

Australian version

iSupport For Dementia

Training and support manual
for carers of people with dementia



Unit 5. Home Care Packages

Why is this unit important?

The Australian Government provides a taxpayer funded subsidy towards a package of care that helps you as a carer and the person living with dementia to live at home for as long as possible. To use this service to benefit the person you care for and yourself you need to understand how it works.

How will this unit help me?

This Unit will summarise how Home Care Packages work and how you can utilise them to improve your role as a carer and provide support to the person you care for.

This learning unit provides:

- An overview of what Home Care is
- Australian government subsidy and eligibility
- An understanding of what Consumer Directed Care is
- Basic information of how you can select services so you and the person you care for remain in charge
- Your rights as a user of Home Care packages
- Where to go for more information.

What is a Home Care Package

The Home Care Package program is government subsidised and provides support for older people who want to stay living at home. There are four different levels of care according to the person's support needs. Each level receives a different amount of funding. This money can be used to buy hours of care and other support that suits your needs.

The four levels of support are:

- Home Care Level 1 - basic care needs
- Home Care Level 2 - low level care needs
- Home Care Level 3 - intermediate care needs
- Home Care Level 4 - high care needs.

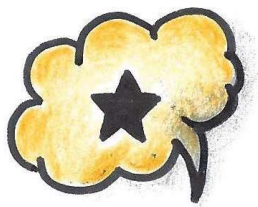
Individuals approved for a Home Care Package are placed on a national queue until a package becomes available and is assigned to them.

(www.myagedcare.gov.au)

Let's look at an example

Mandy has been looking after her 86 year old mother, Barb, who has been living with dementia for over 8 years. Mandy now lives with her mother to provide the support she needs. Lately Mandy has been feeling like she has no time to herself, and Barb needs more and more help. Barb has recently been assigned a Home Care Package and Mandy wants to make the most of this for her mother and herself.

What advice would be good for Mandy and Barb?



The government offer other services for carer support that may be an option. To discuss particular needs, contact the Carer Gateway - www.carergateway.gov.au or call 1800 422 737 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

Tip

Check your understanding



What would you think is the right response for Mandy and Barb?

Pick all the responses you think are appropriate.

- ☐ Access the My Aged Care website and register for an assessment. Use the My Aged Care Researching Home Care Providers - Considerations and Checklist.
- ☐ Wait for a provider to contact Barb in relation to her Home Care Package.
- ☐ Determine the services Mandy and Barb may be interested in having as part of a Home Care Package to discuss with the service provider and ensure the services can be provided where and when Barb and Mandy decide they need them.
- ☐ Mandy should use her savings to cover the costs of services beyond the package budget provided.
- ☐ Use the services only offered by the service provider.
- ☐ Work with the selected service provider to identify care needs and enter into a Home Care Agreement.

Check your understanding



- ✓ **Access the My Aged Care website and register for an assessment. Use the My Aged Care Researching Home Care Providers - Considerations and Checklist.**
This is where arrangements for an assessment are made and a good start. The checklist provides a list of things to think about and to compare when selecting a provider once they have been assigned a home care package.
- ✗ **Wait for a provider to contact Barb in relation to her Home Care Package.**
It is the role of the person living with dementia or carer to make initial contact with a service provider. Service providers should not contact you.

- ✓ **Determine the services Mandy and Barb may be interested in having as part of a Home Care Package to discuss with the service provider and ensure the services can be provided where and when Barb and Mandy decide they need them.**
This is a good response as it means the services will be tailored to Barb and Mandy's needs. Remember - consider what is important and then find out if providers can meet special requirements.
- ✗ **Mandy should use her savings to cover the costs of services beyond the package budget provided..**
This is not the best response as Mandy may have been saving for something specific. Barb may need to contribute to the cost of her care if the needs are more than her budget allows. Mandy should first ask the provider to review the care plan with them to see if all the services are required. Mandy can also ask for Barbs needs to be reassessed by the Aged Care Assessment Team for a higher (or lower) level home care package or other support services.

