SELF-MANAGEMENT IN HOME CARE PACKAGES

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE for PROVIDERS
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Welcome to COTA Australia’s Self-management in home care packages: Toolkit for Providers.

You are taking an important step towards understanding the concept, principles and activities of self-management. You will discover how to prepare yourself and your organisation to deliver a model of care that helps consumers to achieve more choice, control and autonomy in the day-to-day tasks of their Home Care Package.

Our experience tells us that most package providers underestimate what is involved in establishing a self-management model. This Toolkit is your complete guide to self-management from a provider’s perspective on the important elements that make up a successful and compliant model of care. The companion Consumer Toolkit must be used in conjunction with this resource to guide you and your self-managing consumers.

We know how important it is to plan and cost your model according to your individual business needs. Both providers and consumers need a strong framework as well as safeguards and parameters in which to operate with confidence. We have developed the information in this Toolkit as part of COTA Australia’s ‘Self-management in Home Care’ project 2017–2019, drawing on the project’s research and findings.

In these pages, you will find information, tools and resources that cover all aspects of self-management to help, guide and support you.
Older people have been looking after themselves and others for a long time. Self-management in home care packages acknowledges that older people and their carers understand their own care and support needs, and bring skills and experience to continue to make decisions in their lives.

There is no single way to describe self-management in the context of home care. Each consumer’s motivation to self-manage is as individual as they are. And just as importantly, each provider is different with their strengths, strategy, orientation and business model.

Self-management does not mean that a consumer is left to their own devices. All providers must remain involved with their self-managing consumers to make sure they have the care and support they need.

Providers are not obliged to offer a self-management option, however the principles of Consumer Directed Care must continue to underpin all provider models of care.
Who can self-manage?

Any consumer, their carer or other representative, may wish to be more involved in self-managing their home care package. A consumer’s capacity or suitability to manage their own Home Care Package is not for the provider to decide. The Aged Care Act states that consumers have the right to choose the level of involvement they have over their package, however, a partnership approach to self-management works best.

Providers need to offer:

- Consistent information to prepare consumers for self-management.
- Clear agreement around mutual responsibilities and obligations.
- Ongoing support and involvement, in line with Aged Care Quality Standards.
COTA’s self-management model attempts to align with the Australian Aged Care Quality Standards (Quality Standards) to demonstrate ways providers might approach their model design. Whilst there is no guarantee that adopting each model element will result in compliance for the corresponding Standard, our intention is to link certain elements with descriptions in the Standards guidance materials as a starting point.

Think about how your model can support your organisation towards achieving various individual elements of the eight Quality Standards. Consider recording this information in your documentation and having it ready to present at your next Quality Review.

Look out for these Quality Standards icons throughout the Toolkit – these indicate the ways that you are working toward the standards using the COTA self-management model.
SELF-MANAGEMENT & QUALITY STANDARDS

COTA Australia’s model of self-management attempts to align with Australian Aged Care legislation. The model is designed to complement the ongoing Aged Care Reform agenda, which is strongly premised on Consumer Directed Care.

Providers’ obligations and responsibilities to the Department of Health, and to their consumers, do not change in any way for consumers who choose to self-manage. The same legislation, standards, rights and guidance continue to apply.

- *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cwlth)
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission’s Australian Aged Care Quality Standards
- Charter of Aged Care Rights (2019)
- Any related guidance material.
Self-management gives consumers and carers:

- more control of how their funding is spent,
- shared authority to decide on purchases,
- a way of directly paying for services, products and activities relevant to their care.
- a way to choose support workers and other contractors.

This Guide is organised into the following sections to guide you through our model of self-management:

- **SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**
  Sound skills and understanding of tasks involved in self-management

- **SUPPORT WORKERS AND SUPPLIERS**
  Choice of workers and suppliers or preferred organisation

- **SPENDING**
  Make decisions and directly make purchases aligned with care plan

- **TRANSPARENCY**
  Transparent access to up-to-date statement of funds available

- **HELP AND SUPPORT**
  Access to helpful people and other resources when needed
CENTRAL THEMES OF SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR CONSUMERS:

- **Partnership:** Providers and consumers are in this together. Neither can succeed at self-management without the support and co-operation of the other. Mutual understanding and agreement about division and demarcation of tasks and activities is paramount.

- **Care and support:** Consumers are supported to re-evaluate and prioritise their care needs and care goals. Consumers receive formal guidance to source and contract care workers and suppliers if they wish to do so.

- **Financial control:** Consumers have a method to buy approved items and pay suppliers at the point of sale. Consumers and providers share online access to their home care budget and financial statements so consumers’ spending and available balances can be tracked efficiently. For example, a home care debit card can be loaded with an agreed amount of package subsidy, or a process can be established that enables consumers to use their personal funds and be reimbursed.

- **Decisions about spending:** Consumers need information to inform them about appropriate spending parameters that still enable flexibility and creativity in meeting their care needs. Providers should adopt a supported decision-making framework that is objective, consistent and transparent.

- **Help and support when it is needed:** The provider checks in with consumers at key intervals to support their progress, particularly when they are first starting with self-management.

- **Quality and compliance:** The model attempts to align with the Aged Care Quality Standards. Risk mitigation and capacity building for both providers and consumers is central to the model.
COTA’s model of self-management details the topics, conversations and issues that each provider should consider in developing their own distinct model.

