



Aged care workforce wage rise – Home Care Packages Program

Care recipient fact sheet

This fact sheet is to assist Home Care Package (HCP) Program care recipients to prepare for the increase to award wages from 30 June 2023.

Background

The Australian Government is funding the Fair Work Commission's decision on the Aged Care Work Value case. This means a 15% award wage increase from 30 June 2023 for workers on:

- Aged Care Award 2010 – personal care workers and recreation/lifestyle activities officers
- Nurses Award 2020 – nursing assistants, enrolled nurses, registered nurses and nurse practitioners
- Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (SCHADS) 2010 – home care workers

The Government has earmarked \$2.2 billion for the wage increase in the HCP Program and expect all this is passed on for the full benefit of workers.

A more skilled and diverse workforce will deliver safe, consistent, high-quality aged care services for in-home care recipients. This starts with fair wages for workers, a supportive workplace and recognition of the complex, often undervalued work involved.

This fact sheet answers common questions about the wage subsidy increase to help you understand how this change affects your care. The department is also sending out a [letter to all care recipients](#) and their authorised representatives to notify you of this change.

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1. What is the package subsidy increase?

The way the Government is funding the Fair Work Commission's decision is by increasing the Commonwealth portion of your Home Care Package amount (also known as a home care subsidy). This means the Commonwealth portion of your home care subsidy will increase in order to pay your aged care workers their wage increase.

Everyone's Home Care Packages will increase by 11.9%.

Package Level	Current Daily Subsidy (1 July 2022)*	Subsidy from 1 July 2023
Level 1	\$25.15	\$28.14
Level 2	\$44.24	\$49.49
Level 3	\$96.27	\$107.70
Level 4	\$145.94	\$163.27

*The Government contribution changes on 1 July every year.

Supplements such as oxygen and enteral feeding supplements will increase by annual indexation only, as these supplements do not have a workforce component.

For further information on supplements and rates, please review the [subsidies and supplements update](#).

2. How will providers pass on this increase to their workers?

Where a provider has been paying their workers in line with the award wage, they are now required to pay their workers the new award rate from the start of the employee's first full pay period on or after 30 June 2023.

Some providers have a separate arrangement for paying their workers known as an Enterprise Agreement. This arrangement should mean that their workers are already being paid above award minimum wage. If this rate is not above the new award rate, these providers will also have to increase their workers' wage to at least meet the minimum requirements. For more information on enterprise bargaining, visit the [Fair Work Ombudsman website](#).

Many providers will need to adjust their pricing to cover the additional wages and other costs to deliver the nursing, care and services you receive from your aged care workers.

3. How will this affect my Home Care Package?

a. Your care and services should not change

The Government is increasing the value of your package to cover the additional wage increase for workers. Because of this, you should expect to continue to receive the same care and services as previously provided.

b. You can expect changes to your direct service charges

In order for your provider to pass on the wage increase directly to their workers, your providers may need to increase how much they charge you for the care and services delivered by their workers who will be receiving this wage increase.

Your provider must discuss these changes to prices with you and ask you to agree to these price increases.

4. What do care recipients need to do?

If your provider gets in touch with you about the increase to your home care pricing, your provider should be discussing with you:

- What these prices are being changed to?
- Why these prices are being changed?
- What these prices include?
- When will these new prices start?

- Are there any impacts to your current services?

Providers are expected to give you a minimum of 14 days to respond to a proposed change to your home care agreement, or unless otherwise indicated in the agreement.

For more information, refer to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's [Home Services Pricing and Agreements](#) brochure.

5. What if I don't agree to the price increases proposed by my provider?

As long as you are satisfied the prices are reasonable and are connected to the wage rise, the Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) encourages you to agree to all reasonable price increases for your care and services provided by aged care workers.

Not doing so could negatively impact the availability of your care services. It also means that the extra money we've put into the system may not get to the workers who need it.

6. What is a reasonable price?

Wages are one component of costs that go into calculating your service price. The percentage of costs that providers spend on wages will vary per provider.

