



## About Increasing Choice in Home Care

The Australian Government is making changes to home care to improve the way services are delivered to older Australians. These reforms are important for a sustainable and quality aged care system that is more consumer driven, market based and less regulated.

From 27 February 2017, a home care package will follow the consumer, allowing them to choose a provider of home care package services that best meets their needs, and to change their provider if they wish. There will be a consistent national approach to prioritising access to home care, and the process for becoming an approved provider of home care will be simplified.

You will be receiving more information about the changes, and what you need to do to be ready for them, over the coming months.

## What is changing?

Home care packages will change in three main ways.

### Packages

A package will follow the consumer, replacing the current system where home care places are allocated to an approved provider through the Aged Care Approval Round (ACAR). The concept of 'home care places', and current regulations associated with places management such as transfers and variations, will no longer exist.

Providers will have the opportunity to expand their businesses to meet local demand and consumer expectations. They will no longer need to apply for home care places through the ACAR, and will no longer be limited by a fixed number of home care places they have been allocated by the Government.

### Access

Packages will be assigned to eligible consumers from a national pool managed through My Aged Care. Consumers will be prioritised taking account of their relative needs and circumstances and the time they have been waiting for care. This will allow for a more equitable and flexible distribution to packages, regardless of where consumers live.

### Providers

Changes to approved provider arrangements will reduce red tape and encourage more providers to enter the home care market. The 53 mandatory criteria that must currently be considered in an application will be simplified to five key issues. There will be a greater focus on the capacity of the organisation as a whole to deliver quality care, rather than on individual key personnel.

Providers of residential care and flexible care will be able to become home care providers through a simplified process, rather than a full application. Once approved provider status has been granted, it will no longer lapse. This will apply across home care, residential care and flexible care.

## What is NOT changing?

- There will be no changes to current fee and income testing arrangements.
- Home care subsidy and supplements will still be paid to an approved provider.
- Packages will continue to be delivered on a consumer directed care basis.
- Claims and payments will still be made through the Department of Human Services Aged Care Payment System.
- Approved providers must continue to meet relevant quality and accreditation standards.
- The total number of home care packages across the country will still be capped.

## When does Increasing Choice start?

The changes commence on 27 February 2017.

## Transition arrangements

Transition provisions are included in the legislation to ensure continuity of services for existing home care consumers. Existing consumers will continue to receive care and services at their existing package level.

## What can I do to prepare?

If you haven't already done so, make sure you are set up correctly on the My Aged Care portal to connect with assessors and consumers. To set yourself up, or for more information about setting up your business in the portal, go to: [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

It is also important to subscribe to the Department's electronic information updates (email and newsletter) to ensure you receive important programme updates and information about sector briefings and events. To subscribe go to: [www.dss.gov.au/agedcareupdates](http://www.dss.gov.au/agedcareupdates)

## How can I get involved?

Information about the home care reforms, including consultation and sector engagement activities, will be regularly updated on the Increasing Choice in Home Care webpage at [www.dss.gov.au/increasingchoice](http://www.dss.gov.au/increasingchoice)

## How can I get more information?

Visit these websites

[www.dss.gov.au/increasingchoice](http://www.dss.gov.au/increasingchoice)

<http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>

Subscribe to receive electronic updates

[www.dss.gov.au/agedcareupdates](http://www.dss.gov.au/agedcareupdates)

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