

WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE  
WA HACC FEES POLICY

July 2009



*home and community care*

A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM  
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED



**Government of Western Australia**  
**Department of Health**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. WA HACC FEES POLICY .....	1
1.1 HACC SERVICE PROVIDER – WRITTEN FEES POLICY .....	3
1.2 INCOME ASSESSMENT .....	4
1.3 SCHEDULE OF FEES .....	8
1.4 FEE CAP .....	9
1.5 FEE REDUCTION.....	12
1.6 APPEALS.....	15
FORMS.....	16
EXAMPLE - SERVICE PROVIDER FEE POLICY .....	1
GUIDELINES TO INCOME ASSESSMENT .....	1
INCOME ASSESSMENT FORM .....	1
FEE REDUCTION FORM.....	2

### **More information**

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### **Version Control:**

- Updated: July 2009
- Updated: July 2008
- Updated: February 2008
- Updated: August 2007
- Developed: July 2007

## 1. WA HACC FEES POLICY

The WA Fees/Safeguards Policy came into effect from 1 July 1999 and was implemented for consistency and fairness for clients paying fees. In 2000/2001 the Fees/Safeguards Policy was reviewed. The review recommended that the HACC Program continue to monitor the impact of the Safeguards “to determine whether it is having a positive benefit on overall service availability and equity” (Review of the Home and Community Care Safeguards Policy, March 2001). A further review of the Fees/Safeguards Policy was conducted in August 2006. The revised Policy which has now been renamed WA HACC Fees Policy incorporates the recommendations of the review.

Under the WA HACC Fees Policy:

- All HACC clients are income assessed for their ability to contribute to the cost of the support services they receive.
- Clients who are able to contribute do so in accordance with their provider's fee schedule.
- If a client is unable to afford the fee they may be eligible to have it reduced.
- Clients receiving a number of support services from one or more service providers are protected from paying excessive fees by applying a ‘fee cap’. This cap relates to the maximum amount (cap) a client will pay per week.

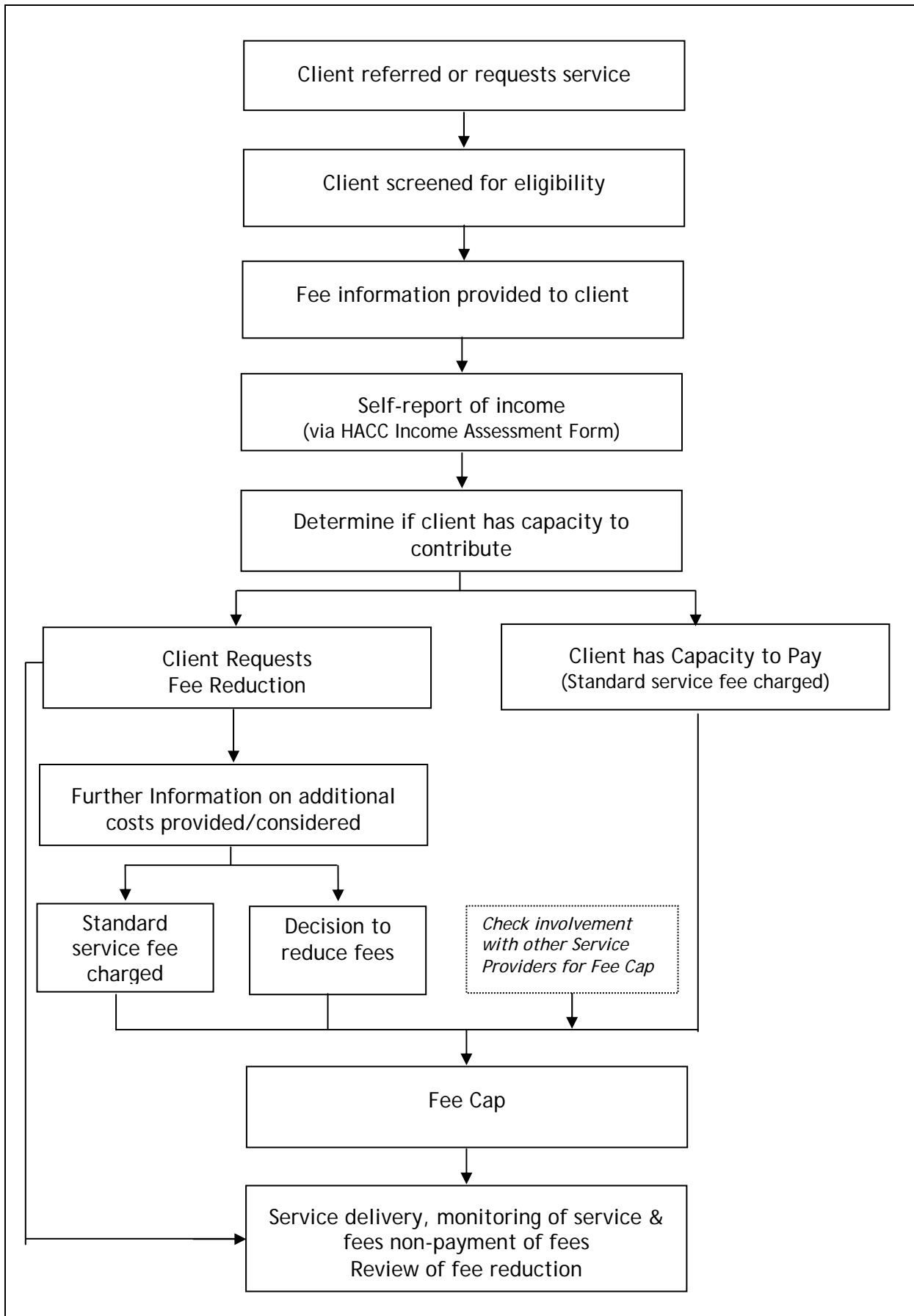
The WA HACC Fees Policy was established in line with the national Draft HACC Fees Policy – principles (included in the HACC Program National Guidelines) [National \(Draft\) HACC Fees Policy - Principles](#) to promote equity between clients in receipt of similar community care services, and structuring consumer contributions to the cost of care relative to ability to pay.

