

# Tips for getting the most out of your home care

Understanding home care packages webinar | aired 9 August 2022

## Top 10 tips

**1. Check out the fee estimator/means assessment tool on the My Aged Care website.**

By entering your assets and income, you can avoid being surprised by unexpected fees.

**2. Ask for a budget from more than one provider. You want to know how much you are paying to receive how many hours of service.**

For example: "I would like two hours of showering support a week, I'd like cleaning once a fortnight, I would like meals on wheels."

"That will allow you to see what you have left in your package at the end of the month, or if all your funding has been spent, because individual fees can be quite confusing," says specialist financial advocate Heidri Brook, of Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia.

"One provider might charge \$40 for a cleaner where another charges \$55. But the second provider might charge less for travel or package management. It's better to look the total picture."

**3. Watch out for hidden costs.**

Some providers charge a percentage to process every invoice. Some charge sign-up and/or exit fees. Others charge a fee if you use your own support worker.

**4. Pick up the phone and call a potential service provider. It's a good way to find out if you are going to get good customer service or not.**

**5. Ask to see a copy of the providers' monthly summary. Is it easy to understand? Do they have a guide for you to follow or someone who can help?**

**6. You have 56 days to find a provider after you've been assigned your home care package.**

If, for some reason, you can't find someone in that time, you can call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** to ask for an extension.

**7. If you believe your health needs have changed or that some medical information hasn't been taken into consideration, you can contact My Aged Care and ask to be reassessed.**

**8. If you self-manage your home care package, local and social networks can be a good way to organise services.**

"I don't mention aged care packages, I simply say I'm looking for a cleaner, a gardener or whatever person I'm looking for," says National Older Persons Reference Group member Lesley Forster.

"We formed our own little group and it's very informal but we share workers and we share problems," says Forster.

"If you can talk to other people with a home care package, you're going to learn a lot more, especially from long-term [users]."

**9. If you are looking for culturally appropriate services, some providers may have support workers who speak your language or are from a similar cultural background.**

Contact the Translation and Interpreting Service on **131 450**, who can assist you in talking to your providers to set out your needs.

**10. Talk to an OPAN advocate or financial advocate for help to understand costs, options and alternative solutions. Call 1800 700 600.**

They might also refer you to Services Australia's free Financial Information Service (FIS).