

# HOME CARE PACKAGE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)



This Frequently Asked Questions document has been compiled to help answer questions regarding home care package (HCP) fees and charges.

Date

1 July 2024

## FAQ's

### **Q: Where can I find HCP schedule of fees?**

**A:** Season's schedule of fees and charges can be found on My Aged Care. Your Care Partner can also provide a copy and you can also locate it on our Seasons Living website.

### **Q: How are HCP fees and charges calculated?**

**A:** Fees are calculated using the service's hourly rate. Services provided between 6.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday have a minimum service time of 30 minutes. Some eligible services are available in 15-minute increments for Seasons residents only. On a case-by-case basis certain services may be charged at a minimum of 2-hours, due to additional travel time being required. This will be discussed with you in advance. For Seasons residents, services are inclusive of a minimum of 10 minutes travel time.

### **Q: Why is Seasons increasing HCP fees from 1 July 2024?**

**A:** This is due to ongoing inflationary pressures, increased labour and equipment costs, supply issues, costs to service delivery, increased compliance, and reporting requirements. A key contributor to fee increases, is the increase to wages for our dedicated, hard-working direct care employees, due to the Fair Work Commission Work Value Case, National Wage Review 1 July 2024, employee shortages, and the Seasons Enterprise Agreement.

### **Q: Does Seasons need my consent to increase fees and alter my care plan and budget?**

**A:** Yes. You have the right to understand all charges, price increases, and their implications. You can meet with your Care Partner who will explain changes to our pricing schedule, including why prices need to change, what prices include, and when new prices will start. Your Care Partner will work with you to ensure you understand changes and will review your budget and care plan in consultation with you and your representative or others involved in your care.

### **Q: What are the benefits of having my HCP package with Seasons?**

**A:** Care and support services will be delivered by our onsite caring and dedicated team. Due to care employees being located at the communities, residents have minimal travel charges. Seasons can also deliver services in increments under one hour, including 15-minute wellness checks to better meet your needs.

### **Q: How is Care Management defined?**

**A:** Below is an outline of Care Management:

- Regularly assessing the person's needs, goals, and preferences
- Reviewing their home care agreement and plan
- Partnering with the person and their families or carers about their care requirements
- Ensuring their care and services align with other supports
- Ensuring their care and services are culturally safe
- Identifying and addressing risks to their safety, health, and wellbeing

### **Q: How is Package Management defined?**

**A:** Rostering & Service Schedules

- Coordinating services (schedule services and workers or arrange respite care)
- Ensuring staff have met all employment requirements, such as providing a valid police check certificate.
- Organising third party services

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- Buying equipment (such as mobility aids)
- Arranging allowable home modifications (such as bath rails)

## Financial Assurance

- Establishing and managing home care budgets
- Preparing invoices and monthly statements and responding to enquiries about invoices
- Submitting claims to Services Australia
- Maintaining and updating income tested care fees and basic daily fee payments
- Completing financial reporting

## Quality Assurance

- Submitting paperwork for ceasing care
- Storing and maintaining records
- Training and educating staff
- Conducting quality improvement, compliance, and assurance activities
- Maintaining COVID-19 vaccination compliance documents

### **Q: Why are Care and Package Management charged separately?**

**A:** Care and Package Management are distinct services that are required by The Department of Health and Aged Care to be charged separately.

### **Q: What items are not included in Package Management?**

**A:** Package Management does not include costs associated with, business overheads, administration, communication, marketing costs, care management tasks, direct service charges.

### **Q: How do care and package management charges apply?**

**A:** If you do not receive care and services for an entire month (claim period), Seasons will not charge for care and package management. If you receive care and services for part of the month, the care and package management fees still apply on the basis Seasons has completed the work to manage and implement the services. Seasons does not pro rata these fees.

### **Q: Can a resident exit and leave Seasons?**

**A:** Residents have the right to provide two weeks' (14 days) notice to leave Seasons. Notice is required in writing to the Care Manager or Care Partner.

### **Q: Can Seasons give notice to terminate a client's HCP?**

**A:** Seasons can give notice to terminate a HCP agreement if Seasons cannot care for a client in their home with the resources we have available, such as budget, equipment, staff skills etc. An agreement can also be terminated if an Aged Care Assessment Team finds that a client's needs would be better met with other services, such as residential aged care and/or the client has breached their Home Care Agreement.

### **Q: What are unplanned charges and how do Seasons charge?**

**A:** Seasons takes a consistent approach to billing unplanned charges across communities. Unplanned charges fall into two categories (emergencies and non-emergencies) and will be charged as a minimum of 15mins per unplanned event. Upon request, our in-house care team can also provide you with a fact sheet on the emergency call system and unplanned charges.

### **Q: What are third party services (brokerage)?**

**A:** Seasons may enter into a brokerage agreement with third party service providers to support the delivery of care and services to Seasons clients. These agreements can include labour hire

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to supplement staff, specialist services like Allied Health, building contractor, or to purchase equipment. Third parties may be engaged on an ad hoc or ongoing basis to meet care recipients' needs or their requests for specific workers, providers, or supplies.