Check your understanding (Continued)



- ✗ **Use the services only offered by the service provider.**

This may not be the correct response. Barb and Mandy must have a say in the types of care and services they receive as well as who delivers those services. Barb and Mandy should discuss their preferences with potential providers to understand how they can make that happen.
- ✓ **Work with the selected service provider to identify care needs and enter into a Home Care Agreement.**

This is correct. The Home Care Agreement is a legal agreement that details what your package will provide, who will provide the services and how much the services will cost including administration fees, as well as fees associated with ceasing service with a provider. It is important to remember that you and the provider are entering into a Home Care Agreement as equal partners.

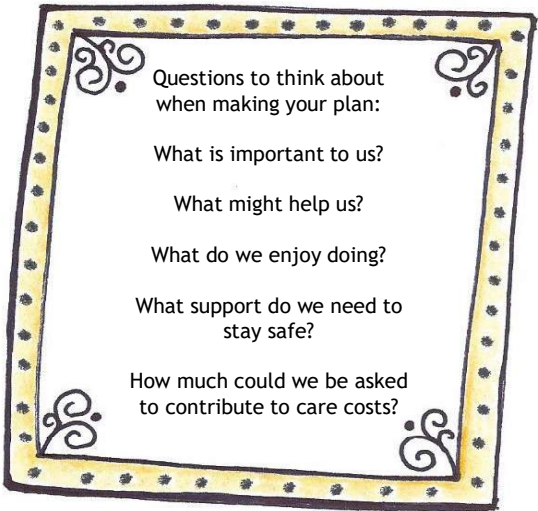


What things can a Home Care Package help with?

A care package can help support the person you care for and you to meet care needs. It can be good to have people help give the care that you may not be able to for whatever reason. Care needs are identified by a member of the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) depending on your level of need. During the care planning process, the assessors will help determine what needs are not already being met by other supports.

Depending on the assessed care needs the types of services that may be useful include:

- Help with personal care such as bathing, showering, toileting, dressing and undressing
- Help with preparing some meals
- Help with equipment to manage care needs
- Nursing and other clinical services such as podiatry, occupational or physiotherapy services
- Transport and assistance with shopping, appointments and attending social activities
- General support such as washing, ironing and gardening
- Support to access meaningful therapy and activity related to dementia and support to undertake hobbies/interests
- Respite and time out for the carer.



Australian government subsidy and eligibility

Funding for home care packages are through the government and you need to contact My Aged Care services to start the process. The staff will ask you questions to help understand the person's care needs. The person you care for may also need to have a face-to-face assessment with a trained assessor. There is no cost for assessment, and it will help to determine eligibility to receive help at home services.

(www.myagedcare.gov.au)

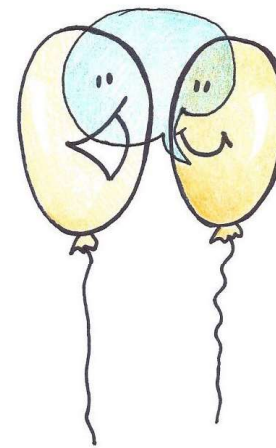
All people have to contribute to the cost of the home care package, including full pensioners. There is a means test, so some people have to contribute higher levels than others. This is assessed by Centrelink. If you are thinking about a Home Care Package for the person you care for, you first need to have their income assessed, as there may be a contribution they need to pay toward the care they receive. This fee is different for everyone because it is based on individual income.

You should do this as soon as possible. You can ask for an assessment before you start receiving care. Refer to the income assessment for home care packages area on the My Aged Care website for further information.

(www.myagedcare.gov.au)

Home care packages are made up of a budget that includes:

- The government subsidy (and eligible supplements)
- An income-tested care fee depending on the assessable income of the person with dementia
- Any other amount you have agreed to pay.



Knowing how much each service costs and what type of services you can receive lets you get the most out of your package. Ask the provider for the itemised cost of each service and be clear about the administration costs.