These tasks below are a starting point summary for you to check off as you progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-MANAGEMENT TASKS</th>
<th>COMPLETED YES/NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read through the material available to providers on the COTA Australia website.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with your consumers about their needs and preferences for the self-management model.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure staff at all levels are involved in helping to design and develop the self-management service.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work through the major questions posed in the ‘Defining your Model’ section on page 12 &amp; 13. Apply continuous improvement principles to review and refine.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify training needs. Upskill and train staff where necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulate your costs. Articulate your charges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate your self-management model, processes and mechanisms.</td>
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Providers need to consider these four main domains in the implementation of their self-management model:

1. Administration / back-of-house
2. Governance, leadership and culture
3. Care management & clinical practice
4. Training and education

The questions in the following pages will help you work out what you need to consider in these domains.
These questions are designed to facilitate productive conversations about your self-management service and to prompt decision-making around important factors.

Your answers will form the basis of your organisation’s approach, policies and mechanisms for self-managing clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>YOUR ANSWERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are your home care service options?</td>
<td>Name your available services e.g. self-managed, agency-managed, share-managed, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are you offering?</td>
<td>What are the differences between these services? (more in the Responsibilities checklists from page 32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What are your options for self-managing clients when they need help?    | Define the options and opportunities - for example:  
  - standard capacity building for all new consumers?  
  - case management services at an hourly rate?  
  - 1 hour free case management per month available?  
  - FAQs published on your website                                                                                                                                 |
<p>| How will you support capacity building?                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| How will your self-managing clients communicate with your organisation?  | Name and describe the process. If you don’t have a ‘care manager’ as a point of contact, it’s likely that there will be some adjustment around the communications processes.                                      |
| How will you disseminate useful resources for your self-managing clients? |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>YOUR ANSWERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your method for clients to access up-to-date statements of their home care packages funding?</td>
<td>Name the system or service e.g. client portal, online app, Capital Guardians website, online banking, phone call or email to the financial team etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your method for clients to make purchases using their home care package funding?</td>
<td>Name the system or service e.g. clients will use their personal funds and then be reimbursed, client will use a home care debit card, clients will use a re-loadable Australia Post card etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your process for clients to make decisions about their purchases</td>
<td>Name and describe the process for decision making. You can use the Spend Check Tool in the Consumer Guide to Self-management as a framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your process for approval invoices and managing receipts?</td>
<td>Name the system or service e.g. clients will approve relevant invoices and receipts and send them to the organisation at the end of each month etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your method for facilitating client choice of support workers?</td>
<td>Name the process or system e.g. clients will have access to the Mable platform; clients will arrange relevant documentation i.e. police checks and insurance checks; clients will be able to on-board staff of their choice from the community etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your system for clients to manage their support workers?</td>
<td>Name and describe the process e.g. client will have access to all relevant documents regarding their care; will have joint access to online system with provider; will be able to initiative a review with suggested changes etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your process for involving clients in their care planning and supporting initiative?</td>
<td>Name the triggers, process, actions and charges associated with providing crisis-management or other interventions and services to your self-managing clients.</td>
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SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Staff at all levels and departments in your organisation develop the skills and knowledge they need to deliver a quality self-management service to your consumers.

From administration staff and finance teams to support workers, care managers, quality managers executive managers and Board members; each of these consumer touchpoints needs information and training to ensure they understand their role in the organisation’s self-management model.

Key considerations for your organisation in developing an approach to Skills and Knowledge:

- Structure clear parameters around your self-management model – this will help you to determine the skills and knowledge your staff needs to deliver the model effectively.
- Build the capacity of your workforce and the systems involved to deliver self-management, and identify where further development is needed.
- Identify the gaps in information, resources and/or training you need to develop or deliver for your workforce and consumers.
- Establish clear processes to allocate responsibilities with consumers, understand their existing strengths and capabilities, and tailor resources and support for each individual.
- Consider introducing a review period for your self-managing consumers; some may need more time or resources and support than others. There may be some cases when it’s not the right option and having a predetermined review meeting may help uncover this.

Idea in Brief

Providers must have a sound understanding of tasks involved in self-management and their responsibilities to support consumer self-management. Providers must support professional development across the organisation as well as build consumer capacity.
Coaching and Capacity Building

Coaching and capacity building will vary in degrees because consumers enter into home care with different skills and knowledge. If you believe that a consumer does not have the necessary capacity or skills to self-manage, it is important not to automatically exclude them. It may be their carer or other representative who can take on the role of managing the consumer’s package on their behalf. It may be that there are less onerous self-management elements that a person can still participate in, regardless of their condition or capacity.

Supported decision making framework

As a provider, you may wish to have a standard capacity building period for every consumer interested in self-management, or perhaps tailor the skills and knowledge development needs to each consumer. You will need to think about what is effective with your current systems, experience, practices and strategy as an organisation. This is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach.

Benefits to the Provider

- Providers that have a structured and well-articulated model of self-management will attract and/or retain consumers seeking more autonomy and control.
- A well-defined self-management model may help to show progress towards meeting Quality Standards.
- Providers may cost their capacity building activities for consumer readiness as a function of Care Management.
- Building an experienced team of in-house self-management experts will, over time, make administrative tasks more efficient, e.g. finance and accounts.
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Lessons from the Self-management Trial

- Office staff need training and education in various aspects of delivering high-level self-management. Finance staff in particular need guidance on what self-management means, as consumers often interface with finance/accounts regarding financial information about their package.
- In our trial, many key staff, including some care managers and finance/accounting staff, were unaware of the Care & Services Schedule from the Quality of Care Principles to help them understand approved spending parameters.