Other costs may include:

- Superannuation for their workers
- Business overheads including fuel, marketing and administration costs

A reasonable and justifiable price increase must be:

- Value for money and reflect the resources it takes to provide the care or service,
- Clear, understandable and transparent, in the best interests of care recipients,
- In line with program requirements and legislation,
- Directly related to coordinating allowable care or services, or
- Purchasing goods to meet the care recipient's assessed needs and goals.

As all providers must publish their current prices, if you think the price is too high you can compare prices on the [My Aged Care website](#).

7. What can I do if a price increase doesn't seem reasonable?

If you have any concerns, speak to your provider first. Information must be communicated in a way that is clear, easy to understand and enables you to exercise choice.

Your provider must discuss with you the prices they propose before you agree to them. Your provider should explain to you how they worked out the new prices for your care and services. They may be able to provide you the old prices compared to the new prices side by side to help you understand.

If your provider cannot explain why the price increase is reasonable, remember that you have a right to complain, and this should not impact the services you receive.

All providers are required to have their own complaints handling process. You can also engage the support of an advocate to talk to your provider. Raising your concerns is an opportunity for providers to understand issues, find solutions and improve their care and services.

8. I pay an income tested care fee. What does this wage subsidy increase mean for me?

This wage subsidy increase means the value of everyone's HCP will go up from 1 July 2023.

If your income is above a certain amount, you may pay an income tested care fee as part of your home care fees. The income tested care fee is calculated separately to the subsidy. For most people, the increase to the subsidy from 1 July 2023 will not change their income tested care fee. Services Australia will send you and your home care provider a letter if your income tested care fee changes.

If you have questions about your income tested care fee you can contact Services Australia on 1800 227 475.

9. What do I do if a worker has questions about the wage increase?

You can suggest that the worker gets in touch with their employer.

Workers can contact the Fair Work Ombudsman on 13 13 94 or via [their website](#) for wage related concerns.

10. How will the Government ensure that wages are passed on to workers?

All aged care providers will be required to report their expenses in their Quarterly Financial Report and declare they have fully passed on the 15% wage rise to workers who are paid under the Aged Care Award 2010, Nurses Award 2020 or the SCHADS Award 2010.

11. Where can I go if I have further questions?

If you believe the increased prices for your care and services are unreasonable or you are still wanting more information, you can:

a. Talk to your provider

- Talk to your provider in the first instance so they can explain their prices.
- To help with this conversation, read the My Aged Care guide on [agreeing to a Home Care Package](#).

b. Visit My Aged Care

- You can compare your provider to others in your area using the 'Find a Provider' tool.
- If you have further questions, call the My Aged Care contact centre on 1800 200 422.

c. Aged Care Specialist Officers

- For face-to-face services, an Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO) can help you in more detail with your aged care matters.
- ACSOs are available at service centres in some locations across Australia.
- To book an appointment with an ACSO, call Services Australia's Aged Care line on 1800 227 475 or by visiting any service centre.
- Find out which service centres have ACSOs on the [Services Australia website](#).

d. Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

- OPAN is a free, confidential, and independent service supporting people receiving or applying for Government-subsidised aged care.
- An OPAN advocate can help you raise and address any aged care issues and understand your aged care rights.
- Call OPAN at 1800 700 600 (available 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm Saturday) for information about your rights and support to talk to your provider.
- Visit [OPAN's website](#) to learn more about how they can help you.

e. Contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

- You can contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) if you feel uncomfortable talking to your provider about your concerns, or you have already tried without an acceptable outcome.
- In line with strict aged care legislation, any person who request confidentiality will be protected from having their identity disclosed.
- You can contact the Commission by calling 1800 951 822 or visiting [their website](#).

f. Contact Department of Health and Aged Care

- For more information about the wage subsidy increase, visit the [department's website](#).



Phone **1800 200 422**

(My Aged Care's free call phone line)



Visit agedcareengagement.health.gov.au

For translating and interpreting services, call 131 450 and ask for My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. To use the National Relay Service, visit nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs or call 1800 555 660.