

[Insert Agency Name] Fees Policy

Services delivered by Agencies funded through the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, must adhere to the national Draft HACC Fees Policy - principles adapted for Western Australia in the WA HACC Fees Policy.

These policies and principles seek a contribution from clients toward the cost of the HACC service(s) they receive, at a level that is fair and affordable, but sufficiently flexible to adapt to individual circumstances.

In all cases:

- An assessment of a client's need for service precedes an assessment of the client's capacity to contribute to the cost of the service (the fee).
- No client will be refused a service because of an inability to pay a fee.
- Mechanisms limit the total fee a client can pay, and allow an assessed fee to be reduced in individual circumstances.

Revenue from client fees will be used for the provision of HACC services in Western Australia.

Capacity to Contribute

In assessing a client's capacity to contribute to the cost of the services they receive, *[insert Agency name]* uses the following procedures:

- Each client is asked to complete an income assessment using the HACC Income Assessment Form:
 - ◆ To assist the client, their general household circumstances are determined (whether they live alone, are part of a couple or family living together, live in a household of unrelated people or are in some other circumstance).
 - ◆ The client is given clear instructions about whose income is to be assessed (single, or couple). This is identified on the Income Assessment Form.
- The Income Assessment Form is to be completed by the client, or their representative and in consultation with the Agency. It may be left with the client for completion and collection at a later date or completed at the time of the initial visit. When completed, the original is retained by the client, and a copy may be kept by the Agency.
- The Income Assessment Form allows clients to record information about their pension or beneficiary status, or if necessary, their level of income.
- Clients can nominate whether they wish to be considered for a fee reduction. Clear guidelines are available to indicate the circumstances where fee reduction might be appropriate. In such circumstances, the client may be asked to complete a Fee Reduction Form.

- ❑ A client can choose not to complete an income assessment but, as a result, may be charged at Level 3 Income .
- ❑ Clients are asked to advise [*Insert Agency, contact position*] as soon as practical of any significant changes in their financial circumstances which may affect their income assessment or resulting level of contribution.
- ❑ Clients are encouraged to raise with the Agency any difficulties they have in paying the fee. Clients shall be advised and reassured that services will not be refused or withdrawn if they are unable to pay.
- ❑ Clients are advised of their right to lodge an appeal if they have any concerns about their income assessment or the extent of fees charged. The appeals process is described further below.
- ❑ Information obtained about a client's income is treated as private and confidential. Written records retained by [*Insert Agency*] will be stored securely. Access must be in accordance with the client's expressed permission, the HACC National Service Standards and relevant legislation.

Payment of Fees

All clients are informed of the fee associated with any service at the time of income assessment, and a copy of the [*Insert Agency*] Fee Schedule is provided to them. Clients will be given reasonable notice of any changes to the Agency Fee Schedule.

In charging fees [*Insert Agency*] applies the following principles, consistent with the National Draft HACC Fees Policy - principles and the WA HACC Fees Policy:

- ❑ Payment of a fee that contributes to the cost of a HACC service is only sought from clients who are assessed as having a capacity to pay.
- ❑ A client who does not have a capacity to pay will have their fee reduced in accordance with the WA HACC Fees Policy Fee Reduction/Fee Waiver Guidelines.
- ❑ The fee for a service is all-inclusive and covers all materials used in the delivery of the service, unless otherwise stated.
- ❑ The fee will not exceed the actual unit cost of service provision.

Compensable Clients

Clients who are applying for a compensation payment that may cover all or part of their community care costs will complete the standard Income Assessment Form and be charged the appropriate fee for their level of income.

[*Insert Agency*] will liaise with the client's legal representative regarding the actual unit cost of care for the client up to the point of a compensation settlement. At the point of settlement, any monies designated for community care costs will be recovered directly by [*the Agency*], net of fees paid. Services delivered after the point of settlement should be charged according to the identified amount set aside for community care in the compensation package. If no amount has been identified then the client should be charged according to their assessed level of income.

Fee Schedule

The [Insert Name of the Agency's Governing Body] has determined the fees for services it provides. The Agency's current Fee Schedule is at Appendix A. The Fee Schedule, [is based on the current industry recommended fee schedule and] is consistent with the requirements of the WA HACC Fees Policy. The [Insert Name of the Agency's Governing Body] reviews the Fee Schedule yearly.

Fee Cap

Clients with multiple service needs will not be charged more than a set amount per week (fee cap), irrespective of the number of services they use. The Department of Health Western Australia has determined the fee limit in consultation with industry and consumer representatives. The fee limit, as at July 2007 is:

Income	Fee Cap
Level One: Full pensioner or equivalent pension eligibility income	\$26 per week
Level Two: Part pensioner or equivalent pension eligibility income	\$33 per week
Level Three: Non-pensioner	\$73 per week

The fee limit applies equally for clients receiving services individually or jointly. For example, the fee limit for a single maximum rate pensioner is \$26 a week. Likewise the total fees payable or fee limit for a maximum rate pensioner couple living in the one household is also \$26 a week.