Tip

Once a package has been approved

Once there is approval you move to the national wait list. At a later date when it is your turn to receive a package you will receive a letter from My Aged Care indicating your package has been assigned. You should move immediately to enter into arrangements with a provider as the offer is time limited. It is up to you and the person you care for how you make the package work. Someone may choose to manage their services, choose to ask a Service Advisor to undertake these tasks on their behalf, or you may be provided with a list of possible service providers.

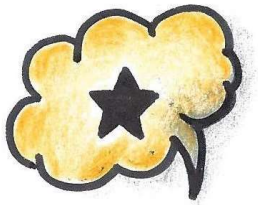
Use the questions and check list below to help you think about what services you may need and make sure you get the right provider:

- ▢ Are Packages flexible and enable choice and control in the way they are provided? (see Consumer Directed Care)
- ▢ Are packages offered as coordinated support as well as direct services?
- ▢ How will I receive individual budgets and monthly statements ?

Activity 

Tick the services you may want to ask about:

- ☐ General household cleaning
- ☐ Spring cleaning
- ☐ Personal care
- ☐ Meal preparation
- ☐ Meal delivery service
- ☐ Laundry service
- ☐ Assistance with shopping
- ☐ Transport services
- ☐ Social support
- ☐ Minor maintenance
- ☐ Minor renovations such as handrails, ramps
- ☐ Equipment.

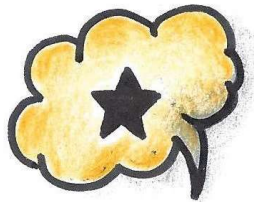


An understanding of what Consumer Directed Care is

Consumer Directed Care is a term used to explain a way of providing services that allows you and the person you care for to make choices about the types of services and who will provide them. Under the Consumer Directed Care approach, you can shop around for the types of services you need and want, and choose who you want to provide those services. You can get the best price and make your funding go further.

How to use Consumer Directed Care to benefit the person you care for

Think outside the box when you are thinking about what would be the most useful for you and the person you care for. Consider some of the things you have looked at in this program that will support the person you care for. Maybe someone to help with a hobby or go for a walk. Maybe help with showering and dressing. Remember different people may be supporting you for different purposes, so the important thing is to consider what the person you care for wants or needs.



Let's look at an example.

Annie and Bob have been married for 37 years. Bob has had dementia for 3 years and recently had to spend some time in hospital for an infection. Up until recently Bob had managed to keep himself fairly well occupied if Annie made suggestions for things for him to do. Since he has come home, Bob seems very fragile and not interested in the things he used to do. He has trouble walking and just sits in his chair most of the day. Annie is worried about him and thinks he needs some company and things to do but she doesn't feel she can be there all the time. They have not yet had applied for a Home Care Package. What advice is best for Bob and Annie? What advice would you give to them?

Check your understanding



What advice is best for Bob and Annie?

You can pick more than one response.

- ☐ Annie should not worry and just let Bob be.
- ☐ Annie should consider options for a Home Care Package to provide support for Bob.
- ☐ Annie should wait and see if things get better.
- ☐ As soon as possible contact My Aged Care to find out about the support services that are available to help.

Check your understanding



- ✗ **Annie should not worry and just let Bob be.**
This is not a good answer as it does not provide help for Bob and may make him feel isolated and depressed.
- ✓ **Annie should consider options for a Home Care Package to provide support for Bob.**
This is a good answer as it means Annie can get some support for Bob. It is good to start the aged care assessment process to support independence and get more help as she and Bob need it.
- ✗ **Annie should wait and see if things get better.**
This is not a good response. There are a number of steps that are needed to receive a Home Care Package and this takes time. In addition, once Bob has been assessed as eligible, he will be placed in a national priority queue for Home Care Packages and will be contacted when a suitable package becomes available.

- ✓ **As soon as possible contact My Aged Care to find out about the support services that are available to help.**

This is a good response. My Aged Care provides a central registration function and initial screening of people seeking government funded services. If the initial phone call determines there are care needs, the My Aged Care contact centre will refer you for a further assessment undertaken by your local Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) to determine the type of care needed and the level of Home Care Package required.



