draft 1

H1: Understanding Support at Home contribution rates

- Help readers understand the new participant co-contribution model under Support at Home,
- including how much people might pay based on pension status,
- what services attract co-contributions,
- what “no worse off” means for current HCP users.

With more Australians choosing to age in place, the Support at Home program aims to simplify and improve the way older people access support in their own homes.

In response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the aged care reforms aim to improve the quality of support older Australians receive. As the aged care industry transitions, one of the biggest questions for participants and their loved ones is; How will the new contribution fees work?

Understanding the contributions that participants will be asked to pay–and why–is key to smoothly transitioning into Support at Home.

There’s a lot changing come 1 July 2025, so we understand if navigating the reforms (and what they mean for you and your loved ones) feels overwhelming right now.

H2: How contributions work under Support at Home

When it comes to contributions and what you can expect to pay, here’s the good news; thanks to the reforms, participants can expect more service hours of support for the same level of funding. Let’s break the major changes down a little.

H3: Clinical supports won’t require a contribution

Under Support at Home, clinical support services will be entirely funded by the government. This means participants won’t have to contribute anything to receive services and supports under this category.

Clinical supports cover services like nursing, physiotherapy and allied health.

You won't have to worry about up-front package fees

Support at Home has also removed up-front package management fees. This means participants can free up more of their budget for direct care services.

You will pay per service

Another major change we'll see under Support at Home is the introduction of a pay-per-service model. Instead of being charged administration and compliance fees across your entire funding package, you will only pay these fees for services that you actually use. While this means hourly rates for support will increase, it also means more of your funding can go to direct care services, and less on administration fees.

Understanding contributions

Contribution rates by support category

Like we mentioned above, the rate you will be asked to contribute will depend on two different factors.

The first factor is the type of support service you are accessing. The table below outlines the Support at Home contribution rates for the different support categories.

Table 2. Support at Home contribution rates

	Clinical supports	Independence	Everyday living
Full pensioner	0%	5%	17.5%
Part pensioner	0%	Part pensioners and CSHC holders **will pay between 5%-50%** based on an assessment of their income and assets. For part pensioners this will be based on their Age Pension means assessment. CSHC holders will undergo a separate assessment for Support at Home.	Part pensioners and CSHC holders **will pay between 17.5%-80%** based on an assessment of their income and assets. For part pensioners this will be based on their Age Pension means assessment. CSHC holders will undergo a separate assessment for Support at Home.
Self-funded retiree (holding or eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card - CSHC)	0%		
Self-funded retiree (not eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card)	0%	50%	80%

Image: page 36 [Support at Home program handbook]

H3: Contribution rates by pension status

Age pension status is the second factor that determines what a participant pays for each service. Generally, we can expect to see:

- the lowest contributions for full pensioners
- moderate contributions for part pensioners
- the highest contributions for self-funded retirees

All participants who are eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) will have lower contributions. This will apply whether you have applied for the card or not.

The table below outlines the Support at Home contribution rates for different age pension statuses.

	Clinical care	Independence	Everyday living
Full pensioner	0%	5%	17.5%
Part pensioner and Commonwealth seniors health card eligible	0%	Between 5% and 50% depending on income and assets	Between 17.5% and 80% depending on income and assets
Self-funded retiree	0%	50%	80%

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H1: What does this mean for me?

H3: Clinical supports – 0% (fully funded)

Clinical supports cover specialised services that support you to maintain or regain functional or cognitive independence. These services can include nursing, physiotherapy, prescribed nutrition care and allied health.

Clinical supports will be **fully funded by the government,** so you won't need to contribute anything to access this service category, regardless of your age pension status.

H3: Independence supports – 5–50%

Independence supports cover services for managing daily living, including personal care, social support, assistive technology and home modifications.

Independence supports will require a contribution rate **between 5 and 50%**, depending on your age pension status. This means:

- Full pensioners will pay a 5% contribution fee.
- Part pensioners, self-funded retirees and CSHC holders will pay between 5 and 50% contribution fee based on an assessment of their income and assets.
- Self-funded retirees will pay a 50% contribution fee.

H3: Everyday living – 17.5–80%

Everyday living supports cover services to support participants to keep their home in a liveable state. This category covers services like domestic assistance, home maintenance and repairs, gardening and meal services.

Everyday living supports will require a contribution rate between **17.5 and 80%** depending on your age pension status. This means:

- Full pensioners will pay a 17.5% contribution fee.
- Part pensioners, self-funded retirees and CSHC holders will pay between 17.5 and 80% contribution fee based on an assessment of their income and assets.
- Self-funded retirees will pay a 80% contribution fee.

H2: How will service-based contributions work?

Under the previous Home Care Package (HCP) program, participants had to pay a basic daily fee and income-tested care fee that didn't change, no matter what services were used.

With changes coming 1 July 2025, your fees will transition into service-based contributions. This means your contributions will be calculated at a set percentage rate per hour, or for each service type.

