



Support at Home Q&As for communication with older people, families and carers – November 2024

This document has been developed to support in-home aged care providers to answer questions from older people, families and carers about the Support at Home program.

What is the new Support at Home program?

The Australian Government is improving in-home aged care to help older people live independently at home for longer. A new program has been developed called Support at Home, which will bring together existing in-home aged care programs from 1 July 2025.

How is the Support at Home program different to current in-home aged care programs?

Under the new Support at Home program, there will be improved access to services, products, equipment and home modifications to help older people to remain healthy, active and socially connected to their community.

This includes the following short-term or additional supports:

- Restorative Care Pathway, which can help you maintain and improve your independence through multidisciplinary allied health services.
- End-of-Life Pathway, which will provide access to additional services to remain at home in your last 3 months of life.
- Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM) Scheme, which will support you to access products, equipment and/or home modifications based on your assessed needs.

When will Support at Home start?

The Support at Home program will replace the [Home Care Packages \(HCP\) Program](#) and [Short-Term Restorative Care \(STRC\) Programme](#) from 1 July 2025. The Home Care Packages Program and Short-Term Restorative Care Programme will continue operating as usual until they become part of Support at Home on 1 July 2025.

Your services will continue under the same provider when the Home Care Packages Program and Short-Term Restorative Care Programme become Support at Home.

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) will become part of the Support at Home program no earlier than 1 July 2027.

I receive services under the Home Care Packages Program – what is changing for me?

There are some differences between the Home Care Packages Program and Support at Home program that will affect you from 1 July 2025.

Key changes from 1 July 2025 will include:

- **moving to a quarterly budget**
- **a defined service list**
- **care management funding set at 10% of all quarterly budgets**
- **separately funded Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM) Scheme.**

You can be re-assessed to a higher classification level in the Support at Home program if your needs change.

If, on 12 September 2024, you were assessed as having a high enough income that you should be paying an income tested care fee and were already receiving a Home Care Package, on the National Priority System or assessed as eligible for a home care package, you will pay transitional contribution rates that ensure you pay no more under Support at Home than you should have paid under your Home Care Package. You will continue to pay contributions based on the rates for existing Home Care Package recipients, even if you change package levels in the Support at Home program.

The Department of Health and Aged Care is working with Home Care Packages Program providers to ensure they are well prepared to become part of Support at Home on 1 July 2025 and reduce any impacts to your care.

Your provider will communicate with you directly about any changes to your in-home care arrangements before they occur.

Will I have access to care management?

You will have access to care management, which supports you to get the best outcomes from your aged care services.

- Providers will continue to be responsible for delivering the Support at Home program and providing care management as required by each participant.
- If you receive ongoing services, you will have 10% of your quarterly budget pooled with your provider to deliver care management. This amount will be the same even if you have a self-management arrangement in place with your provider.

How will my budget change?

Based on your aged care assessment and classification level, you will have a quarterly (3-monthly) budget under Support at Home.

- You and your provider will have the flexibility to manage your funding each quarter.
- If you don't spend your budget within the quarter, you will be able to accrue a maximum of \$1,000 or 10% of your quarterly budget from one quarter to the next.

What services are available under Support at Home?

There is a defined Support at Home service list, which describes what is available under the Support at Home program.

- This includes support for:
 - Clinical care (e.g. nursing care, occupational therapy, continence care).
 - Independence (e.g. help with showering, getting dressed or taking medications, transport or respite care).
 - Everyday living (e.g. cleaning, gardening, shopping or meal preparation).
- Each category includes its own service types and services. They will also include the maximum cost of services, once these have been determined with advice from the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA).

I receive services under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme – is anything changing for me?

The services you receive under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme will not change when Support at Home commences on 1 July 2025.

If you get your home support through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, you will move to Support at Home no earlier than 1 July 2027, unless you are reassessed for a higher level of services.

This staged approach gives Commonwealth Home Support Programme providers time to ensure they are prepared to move to Support at Home in the future, to ensure service continuity for the services you are receiving.

From day 1 of the new Aged Care Act, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will register and regulate Commonwealth Home Support Programme providers. They will need to meet obligations based on the type of services they deliver and will be accountable for the safety and quality of care they provide.

Your provider will communicate with you directly about any changes to your in-home care arrangements before they occur.

Will I have to pay more under Support at Home if I was already receiving a Home Care Package on 12 September 2024?

On 12 September 2024, if you were already receiving a Home Care Package, you will be no worse off under the contribution arrangements for Support at Home.

You will make the same financial contributions, or lower, than you currently have under the Home Care Packages Program.

You will receive a Support at Home budget that matches the same funding level as your Home Care Package, subject to Support at Home program arrangements.

Under Support at Home, you will only pay contributions on the services you have received, unlike the current Home Care Package Program fee arrangements.

