

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2014-15 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 3.3 Home Care

Question No: SQ15-000198

Topic: Consumer advice

Hansard page:

Senator Polley, Helen asked:

Is there room in the funding of home care packages for providers to use for administration? Travel?
Consumer advice and general liaison?
Who provides advice to consumers?

Answer:

Approved providers of Home Care Packages are able to charge administrative fees to cover a range of overhead or operational costs, such as insurance, workers compensation, care co-ordination (including development of care plan with the consumer) and service provider travel costs. The Department of Social Services does not set a limit on administrative fees, but expects them to be kept to a minimum so that consumers can receive the care and support they need.

As part of the implementation of Consumer Directed Care (CDC), home care providers and consumers work in partnership to agree their fees and charges in the Home Care Agreement. Following acceptance of the Home Care Agreement, consumers and providers work in partnership to co-design a care plan that will identify the consumer's goals and needs. The care plan costs are recorded in an individualised budget which provides consumers with greater transparency of the costs of their care. Consumers are kept informed of these costs in an ongoing monthly income and expenses statement.

The Department recognises the higher costs associated with attracting and retaining staff as well as other resource implications faced in providing home care services in rural and remote areas. For consumers located in specific Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) locations, the Department provides an additional viability supplement as part of their home care package budget.

Consumers receive information from a range of sources. In particular:

- My Aged Care is an Australian Government website and national phone line that provides up to date information about aged care for consumers.
- The Government funds the National Aged Care Advocacy Program to provide advice to consumers, their families and carers about their rights and responsibilities when accessing aged care services. Advocacy services are free, confidential and independent. The National Aged Care Advocacy Line can be contacted on freecall 1800 700 600.
- In addition, the department is providing funding to support COTA Australia with its partners Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) and Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) to provide consumers and aged care providers with resources and information.