**Q: What considerations are reviewed regarding third-party (brokerage) compliance?**

**A:** Seasons and the resident need to consider if the service, support, or purchase is directly linked to their identified care needs and goals and if the client can afford the third-party service. Seasons are obligated under the Aged Care Quality Standards, and the User Rights Principles to take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that third parties engaged for clients have appropriate compliance checks in place. Seasons must receive relevant documentation before third parties can be engaged (eg: police, immunisation, and public liability insurance checks).

**Q: Can Seasons reject to use a third-party (brokered) supplier?**

**A:** Seasons can decline a brokerage arrangement with a third-party supplier if they cannot agree to a reasonable price and/or they do not meet the legal requirements.

**Q: How can I pay for my home care if my government funding does not cover my care?**

**A:** If you need extra support beyond your HCP funding, or are unable to secure government funding, you can contact your Care Partner to arrange to pay Fee for Service.

**Q: What items are considered part of the service that I pay for?**

**A:** Services include our care team preparing for your service (eg: collecting equipment or supplies required for your visit, reading progress notes). After your service, your care giver may also need to record your health information in our digital health management system.

**Q: What if I need to book an unplanned service?**

**A:** Home care services are planned in advance scheduled services. Should you need to arrange an unplanned or last-minute service (including welfare checks) our team will need to review the availability of care givers to see if we can assist you. Please kindly note we will not always be able to meet last minute requests.

**Q: Do I have to pay for the Emergency Call System (ECS)?**

**A:** If your community has an ECS and a resident uses the system for a genuine medical emergency, they will not be charged. Residents will be charged for all non-emergency situations that our employees attend. Prices start at a minimum of \$85. Depending on your non-emergency situation, you will be charged for unplanned services (via Fee for Service). For further details please ask your Care Partner for the Seasons Emergency Call System FAQ document.

**Q: Can I arrange extra services if I am coming back to my apartment from hospital?**

**A:** Seasons communities are independent retirement living villages. As such, our residents need to be able to live safely in the regime of independent living. While many residents have care and support arrangements in place, there are important considerations for the resident and support person when a resident wishes to return to their apartment after a hospital stay.

Please note in some cases, and in line with the requirements below some resident may be safer in short term residential aged care or respite care with 24/7 nursing staff.

- **Notice Period:** Seasons requires at least 48 hours' notice to arrange extra care and support services (HCP or Fee for Service). As a result, a family member or support person may need to stay with the resident, until services can be booked.
- **Medication Management:** Medication requirements can change considerably after a hospital stay. As a result, if Seasons currently conducts medication services, we will

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need advance notice of medication changes to ensure we can continue to provide requested medication services. Please note in some cases certain medications cannot be given by our care givers, and a Registered Nurse may be required.

- **GP Appointments:** Residents and/or their support person are required to follow up and make all required GP appointments. This also includes requesting and/or obtaining scripts and any care supplies the resident requires.

## **Q: Can bathroom modifications be claimed under my HCP?**

**A:** Bathroom modifications if clinically justified, could include lowering or removing shower hobs, changes to design/layout to improve accessibility, handheld showers, removal of shower screens/doors and installing weighted shower curtains. If changes must be achieved without compromising structure, waterproofing, and plumbing within the bathroom. Significant changes to the floorplan of the home, such as a new bathroom/extension are not permitted in Seasons Villages.

## **Q: Can medical expenses and non-PBS medications, including vitamins and supplements be claimed under my HCP?**

**A:** The intent of HCP is to provide medication management, rather than serving as a subsidy for medical expenses/non-PBS medications, including vitamins and supplements. When a medicine is not listed under PBS, the medicine will have to be supplied as a private prescription and fully paid for by the resident. Clients cannot use HCP to pay for medicinal cannabis. If approved by a medical professional, some nutritional supplements (e.g. liquids for enteral feeding) may be approved.

## **Q: Can the purchase of a washing machine be claimed under my HCP?**

**A:** Laundry services and/or repair or provision of a washing machine/dryer can only be claimed if the client has permanent and severe incontinence or other exceptional circumstances, as diagnosed by Occupational Therapist, and documented in their care plan.

## **Q: Can my phone and internet plans be claimed under HCP?**

**A:** HCP cannot be used for phone and/or internet plans, entertainment activities such as streaming subscriptions (e.g. Foxtel) and ipad apps or any other household bills.

## **Q: What household items cannot be claimed under my HCP?**

**A:** Household items not related to improvement of ageing related functions and/or impairment, which include, but not limited to furniture that does not support client's care needs, such as general lounge suites, new mattresses, and appliances (fridges, heating/cooling/hot water systems, TVs, microwaves (except talking microwaves for vision impaired clients). Specialised kitchen equipment (e.g. kettle tippers). For more information on what can be ordered to further assist residents, please contact your Care Partner.

## **Q: Can food/meals be claimed under my HCP?**

**A:** Preparation and delivery of meals can be included but the raw food component of those meals cannot be included. As such, you may be able to claim a percentage of your meal costs, should you have enough budget left in your HCP package.

## **Q: Can Natural Therapies be claimed under my HCP?**

**A:** Natural therapies excluded from HCP include: Alexander technique, Aromatherapy, Bowen Therapy, Buteyko, Feldenkrais, Homeopathy, Iridology, Kinesiology, Naturopathy, Pilates (except for sessions supervised by a physio/exercise physiologist), Reflexology, Rolfing, Shiatsu, Tai chi, Western herbalism and Yoga (except for supervised sessions by physio/exercise physiologist).