



home**care**today

YOUR GUIDE TO  
**NEW**  
**CHOICES**  
IN HOME CARE

# ABOUT



home**care**today

Your resource hub for new ideas  
and choices in home care

**Home Care Today helps people receiving home care services to make the most of the new way of delivering home care packages – called Consumer Directed Care. Home Care Today also helps providers of home care to change to the new ways of working that come from delivering consumer directed home care services. Home Care Today is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.**

## ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet provides a guide for people who want help to remain living at home and the people who support them in this goal. It aims to give people an idea of how home care packages work when they are provided using the Consumer Directed Care (CDC) approach. All Commonwealth funded home care packages will be delivered using the CDC approach from July 2015. Until then, some home care packages will be delivered using the CDC approach and some will be delivered using the traditional approach to home care.

**DISCLAIMER:** This booklet provides some general practical advice for people receiving or beginning to receive a consumer directed care based home care package and is not intended as legal or financial advice. This booklet should not be the only source of information for people getting home care. Home Care Today encourages anyone who has questions about getting home care to get the relevant professional advice to discuss their own particular situation.

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## CONTACT DETAILS

For further information visit [www.homecareservice.org.au](http://www.homecareservice.org.au) or contact the services listed in this booklet. Publication date April 2014

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# HOME CARE: YOUR CHOICE, YOUR WAY

1

## WHAT IS HOME CARE?

Home care packages provide assistance for people who need help to stay safe and well at home.

Sometimes you may find that you cannot manage some things around your home like you used to. Home care packages are one type of assistance that you could use, alongside the support of family and friends and other community resources. They can help with personal care, general support around the home and help you to stay healthy.

If you think you might like to have some assistance, you can make enquiries to see if you are eligible for a home care package.

An **Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) member** can talk to you about your situation and determine if you are eligible. If it is agreed that you are eligible, you can go to an approved home care service provider, who receives funding from the Commonwealth Government to **work with you** to arrange the assistance you require.

*“I don’t want to move anywhere; I’ll be just fine at home. I just need a bit of help with a few things that aren’t as easy as they used to be.”*

## MY CHOICE, MY WAY

All new home care packages from 1 August 2013 come with a lot of flexibility. The **Consumer Directed Care approach (CDC)** puts you – the consumer – in the driver’s seat if you wish. You will have a lot more opportunity to say how the funds allocated to you in your package are used, so that you can get the things you think will make your life easier.

If you started receiving a home care package before 1 August 2013, the way it is provided doesn’t have to change until 1 July 2015 when all home care packages have to change to the CDC system. If you want to make more decisions about what services you get, and how they are provided, you may **talk to your home care provider** about whether or not your package could become a CDC package earlier than that.

*“We were getting a regular package before and the change to CDC gave us a whole lot of new options. We really got to think about what was important to Bob. Firstly those things that were needed to maintain his health to the best of our ability but also the things that were important to him to have a good quality of life, like being able to keep up with some of his previous work interests and to be able to receive assistance while he is interstate visiting the children.”*

## NEW CHOICES IN HOME CARE

With CDC you will have a budget allocated for your home care package, which consists of the funds the government has allocated for you plus your co-contribution. Its purpose is to help you stay at home for as long as possible, and provided that it meets legal and safety requirements, you will get to make the decisions about how the funds are spent. Your home care service provider holds these funds on your behalf and works with you to coordinate the services you want.

When your home care package is provided in the CDC way, you will get a statement that lets you see exactly the funds you have, how much you can spend and how much goes on what.

***You can decide on the arrangements that will work best for you.***

If your home care provider can’t deliver what you need, then you can ask them to try to buy it from somewhere else. That might be another home care provider, a different sort of service provider or a local shop or business.

Of course there might be some things that aren’t possible, or may not be within your budget, and you might need to come up with an alternate plan.

An important part of CDC is that it’s all about **building on what you CAN** do rather than focusing on what you CAN’T do. It’s about **helping you to continue to live a good life at home**. Even if you have had some health issues, the right sort of assistance can help you feel healthier and get back to doing more things for yourself.

You can also buy extra services with your own funds if you can afford it and want to have more assistance than is covered by your home care package.

The relationship between you and your service provider is really important to achieve what you want. Their role is to work in partnership with you to give you **support and advice**, as much or as little as you want or need.

*“The CDC approach puts the focus on all the things you are able to do, rather than what you can’t do; with the aim of improving your health and making life easier for you.”*

Of course there are some things you can’t use your home care package for, like paying your rent or mortgage, buying your groceries or paying for holidays. But you can use it to pay for your regular care needs while you are away on holiday. And if you don’t use one or more of the services in your package for a period of time, because you are away or in hospital for example, you may be able to use or save some of the funds for other things. You can discuss how to use or save some of the funds for other things.

## WHAT KINDS OF ASSISTANCE CAN I HAVE?

The funds in your home care package are to pay for help that keeps you safe and well at home. There are three main kinds of help you can have. We’ve given some examples of that help here, but you can talk about having other things too.