Consider which Quality Standards best align with your model:

- Standard 1
- Standard 2
- Standard 3
- Standard 4

To-Do List:

All of these tasks are important to establishing your unique model of self-management.

- Document the details of your self-management model including responsibilities, capacity building approach and systems involved – link to Responsibilities Tool.
- Communicate to all staff about your organisation’s approach to self-management and future steps.
- Train your key staff in self-management including the key concepts as well as the systems/processes involved in your approach – link to COTA Australia website – online resources.
- Create and finalise a self-management Agreement including pricing strategy – link to self-management Agreement.
- Customise the self-management Agreement with each consumer, tailored to their preferred level of self-management involvement.
What does ‘Support Workers and Suppliers’ mean for consumers?

In a self-management model, the consumer will have the option of selecting their own workers and suppliers to meet their care needs and goals. Some support worker selections may result in cost savings to the package, enabling funds to be diverted to other priority care and support needs. Refer to the Consumer Guide to Self-management for details.

What does ‘Support Workers and Suppliers’ mean for providers?

As the provider, you host the Home Care Package, however, your self-managing consumers may choose service providers and support workers external to your organisation. This freedom of choice is a fundamental aspect of self-management. Regardless of how, or by whom, a supplier or support worker has been engaged, providers are obliged to ensure Quality Standards are met.

Consumers may wish to select workers from many sources, including:

- support workers already working with them before they began the Home Care Package
- support workers employed in your organisation
- support workers employed by other service providers
- workers, suppliers or businesses they know from their neighbourhood or community
- online platforms that connect people directly with independent care and support workers in local communities, e.g. Mable*
Idea in Brief

Self-managing consumers must have the option to choose their support workers. Many consumers wish to take on responsibility for rosters, timesheets and payment. Your internal practices will need to be adapted to allow choice for consumers but be flexible on how support workers are managed.

How you enable these arrangements is up to you and your organisation. There are many options in managing the contractual aspect of this arrangement; some providers choose to create individual contracts with each external service provider while others have opted to use online platforms to manage the process.

* COTA partnered with Mable during the self-management project. Mable is compliant with general Approved Provider requirements. COTA Australia recommends that providers conduct due diligence when engaging in a brokerage agreement with an employment platform.
There are a range of options for a consumer to choose their own support workers or suppliers. You will need to think about what is practical, effective and works with your current systems, practices and strategy as an organisation. Providers offering self-management may implement one or more of the following options to give maximum flexibility to their model:

- customising a sub-contract arrangement for workers [refer to Staff Handbook]
- partnering with online employment platforms.
- supplying your preferred provider list for consumers to choose from.

Providers need to consider and discuss with consumers:

- support worker and supplier on-boarding processes;
- compliance-related checks;
- qualifications and/or training requirements;
- on-going management;
- feedback and communication; and
- monitoring of support worker and supplier performance.

Some consumers may simply wish only to be involved in the ‘choosing’ of support workers, however, if they do wish to take on higher levels of support worker and supplier management, providers are obligated to ensure these arrangements satisfy the relevant Quality Standards and their obligations under the Aged Care Act.
Lessons from the Self-management Trial

- A key reason consumers want to self-manage their package is to be able to choose some or all of their support workers and/or suppliers.

- Provider systems need to be adapted to allow for consumers to on-board support workers of their choice and to enable appropriate monitoring and oversight.

- It takes time for providers and consumers to set up effective systems for managing external worker contracts.

- Providers need to be prepared for conversations with their legal advisors about establishing external worker contracts and using existing online employment platforms. Various models are currently in use by providers across aged and disability services, though you need to check that they satisfy the compliance and legal requirements against the Aged Care Quality Standards and Aged Care Act.

- Online employment platforms can streamline contracts and insurance issues for providers.

- Online employment platforms can make managing and monitoring support workers much easier for consumers.

- Providers need to be aware of the variations between Australian States and Territories regarding insurance requirements for support workers working in the homes of consumers.

Consider which Quality Standards best align with your model:
To-Do List:

Not all of the tasks listed here will apply to your organisation; use your discretion to determine which ones apply to you.

- Create and document independent contractor processes including credential and insurance checks and responsibilities,
- Sign any relevant agreements with external contract worker organisations,
- Create and document processes for safeguards for your consumers when they are dealing with their contract support workers and suppliers, including quality oversight and risk management - see Preparation Tool and Risk Mitigation Tool in the ‘Provider - Developing Your Self-management Agreement’ resource
- Review contractor vs employee information here: Australian Taxation Office Contractor Information
- Review Police Certificate Guidelines (July 2019)
Self-management can provide ways for consumers to take more control of their home care package funding, to purchase services and supplies that relate to their care needs. Even in self-management, all spending needs to be matched to the consumer’s care plan and goals, and fit within their home care budget.

You will need to consider two key things:

1. the **process** of making decisions and,

2. the **mechanism** for making approved purchases.

As the provider, you have some important decisions to make to successfully facilitate this.

**PROCESS: Decision-making**

Empower consumers to think creatively about meeting their care needs and to match spending with their care plan and goals.

When an item or service does not fit neatly as an ‘Included Item’, decision-making needs to be consistent and objective. Providers and consumers are collectively accountable for spending taxpayer dollars in a fair and responsible way.

Use the Spend Check Tool [in the Consumer Toolkit] to demonstrate a clear and objective process. To protect both the consumer and the provider, this process requires consumers to seek provider agreement for new spending before the spending takes place.
MECHANISM: How to enable spending control

The mechanism you choose must allow consumers to directly make the purchase themselves. It is preferable that the account be set up specifically for Home Care Package funding. Receipts for all spending must be presented by the consumer to the provider before reimbursement occurs.

