on a Level 1 or 2 package where their budget has been fully allocated, can access short-term allied health, therapy or nursing services through CHSP to assist the care recipient to get back on their feet after a setback (such as a fall).
2. Recipients on a Level 1 to 4 package where their budget has been fully allocated, can access planned short-term respite services through CHSP if their carer requires it.
3. Recipients on a Level 1 to 4 package where their budget has been fully allocated, in an emergency that presents an urgent and immediate health or safety need, can access CHSP services on a short-term basis. These instances must be time limited, monitored and reviewed.
4. Recipients on a Level 1 or 2 package where their budget has been fully allocated can access additional home modifications through the CHSP only when they are:
 - either waiting for an ACAT re-assessment, or
 - have been re-assessed by an ACAT as needing a Level 3 or 4 and are waiting for their package assignment.
5. Recipients on a Level 1 to 4 package who have transitioned from CHSP can access their existing social support group to continue these social relationships. This only applies to recipients attending a pre-existing CHSP social support group service.
6. Recipients on a Level 1 to 4 package, or awaiting their package, that have insufficient funds in their budget and have an urgent need for goods, equipment and assistive technology (GEAT), may access GEAT in the short-term from the national provider GEAT2GO.

These CHSP services will not be charged to the care recipient's package budget, but they will be expected to contribute to the cost in line with a CHSP provider's client contribution policy. The client contribution must be paid for privately and not from the client's package funds.

There is no strict definition for "short-term" or "time limited" CHSP services because it will depend on a HCP recipient's specific circumstances. That said, the timeframe for short-term services is generally up to 3 months. These services can be delivered for longer where a care recipient's specific circumstances warrant it.

More information is available in Chapter 4 (4.1.1 Interaction with specific programs and services) of the CHSP Manual on [the department's website](#).

3.06– Does the 2024-25 extension mean that CHSP performance reporting will continue in the DSS Data Exchange until 2025?

Yes. The existing reporting requirements for CHSP providers will remain in 2023-24 grants and are expected into the 2024-25 extension.

CHSP providers* must submit monthly performance reports through the Department of Social Services' Data Exchange (DEX). Monthly performance reports are due on the 14th day of each month, or the next business day. This mandatory monthly DEX performance report may be linked to the release of a CHSP provider's next monthly payment. Note, a provider can choose to submit a report more frequently (e.g. fortnightly).

*CHSP providers that only deliver Sector Support and Development (SSD) remain on a 6-monthly reporting schedule.

3.07 - Do we need CHSP client consent when communicating the fee schedule for next financial year?

CHSP services are subsidised by the Australian Government and clients are not means tested. That said, clients are expected to contribute to their CHSP services. To support the ongoing sustainability of service delivery, all CHSP providers are required to have a client contribution policy in place and charge these fees to clients who can afford to pay.

Providers should discuss and agree with their clients on how much they will contribute before they deliver the service and when fee amounts change. This should include discussing the client's capacity to pay the fees. Providers should have arrangements for delivering services to clients who have limited capacity to contribute to the cost of their care.

Providers should have information about their client contribution policy on their website or be available on request.

3.08 – Will unspent grant funding roll over to 2023-24, or will they be recovered on 30 June 2023?

From 1 July 2023, the department will be initiating the recovery of any remaining 2021-22 CHSP unspent funds not captured in any contract write down processes. Impacted CHSP providers will be notified in July 2023.

CHSP providers will not be able to carry over any unspent 2022-23 funding into 2023-24, with the exception of any new CHSP ad hoc grant funding provided during 2022-23.

3.09 - Can we have more information regarding the application process for CHSP ad hoc grants GO5672?

CHSP providers can apply for funding under the ad hoc grant funding opportunity (GO5672) to:

- respond to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances that directly impact service delivery arrangements (including COVID-19)
- address demonstrated service demand pressures and supply shortages
- deliver service sector improvement or new and innovative home-support delivery models.

Proposals may be for one-off or recurrent funding. However, any proposal for ongoing increases to CHSP base funding must include evidence that clearly demonstrates how the funding will meet ongoing, unmet client needs.

More information is available on the [Grant Connect website](#).

3.10 – How do you ensure equitable distribution of CHSP service availability in an Aged Care Planning Region?