The National Draft Fees Policy – principles provides a consistent framework for the collection of fees in the HACC Program. These National fee principles have guided the development of the WA HACC Fees Policy and require that HACC funded Service Providers have a:

1. Written Fees policy
2. Standard way to assess income
3. Consistently applied Schedule of Fees
4. Fee Cap for clients with multiple service needs
5. Standard way to reduce fees
6. Appeals mechanism

The following will expand on each of these policy principles and broad guidelines and will provide guidance on the application of these principles. Figure 1 illustrates the WA HACC Fee Policy process and outlines the steps to be taken in determining and reviewing fees. All HACC funded Service Providers are required to adhere to this Policy.

Figure 1: Assessment process - WA HACC Fees Policy



## 1.1 HACC Service Provider – Written Fees Policy

HACC Funded Service Providers should have a written fees policy regarding the fee to be charged for any support services and the payment procedures. Each Service Provider needs to make available and explain its written fee policy to all new and existing clients.

HACC clients should be informed of the fees applicable to them at the time of assessment or commencement of the service. It will also be necessary to re-assess clients due to a change in circumstances, particularly in relation to their financial situation.

An [Example - Service Provider Fee Policy](#) is included in the Forms section of this document. Service Providers can adopt the model policy as their own or adapt it to suit their individual circumstances. However, the Service Providers policy should include the following elements:

- ❑ How a client(s) income is to be assessed
- ❑ Service Provider Fee Schedule
- ❑ Fee Reduction, and Fee Review process
- ❑ The fee cap to apply for each income group
- ❑ Procedures for a client to appeal a fee decision
- ❑ How fee income is used
- ❑ Service types that are included and excluded from the Fee Cap and how fees will be charged for these support services
- ❑ How fees will be collected
- ❑ How the contribution of clients who receive a compensation settlement is managed
- ❑ Protocols if a client refuses to pay

## 1.2 Income Assessment

The WA HACC fees policy was developed with the aim of achieving consistency and fairness for clients paying a fee by ensuring that all clients' capacities to pay are assessed in the same way.

Clients are assessed to see if they can afford to contribute to the cost of their care. All contributions towards the cost of HACC support are used to provide clients with the HACC support that they need.

The [Income Assessment Form](#) allows clients income level to be determined against the three income levels. The key features of the Income assessment process are:

- An income assessment is not completed until the client's need for service, is assessed and service plan developed.
- A fee can only be determined after considering the client's income and factors that affect the client's ability to pay.
- 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 service.
- Circumstances may affect a client's ability to pay a fee; in these cases a client has the right to request a fee reduction. A confidential [Fee Reduction Form](#) should be completed. Clients should be regularly reminded of these options.
- Information about a client's income should be treated confidentially, consistent with the Home and Community Care National Service Standards.