Here's a few examples that might make this clearer:

1. Joan receives two hours of personal care, so she will pay a contribution fee per hour.

2. Joan also receives five meals under a meal delivery service. Here, she will pay a contribution for each meal.

H2: The “No worse off” principle

An important part of the transition into Support at Home is the government’s commitment to the ‘no worse off principle’.

This means that current home care participants will not be negatively affected by the reforms.

So what does this mean for you?

I have a current Home Care Package and am a full rate pensioner paying no fees
You will:

– receive the same level of funding after 1 July 2025
– keep your unspent funds and be able to use them in the new Support at Home program

I have a current Home Care Package and am a part rate pensioner paying some fees
You will:

– receive the same level of funding after 1 July 2025
– pay the same or less in contribution fees under Support at Home

I am on the waitlist for a Home Care Package
You will:

– receive an equivalent Support at Home budget to the one you were approved for

I have been assessed as eligible for a Home Care Package

You will:

– receive an equivalent Support at Home budget to the one you were assessed for

H2: Contribution caps, hardship and exceptions

There will be a contribution cap

As another buffer in the new aged care system, there will be a $130,000 lifetime cap on contributions. This protects participants who receive aged care for a long time, and gives them the means to afford to do so.

It's important to note that the lifetime cap is combined with the non-clinical care contribution in residential aged care. This means that if a participant moves from Support at Home to residential care, the contributions they have previously made will still count towards the cap. A resident will stop paying the non-clinical care contribution when they reach this cap, or after their total contributions reach $130,000.

Financial hardship will carry into Support at Home

If something happens outside your control, and you can't afford your aged care costs, you can apply for financial hardship assistance. The process will remain the same after 1 July 2025.

If you have been receiving hardship support before the reforms take place on 1 July 2025, you will be able to continue with the same arrangement under Support at Home.

Once your hardship arraignment expires, you will need to either apply for a new one, or pay the contribution rate relevant for you.

The government will continue to cover majority of cost

Just like the Home Care Package Program, government subsidies will continue to cover the larger portion of your aged care support. Like we explored above, Support at Home participants will pay a contribution fee. But the government will pay the remainder of the cost.

Here's a few examples that might make this clearer:

1. Steve is a full pensioner receiving Support at Home.

He won't pay anything to receive Clinical Care supports, as this is fully covered by government subsidies.

He will pay 5% of the costs to cover his Independence supports, with government subsidies contributing the remaining 95%.

Finally, he will pay 17.5% of the costs to cover his Everyday Living supports. The government will contribute the remaining 82.5%.

2. Daphne is a part pensioner receiving Support at Home.

She won't pay anything to receive Clinical Care supports, as this is fully covered by government subsidies.

Depending on her income and assets, she will pay between 5 and 50% of the costs to cover her Independence supports. The government subsidies will contribute the remaining 95 – 50%.

Finally, she will pay between 17.5 and 80% of the costs to cover her Everyday Living supports. The government will contribute the remaining 82.5 – 20%.

H2: How to find out your contribution rate

We hope this article has given you a good foundation for understanding the new contributions under Support at Home.

Your exact contribution rate will depend on your circumstances.

If you are already a Home Care Package recipient, your contribution under Support at Home will be the *same or less as you pay now*. This is also the case if you are currently on the national priority system.

If you apply for Support at Home after 1 July 2025, your contribution rate will be calculated by your *aged pension status, as well as an income assessment by Services Australia.*

Shay's remix

Understanding Support at Home contribution rates

The new participant co-contribution model under Support at Home is one of the key features of the aged care reforms. Change can seem daunting, but thankfully, this new model is designed to uphold high-quality care standards for older Australians.

As the aged care industry transitions to Support at Home, one of the biggest questions for participants and their loved ones is "how will the new contribution fees work?"

With more Australians choosing to age in place, the Support at Home program aims to simplify and improve the way older people access support in their own homes.

Here's everything you need to know about Support at Home contribution rates:

- How contributions work under Support at Home
- Contribution rates by support category
- How will service-based contributions work?
- Understanding the "no worse off" principle

A quick refresher on Support at Home

Support at Home will replace the Home Care Packages Program and Short-Term Restorative Care Programme from 1 November 2025.

Put into place in response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the reforms aim to improve the quality of support older Australians receive.

Access more government resources on Support at Home.

How contribution rates work under Support at Home

Here's the good news: thanks to the reforms, participants can expect more service hours of support for the same level of funding. Let's break the major changes down a little.

Clinical supports won't require a contribution

Clinical supports cover services like nursing, physiotherapy and allied health. Under Support at Home, clinical support services will be entirely funded by the government. This means participants won't have to contribute anything to receive services and supports under this category.

Learn more about contributions per service

You won't have to worry about up-front package fees

Support at Home has also removed up-front package management fees. This means participants can free up more of their budget for direct care services.

