Aged care entry process - Home Care

To access ‘home care package’ aged care services with financial assistance via government subsidy, care recipients generally require two assessments:

- an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessment which determines the needs of the care recipient and recommends and approves the services suitable for the recipient; and
- an income test assessment which determines the level of fees payable.

Recipients of home care may choose not to have their income assessed and pay the maximum income tested fee (subject to annual and lifetime caps). In order for the Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to complete an income assessment, self funded retirees will need to complete an income assessment form.

To accelerate the process, prospective care recipients can complete the income assessment up to 120 days before commencing a home care package.

Recipients of home care who receive a means tested income support payment from the Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs are not required to complete the Aged Care Fees Income Assessment form (SA456). This is because the respective department already holds the necessary information required to complete this assessment.

A basic daily fee is an amount which all care recipients are asked to pay toward their cost of care.

The income test assessment determines any additional fees that care recipients may be asked to contribute to cover the costs of aged care.

There will be situations where a fee advice differs to what the care recipient was expecting. It may be because the department completing the assessment holds additional information in respect of the care recipient.

Once completed, an assessment outcome letter is sent to the care recipient and nominee (if relevant) to advise of the fees they are required to pay.

In cases where an incomplete assessment is submitted, in addition to written advice, two attempts will be made by the Department of Human Services to phone the care recipient to remind them to provide further information. The home care provider (if care has commenced) will also receive a letter notifying them that the Department is seeking the additional information.

If the care recipient does not submit a completed assessment following these reminders they are liable to pay up to the maximum income tested fee. Both the care recipient and the provider will receive fee advice notification letters from the Department of Human Services to this effect.

On commencement of a home care package, the service will provide the care recipient’s details via the online Aged Care Entry Record (ACER) to enable data matching for income testing purposes. The service will then receive the fee notification letter for the care recipient if an assessment has already been completed or if the care recipient is a means tested income support payment recipient.
Home care is funded by the Australian Government through the Home Care Packages Programme and provides aged care services to people in their own home.

The Aged Care Fees Income Assessment form (SA456) is used to determine the daily rate of home care fees payable by a care recipient who is planning to commence or has commenced a home care package. The information will also be used to calculate the amount of Government assistance that your home care provider may receive on your behalf.

If you receive a means tested Australian income support payment such as:
- Centrelink - Age Pension, or Disability Support Pension
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs - Service Pension, or Income Support Supplement
then you do not need to complete an income assessment form. The Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs will have sufficient information to work out your income tested fees.

If you are a self-funded retiree or receive a non-income tested government payment such as:
- Centrelink - Age Pension (Blind), Disability Support Pension (Blind), Carer Allowance, or Mobility Allowance
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs – Disability Pension or War Widow’s Pension (AND you do not receive the Income Support Supplement with these pensions)
and you want to request financial assistance, then you do need to complete an income assessment form, as the Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs will not have enough information about your income to work out your income tested fees.

**Basic daily fee**
The basic daily fee for home care is equivalent to 17.5% of the single basic Age Pension daily payment rate. This is an amount which all care recipients are asked to pay toward their cost of care.

**Income tested care fee**
New home care recipients who commenced care from 1 July 2014 may also be asked to pay an income tested care fee based on their total assessable income over the relevant income free area.

**Quarterly Review**
Your aged care fees are reviewed quarterly (January, March, July and September) using the latest assessment of your income and your cost of care.

If you are having trouble meeting your care costs or experience financial hardship, you may be eligible for financial hardship assistance. Information about financial hardship assistance is on our website: [humanservices.gov.au/agedcare](http://humanservices.gov.au/agedcare)

If you complete the Aged Care Fees Income Assessment form (SA456) before commencing a Home Care Package, the initial fee notification advice you receive will be valid for 120 days unless there is a significant change in your circumstances in which case you will be required to notify us.

Information on aged care fees and charges which may apply to you is available at [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au) or by calling the My Aged Care Information Line on 1800 200 422.

This factsheet outlines interactions between you and the Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Your aged care service provider may have other requirements, such as application forms and client agreements. Please ask them about their requirements.

**The Aged Care Fee Estimator**
The Aged Care Fee Estimator can assist care recipients work out the fees and charges they may be asked to pay for aged care, noting the actual fees care recipients pay will depend on their income as assessed by the Department of Human Services or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. The estimator should be used as a guide only and can be found at: [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

The Aged Care Fee Estimator is not a substitute for financial advice. Care recipients or their nominees should consider seeking independent legal, financial, taxation or other advice to check how the estimate relates to their particular circumstances.