How to remain in charge

Once a provider is selected from the Approved Provider list they will receive and manage your Home Care Package.
The Home Care Agreement you sign with a provider will outline how to go about planning for services. The control over the funding use remains with the individual who it was provided to.

Activity



Use the tick box to ensure that you and the person you care for have agreed with the Service Provider:

- ☐ Choice in the care and services, how they are delivered and who delivers them
- ☐ Goals have been set
- ☐ The individual care plan is understood
- ☐ Involvement in managing the care package
- ☐ How the package is funded
- ☐ Monitoring and formal reviews.

Keep in mind



Note the Home Care Agreement you sign with a provider will outline how to go about planning for services.
Also, under the legislation there are some exclusions, and it is important to not overstate expectations here.



If needs cannot be met within the Home Care Package budget, look at other options, including:

- being reassessed for eligibility for a higher level of package.
- if you can afford using your own money to purchase top up services.

If the person you care for's or your circumstances change the home care provider can change the care plan to suit your needs at anytime.

Tip

Knowing More: Your rights as a user of a Home Care Package

www.myagedcare.gov.au

The government has determined that older Australians have a right to be looked after properly, treated well and given high-quality care and services.

Service users must follow:

▢ The Charter of Care Recipients' Rights and Responsibilities for Home Care (The Charter)

The Charter outlines consumers rights when receiving care, including the right to:

- be treated with respect
- be involved in deciding what care meets your needs
- have a written agreement covering everything you and your service provider have agreed to
- have your care and services reviewed
- privacy and confidentiality of your personal information
- be given information on how to make comments and/or complaints about your care and services
- have your fees determined in a way that is transparent, accessible and fair
- be given a copy of the Charter.

Consumer (user) responsibilities

The Charter also outlines your responsibilities when receiving care. This means you need to:

- respect the rights of care workers
- give enough information to the service provider so they can develop and deliver your care plan
- follow the terms and conditions of your written agreement
- allow safe and reasonable access for care workers at the times agreed in your care plan
- pay any fees outlined in your written agreement.

Home Care Standards

Under the Home Care Standards, service providers need to:

- give you information about your services
- speak with you about any changes to these services
- respect your privacy and dignity
- handle your concerns or complaints fairly and confidentially.

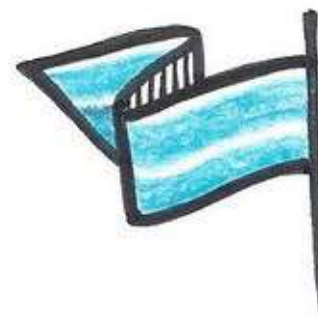
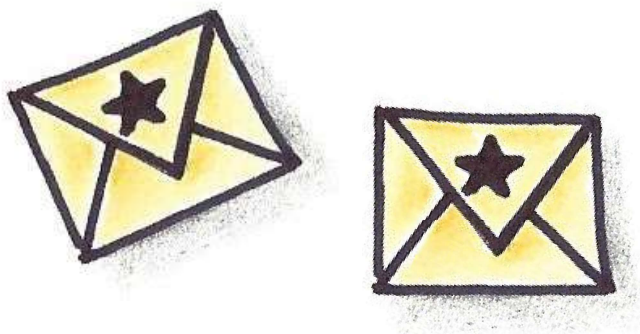
Where to go for more information

It's never too early or too late to talk about the care the person needs or the support you need as a carer. Talking about getting some extra help doesn't mean you are not doing well as a carer.

My Aged Care www.myagedcare.gov.au phone 1800 200 422 will help you work out the steps you need to take.

RELATED LEARNING UNITS

- Module 1 Unit 1 Introduction to dementia
- Module 2 Unit 4 Involving others
- Module 3 Unit 3 Thinking differently



If you or the person you provide care for are concerned about the care or services, it is important that you discuss this with the service provider.

If, after this discussion, you do not believe the service provider is meeting their obligations for the Home Care Package you may want to contact the

- National Aged Care Advocacy

Program, www.opan.com.au or by calling 1800 700 600.

- Aged Care Complaints

Commissioner, www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au or by calling 1800 550 552

Tip



You finished this unit, well done!