

Home Care Package Basics

HELPING DONALD TO STAY AT HOME

Since Mary died, Donald had been managing living at home by himself: he'd had to learn to cook, clean, shop and pay bills. But when he had a fall and broke his hip, his daughters were concerned that he wouldn't be able to manage when he returned home. As he was no longer able to drive, they were also worried that he would become isolated, unable to catch up with his friends, visit the library and have coffee in the local coffee shop – something that had become a daily ritual since Mary's death.

Then a staff member at the rehabilitation centre suggested that Donald get assessed for a home care package so that he could remain living at home with some professional support. Donald was confused: he didn't understand what a home care package was or how it would help him. However, he didn't want to burden his daughters and was keen to remain living at home. This motivated him to call My Aged Care to organise an assessment.

After the assessment, Donald received a letter letting him know that he was approved for a level two home care package and that he was put on the national package queue. A few weeks later he received another letter informing him that he was assigned a package. The letter also included a referral code and a date he needed to enter a home care agreement with a provider of his choice.

Donald asked a friend to help him. Together they went on the computer and navigated the My Aged Care Service Finder to find some providers in the area. He called two providers to find out more. Both came to his home to talk with him about his unique needs and interests; what they could provide; the cost of their services and the home care package process.

Donald was impressed with one of the providers – they really listened to him. They also came up with some practical things they could assist him with, including weekly cleaning and regular home sessions with an occupational therapist to help him regain his mobility for daily tasks. This would all build up his confidence to walk to the local coffee shop. So that he could cook again more easily, they suggested that he buy lighter, smaller pots and pans.

The provider also helped him find other help in the community. They pointed out that the local library was doing home delivery, while the neighbourhood house had a great program teaching people to cook for one. They let Donald know that supermarket nearby did home delivery for free for older residents. These were all things that would make a real difference to his life, and that he could draw on without having to use his home care package funds.

Home care packages – how they work

Home Care Packages is a government-funded program that helps older people with more complex needs to stay living at home.

Assessment

To find out if you are eligible for a home care package, contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 to arrange an assessment. This free assessment is done in your home. The Aged Care Assessment Team will work out what package you are eligible for, according to your needs. There are four levels of packages depending on how complex your needs are and how much support you require.

After the assessment, you will receive a letter to let you know what level of package you're eligible for, whether you are on the national waiting list or if you have been assigned a package. Once you have been assigned a package you are given a limited time to choose a provider to deliver the package for you.

Choosing a provider and starting your package

The provider you choose will ask you to sign a home care agreement. The agreement outlines how the package will be provided, the services you will receive, your rights and responsibilities and how much it will cost. The provider will work with you to develop a 'care plan' that matches your interests and meets your unique needs.

What it costs

You can be asked to pay something towards the cost of the home care package, depending on your income and assets.

Once you are receiving services, you get a monthly statement detailing the amount of money the Government has contributed, how much you have contributed, the type and cost of any services you received, and any balance remaining – this is carried over to next month.

If you need more support, you can boost your package by contributing more of your own money, or by buying extra private services on top of your package.

If your needs change

If your needs change, you can ask for a review of the care plan. If your needs increase significantly, you can have another assessment to see if the level of your package needs to be changed.

What was the outcome for Donald?

Donald signed up with the provider and they were able to start his package within a week of him signing up. The weekly sessions with the occupational therapist were very successful, and within a few weeks Donald was able to walk – initially with a walker and later with a walking stick – to his local coffee shop. The coffee shop was pleased to see him again and kept an eye on him, even giving him a lift home when it was raining. Donald loves the library books that get delivered every week. The cooking class renewed his interest in cooking, and the new pots he bought with some of his package money have made a real difference.

Donald's case manager contacts him monthly by phone to see how he is managing. He also has a number he can call if things change or if he has any concerns or questions. His daughters are very happy to see him managing well and even making some new friends.

Donald is so glad that he overcame his initial fear of the unknown and took up the opportunity to have a package which made a real difference to his wellbeing and his ability to live at home and stay connected.

Find out more about home care packages:

[My Aged Care](#)

[My Aged Care Service Finder](#)

[Home Care Today](#)