

COMMUNITY SERVICES CLIENT FEES



GUIDELINE

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PURPOSE

Bendigo Health is committed to providing equitable access to our Community Services for all clients, regardless of their financial situation and individual circumstances.

This guideline outlines Bendigo Health’s (BH) processes to align with the Victorian Home and Community Care for Younger People (HACC PYP) Fees Policy, the National Guide to the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Client Contribution Framework, and the Support at Home business rules. It ensures that all clients using funded services are expected to contribute to the costs of services where they can afford to do so.

This document:

- Aims to ensure a fair, equitable and transparent approach to client contribution
- Outlines methods of payment of fees
- Outlines provisions to apply if a client has difficulty paying fees.

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TARGET AUDIENCE

- Carer Support Services staff
- Community Allied Health Services staff
- Community Care Services staff
- Community Nursing Services staff
- Home Care Services staff
- Clients of a Community Service program

DEFINITION OF TERMS

CHSP: Commonwealth Home Support Program

HACC PYP: Home and Community Care Program for Younger People

SaH: Support at Home (referring to clients receiving their Support at Home package through Bendigo Health)

PROCEDURE

CLIENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Clients accessing HACC PYP, CHSP or SaH package services are charged a client contribution fee. The Community Services Fee Schedule outlines each service type and corresponding fees applicable for HACC PYP and CHSP.

The Fee Schedule is reviewed and updated annually prior to each new financial year, with adjustments made as required in accordance with the Victorian HACC PYP Fees Policy, the National Guide to the CHSP Client Contribution Framework, and with consideration of relevant Wage Price Index.

Support at Home client contributions are calculated individually by Services Australia pending pension status and individual situations.

INFORMING CLIENTS

Upon admission and prior to commencement of service, clients receive written and verbal information regarding fees. Clients admitted to all Commonwealth funded aged care services through Community Services are provided with a Service Agreement inclusive of client contribution fees. This is discussed with the client prior to a service commencing. All active clients are informed in writing of any fee increases. Additionally, the Community Services Fee Schedule and Support at Home Pricing is available via the Bendigo Health website.

SERVICE ACTIVITIES WITH CLIENT CONTRIBUTION - CHSP and HACC PYP

In person and telehealth appointments

Where a clinical service is delivered to a client in person and/or via telehealth, the appointment is recorded in the client management system accordingly, and a client contribution fee is applied.

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SERVICE ACTIVITIES WITH NO CLIENT CONTRIBUTION – CHSP and HACC PYP

Intake tasks

Staff time for phone calls to clients to review status for triaging and waitlisting, without clinical assessment or intervention, does not attract a client fee.

Service level assessment for CHSP Respite does not incur a client fee.

Staff time related to coordinating brokered services does not incur a client fee.

COLLECTION OF FEES

Home based and telehealth appointments

An invoice will be generated by the program and sent to the client via their nominated method.

Centre based

For some services, clients have the option of paying by EFTPOS at the time of the appointment / session.

Clients who are unable to pay at this time will be invoiced on a monthly basis.

Centre based respite

Sub-contracted providers operate centre based respite on behalf of Carer Support Services. Clients are invoiced on a monthly basis following confirmation of attendance from the sub-contracted provider.

Support at Home

Clients will receive a monthly invoice around the time they receive their monthly statement and sent to clients via their nominated method.

FEE VARIATION (CHSP and HACC PYP only)

Clients are provided with an opportunity to discuss affordability for either subsidised or non-subsidised services.

If a staff member identifies client concern with paying nominated fees, then the client can be provided with the Fee Variation Application Form

Approval Process

- The relevant Manager will assess the application, and either approve or decline in accordance with the BH Delegations Manual, and discuss with the client the outcome of the fee variation. The completed form is stored in the client management system
- Ensure fee variation is recorded and actioned in the client management system.
- The fee variation may be time limited and may be renegotiated with the client following the agreed timeframe
- Clients will be notified of the outcome

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Hardship application for Support at Home clients

Clients accessing aged care supports through Support at Home, are able to apply through Services Australia for Financial Hardship. This is done by completing an Aged Care Claim for financial hardship assistance form with Services Australia.

Grievance Process

All clients, their advocates, authorised representative or registered supporter have the right to question the fee they are being charged if they feel it is unfair or not affordable either at the initial assessment or at any time they are receiving services.

Complaints will be dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution.

CONSUMABLES (HACC PYP and CHSP)

Community Nursing and Podiatry provide basic consumables needed for some treatments. If any additional or specialised items are required, these may incur an extra cost.

During intake and triage, or during home visits, if products needed are on top of basic consumables, this will be discussed with the client and itemised on the client invoice.

Cost of a consumable:

Cost per single item as purchased through Bendigo Health.

DATA COLLECTION

CHSP Grant agreement obligations include a requirement for service providers to report the dollar amount charged to clients. A record of all client contributions charged over the financial year is reported through the Data Exchange (DEX) via the appointment schedule in client management system.

SERVICE CANCELLATION

All clients must provide at least two business days' notice for cancellations. Fees will be charged for cancellations inside this notice period.

Circumstances may exist where there are reasonable grounds for a client being unable to cancel with two days notice and fees may be waived. These are:

- sudden illness
- hospital admission
- where an external brokered service has not charged BH cancellation fees

Team Leaders can be consulted for any guidance on service cancellation.

KEY LEGISLATION, ACTS & STANDARDS

- [Aged Care Act 2024](#)
- [HACC PYP fees policy and schedule of fees \(health.vic.gov.au\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Home Support Programme \(CHSP\) Manual 2025-2027](#)
- [CHSP National Unit Price Ranges and Guide to the National CHSP Client Contribution Framework](#)

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RELATED BENDIGO HEALTH DOCUMENTS

- [Consumer Complaint Management Protocol](#)
- [Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#)
- [Delegations Manual](#)

APPROVAL

DOCUMENT OWNER	Director, Community Services
LEAD AUTHOR THIS VERSION	Manager, Carer Support Services
APPROVED BY	Corporate Standards Committee
DATE APPROVED	24/02/2026

MANDATORY INCLUSION

Personal information and health information as defined in the relevant Victorian law, which is required to be collected, used, disclosed and stored by Bendigo Health in order to achieve the Purpose of this document, will be handled by the Group and its employees in accordance with their legal obligations.

When developing this document, Bendigo Health has taken all reasonable steps to make its content consistent with the proper discharge of its obligations under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.