

What Support at Home means for New Participants

Significant changes have been made to the way home care services are delivered in Australia. The new Support at Home program commenced on 1 November 2025, replacing the old Home Care Packages (HCP) program.

Anyone newly assessed after 1 November 2025 starts afresh with Support at Home and is often referred to as a 'Newbie' participant. This handout is designed to give you clear and practical information about what Newbies can expect from Support at Home and how they will access services in the future.

Who are the New 'Newbie' participants?

Newbie participants are people who are assessed as eligible for a Support at Home classification after **1 November 2025**.

This does NOT include people who were assessed before 1 November 2025, even if they are assigned their funding any time after 1 November 2025. Importantly, for Newbies, there are absolutely zero elements of the previous home care packages (HCP) program for them. They will experience 100% Support at Home features only.

What does Support at Home look for Newbie Participants?

Following their comprehensive assessment by the Single Assessment Service, Newbies will receive:

- A **Notice of Decision** letter: This letter confirms what programs the participant has been approved to receive and the reasons & evidence behind the assessor's decision about the services they approved.
- A **My Aged Care Support Plan**: This outlines the main issues and goals for the person relating to remaining independent at home and includes their classification level and approved quarterly budget amount. Their Plan also lists the services they are approved for from the three Service Categories (Clinical, Independence and Everyday Supports).
- A **Quarterly Budget**: They will receive a quarterly budget amount to build a Care Plan with their registered provider to pay for their care and services.
- **Approval for Services**: Unlike Hybrid and Grandfathered participants, Newbie participants are NOT automatically eligible for all types of services on the Support at Home service list – they can only access services from the specific service types they are approved for in their Notice of Decision. The only exception is if the person has Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- **Out-of-pocket contributions**: Newbies will be advised by Services Australia what percentage contribution rates they have to pay, depending on their income and assets, and which service types they receive. The main thing to remember is that all Newbies, including full Age Pensioners, are required to pay toward the cost of their care.
- **Capped Rollover Funds**: Newbies will be able to access a capped amount of funds that have not been used in each quarter for care and services. The capped amount is added to their next quarterly budget in case they need some extra support.

Important Note about Service Access

Newbie participants can only access services or supports that have been **specifically listed on their Notice of Decision**.

If their care needs change or they wish to vary the way they use their quarterly budget, they can apply for a variation or higher level of funding via a Support Plan Review.

Newbies can apply for other **short-term funding streams** to supplement their ongoing quarterly budget. This includes:

- Assistive Technology & Home Modifications (AT-HM) Scheme
- Restorative Care Pathway
- End-of-Life Pathway

How does this affect your daily work?

The changes you may have seen since the transition from Home Care Packages to the Support at Home program apply to all your participants in one way or another, not just to Newbies.

Some of the more common changes that support workers may have noticed include:

- More emphasis on showing evidence that services have taken place
- Some changes to what participants can spend their funding on
- Noticeable increases in the prices of services
- Some delays in receiving monthly statements and up-to-date package financials, and
- Some confusion and worry amongst participants about their personal contributions.

Keeping track of feedback

If you hear concerns expressed by participants, it's a good idea to document any questions or feedback to pass along to your supervisors and to learn as much as you can from your organisation's training and other sector updates.

The November 2025 Support at Home commencement date is not the end of the government reforms; it is actually the beginning. It will take time to settle, and we are all hopeful that the changes will have positive outcomes for the people they are designed to support.

If your participants are unsure of how the Support at Home program can best support them, you should suggest they reach out to their Care Partner for a conversation.



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Scan to watch a short and helpful explainer video for this topic!