In accordance with the National Draft HACC Fees Policy - Principles, meals (delivered or centre based), podiatry, transport and home modification services are excluded from the fee limit.

Services with a Partial or Full Exemption from the WA HACC Fees Policy

Fees will not be charged for information, advisory and advocacy services, carer support, assessment and review services, or social support services. Social support services include volunteer home visits and telephone based monitoring services. Carer support services include counselling, training and information for carers and carer support groups.

A standard fee applies to meals (delivered or centre based), podiatry and transport services. Where a client receives only these service types, an income assessment is not required.

Collection of Fees

The client is advised of their fee in writing. The written notification includes:

- ❑ a statement of the number of units of service to be received, in accordance with the agreed care plan
- ❑ the total fee payable, including any fee reduction or the application of a fee limit.

Coordination of Fee Collection with Other HACC Services

At the time of income assessment, information will be collected from each client about other HACC services they receive, and the charges that apply. Where other Agencies are involved, *[Insert Agency]* will explain the application of a fee limit and ask for permission to contact the other Agency/ies regarding the calculation and payment of fees in accordance with the fee limit.

If permission is given, *[Insert Agency]* will contact the relevant HACC Agency to negotiate the application of a fee limit and the means of fee collection.

Refusal to Pay

If a client is identified as being in arrears, without prior arrangement, the Coordinator will contact and/or visit the client to explore the reasons for non-payment. The client will be advised of their right to have an advocate present during the visit.

Depending on the circumstances a number of fee payment options may be considered including the client paying the outstanding amount in instalments or reducing the outstanding amount. The ongoing fee should also be reviewed to consider whether there is a case for fee reduction in accordance with the WA HACC Fees Policy Fee Reduction Guidelines. The client will be informed of the outcome of this process in writing.

Further visits may be considered and all reasonable attempts to negotiate with the client should be made to arrive at a mutually agreed fee. The client should be made aware of their right to appeal and use the services of an advocate. If the client still fails to pay the agreed outstanding amount, a written reminder will be issued, requesting payment within 14 days.

Once all avenues have been explored, the *[Insert Name of the Agency's Governing Body]* will decide how to manage the debt. The client will be informed in writing of the Agency's decision and will have their right of appeal explained to them.

Appeals

Clients or their advocates have the right of appeal if they are unhappy with any aspect of income assessment or fee setting. All clients shall be advised of this right and the process of appeal at the time of assessment and subsequent reviews.

The process for appeal endorsed by the *[Insert Name of the Agency's Governing Body]* is:

- ❑ The client contacts the Coordinator about their concerns.
- ❑ The Coordinator acknowledges the approach in writing within 7 working days and arranges to meet with the client to discuss the situation.

The Coordinator verifies that

- ◆ The client is appropriately supported or represented by a carer, guardian or advocate.
- ◆ The correct fee has been set for the client's current circumstances.
- ◆ Fee reduction avenues have been explored.
- ◆ The client correctly understands the fee outcome.

- A client who appeals the level of fees charged will receive a written statement of the outcome of their appeal within 7 working days of a decision being made and advised about any further steps they may take.
- Contact details of independent advocacy services (Appendix B), which may be available to negotiate the payment of fees on the client's behalf, will also be provided.
- If this process does not resolve the issue the [*Insert name of the Agency's Governing Body*] and/or the client may refer the matter to an Independent Appeals Tribunal for resolution.

No client will be disadvantaged or penalised as a result of lodging an appeal.

If appropriate, the Coordinator will negotiate with the client to reduce the disputed fee while the appeal is being considered.

Appendix A

WA HACC [INSERT AGENCY NAME] FEE SCHEDULE

Services Included in Fee Cap				
Activity Name	Unit of Service	Fee for Service		
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Domestic Assistance	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Food Services (meal Preparation)	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Respite Care	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Social Support	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Nursing Care	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Personal Care	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Centre Based Day Care	Per occasion	\$	\$	\$
Allied Health Care	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Home Maintenance	Per hour	\$	\$	\$
Services Excluded in Fee Cap				
Home Modification**	Per job	\$	\$	\$
Transport*	Per trip	\$		
Meals on Wheels*	Per meal	\$		
Allied Health Care - Podiatry*	Per hour	\$		
Services that do not have a fee				
Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer home visits • Telecross telephone support services 			
Counselling Support Information and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory • Advocacy • Counselling support • Carer Support 			
Other HACC Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of services • Case Management • Provision of information • Assessment & Review 			

Note: *These service types are not income assessed and should be paid for by the client.

**Income assessment applies. A variable negotiated fee linked to the cost of service will apply.

This fee schedule was endorsed by the [Insert Agency] on [Insert Date]. The next review of this schedule is due on [Insert Date].

