

# Changes to in-home aged care services

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This fact sheet contains information about changes to in-home care services that will come into effect from July 2024, based on the [Support at Home Program Overview](#), the [A New Program for In-Home Aged Care: Discussion Paper](#) and the [New Aged Care Act and Support at Home program update – webinar slides](#) published by the Department of Health and Aged Care (DOHAC). [Subscribe](#) to Carers NSW monthly eNews for regular updates on aged care reforms.

From 2024, the Federal Government will begin making changes to how the supports older Australians receive in their home and community are delivered. This includes the introduction of a new assessment tool, and the transition of existing in-home aged care programs including the [Home Care Packages \(HCP\) Program](#), [Short Term Restorative Care \(STRC\) Programme](#), and the [Commonwealth Home Support Programme \(CHSP\)](#) to the new Support at Home Program.

## Why are these changes happening?

Changes are being made to in-home aged care services following a series of recommendations made by the [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#).

Currently, in-home care services are delivered by several programs which have different approaches to assessment, eligibility, service providers, funding and fees. While these programs offer meaningful care and support to almost one million older Australians, the existing system can be complicated and confusing to navigate.

The new Support at Home Program aims to improve and streamline existing in-home aged care services, supporting older Australians to stay at home for as long as possible, in line with the preferences of many people who are ageing.

## What do these changes mean?

Changes to in-home care mean that the HCP and STRC programs will transition into the Support at Home Program from July 2025, while the CHSP will transfer no earlier than July 2027. This means that all older people and their carers will access services and supports from the same, single program after July 2027.

## What will the changes look like?

### Changes to assessments

Aged care assessments are currently completed by the Regional Assessment Services (RAS) – for people with low support needs – and the Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) – for people with more complex needs. A new, single assessment tool will be introduced in July 2024 with assessments undertaken by a single assessment service.

The [Integrated Assessment Tool](#) will assess eligibility for all aged care programs, including home care, residential care, transition care, multi-purpose services and respite.

The new tool will identify the home care services that are most appropriate to meet the needs of older people and their carers using a new classification system. It will also identify whether an older person's needs are best met in residential aged care and will provide funding approval as part of the assessment outcome. Culturally safe First Nations assessment organisations will be progressively introduced from July 2025 onwards.

## Individualised Support Plans

After an assessment, older Australians will receive an **Individualised Support Plan**. The plan will outline the service types the older person is eligible for and the frequency and duration in which they should receive them. The older person and the assessor will work together to adjust the service mix within the Individualised Support Plan, to ensure that it best reflects their support needs, individual circumstances and personal preferences.

From July 2025, Individualised Support Plans will be managed by a single provider, however short-term and ongoing supports can still be provided by multiple service providers if preferred. After July 2027, it will be an option to have multiple service providers manage a Plan.

## Continued access to goods, equipment and technology that supports independence

Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (ATHM) are essential supports for many older Australians, but can be difficult to access under the current in-home care programs. Consultation on how access to ATHM will be provided is still ongoing, but older Australians will no longer be required to 'save' in-home care funds to pay for these supports.

## Changes to plan management

Under the current *Aged Care Act 1997*, recipients of a HCP must select one Approved Provider to take full responsibility for the delivery of care under their package. This can involve delivering the full suite of care in-house; managing a series of sub-contractors to deliver care or supporting the older person and their carer to self-manage their care.

The **new regulatory model** will better enable people to self-manage their care. After July 2027, people will be able to use multiple service providers if they wish. After this time, people will also be able to elect a Care Partner independent from their service provider to help manage changes and ensure services are meeting their needs. Self-management under Support at Home will be enabled by a **new computer-based payments** platform which will allow older Australians and providers to view the person's entitlements and book and pay for services at the point of delivery, with price caps set by the Government.

## Changes to reablement and restorative care

The current STRC program offers older people eight weeks of restorative care to support older Australians to restore skills or capabilities but is limited to people outside of the HCP program.

Support at Home will integrate the existing STRC program and broaden the eligibility to include all older Australians who would benefit from short-term restorative care, as well lengthen the program period to 12 weeks.

## What does this mean for carers?

The Support at Home Program will aim to improve support for family and friend carers through the new assessment process and increased integration between [My Aged Care](#) and [Carer Gateway](#).

[Carer Gateway](#) will play an increased role in booking respite services in advance for carers of people who are ageing and will continue to provide counselling, coaching, peer support and skills training.

To find out more, or to get involved with aged care reforms, family and friend carers can visit the Aged Care Engagement Hub at <https://agedcareengagement.health.gov.au/>. Carers can also visit the Reforming in-home aged care webpage at <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/aged-care/aged-care-reforms-and-reviews/reforming-in-home-aged-care> to stay up to date about changes to in-home care.