### RECEIVE HELP WITH

#### GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- doing the cleaning and laundry
- doing the shopping and getting to appointments
- staying connected with your activities, interests, friends and community
- gardening and home maintenance
- changes to your home to make it safer and easier for you to live there
- 24 hour on-call service
- lots of different kinds of advice about staying at home.

#### PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

- dressing, showering and using the toilet
- making meals and eating.

#### HELP TO STAY HEALTHY

- nurse visits
- seeing professionals like physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, dentists and podiatrists
- providing bandages and other items needed to look after wounds
- providing technological devices, equipment and other items that help you to do things like get around, look after your personal hygiene, make yourself understood and generally stay safe.





# FINDING HOME CARE

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## HOW CAN I GET A HOME CARE PACKAGE?

Eligibility for a home care package is decided by an **Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)**. The ACAT is made up of skilled and experienced people who will talk with you about what is important to you to help you to continue living at home.

Your doctor can refer you to your nearest ACAT. You can also contact an ACAT direct to make an appointment.

You can find your nearest ACAT at [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or phone **1800 200 422**

A member of the ACAT team will **visit you at home** so they can talk to you about your home, your usual routines and supports.

They will want to know from you about your physical and mental health, what's working well for you, and what you would like help with around your home. They will also want to hear

about the things that are important to you, to live the way you need to and stay in touch with your friends, family and community.

You are welcome to have someone there with you during the ACAT visit. It might be your wife or husband, partner, friend, or relative.

The exact amount of Government funding for each level of package can be found on the government's My Aged Care website at [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or you can phone **1800 200 422** to ask for details.

*“It was a relief really, being able to explain about the things that I was not able to do but wanted to do and know that there was help available.”*

## HOW MUCH SUPPORT CAN I RECEIVE?

The ACAT assessment determines the level of support you can get. There are **four levels of home care package**, ranging from low care (levels one and two) up to high level care (levels three and four). There are different amounts of funding available for each of the four levels.

In 2013/2014, the government will provide funding ranging from \$20.55 per day (or \$7,501 per year) for a Level 1 package, up to \$124.95

per day (or \$45,607 per year) for a Level 4 package. These amounts will increase over time to keep up with changing costs.

In addition to the funds the Government provides, you will be asked to pay a co-contribution if you can afford to do so. The amount you pay is related to your income.

You can ask for a review at any time if your situation changes and you feel you need a higher or lower level of support.

**The exact amount of Government funding for each level of package can be found on the government's My Aged Care website at [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or you can phone 1800 200 422 to ask for details.**

## HOW DO I FIND A HOME CARE SERVICE PROVIDER?

The ACAT team can **refer you to home care service providers in your local area**. They might also give you a list of all the home care service providers in the area.

**If you want you can do your own research at: [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or you can phone 1800 200 422 to ask for details.**

When you find a home care service provider that has a package at the right level for you, as determined by the ACAT, you can start the process to receive services.

If there are no home care packages available in your region, you may need to join a waiting list. If this happens, you might be offered a package at a lower level than you need and then moved up to the right level of support when it is available.

In some situations, like in certain rural areas, your choices might be limited to one or two home care providers.

*“Well, it was a bit like getting quotes from a few different painters to paint your house. We talked to three service providers and they could all provide us with what we wanted, but in the end we went with the one that my wife and I felt we would have the best relationship with.”*





# MAKING A SERVICE PLAN

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Once you have chosen a particular home care provider, the next step is to make a plan. An adviser or 'case manager', who is employed by your home care provider, will work with you to help you get the support you need, the way you want it.

Together you can settle on what the home care provider can offer or arrange as part of your '**care plan**' to best meet your needs and preferences.

You will have your own interests and experiences and you will like to do things in a particular way. Your adviser will ask about these preferences as well as the important people in your life. This will help in planning the **best possible options for you**.

There might be some things you don't want to share with your adviser. That's absolutely fine. **It's your choice**.

*“Do you want to go out more? Is your garden really important to you? What day do you prefer to go shopping? Sharing your hopes and what's important to you will help you and your adviser to come up with a plan that works for you.”*

## THINKING THROUGH YOUR CHOICES

The next step is to really think about how you want to live, what your goals are and what's most important to you to make your life as easy as possible. This will help your adviser to better understand you and your needs.

### These are some questions you might consider in making your plan:

- What is important to me?
- What do I most enjoy doing?
- What makes my life enjoyable and meaningful?
- What's good right now and what's not?
- What's preventing me from having an enjoyable and meaningful life?
- What's missing? What would I have, if I could choose anything?
- What sorts of things might help to improve my day to day life?
- What support do I need to remain safe and well?
- Where and when do I want that support to be available?
- How do I want to be supported and by whom?

## DECIDING A PLAN

Working through your goals, interests and preferences will help you to make informed choices about the services and assistance you'd like to receive.

Whatever services you decide on will form your care plan including:

- exactly what will be provided
- who will provide it
- the timing and frequency
- the cost of the services you will receive
- your co-contribution
- the costs your provider incurs in managing your home care package.

It might be the first time you've really sat down and thought about these things.

