

How to compare Home Care Package providers

#1

It's personal

While you'll want to ensure you are getting the best value care, don't forget that having someone in your home is personal. You may be new to home care services, but you know when you feel listened to and understood.

Ask...

Has the service taken time to ask about your situation and desires?

#3

Don't get locked in

Too many providers structure packages based on their system, rather than your needs. In practical terms, this can mean restricting services available to you, locking you into contracts, and charging exit fees if you do want to move on, among other issues.

Ask...

About service limitations, and ease of making changes or exiting.

#2

Compare apples with apples

Because many providers charge various fees and costs, it is often easier to compare hours of care available after all costs are taken out, instead of trying to calculate budgets.

Ask...

How many hours of care you can expect to receive based on your funding level?

#4

Check head count

Some services can send a revolving door of carers and service providers, so you never know who you'll see one visit to the next. This can feel pretty intrusive, and your care can be less cohesive as a result.

Ask...

How is your team structured and how many people are you likely to see based on your funding level?

#5

Meet and greet

Your care team will include a Care Manager to oversee your care planning and budget management, as well as the person/people that visit your home to provide direct care.

Ask...

Can you meet your manager to ensure a good fit and do you get a say in the traits and expertise of your carer?

#6

Staying in the loop

When and how your Home Care Package provider communicates with you can make a big difference to your care and progress towards your goals.

Ask...

How often can you expect a formal care review, and how often can you expect a call or visit from your Care Manager?

#7

Look for hidden costs

Be sure you understand all the fees that a provider is going to charge you, to avoid bill shock once you've signed up. Common fees include:

Exit fee

If you decide to move on from a service you are not happy with, some may charge you a fee to leave.

Setup fee

Just getting started with some providers can mean paying a set up fee for your service.

Basic daily fee

This is an out-of-pocket amount some Home Care Package providers charge you directly.

Surcharges

Be aware some providers add 10-15% for every service provider they arrange to help, such as gardeners.

Travel fees

Adding a cost per kilometre that your carer travels to your home is another common added extra.

Care management surcharges

Some Home Care Package providers limit the number of Care Management (CM) hours you can use each month, and charge by the hour for additional time, including phone calls!

Cancellation fees

If you need to cancel a planned visit from your carer for some reason, some providers even charge extra for that. Be sure to ask about the policy for cancelling a shift.