

What Does Helping Hand Think About:

Transparency in Home Care Package Pricing Information

The Issue

The Home Care Package (HCP) reform process was designed to give greater choice and control to older people and their families and friends over the services that are available. A key element of this shift is that older people will have a budget they can manage directly. However, older people and their families and friends have expressed deep frustration and confusion over the jargon used in HCP management and the lack of transparency in HCP pricing and budgets. Reforms due to start on 1 July 2019 in the form of more open and transparent pricing regulations are designed to address these problems.

Helping Hand's Position

Helping Hand strongly supports transparency in HCP pricing and welcomes these initiatives which assist older people and their families and friends to make informed decisions about the care they want to receive.

Why we think this

A key element of a market-based system, whether it is utilities offer, telephone plan or an aged care package, is that ability for consumers to compare like for like and to make decisions about the different options which providers present. We support initiatives which:

- Increase truth and clarity and pricing eg no hidden fees; no "special" names to define common tasks but which make comparison difficult;
- Clarity and consistency about what is included in a particular service item, for example, what is covered by a management fee, really mean;
- The opportunity for service providers to explain the differences which might enhance their service delivery or explain why they charge more or less than others;
- Explains additional costs which may be incurred for example, travel costs in rural and remote areas in comparison to those in metropolitan areas.

Older people and their families and friends will be able to make better decisions about their services when they have accurate, consistent and comparable information of this kind.

The general public will have greater confidence that the funding made available from the public purse is being spent appropriately.