Will I have to pay more under Support at Home if I was on the National Priority System on 12 September 2024?

On 12 September 2024, if you were on the National Priority System, you will be no worse off under the contribution arrangements for Support at Home. You may need to look at your letters from My Aged Care to work out if you are on the Priority System.

You will make the same financial contributions, or lower, than you would have under the Home Care Packages Program.

Will I have to pay more under Support at Home if I was already assessed as eligible for a package on 12 September 2024?

On 12 September 2024, if you were assessed as eligible for a package, you will be no worse off under the contribution arrangements for Support at Home.

You will make the same financial contributions, or lower, than you would have under the Home Care Packages Program.

What if I need to move to residential care – will I still be no worse off?

On 12 September 2024, if you were already receiving a Home Care Package, on the National Priority System or assessed as eligible for a package, you will be no worse off under the contribution arrangements for Support at Home. You may need to look at your letters from My Aged Care to work out if you are on the Priority System.

You will be able to enter residential care under the current fee system, regardless of when you need to enter residential care.

Will I have the same funding level in Support at Home as the Home Care Packages Program?

On 12 September 2024, if you were already receiving a Home Care Package, on the National Priority System or assessed as eligible for a package, you will be no worse off under the contribution arrangements for Support at Home.

You will receive a Support at Home budget that matches the same funding level as your Home Care Package, subject to Support at Home program arrangements.

Will I lose my unspent funds?

If you have Commonwealth unspent funds in the Home Care Packages Program, you will keep these funds for use under Support at Home. These amounts will not be subject to quarterly roll over limits.

What are the classifications under Support at Home? Will I need to be reassessed?

The Support at Home classification framework improves on the current 4 Home Care Package levels, with:

- 8 ongoing Support at Home funding classifications
- 2 short-term care pathways (Restorative Care Pathway and End-of-Life Pathway)
- upfront funding for the Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM) Scheme, with 3 AT-HM Scheme funding tiers.

You can be re-assessed to a higher classification level in the Support at Home program if your needs change. If, on 12 September 2024, you were assessed as having to pay an income tested care fee and already receiving a Home Care Package, on the National Priority System or assessed as eligible for a home care package, you will remain under the transitional contribution rates for Support at Home, even if your package level changes.

What if I need short-term support?

There are 2 short-term care pathways under Support at Home, in addition to 8 ongoing Support at Home funding classifications.

This includes the:

- Restorative Care Pathway, to help you maintain and improve your independence through multidisciplinary allied health services.
- End-of-Life Pathway, to access additional services and remain at home in your last 3 months of life.

What is the difference between the Short-Term Restorative Care Programme and the new Restorative Care Pathway under Support at Home?

Under the Support at Home program, the new Restorative Care Pathway will help you maintain and improve your independence, delay the need for higher levels of services and support you to continue to do the things you enjoy.

Under the Restorative Care Pathway, you may:

- have access to up to 12 weeks of restorative care if beginning a new round of restorative care, which is an extra 4 weeks of restorative care compared to the current Short-Term Restorative Care Programme
- access restorative care services in addition to any Support at Home services you already receive
- be assigned an additional budget of approximately \$6,000 (or up to \$12,000 if required) for multidisciplinary allied health services.

If you require another round of restorative care, you will need further approvals from an aged care assessor to access this.

What can I access under the End-of-Life pathway?

Under the End-of-Life Pathway, you will:

- have urgent access to a higher level of in-home aged care services if you have 3 months or less to live
- receive additional funding of up to \$25,000, with 16 weeks to use the funds.

What can I access under the AT-HM Scheme?

The Assistive Technology and Home Modification (AT-HM) Scheme will give you access to products, equipment and/or home modifications to meet your assessed needs.

- If eligible for the AT-HM Scheme, you can access up to \$15,000 for home modifications and \$15,000 (or more with evidence) for assistive technology.
- The separate funding tiers for assistive technology and/or home modifications include:
 - Low tier - \$500
 - Medium tier - \$2,000
 - High tier - \$15,000
- Participants can receive higher funding for assistive technology with evidence of need.
- If you have specific needs, such as severe ongoing incontinence, you may be eligible for additional funding over a longer period.
- There will be a defined AT-HM list, which will outline the products, equipment and home modifications that can be accessed under the AT-HM Scheme.

Can I have more than one provider?

For the first 2 years of the Support at Home program, until the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) becomes part of Support at Home, you will continue to have one provider manage and deliver your services.

Can I still self-manage my services?

You can continue to choose to self-manage your services through a provider that offers this option.

Where can I get further information?

The Department of Health and Aged Care will soon be releasing materials to support older people and their families and carers to move to the Support at Home program.

You can subscribe to the Department of Health and Aged Care's EngAged newsletter by visiting the [department's website](#) to receive updates about the aged care reforms, including Support at Home.