*“One thing is for sure, our right to live the way we want, with dignity, within the law, is a basic right that doesn't change with age or ability.”*

*“She really listened and she was full of good ideas. We made some arrangements and agreed to monitor things and it felt like we had a plan that could really help.”*

It's really up to you and your adviser (and others too, if you want) to work out the best way to use the funds you have been allocated, to achieve what you want. And that can include getting services from another home care service provider or from somewhere else altogether.

**You are in control and you get to make the final decisions, but it's a partnership process to work out how to make it happen. That's why your relationship with your home care service provider and your adviser is important.**

When you first get a home care package the decisions you need to make can seem difficult. In the beginning you may let other people make decisions for you but as the service becomes more familiar you may wish to take more control and make more decisions for yourself.

Over time you may need or want to change your arrangements, like when, where and how often your service is delivered or perhaps who

delivers your service. **Your adviser will work with you to try to make that happen.**

## **DECIDING WHO WILL MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS**

You are always in charge of your home care package but can choose to be really involved in managing your home care package or hardly involved at all. You might want to do your own research and make your own inquiries about different services and options or manage your own budgeting. You can also choose a representative to act on your behalf (this may be a relative, friend or advocate).

If you or your representative chooses to take charge of some of the administration involved with your package, such as record keeping or making your own appointments, that may reduce the amount you need to pay your home care provider, leaving more funds available for you to spend on other things.

You can also decide to have your adviser take care of arranging most things on your behalf if you wish. Or you might choose any combination of approaches to suit different situations and times.

**Once you have agreed your care plan, the management of your package and any other details with your provider, it will be set out in a written agreement that you both sign. It is called a Home Care Agreement.**

*“Sometimes they had the solution we were looking for but other times John and I came up with our own solutions and we were able to talk it through and make it work. We felt a great deal of satisfaction from feeling we were really involved and in control.”*



# MAKING A BUDGET PLAN

## 4

**While you get to say how and when the funds for your care package are spent, they are held by your home care provider. While costs and other elements might vary between different home care providers, they are all required to give you a monthly statement, clearly explaining:**

- your available funds (the government's subsidy plus any co-contribution you might have to pay)
- your monthly costs
- what you have spent
- the balance of funds remaining.

**There are three broad categories of monthly costs that will be itemised in your monthly statement:**

- administration costs - including relevant home care provider overhead costs, insurance etc.

- adviser (or case manager) costs - for the time they take to visit, phone and follow up the arrangements for your home care package
- service and support costs - the costs of delivering the services and support you have agreed in your care plan, or making purchases on your behalf.

**All these costs will be discussed and agreed with you before they are recorded as part of your Home Care Agreement.**

*“When you look at your monthly statement, your expenditure should reflect the things you value most and that are helping you to achieve your goals.”*



# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## **YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a consumer, you and your family and carers have rights that must be respected but also responsibilities. These are set out in a document called the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Home Care. Your home care service provider will give you a copy of the Charter as part of your Home Care Agreement.

*“As long as there is respect, you can usually find a way through that everyone is happy with.”*



### **In general, you have the right to:**

- receive quality services
- be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect
- be actively involved in decision making
- transparency in the setting of fees and budgeting
- receive care and support in a way that respects your gender, your cultural, spiritual or philosophical background or beliefs, and your sexual orientation
- have information provided to you in a language you understand
- have your services reviewed
- information to assist with making comments or complaints
- privacy and confidentiality of personal information.

### **As a consumer of home care services, your responsibilities include:**

- respecting the rights of home care workers
- providing sufficient and accurate information to the home care service provider in developing the plan and Home Care Agreement
- following the terms and conditions of your Home Care Agreement including any payment of fees; and
- allowing safe and reasonable access for home care staff at the times and places set out in your Home Care Agreement.

## **THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR HOME CARE SERVICE PROVIDER**

Your home care service provider has rights and responsibilities as well which will also be clearly described in your Home Care Agreement.

### **It is the responsibility of the home care service provider to:**

- ensure your rights are respected.  
This involves responsibility to meet a range of legal requirements around safety and security and quality of services, staff and procedures
- provide you with the information you need to make your own decisions.

**And like you, your home care service provider and their staff also have the right to be treated with fairness, courtesy and respect.**





# MAKING A COMPLAINT

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**Your Home Care Agreement includes information about how to make comments or complaints, including who to contact at your home care provider if you are not happy with your arrangements.**

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your home care service, it is a good idea to **raise it with your adviser first**. If you'd like to do that but don't feel comfortable yourself, you can always ask someone who can be your representative to raise the issue on your behalf.

You can also make a complaint at any time to the **Aged Care Complaints Scheme**. This is a free service for people to raise their concerns about the quality of care or

services they are receiving from Australian Government funded aged care services.

You can make a complaint without giving your name.

When you make a complaint with the Aged Care Complaints Scheme, they will explain the process, the various options for resolving your complaint and what can be achieved through those options.

You can also ask for a formal advocate to act for you through a program called the **National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP)**.

It is funded by the Australian Government to promote the rights of people who are seeking or receiving Australian Government funded aged care services.

Call **1800 550 552** (free call) or go to Aged Care Complaints Scheme website: **[agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au](https://agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au)**

NACAP can be reached on **1800 700 600** (free call).



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