The income assessment process is outlined on figure 1 (page 2). The [Guidelines to Income Assessment](#) offers further guidance for Service Providers regarding the income assessment process and is included in the Forms section of this document.

### 1.2.1 HACC Income Assessment Form

All clients receiving HACC funded support are required to complete a confidential HACC [Income Assessment Form](#). The form asks clients to identify their income range whether they receive a pension and if so, whether they receive the maximum amount of pension or a part-pension. On this basis HACC clients are categorised into three levels of income ranges: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3.

Income ranges used in the HACC Income Assessment Form are consistent with the ranges used to determine eligibility for Centrelink's maximum income to retain a Health Care Card and the maximum income rate for part Aged Pension. The table below describes the income relevant to each of the income ranges.

#### Income Ranges for 2009 – 2010 (effective 1 July 2009)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Single	\$0 – \$41,015 <sup>1</sup>	\$41,016 to \$50,000 <sup>2</sup>	More than \$50,001
Couple Combined	\$0 – \$68,497 <sup>1</sup>	\$68,498 to \$80,000 <sup>2</sup>	More than \$80,001

Note: (1) Income levels calculated using maximum income for full Aged Pension, part Aged Pension and equivalent income as at 20 March 2009. Income levels are subject to changes in Commonwealth Age Pension rates, which are reviewed twice yearly 20 March, 20 September.  
(2) Income levels calculated using income limit for Commonwealth Seniors' Card.

#### Income Description

Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People receiving full pension.</li> <li>• People with a health card.</li> <li>• A single person with a before-tax income of less than \$41,015 per year.</li> <li>• A couple with a before-tax income of less than \$68,497 per year.</li> <li>• A single person, or a couple who face additional costs (due to disability and/or other factors) which reduces their income to this level.</li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single person with a before-tax income <i>greater</i> than \$41,015 but <i>less</i> than \$50,000 per year.</li> <li>• A couple with a before-tax income of <i>greater</i> than \$68,497 but <i>less</i> than \$80,000.</li> <li>• A single person, or a couple who face additional costs (due to disability and/or other factors) which reduces their income to this level.</li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single person with a before-tax income of more than \$50,001 per year.</li> <li>• A couple with a before-tax income of more than \$80,001 per year</li> </ul>

### **1.2.2 Whose Income is assessed?**

- Where a person is living alone, that person's income is assessed (single).
- Where a couple are both HACC clients, their combined income is assessed (couple).
- Where one member of a couple is a HACC client, the couple's income would generally be assessed (couple). Service providers should, however, apply this guideline flexibly depending on individual circumstances.

### **1.2.3 Different family groupings should be assessed as follows:**

- The client's income will be used for the purpose of setting fees where a client is living with a family member or carer.
- Where there is a child or children with a disability under age 16, the family's income is assessed.
- Where there is a family with an adolescent or adult with a disability aged 16 years of age or over, then that individual's income is assessed.
- Where there is a household of three or more unrelated people living together, the income of the person requiring HACC support is assessed and services should be provided only to support that person.

### **1.2.4 Types of Income**

#### **Department of Veterans' Affairs**

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Income Support Pension or Service Pension is an income and asset tested pension similar to the Age Pension and Disability Support Pension paid by Centrelink. The income and asset limits are the same as those supplied by Centrelink and result in eligible clients receiving a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC).

The compensation pension, or DVA Disability Pension, is not income or asset based, and does not result in the issue of a Pension Concession Card. This pension is not counted as taxable income and is therefore not treated as income in the HACC assessment process. While the DVA issues a range of cards, it is only the DVA Pensioner Concession Card that is relevant to the HACC assessment process.

#### **Supplementary income payments and Primary Income**

Australian Taxation Office rules on supplementary income payments such as Child Disability Allowance and Family Payments should be applied. These two supplementary payments are not taxable income and therefore should not be included in income assessment calculations. There is a range of other payments that are deemed not taxable; these should be dealt with in the same way.

However, where the income is the primary source of income such as Aged Pension, the Disability Support Pension and the Veterans' Affairs Pension, it should be included in the income assessment process.

### **Compensable Payments**

The policy seeks recovery of costs from clients who receive a compensation payment intended to cover the cost of community care. Service Providers should liaise with a compensable client's legal representative about the actual unit cost of providing care up to the point of a compensation settlement.