Options tested during our project trial include:

- Load’n’Go reloadable debit card issued by Australia Post
- a debit card and dedicated bank sub-account linked to the provider’s main bank account
- a consumer debit card (dedicated home care account) with funds being reimbursed by the provider after purchase
- a consumer credit card reimbursed within the interest-free period
- an online platform that facilitates payment through a third party or financial intermediary e.g. Capital Guardians

Lessons from the Self-management Trial

- Collecting receipts and reconciling expenses can be time-consuming for providers; ensure your system is clear and adapt your systems as issues arise.
- During the trial, each of our providers tested different mechanisms to allow their consumers to buy their care services and products. Choose the one that is right for you.
- Consumers often need help setting up their new payment mechanisms, e.g. creating an account or getting a pre-paid debit card from Australia Post.
- Apply a continuous improvement framework to testing new systems. Providers in the trial had to review and refine their model as they progressed.
- We highly recommend trialling any new mechanisms or processes with a smaller group of consumers (which includes a diverse group for maximum learning) before offering the new mechanism or process to all consumers.
- Complete a set of the bank or AusPost forms yourself before you decide which option to take. The project team tested the Load’n’Go acquisition process personally and subsequently made changes to the instructions for participants based on that experience.
Benefit to the provider

- Clarifying the decision-making process will mitigate a lot of issues down the track. Having a clear process and agreement for spending parameters reduces the risk of inappropriate purchases.
- Automating simple purchase decisions will greatly reduce your staff time spent on simple matters. For example, if continence supplies are listed in the care plan then the consumer has the authority to purchase as required without contacting the provider on each occasion.
- Consumers will have a greater sense of dignity and autonomy when you give them the authority to buy simple items that they need, e.g. continence supplies, taxis, allied health appointments.

Consider which Quality Standards best align with your model:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1</th>
<th>Standard 3</th>
<th>Standard 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 2</td>
<td>Standard 7</td>
<td>Standard 8</td>
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Consider which Quality Standards best align with your model:
SPENDING

To-Do List:

Financial self-management is highly regarded by consumers who enjoy the freedom and flexibility it brings. Use your discretion to determine which ones apply to you.

- Define and document processes for various financial options available to consumers.
- Create and document processes for accounts and finances, including reconciling receipts, loading funds into consumer accounts and joint oversight over accounts - link to Agreement and Responsibilities Tool
- Define and document the decision process for spending approval

Please note:

- Consumers paying directly for goods and services may be charged GST on applicable items.
- Providers may claim back GST on behalf of consumers.
- Some suppliers offer bulk order discounts to providers, but may not transfer this cheaper rate to a consumer who orders directly from them.
Transparency relates to many aspects of self-management:

➔ information
➔ costs and charges
➔ demarcation of responsibilities
➔ package spending
➔ shared access to statements of financials

Generally, consumers will be supplied two statements each month:
1) a provider-issued statement of total Home Care Package income and expenditure, and
2) a statement of financial activity on their home care debit card.

If you have the technology to enable real-time balances which includes subsidy income up to the previous day of occupancy, then this will make planning and purchasing even more streamlined.

Consumers are often unaware of the funding available in their package from a day-to-day perspective. The ‘Spending’ element of self-management relies on the budget and financial ‘Transparency’ element for success. The consumer must have an accurate knowledge of their available funds to confidently make decisions and purchases themselves. Once receipts are received, reimbursement to the home care debit card must occur quickly (i.e. within 1-2 days) to ensure consumers can continue to transact with confidence.

It is recommended that you link this section with the processes and mechanisms involved in the ‘Spending’ part of your model. This decision will have implications on the types of activities your internal staff are required to do. The decisions you make here will also impact the type of support you offer and will help identify skills your consumers will need to learn to financially manage their package funds.

In addition to general transparency and sharing of information and responsibilities, there are many ways transparency can be provided to consumers: through an online portal, a mobile phone app, phone calls direct to the finance team, an independent (external) financial intermediary or other methods. Consider what works with your current systems, processes and staff.

Idea in Brief
Consumers cannot exercise choice and control if they don’t know how much they have to spend. If you use automation and technology, providing transparency can result in minimal extra staff time while providing a big benefit to your consumers.
Lessons from the Self-management Trial

Our provider partners are yet to determine 1) how to get real time financial information on package budget in an accessible format for consumers to access, and 2) how to integrate debit card spending statements with their provider issued monthly statement. This is an unresolved outcome from the project trial.

- Facilitating online access to home care debit card expenditure statements will reduce the time burden for finance staff to give information to consumers, compared with time taken via phone or email.
- Providers who enable shared online access with consumers to their card balances are able to use their staff time more efficiently.
- Consumers using online methods to view their statements need training on how to do this, as do the staff expected to guide them. Once set-up, this is easily maintained.
- If you use a financial intermediary or online platform, your staff will need to be trained in these options.

Benefit to the provider

- Consumers will be more aware of unspent funds and be able to identify more ways to use the funds to help them with their care.
- Providing access to up-to-date statements online or via phone App will save staff resources by reducing the time spent handling consumer enquiries about their budget and finances.
- Automating this budget transparency aspect of self-management is highly recommended. Consumers are often familiar with viewing bank accounts online so minimal support or training should be needed.
- Using a financial services intermediary, such as Capital Guardians, may allow you to transfer some responsibility to another organisation and reduce your staff time managing finances.
TRANSPARENCY

Consider which Quality Standards best align with your model:

Standard 1
Standard 2

Standard 3
Standard 4

To-Do List:

Not all of the tasks listed here will apply to your organisation; use your discretion to determine which ones apply to you.

