

# Care and Support

## Home support and care options



There are several government-funded programs that support frail older people to remain living at home for as long as possible:

- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)
- Veterans' Home Care (VHC)
- Home Care Packages

The first two programs provide a basic level of support. Home Care Packages provide for more complex care needs. You usually can only receive assistance from one of the above programs at any one time.

### Wellness and 'reablement' focus

The Commonwealth-subsidised programs supporting seniors at home adopt wellness and 'reablement' principles.

Wellness is based on the premise that, even with frailty, chronic illness or disability, people generally have the desire and capacity to improve their function, independence and quality of life, building on their own strengths.

'Reablement' is about helping the person to adapt to a functional loss or regain confidence and capacity to resume activities.

Whenever it is possible the service provider will aim to do things 'with the client' rather than 'for the client'.

### Commonwealth Home Support Program

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) is funded by the Australian Government for people over 65 (or over 50 if of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background).

The program provides the most basic level of services on an ongoing basis or intensive support in the short term to support recovery.

The scheme funds a range of organisations to provide basic support services including: transport to appointments/activities, domestic help (house cleaning, washing clothes), home maintenance / modification (e.g. grab rail installation), aids and equipment, meals / food preparation, social support, allied health (e.g. podiatry, physiotherapy), respite care.

Some of these services are provided by local councils and (in country areas) by community health services. A number of not-for-profit and private organisations are also funded to provide these support services.

**My Aged Care** is a national service that provides information on Commonwealth-funded aged care and support services. This gateway will check your eligibility for CHSP services and will refer you to a provider covering your area. If necessary My Aged Care will refer you to a Regional Assessment Service for a face-to-face assessment.

**Tel. 1800 200 422** (Mon – Fri 8 am – 8 pm, Sat 10 am – 2 pm); [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

### Veterans' Home Care (VHC)

VHC is funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to provide basic home support services for eligible veterans and war widows. Services may include personal care, domestic assistance, home and garden maintenance and respite care.

Veterans can choose to receive services through the CHSP program or VHC. Once in receipt of VHC Veterans can only receive a CHSP-funded service if that service is unavailable through VHC. Eligibility is based on assessed need.

**Tel. 1300 550 450**; [www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hcs01-veterans-home-care](http://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hcs01-veterans-home-care) .

### Home Care Packages

Home Care Packages include a range of home care and support services that are tailored to meet the individual needs of people. Packages are flexible and may include assistance with: personal hygiene and dressing, domestic tasks, preparing meals, shopping, transport, gardening and social support, restorative care.

### Consumer Directed Care (CDC)

All Home Care Packages are to be delivered on a CDC basis. This means allowing consumers to make choices about the types of care and services they access and the delivery of those services, including who will deliver the services and when.

Under a CDC approach, consumers are encouraged by the service provider to identify goals, which could include independence, wellness and 'reablement'. These will form the basis of the Home Care Agreement and care plan. The consumer decides the level of involvement they wish to have in managing their package.

### Types of care packages available

Four levels of Commonwealth-funded Home Care Packages are available:

- Level 1 - For people with basic care needs
- Level 2 - For people with low level care needs
- Level 3 - For people with intermediate level care needs
- Level 4 - For people with high level care needs

### Finding out whether you are eligible

To be eligible for any of the packages of care, your care needs must first be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). The assessment is free of charge. An assessor will visit you to determine if you are eligible and which type of care package is the most suitable for you. The team will decide if your care needs can be met within the scope and funding of the program and that you have a genuine desire to

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remain at home. Contact **My Aged Care** on **1800 200 422** to be referred to an ACAT.

If you are eligible you will receive a letter of approval from My Aged Care informing you of the level of the package. You will be placed on a national priority queue for packages and informed when a suitable one becomes available. You may be offered a lower level of package while waiting for the appropriate level. The time you wait before you are assigned a home care package is based on your needs, circumstances, and the overall number of packages funded by the government in relation to the demand.

When a home care package becomes available, you will get a letter from My Aged Care to let you know you have been assigned a package. You have 56 days to find a service provider and enter into a Home Care Agreement from the date of your assignment letter. To find a provider of Home Care Packages call My Aged Care or search at [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au). Alternatively contact Catalyst Foundation (including Seniors Information Service) and we will assist you with searching for providers covering your area.

#### Home Care Package fees

You will be asked to pay the basic care fee. Full pensioners only pay the basic care fee, calculated as a percentage of the single person rate of basic Age Pension. Rates from **1 July 2019** are:

Level 1 – 15.68%	Level 2 – 16.58 %
Level 3 – 17.05 %	Level 4 – 17.50 %

If you are part-pensioner or self-funded retiree, depending on your assessable income you may also be asked to pay an income-tested fee. Centrelink will assess whether you need to pay based on the information you provide using the *Home Care Package Calculation of your Cost of Care form (SA456)*. Annual and lifetime caps apply to the income-tested care fee.

If you cannot afford to pay the fees that have been set, you can apply for hardship assistance (conditions apply). You will need to complete the *Financial Hardship Assistance for Home Care and Residential Respite Care form (SA462)*.

#### Aged care clients' rights

The *Charter of Aged Care Rights and Responsibilities - Home Care* lists your rights as an aged care consumer. Some of these rights are:

- Safe and high quality care services
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- To have your identity, culture and diversity valued and supported
- To have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of your daily life, financial affairs and possessions
- To complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly.

#### Concerns or complaints about services

If you are not satisfied with the service or care provided you can make a complaint to the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**, tel. **1800 951 822**, [www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au). The Commission resolves complaints about aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.

**Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)** offers free, independent and confidential services that focus on supporting older people and their representatives to raise and address issues relating to accessing and interacting with Commonwealth-funded aged care services. Tel. **1800 700 600**, <https://opan.com.au>

**Aged Rights Advocacy Service** is the South Australian OPAN member. An advocate can assist you in making a complaint. They can stand beside you or work on your behalf, at your direction, in a way that represents your expressed wishes, and will always seek your permission before taking action. [www.sa.agedrights.asn.au](http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au)

If you are receiving services from the **Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)** and have concerns contact DVA in the first instance, tel. **1800 555 254**, [www.dva.gov.au/contact/feedback](http://www.dva.gov.au/contact/feedback).

#### If you are not eligible for these services

If you are under 65 years of age (50 if indigenous) and have a disability you may be eligible for the National Disability Support Scheme.

If you wish to consider privately obtained services contact **Catalyst Foundations** for information on providers operating in your area. Tel. **8168 8776**, **1800 636 368 (SA country callers, landline)**.

See also our fact sheet *Hiring private care services and tradespeople*.

#### Support for carers

If you are caring for a relative or a friend who is frail, has a disability, severe chronic condition or a mental illness, you can access assistance with planning and coordinating respite care and with accessing carer support services. Contact the **Carer Gateway** on **1800 422 737** or visit <https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>.

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