You will pay per service

Another major change we'll see under Support at Home is the introduction of a pay-per-service model. Instead of being charged administration and compliance fees across your entire funding package, you will only pay these fees for services that you actually use.

While this means hourly rates for support will increase, it also means more of your funding can go to direct care services, and less on administration fees.

Understanding co-contributions

The federal government will continue to fund aged care services. Those who can afford to do so will make contributions to aged care costs. How much you contribute will depend on your circumstances, the level of support you require, your income and assets.

Contribution rates by pension status

Age pension status is the second factor that determines what a participant pays for each service. Generally, we can expect to see:

- the lowest contributions for full pensioners
- moderate contributions for part pensioners
- the highest contributions for self-funded retirees

All participants who are eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) will have lower contributions. This will apply whether you have applied for the card or not.

The table below outlines the Support at Home contribution rates for different age pension statuses.

Contributions rates per category and co-contributions

Here's the contribution rates per service at a glance:

Support type	**Contributions**
Clinical supports	No contributions
Independence supports	5–50% funded
Everyday living	17.5–80% funded

See Table 2 in the Support at Home Program Handbook.

Clinical supports: no contributions

You will make no contribution for clinical support services, so you won't need to contribute anything to access this service category, regardless of your age pension status.

This includes anyone who is:

- A full pensioner
- A part pensioner
- A self-funded retiree who holds or is eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card - CSHC

- A self-funded retiree who is not eligible for a CSHC

Clinical supports cover specialised services that support you to maintain or regain functional or cognitive independence. These services can include nursing, physiotherapy, prescribed nutrition care and allied health.

The Support at Home guidelines maintain that these services must be delivered directly, or be supervised, by university qualified or accredited health professionals trained in the use of evidence-based prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management practices to deliver safe and quality care to older people.

Independence supports: 5–50% contributions

Independence supports cover services for managing daily living, including personal care, social support, assistive technology and home modifications.

Independence supports will require a contribution rate between 5 and 50%, depending on your age pension status. This means:

- Full pensioners will pay a 5% contribution fee.
- Part pensioners, self-funded retirees and CSHC holders will pay between 5 and 50% contribution fee based on an assessment of their income and assets.
- Self-funded retirees will pay a 50% contribution fee.

Everyday living: 17.5–80% contributions

Everyday living supports cover services to support participants to keep their home in a liveable state. This category covers services like domestic assistance, home maintenance and repairs, gardening and meal services.

Everyday living supports will require a contribution rate between 17.5 and 80% depending on your age pension status. This means:

- Full pensioners will pay a 17.5% contribution fee.
- Part pensioners, self-funded retirees and CSHC holders will pay between 17.5 and 80% contribution fee based on an assessment of their income and assets.
- Self-funded retirees will pay a 80% contribution fee.

Understanding the “no worse off” principle

The no worse off principle underpins the heart of the Support at Home program and the aged care reforms.

This principle applies to the contributions arrangements for people who, on 12 September 2024, were either receiving a package on the National Priority System or assessed as eligible for a package.

Participants will make the same contributions, or lower, than they would have had under Home Care Package arrangements. Let’s break down the details:

- If you are a full rate pensioner paying no fees under your HCP as of 12 September 2024, **you will never pay fees** under Support at Home.
- If you were required to pay fees under your HCP as of 12 September 2024, the contribution rates may change but **you will pay the same or less under Support at Home**.
- If you are re-assessed after 1 November 2025, you will be allocated a Support at Home classification that is **equivalent or higher than your current HCP package**.

Contribution caps and hardship arrangements

You won’t pay further individual contributions once they reach the $130,000 lifetime cap under Support at Home and the non-clinical care component of their contribution to residential care.

If something happens outside your control, and you can’t afford your aged care costs, you can apply for financial hardship assistance. The process will remain the same after 1 November 2025.

If you have been receiving hardship support before the reforms take place on 1 November 2025, you will be able to continue with the same arrangement under Support at Home. Once your hardship arraignment expires, you will need to either apply for a new one, or pay the contribution rate relevant for you.

What does this mean for older Australians?

- Participants will never pay for clinical supports.

- Participants will only contribute to services they receive, according to their means.
- Older Australians currently receiving a HCP (or waiting for a HCP on the National Priority System) will have peace of mind that they will be no worse off under Support at Home.

What does this mean for aged care providers?

- Providers will be required to have processes in place for every participant in Support at Home to collect participant contributions where relevant.
- Providers will be required to document these processes and be clear with participants about how much they are expected to contribute for services in each category of services before they commence services.

How to find your contribution rate

Under the guiding principle of "no worse off" your exact contribution rate will depend on your circumstances.

- **If you are already a Home Care Package recipient:** your contribution under Support at Home will be the same or less as you pay now. This is also the case if you are currently on the national priority system.

- **If you apply for Support at Home after 1 November 2025:** your contribution rate will be calculated by your aged pension status, as well as an income assessment by Services Australia.

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