CHSP providers are funded to deliver outputs for services across Aged Care Planning Regions (ACPR) as specified in their grant agreement.

CHSP providers are required to spend the funds in accordance with the grant agreement and deliver services to clients. It is the CHSP providers’ internal business decision which areas within their funded ACPR they choose to service. Some providers may not be able to deliver support throughout an entire ACPR. This may be due to providers’ location within the ACPR, as well as difficulties with workforce recruitment and retention.

4) Home Care Packages Program

4.01 – How will the Fair Work Commission’s decision on the Aged Care Work Value Case be implemented in the HCP Program?

The department has published a [provider fact sheet](#) and [care recipient fact sheet](#) about the 11.9% increase to the [HCP subsidy rate](#) (including annual indexation) from 1 July 2023.

This subsidy increase will pass on the Fair Work Commission’s [15% award wage increase](#) and ensure HCP recipients continue to receive the same level of care and services.

The department has sent a [letter](#) to all care recipients and their authorised representatives to notify them of this change.

4.02 – How will the subsidy increase affect the price caps to care and package management?

The maximum daily prices for care and package management, capped at 20% and 15% of the package level respectively, will go up with the subsidy increase from 1 July 2023 (see below).

Home Care Package level	Basic subsidy amount	Care management cap x 20%	Package management cap x 15%
Level 1	\$28.14	\$5.63	\$4.22
Level 2	\$49.49	\$9.90	\$7.42
Level 3	\$107.70	\$21.54	\$16.16
Level 4	\$163.27	\$32.65	\$24.49

Most providers already charge less than the caps for care and package management. As such, these changes may not result in a change to the amount you currently pay.

If your provider increases their prices, as always:

- Your provider must seek your consent before raising them.
- You have the right to understand all charges, price increases and what they mean.
- Your provider must explain their price increase, including:
 - what prices are changing
 - why they need to change their prices
 - what those prices include
 - when the new prices will start.

If you have concerns about changes to prices, you can:

- Talk to your provider in the first instance so they can explain their prices and to see if you can negotiate a lower one.
- Read the '[Agreeing to a Home Care Package](#)' guide on the My Aged Care website or call the My Aged Care Contact Centre on 1800 200 422.
- Compare your provider to others in your area with My Aged Care's '[Find a Provider](#)' tool.
- Contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) by:
 - calling 1800 700 600 (available 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm Saturday) for information about your rights and support to talk to your provider
 - visit [their website](#) to learn more about how OPAN can help you.
- Contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on 1800 951 822 or [via their website](#).

For more information about the price caps that [came into effect from 1 January 2023](#), read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) available on the department's website.

The department also hosted a webinar about the price caps on 1 December 2022. The recording and presentation slides are available on the [department's website](#).

4.03 – I have a question about what is included and excluded under a care recipient's package. Where can I go?

The department expects approved HCP providers to use the Inclusions and Exclusions Framework when making decisions on what can or cannot be included as part of a care recipient's package. The framework is found in Part 9 of the [HCP Program Operational Manual: A Guide for Home Care Providers](#).

The department has prepared a [Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet](#) to support providers and care recipients to clarify what is included and excluded under the HCP Program.

The department also hosted a webinar for HCP providers on 4 April 2023, which covered:

- general program scope

- updates to the provider manual
- clarification on inclusions and exclusions
- advice for having conversations with care recipients on what can and cannot be covered
- answers to common questions.

A recording of the webinar and the presentation's slides are available on [the department's website](#).

If your question has not been answered, you can email hcpmanualsfeedback@health.gov.au.

5) Legislation and Regulation

Answers to frequently asked questions on the new model for regulating aged care and the new Aged Care Act are available on [the department's website](#).

5.01 How will timing for the commencement of the new Aged Care Act and commencement of the Support at Home Program align?

Subject to Parliamentary passage, the new Aged Care Act is planned to commence from 1 July 2024. The new Act will contain the statement of rights and the new regulatory model and establish common eligibility requirements and a single point of entry to the aged care system.

The new Act will present a holistic picture of Commonwealth funded aged care services and will be structured to support the new home care program commencing in 2025.



Phone **1800 200 422**
(My Aged Care's free call phone line)



Visit **agedcareengagement.health.gov.au**

For translating and interpreting services, call 131 450 and ask for My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. To use the National Relay Service, visit nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs or call 1800 555 660.