



13 January 2023

Media Release

Home care consumers and providers working together

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner Janet Anderson is encouraging people receiving aged care via a home care package to work closely with their provider to sort out their care arrangements.

“Active participation by home care consumers in decisions about their care arrangements typically leads to better outcomes.

I want to encourage all consumers and those authorised to speak on their behalf to talk often with their provider, asking any questions they might have and providing useful feedback about the services they are receiving to help the provider make any necessary improvements,” Ms Anderson said.

Standard 2 of the 8 Aged Care Quality Standards sets out the expectation that consumers are partners with their provider in the ongoing assessment and planning of their care. This helps consumers get the care and services they need for their health and well-being, taking into account their goals and preferences.

Provider obligations to consult consumers are currently receiving increased attention in the sector. Prompting this are changes made last year to the industrial award that many home care workers are employed under, as well as new caps on home care fees and charges that came into effect on 1 January 2023.

The Australian Government introduced the new pricing caps to improve pricing transparency and reduce excessive charges.

Ms Anderson said “It is important for consumers to understand that their home care provider cannot make changes to their care arrangements without consultation. Also, any changes that are made should not negatively impact the quality and safe delivery of care and services that consumers receive.”

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission conducted targeted activities with home care providers throughout 2022 to remind them of their obligations when making changes to consumers’ care arrangements, and the new pricing cap requirements introduced on 1 January 2023.

Ms Anderson said that the Commission had found some providers who had failed to properly support their consumers to exercise choice about their care, and to deliver care and services that met their consumers’ needs. The Commission has taken action with those providers to address the identified issues.

“Whenever the Commission finds a provider not meeting its obligations to consumers, we will take appropriate action to ensure that the provider makes the necessary changes to their service,” Ms Anderson said.

If people have concerns about their care arrangements, there are a number of options available to them. The Commission is always ready to help consumers to resolve concerns with a provider. The Commission provides a free service for anyone to raise their concerns or make a complaint about an Australian Government funded aged care provider and this can be done confidentially or anonymously.

Alternatively, consumers are encouraged to raise concerns directly with their provider if they feel comfortable doing this. All service providers are required to have a complaints system in place, and in most cases, consumers and providers are able to work together effectively to address concerns. However, if this approach doesn’t work or if consumers want help to do this, then they should not hesitate to contact the Commission.

“If you, or someone you know, have concerns about a home care provider making changes to care arrangements or you are concerned about the fees being charged, please contact us so we can help.

Making a complaint is not ‘being difficult’. Complaints are important because they can help providers to improve the quality of care and services they deliver,” Ms Anderson said.

The Commission can be contacted by telephone on 1800 951 822 or by visiting the website at **www.agedcarequality.gov.au**.

Support and advice is also available from the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) by telephone on 1800 700 600 or by visiting the website at **www.opan.org.au**.

Media enquiries: media@agedcarequality.gov.au