Client Survey Month

Each year we ask you to complete a survey.
Please return your survey by Monday 2 June to any of our offices or by post or by email.

CLIENT NEWSLETTER MAY #2, 2025

Hello everyone,

This Newsletter is coming soon after the last one and it has one purpose which is to provide further information on the new Aged Care Act and how it will affect you.

I have taken pieces from various resources which have come across my desk to assist you in understanding changes which you may hear about from your provider.

The new Aged Care Act

The new Aged Care Act will take effect from 1 July 2025. The new Act will:

make sure older people have explicit rights, and ways to protect them

let older people choose someone they trust to help them make decisions

make it easier to access aged care with a simple, single-entry point and needs assessment

improve information about aged care providers to help older people make informed decisions

make clear what older people should expect from aged care providers and workers

allocate a permanent residential care place to older people directly if they need one.

The Government has stated that a 'no worse off' principle will apply when we move to the new Act.

A 'no worse off' principle protects an older person who, on or before 12 September 2024, was receiving a Home Care Package or assessed as eligible for a package. That person will make the same contribution, or lower, as they would have under Home Care Packages Program arrangements. If they were assessed as not required to pay an income-tested care fee, they will never be required to make a contribution under Support at Home.

After hearing about the new Act, clients have been asking what they do.

What do I need to do now?

Your provider will work with you to review your care plan and ensure that services and prices are reflected in an updated service agreement. Your provider will be able to give you more detailed information on the new program and prepare you for the transition to Support at Home on 1 July 2025.

You can keep and use your Home Care Package unspent funds when you transition to Support at Home on 1 July 2025. You will not lose these funds on re-assessment, and they are not time limited. Unspent HCP funds may be used to access additional services if your Support at Home quarterly budget is fully allocated, or assistive technology and home modifications, if approved.

Aged Care Act
Statement of Rights

- Choice and Control
- Get the services you require
- Safe services that work well
- Safe and private information storage
- Get information and the right to speak up
- Get support from other people

New contributions arrangements

The government will continue to be the majority funder of older people's aged care. However, older people who can afford to will contribute to their aged care costs. How much someone contributes will depend on:
their personal circumstances

the level of support they need

the combination of their income and assets

How do I help clients understand their new budget?

Participants will continue to receive a budget that is equivalent to their existing HCP level funding. The transitioned HCP classification funding amount will be divided into four to create the Support at Home quarterly budget from 1 July 2025. You will need to plan with your participants the services they will receive in each quarter and the cost of the services.

When will I find out how much I need to pay?

Services Australia will conduct an income and asset assessment to determine your contribution rate. This can only occur once the new Aged Care Act commences on 1 July 2025. Most participants will receive a letter outlining their individual contribution rate that they have to pay ir July 2025. If your rate is 0%, you will still receive a letter confirming you won't be asked to pay anything.

If you want an estimate of your likely contribution rate before you receive a letter from Services Australia, an online calculator will be available on the My Aged Care website. This will help you estimate the contributions that you might need to pay using asset and income details that you can enter into the calculator.

You will also need to know the unit price for the services you are receiving from your provider. Your contribution rates will be a percentage of the unit price of services received. Your provider must publish their prices on My Aged Care by 1 July 2025 and will give you a copy of their price list as part of a new service agreement.

If I don't know my contribution rate when a service agreement is presented to me, what are my options? What is the impact?

Services Australia will conduct the income and asset assessment to determine your contribution rate. This can only occur once the new Aged Care Act has commenced on 1 July 2025.

Your provider must work collaboratively with you to communicate, consult and reach agreement on your service agreement.

As per existing arrangements, the service agreement does not have to include the specific rates that you will contribute. This means that service agreements can be agreed before the outcome of the means test assessment by Services Australia.

Support at Home program

Support at Home is a new in-home aged care program that will commence on 1 July this year. It will replace the Home Care Packages (HCP) Program and Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) Programme.

Under Support at Home, older people will have improved access to services, products, equipment and home modifications to help them live independently at home for longer. The rights-based Aged Care Act and strengthened Quality Standards support older people to know what they should expect when seeking or accessing aged care services. The Statement of Rights makes sure older people can exercise choice and make decisions in relation to their approved services; how, when and who delivers those services; and their financial affairs.

How much older people contribute to Support at Home will be based on an assessment of income and assets similar to the age pension means test. Contributions will also depend on services delivered to participants and will vary depending on the type of service used. Further information on contributions will be available soon.