Define and document processes for consumers to have transparent access to their statement of funds including the method of communication and any online systems involved

- Set up your preferred systems, including agreements required with financial institutions.
- Facilitate opening consumer accounts and debit card arrangements.
HELP AND SUPPORT

Providers need a level of expertise that ensures consumers and others within their organisation fully understand what is required to implement and sustain a model of self-management. Providers need to know where to find appropriate information for themselves and to use existing sector resources wherever possible.

Historically, home care packages providers have delivered care management services to coordinate care and services associated with their consumers’ care needs. Care management continues to be an important service in home care packages. Self-managing consumers often want and need the help of their providers, but they want more control over how it is delivered to them. Providers need to adjust the types of services they provide and the way they charge for them to help their self-managing consumers appropriately. Consider how you will provide the following to your self-managing consumers:

- ad-hoc care management
- capacity building assistance
- emergency and crisis management
- review of self-management arrangements.

Even the most independent self-managing consumers and carers will need help at some point. Providers are obligated to monitor and review the clinical needs of their consumers, including those who self-manage their care. Establishing a process for identifying changes in clinical care needs and crisis management is essential.

The set-up phase in self-management typically requires the most intensive period of help and support. This is expected to taper off once consumers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to continue without additional supports. This capacity building period will vary for each consumer, and may involve directing consumers to helpful resources, coaching, technologies and so on. Providers can cost and charge for their capacity building activities accordingly.
HELP AND SUPPORT

Lessons from the Self-management Trial

- Many providers in the trial reduced their fees to their self-managing consumers based on the assumption that they could reduce their care management service delivery or eliminate it altogether for self-managing consumers. However, some consumers still needed a significant amount of help from their provider in navigating self-management and setting up their services and processes.

- If you are reducing your ‘standard’ care management (or equivalent) provision to your self-managing consumers, be clear on the tasks and level of involvement that are prerequisite for consumers to meet. Establish a process to cost and charge for additional care management services if required.

- Being clear about the way care management and other help is charged to your self-managing consumers will reduce your financial risk.

- Information and resources are important to consumers; they are likely to read and research all that is available to them. Make sure you have information that meets the needs of consumers and carers who may already be relatively savvy in the sector. Don’t over-simplify important information; it may cost you more in the long run.
To-Do List:

Depending on which of the ‘Help and Support’ self-management options you implement, you may need to complete some or all of the tasks below:

- Define and document processes for your staff and consumers to ask questions and access help regarding self-management - refer to Responsibilities on page 32, and Self-management Agreement resource.
- Create resources to communicate the processes and information about your self-management model, including using templates and information available through the COTA Australia website.
The following documents have been prepared in collaboration with Gadens lawyers, 2019. It is important that providers and consumers are protected by a formal agreement to detail the demarcation of tasks, activities and responsibilities associated with self-management in home care packages.

**Responsibilities Checklist**

Within self-management, each party is has a range of tasks and responsibilities. Clarifying responsibilities is a major part of differentiating your self-management option from other provider-managed options available. The tables on the following pages list a range of tasks, activities and responsibilities associated with the management of a home care package - together you and your consumer can use the checklist system to decide which responsibility falls to whom.

This checklist has been designed primarily as a tool for your conversations with consumers who are interested in self-managing. It can also be used as a secondary tool by your service to clarify the scope of your service offerings.
# CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS A CONSUMER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOU CAN:</th>
<th>SELF MANAGED</th>
<th>&lt;SHARE MANAGED&gt;</th>
<th>&lt;PROVIDER MANAGED&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose your support workers and/or the organisation that provides your workers</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make all or some purchases directly &lt;insert your method here – refer to policy and refer to Home Care Debit Card&gt; &lt;refer decision-making process&gt; &lt;refer receipts/tracking process&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Request access to care management professionals charged at an hourly rate (outline in policy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access printed and digital resources for self-management assistance to build knowledge and skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage your support workers directly &lt;insert your method here – relates to policy&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU MUST:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete self-assessment checklist &lt;or other relevant documents&gt; and return to approved provider</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS A CONSUMER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>&lt;SHARE MANAGED&gt;</th>
<th>&lt;PROVIDER MANAGED&gt;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review and update care plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve support worker timesheets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve supplier invoices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the risks associated with self-managing home care</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor your expenses by accessing the up-to-date statement of your home care funds on &lt;insert method&gt;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure funding is spent according to home care legislation (see Clause ## of your Home Care Agreement), and your Care Plan, which will be attached to your Home Care Agreement&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise provider of any changes in circumstance that could affect home care funding or nature of care management requirements</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss with provider if you cannot complete the expected self-management tasks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact provider (or a trusted person) to help with any critical event that may affect your ability to self-manage</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

**OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PROVIDER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WE MUST:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supply you with up-to-date statements of your funding balance via online access or other means &lt;insert your method&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support you to choose your support workers &lt;insert your method&gt; e.g. directing to Mable website, supplying them with standard contract for suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give you all documents and online resources relevant to managing/directing your own care &lt;insert specifics&gt; e.g. care plan, assessed needs report, agreement, online and printed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support you to access, manage and monitor your home care funds &lt;insert specifics&gt; e.g. debit card guidelines, application form for card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you if a critical event occurs that affects your capacity to self-manage &lt;hospital stay, health crisis, add any other relevant field in here&gt; charged at regular case management rate &lt;$x&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give you direct access to a professional with self-management knowledge and advice &lt;insert details e.g. charged per hour&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PROVIDER</th>
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<th>&lt;SHARE MANAGED&gt;</th>
<th>&lt;PROVIDER MANAGED&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WE MUST:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Give you printed and/or digital resources for self-management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide supported capacity building for self-management &lt;charged at agency-managed rate&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support you to make all or some purchases directly &lt;insert your method here – refer to policy and refer to Home Care Debit Card&gt; &lt;refer decision-making process&gt; &lt;refer receipts/tracking process&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide oversight of your direct purchases &lt;insert method&gt; e.g. reviewing monthly statement</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you to manage your support workers directly &lt;insert Self-management Schedule – Managing Support Workers &lt;template document&gt; &lt;your method here – relates to policy&gt;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide you with and discuss your completed self-assessment checklist &lt;or other relevant documents&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide out-of-hours support &lt;insert method here&gt; charged at $x per hour</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support you to develop your own care plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop your care plan in consultation with you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and update your care plan</td>
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</table>
COTA’s self-management model differs significantly from most other models by identifying the perceived and actual risks and mitigating them through consumer capacity building, robust demarcation of tasks, and agreement of responsibilities for both consumers and providers. Unlike other self-management programs such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Australia, there is no transference of liability from the provider to the self-managing consumer. The approved home care provider is still ultimately responsible.

Some risks perceived by providers are:

- consumer health outcomes might be worse
- consumers may buy inappropriate things or compromise their essential care needs
- the provider might not meet the quality standards if they use a self-management model.

The major risks perceived by consumers are:

- they may make a mistake and have to pay back money from their personal funds
- providers won’t offer any help, and no one will be there to help them if they need it.

Lessons from the Self-management Trial

- Perceived risks by providers are far greater than the actual risks involved in self-management – few risks became a reality in the trial.
- In general, consumers perceive far fewer risks than providers.
- There will be many conversations about risk within your organisation.
- Most risks can be mitigated through clear processes and by clarifying expectations.
- Consumers are wary of making mistakes and of possible financial consequences if they spend the funding incorrectly. Often they will actively seek help from you to avoid those risks.
To-Do List:

- Read the Literature Review available on COTA Australia’s website, which includes research from self-management programs overseas, the risks and the issues that have arisen in the past.
- Conduct risk identification and risk analysis activities, which may include rating the risks according to impact and likelihood.
- Review the risk mitigation strategies in COTA Australia’s Risk Mitigation table.
- Form and document organisational responses to the most prevalent risks.
- Review Australian Government requirements for managing risk including:
  - emergency events: Department of Health: emergency-events-in-aged-care;
  - heatwave preparation and response - Department of Health: heatwave response
This table lists the suite of COTA Australia tools available to consumers and providers. The column to the right describes what risk this tool is addressing and how it can help to mitigate the risk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS &amp; RESOURCES: Refer to CONSUMER Guide to Self-management and Consumer Toolkit.</th>
<th>HOW THE RESOURCES ADDRESS PERCEIVED RISKS &amp; CONCERNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Readiness Checklist ‘Getting Ready’</td>
<td>“Consumers don’t know enough about what’s involved in self-management” Consumers will be able to recognise the relevant skills and knowledge they need for self-management and identify where they need to build their capacity. This will help providers to identify people who might struggle with self-management and put supports in place while the consumer learns all the necessary skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Self-assessment Checklist ‘It’s About You’</td>
<td>“Consumers don’t know enough about their care needs” Consumers will be able to better understand their care needs and identify new (or changed) needs that might not be written in their care plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Prioritising Needs Tool ‘My Priorities’</td>
<td>“Consumers might compromise their essential care needs” Consumers can identify their priority care needs to ensure they can make appropriate decisions regarding their home care. Care planning is a partnership activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Care Plan Review Tool ‘My Care Plan’</td>
<td>“Self-managed consumers care plans will be out of date or not reflective of their needs” Consumers are equipped with a simple structure to review their care plan. Consumers who are actively involved in initiating reviews to their care plans are more likely to have care plans that reflect current needs and to raise concerns early with providers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Consumer To Do Lists | “Consumers don’t know what tasks they need to do” Consumers can easily identify the tasks they are required to do to set themselves up as successful self-managers, with an easy-to-use checklist form so they can tick off tasks as they go. Helping consumers set up for self-management thoroughly can give them a better sense of the requirements and manage expectations. | 39
### RISK MITIGATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS &amp; RESOURCES</th>
<th>HOW THE RESOURCES ADDRESS PERCEIVED RISKS &amp; CONCERNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer and Provider Responsibilities Tools</td>
<td>“Consumers and providers don’t know their responsibilities”&lt;br&gt;Both consumers and providers are able to identify the responsibilities that can be involved in self-management. By working through the tool together, both parties can agree on how the responsibilities will be allocated. Conflicts and disagreements can be mitigated by identifying and clarifying the responsibilities early on. Ensuring there is a method to review these responsibilities in the early stages helps to adjust to the needs of the consumer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer and Provider Spend Check Tool</td>
<td>“Consumers might make inappropriate spending decisions”&lt;br&gt;“Providers make arbitrary and inconsistent decisions”&lt;br&gt;This tool lays out a clear decision-making process for home care purchases. This is an objective decision-making tool that follows aged care legislation while navigating the ‘grey areas’ of that legislation. Consumers are empowered to have an active role in spending decisions while being mindful of their obligations. Providers base their decisions on the Care and Services Schedule, however this is a bit vague and doesn’t help consumers to understand why a decision was made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Videos (see COTA website)</td>
<td>“Consumers and providers have trouble understanding the basics of self-management”&lt;br&gt;Watching these videos will help consumers and providers understand the general concepts of self-management and how it can be of benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Your Model</td>
<td>“Providers don’t know the parameters of self-management”&lt;br&gt;Providers will be able to identify and structure the parameters around their unique self-management model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider To Do Lists</td>
<td>“Providers don’t know what they need to do to offer self-management”&lt;br&gt;Providers can more easily identify the tasks they are required to complete within a self-management model with an easy-to-use checklist form, so they can tick off tasks as they go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider Readiness Checklist</td>
<td>“Providers don’t know enough about what’s involved in self-management”&lt;br&gt;Providers will be able to recognise the relevant skills and knowledge their staff will need for self-management and identify where they need to build their capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure</td>
<td>“Providers don’t have any promotional material for self-management”&lt;br&gt;Using this brochure, providers will be able to promote the concept and benefits of self-management to consumers. They can also use the free resources developed in the COTA trial overall.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Case Studies
(see Consumer Guide to Self-management)

