

Self-Management and Direction

JEAN'S STORY

Jean lives alone in rural NSW. Having been the secretary of many local committees over the years, she has a bit of computer knowledge and enjoys using the internet. Jean's rheumatoid arthritis and some vision problems are quite debilitating, but her positive attitude and willingness to try new things give her the independence she values so much. Jean's son, Andrew, lives in Sydney, but is very involved in her care – albeit at a distance.

Jean has a level 4 package, which she has chosen to self-manage. This allows her to spend more of her package value on care, and keeps her active mind busy and engaged. Jean communicates with her Sydney-based package provider by email, Skype or telephone. Jean needs assistance every morning with her personal care routine. Other than that, she prefers not to be tied to a particular day and time to do things, so she uses a small local service with flexible staff.

Together with her Case Manager, Jean has developed a care plan that clearly documents her goals; the strategies needed to achieve these goals; the services and support used from the package; and other potential support to draw on, including family and local community.

Jean knows her care plan and package budget in detail. When she needs the services and support identified in her care plan, she calls and books staff and services directly, then advises the Case Manager by email. Jean's flexible package pays for the care staff who assist her every morning; her annual hydro-pool membership; twice weekly in-home massages for pain relief; and a modified keyboard and enlarged computer monitor that help her stay online. In Jean's budget, an allowance was made for continence supplies from the local pharmacy and some contingencies to assist with emerging needs related to her declining mobility.

Andrew, Jean's son, is copied into all email correspondence with the provider; he monitors the monthly financial statements and keeps an eye on the budget for her.

Consumer Directed Care

Home Care Packages are delivered on a Consumer Directed Care basis. This means that people who receive a Home Care Package have more choice and control over what services and support they receive and where and when they are delivered. You can choose a provider to manage the package for you and they must work with you to design a care plan that is based on your expressed needs. The care plan outlines your individual budget and how it will be spent to help you achieve your goals. The budget also outlines the costs for the provider's administration and case management of your package.

Self-management roles and responsibilities

You can decide how much you want to be involved in managing your home care package. Some people may want the provider to manage their package and not to be involved at all, whereas others are quite happy to be more involved as they have the interest, time and ability. Most Home Care Package providers offer a range of self-management options catering for different circumstances. Make sure you have a shared understanding of what your role and responsibilities are if you choose to take on some self-management. You may be able to arrange the services that are outlined in your care plan directly

and monitor invoices to ensure they are correct before passing them on to the provider to pay. Ensure that you discuss the cost of the different self-management options and how this will affect the amount you have left to spend on your care and support.

Communication

To get the best outcome from your Home Care Package, it is vital to find effective ways to communicate with your provider and, if relevant, any family members or friends who support you. Think about your preferred way to communicate – such as by phone, email, SMS or mail – and let your provider know so they can tell staff and note it in your personal file. When you meet with your Case Manager to develop your care plan, talk about common things you will need to communicate about and how to go best about it without misunderstandings and delays.

What was the outcome for Jean?

Jean is very happy with the care and support she receives from her package and she has established an excellent relationship with her provider and the people providing services for her. She greatly values knowing what the budget is for her care and being able to make decisions on how to best use the package to meet her needs. Her son, Andrew, who monitors the monthly financial statements and the budget, feels that despite the distance he is still involved in his mum's care, and they often have engaging discussions about what matters her.

Find out more:

[My Aged Care: Consumer Directed Care](#)

[My Aged Care: Enter into a Home Care Agreement – Care Plan](#)

[Home Care Today: Managing your Home Care Package](#)

Videos:

[Increasing Choice in Home Care](#)

[Your Home Care Package: Making it work for you](#)