Useful Contacts

Advocare

Freecall™: 1800 655 566

www.advocare.org.au

Level 3, Kings Complex
517 Hay St
Perth WA 6000
Telephone: (08) 9221 8599
Email: rights@advocare.org.au

Carers WA

255 Walcott Street
NORTH PERTH WA 6006
Tel: 08 9444 5922
Fax: 08 9444 8966
24 Hour Freecall: 1800 242 636
1300 CARERS (227377)
Web: <http://www.carerswa.asn.au/>

Disability Services Commission

146-160 Colin Street,
West Perth WA 6005
General enquiries: Phone (08) 9426 9200
Main fax: (08) 9226 2306
Teletypewriter: (08) 9426 9315
Country callers: Freecall 1800 998 214
Email: dsc@dsc.wa.gov.au

Health Consumers' Council WA (Inc)

GPO Box C134
PERTH WA 6839
The Health Consumers' Council office is situated at:
Unit 13/14 Wellington Fair
4 Lord Street
PERTH WA 6000
Telephone: (08) 9221 3422
Freecall: 1800 620 780
Facsimile: (08) 9221 5435
Email: info@hconc.org.au

The Office of Health Review
Level 12, St Martin's Tower
44 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000
GPO Box B61
PERTH WA 6838
Phone: (08) 9323 0600
Facsimile: (08) 9221 3675
Country Free Call: 1800 813 583
TTY: (08) 9323 0616

Ombudsman Western Australia*
Level 12
44 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000
Phone: (08) 9220 7555
Facsimile: (08) 9325 1107
Email: mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au

* The Ombudsman WA only has jurisdiction to consider matters relating to HACC services provided under the management/sponsorship of a local authority or another State government body.

Guidelines to Income Assessment

WA HACC Fees Policy- Guidelines For Income Assessment of Clients

These Income Assessment Guidelines provide information that providers of HACC support services should follow in discussing the income assessment process with clients.

Under the WA HACC Fees Policy, all clients receiving support funded through the HACC Program are required to complete an Income Assessment Form. These Forms have been provided to Service Providers.

All Service Providers are required to develop a Schedule of Fees. This Schedule should be provided to the client with the Income Assessment Form.

A client can choose not to complete the Income Assessment Form. If so, the Service Provider can charge the maximum fee from their Fee Schedule up to the actual unit cost of delivering the support service.

Steps in Completing an Income Assessment:

- A client should not complete an income assessment until their need for service is assessed and the quantity and mix of services they will receive is determined.
- The client can complete the Income Assessment Form in whatever way they choose. The form can be left with the client to complete within a specified period and be returned to the Service Provider, or completed with the help of the Service Provider. If the client is unable to provide the required financial information, or cannot complete the form, the person who is their authorised financial representative should complete the form.
- After the form has been completed, the client or their authorised financial representative retains a copy. This avoids the need for the client to complete another assessment if they are to receive services from another Service Provider.

Essential Information for Clients

The income assessment process and the Fee Schedule need to be explained to the client in simple terms. Important points for service providers to cover are:

1. All clients receiving HACC services complete the standard HACC Income Assessment Form.
2. Clients should be advised whose income details (single or couple) are to be recorded on the form. This advice should be noted in the space provided on the front of the Income Assessment Form. The following Guidelines apply.
 - a) Where a person who is a HACC client is living alone, that person's income is assessed.
 - b) Where there is a couple who are both HACC clients, the couple's income is assessed.
 - c) Where one member of a couple is a HACC client, the couple's income would generally be assessed. Service providers should, however, apply this guideline flexibly depending on individual circumstances.

- d) Where an older person who is a HACC client is living with a family or a carer (other than their spouse), the older person's income should be assessed.
 - e) Where there is a family with a child, or children with disability, aged 16 years or under, who is a HACC client, the parental income is assessed.
 - f) Where there is a family with an adolescent or adult with a disability aged over 16 years, who is a HACC client, the individual client's income is assessed.
 - g) Where there is a household of unrelated people, one or more of whom is a HACC client, the income of the HACC client is assessed and the service should be provided only to support that person.
3. Clients should be assisted by Service Providers to correctly identify their income level.
 4. All HACC funded agencies have developed a Schedule of Fees for the services they provide.
 5. Agencies are required to adhere to the fee cap. This may apply to clients receiving multiple services from one or several Service Providers. The fee cap is reflected in all Agency Fee Schedules.
 6. To assist in applying a fee limit, clients should advise of other HACC services they receive.
 7. If a client's circumstances change their assessed fee may need to be adjusted. Clients should contact their HACC Service Provider quickly if this is the case. A HACC Fee Reduction Form may need to be completed.
 8. Information obtained about a client's income is treated as private and confidential. Written records will be stored securely. Access will be in accordance with the client's expressed permission.
 9. If a client is concerned about any aspect of the fee an appeal can be lodged, either with the HACC Agency or through an advocacy service. Clients should be advised of the appeals process.

Optional Additional Information for Clients

10. In most cases, fees are only a small contribution to the actual cost of delivering a support service.
 11. Money raised through fees help to provide more HACC services where they are needed.
 12. Clients who indicate that they do not wish to complete the Income Assessment Form may be charged fees at the highest income level.
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Income Assessment Form

See Separate Forms

Fee Reduction/Fee Waiver Form

See Separate Forms