*“Consumers and providers find it hard to understand self-management in practice”*

These case studies will help providers and consumers to see how the concept of self-management works in practice and to view a few examples of how the principles can be applied differently.

### Frequently Asked Questions
(see Consumer Guide to Self-management)

*“Consumers and providers have so many unanswered questions when it comes to self-management”*

The FAQs can help consumers and providers to find answers to common questions about self-management at a glance.

### Key Benefits

*“The keys benefits for self-management aren’t clear”*

Consumers and providers will be able to understand the key benefits of self-management.

### Aged Care Quality Standards
References

*“Providers offering self-management won’t be compliant with the Aged Care Quality Standards”*

This tool will help providers to see how self-management attempts to align with the Aged Care Quality Standards.
Self-management may not automatically translate into lower charges to consumers. Just like any other business decision, your organisation will need to weigh up the costs associated with providing self-managed home care to your consumers in addition to the value you provide to them. Some consumers will take on ‘low-level’ activities of self-management that may give them a greater sense of autonomy, but may not equate to less work for their provider.

How a self-management model is implemented will be different for every provider as each organisation is unique: its history, location, strengths, weaknesses and so on all ultimately contribute to the pricing.

Once you have considered the model of self-management and how best to implement it, you will start to develop (or outsource) services that provide value and address the needs specifically of your self-managing consumers. Pricing these services will depend on whether and how much your consumers actually want those services from you.

Take time to work through the service design process and link to your organisational strategy. If you are already satisfied with the self-management services you have on offer, you may want to start with the service pricing process rather than the service design process.

Be wary of pricing your services purely based on the market. This strategy will not accurately reflect your organisation’s internal costs, value or the uniqueness of your customers.
PRICING

Idea in Brief

Offering self-management to your consumers means you have to re-think how you price your services. Traditional models of home care may not be as easily adapted to incorporate self-management. You have the opportunity to develop a suite of helpful supports and services to support your self-managing consumers.

Lessons from the Self-management Trial

- Providers often feel obliged to reduce their fees for self-managing consumers,
- Providers did not necessarily cost their models according to the level of support the consumer required in self-management,
- Providers sometimes found it difficult to recoup the costs involved in operational running of self-management as consumers sometimes needed more input from case managers than was initially expected. As such, the costs of case management for capacity building support were not always adequately charged,
- The major savings to consumers occur when they can choose their own support workers and negotiate the hourly rate privately,
- Consumers highly rate the value of having more freedom and choice in their home care package – this was not always related to having reduced charges from providers against their package,
- Some providers added a handling fee to processing consumer invoices to recover costs.
Debbie received a call from her new client, Greta, to discuss getting a debit card to pay for some of her regular activities such as taxi fares and her weekly hydrotherapy sessions. Debbie had never had clients using a debit card for home care expenses before but she supported the idea of giving Greta more autonomy. Debbie found COTA Australia's 'Getting Ready' checklist to get a general understanding of the abilities and knowledge consumers need to be good candidates for self-management.

Together the home care team discussed the option of introducing a home care debit card and ways to minimise the risk of consumers spending the funds inappropriately. The team decided to use COTA Australia's Spend Check Tool to clarify the decision-making process for consumers and clarified their parameters for the debit card by using the Debit Card Schedule available through COTA Australia's website.

The home care team decided to do a three month trial of the debit card with Greta and recruited two more consumers to test its effectiveness. For the trial period, the team chose to use a reloadable debit card that required minimal set-up. They invited the three consumers to give regular feedback via weekly phone calls so they could adjust their processes as necessary and more closely monitor risks during the trial period.

The home care team hope that, in time, consumers will have increased autonomy whilst reducing their case manager's input in facilitating purchases. All going well, Debbie and her team plan to extend the debit card option to other consumers and use the new card system as a point of difference from competitors in the New South Wales area.

This is based on a true story but names and details have been changed for privacy reasons. This serves as an example only and does not represent the only options available to consumers or providers. For more details check out the COTA Australia website.
CASE STUDY: SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

Getting started with self-management

Lotana returned from a provider network meeting feeling perplexed about what the concept of self-management actually entailed. Lotana is thinking it’s something the organisation should look into. They're one of the big providers in Queensland but they haven't been getting many new consumers lately - it’s time to start exploring new ideas. Lotana does some research on the internet and discovers lots of free and useful resources available on the COTA Australia website for providers and consumers. She also checks out what other providers are doing around the self-management space.

Lotana organises a meeting with her manager to discuss the viability of integrating self-management into the organisation. They complete the 'Provider Readiness' checklist from COTA Australia and discover that in order to progress, they’ll need to look at their current strategy and strengths as an organisation to see whether it’s a good fit.

Lotana also wants to talk to her colleagues to see whether there has been a demand from their consumers to do some of these 'self-management' tasks as described in the 'Responsibilities' Tool.

After a period of exploration and surveying their consumers, Lotana and her team decide to do a pilot of self-management. They follow the 'To Do' list steps included in the Provider Toolkit to ensure they are set up and have considered the relevant processes and risks. They determine a timeline and 'measures of success' and set off on their pilot journey. All going well, they hope that their fresh approach to home care will attract new consumers.

This is based on a true story but names and details have been changed for privacy reasons. This serves as an example only and does not represent the only options available to consumers or providers. For more details check out the COTA Australia website.
CASE STUDY: SUPPORT WORKERS & SUPPLIERS

Keeping the gardener

Larry has been John's gardener for over a decade now. Larry lives close by so it's easy for him to drop around whenever John needs some work done.

John was recently approved for a home care package. He was disappointed to learn that his provider wanted to replace Larry with a gardener from his provider's list of preferred gardeners. John was happy with all his services and workers from the provider except for his wish to keep Larry on as his gardener. Larry had become an essential connection to the community and he trusted his professional advice in the garden. Layla and her father approached the provider to discuss how they could keep Larry on as his gardener.

Ahmed, John's care manager, agreed to look into the possibilities of keeping Larry in the care team. Some other care managers in the team had managed this kind of arrangement before and recommended two options; a contract be signed between Larry and the provider or to use an online platform to manage the contract. Both of these options need approval from Senior Management.

Ahmed consulted COTA Australia's Provider toolkit for further clarification particularly the Agreement template and the Workers Schedule.

In both cases Larry must provide some essential information; his ABN, a current police check and public liability insurance. Ahmed communicated these requirements to John and Layla. Layla organised for Larry to email the required documentation to Ahmed directly. John himself wants to stay as the main contact for Larry so they can maintain their usual relationship as they have for the past decade.

Ahmed doesn't have to organise any of the communications or rostering with Larry. However Larry sends his invoices to Ahmed for processing.

This is based on a true story but names and details have been changed for privacy reasons. This serves as an example only and does not represent the only options available to consumers or providers.

For more details check out the COTA Australia website.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is ultimately responsible for how the Home Care subsidy is spent?

- Approved providers are accountable to the Commonwealth Department of Health for how the funding is spent.
- Self-managing consumers share responsibility to ensure spending is in line with home care packages guidelines.
- Home care packages are a taxpayer-funded government program. This means providers and consumers are responsible for ensuring the package funds are spent according to each consumer’s assessed care needs, and in a responsible way.

Do I need to give permission for every product or service my consumers want to buy?

- No, you do not need to approve each purchase separately; you can simplify processes and responsibilities, e.g. regular items that are ‘pre-approved’, i.e. items that are explicitly mentioned in the care plan can be bought by the consumer without approval each time.
- Ensure you have a clear approvals process in place that is well-communicated to your consumers.

Who makes decisions about what to buy?

- In a self-management model, consumers are encouraged to take the lead when it comes to making decisions about what products and services meet their care needs.
- Ensure you have a clear decision-making process in place that is consistent from the provider and the consumer perspective.

What happens if you and your consumer disagree about what the funds can buy?

- The Spend Check Tool is designed to help the decision-making process by asking key questions to link spending with assessed care needs.
- You both may need to compromise to reach a satisfactory agreement.

What if I find that my consumers are struggling with self-management?

- Particularly in the early stages of self-management, some consumers may need more support and oversight from you.
- Build some capacity building and monitoring into your self-management model; this can be phased out as the consumer builds on their knowledge and skills.
- Communicate the process for consumers to ask for extra support or even opt out of self-management at any time.
### How much should we charge our self-managing consumers?

- Providers are entitled to set their own costs and charges associated with self-management.
- Like any other service type or business offering, you will need to price according to your costs to run the service and the value you provide to your consumers.
- How much you charge the consumer’s package may also depend on how many activities they manage, and what activities you remain responsible for.

### What happens if there are changes due to a hospital admission, respite care, transition care or a holiday?

- You must have a clear process in place for your self-managing consumers to advise you of changes that affect your Medicare Claim.

### Can my self-managing consumers create and review their own care plan?

- Yes, self-managing consumers are encouraged to be more active in creating and updating their care plan.
- You will need a clear process in place for consumers to more actively contribute and instigate change.

### Who is monitoring the quality of support workers?

- You and your self-managing consumers need to ensure adequate processes are in place to monitor the quality of support workers and suppliers. This is no different to your obligation for monitoring outcomes for all of your consumers.
- Include items such as: emergency procedures, after hours support, support worker feedback requirements, and the like.
Authors
Anna Millicer and Jacqui Storey

Disclaimer: This document provides general practical advice and is not intended as legal or financial advice. This publication should not be the only source of information for consumers and providers of home care. COTA Australia encourages anyone who has questions about home care to get the relevant professional advice to discuss their own or their organisation’s particular situation. COTA Australia makes no representations or warranties of any kind with respect to the contents of the information. To the maximum permitted by the law, COTA Australia disclaims any such representations or warranties as to the completeness, accuracy, merchantability or fitness for purpose of the information.

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