Up to the point of settlement, the client would be income assessed in the normal way and charged the appropriate fee. At the point of settlement, any monies designated for community care costs will be recovered directly by the Service Providers, net of fees paid. HACC support 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 level of assessed income.

### 1.3 Schedule of Fees

All HACC funded Service Providers are required to develop a Schedule of Fees. The Fee Schedule documents the fee per unit of service for clients at different income levels. This Fee Schedule should be provided to the client with the Income Assessment Form and should be kept as simple as possible, and be easy for clients to understand.

- Clients in the high Income range can be charged up to, but not exceeding, the actual unit cost of the care provided.
- The fee per unit of service can be reduced by the HACC Service Providers in line with the HACC Fee Reduction Guidelines.
- Where a couple, or family, receive an hour of service they should not be separately charged (that is, charged for two hours of service), when the couple received only one hour between them.
- The maximum fee that can be charged must be less than or equal to the actual unit cost of the service. Any materials not covered by the fee, e.g. continence aids, cleaning materials, should be clearly identified.

#### 1.3.1 Administering Fee Schedule

Service Providers should administer the Fee Schedule in a manner that best suits their service delivery. Some Service Providers may choose to invoice clients on a weekly/fortnightly/four week basis according to the exact level of support utilised for that time period. Other Service Providers may decide that it is easier to determine the average level of support usage over a week/fortnight/four week basis. For example an average weekly charge may be more applicable for clients who receive a regular Home Maintenance service (i.e., lawn mowing). If Service Providers do choose to charge clients on an average basis then they should be able to illustrate to the client how the average was calculated.

#### 1.3.2 Method of Fee Collection

Service Providers should take in to account the special needs of key groups in devising collection mechanisms. Service Providers should identify protocols accordingly, for example, for homeless people, those with cognitive impairments and those requiring multiple support services.

#### 1.3.3 HACC Fee Schedule Guide

The recent consultation process recommended that the Aged Care Policy Directorate, Department of Health conduct a regular “snapshot” exercise of Service Providers Fee Schedule to assist in determining fees for support services. The Fee Schedule information will be collected annually as part of the HACC Service Agreement reporting.

## 1.4 Fee Cap

Some clients receive several support services per week from one or more Service Providers. Under the Policy, clients receiving a number of services from one or more HACC Service Providers are protected from paying excessive fees by applying a 'Fee Cap'. This cap relates to the maximum amount (cap) a client will pay per week.

### 1.4.1 Fee Cap Contributions

The recent consultation recommended that the Fee Cap be increased by 15 per cent for clients in receipt of the maximum rate of age pension effective 1 July 2009. This will change the current maximum client contribution of \$35.00 per week to a maximum of \$43.00 per week for level 1 HACC Clients in July 2009. This is calculated using the maximum age pension rates - see table below.

Income Range	Fee Cap Maximum amount per week
Level 1	\$43.00 per week
Level 2	\$53.00 per week
Level 3	\$118.00 per week

Note: (1) The figures quoted are subject to changes in Commonwealth Age Pension rates, and are reviewed twice yearly.

(2) HACC limit increase is calculated at single pension rates.

- It is a requirement that Service Providers charge only up to the maximum weekly fee cap specified for the different income levels. This applies regardless of how many support services are received, and how many Service Providers are involved.
- The fee cap for the three income ranges applies equally to individuals or couples. This approach has been taken in the interests of simplicity, and to accommodate clients' changing needs. All HACC support except those specifically excluded (see list below at 1.4.4), is included in the fee cap.

### 1.4.2 Fee Cap Contribution - Increases

The Fee Cap will be reviewed every six months in line with other Australian Government community care programs and adjusted in accordance with changes in the full rate of Aged Pension. Fee Cap will be increased in annual increments of 2.5 per cent over a period of three years until parity is achieved with the fees charged by other Australian Government community care programs.

### 1.4.3 Service Providers Administering the Fee Cap

It is acknowledged that the administration of the Fee Cap across Service Providers will rely very much on co-operation between Service Providers. It is expected that all Service Providers when making contact with a client for the first time will clarify any involvement of other Service Providers before proceeding with an Income Assessment. If another Service Provider is identified, subsequent Service Providers should explain the Fee Cap to the client and seek permission to contact the other Service Provider(s) to facilitate administering the Fee Cap.

### 1.4.4 Support Services in the Fee Cap

The table below summarises what types of HACC support that are **included** or **excluded** in the WA HACC Fees Cap. It also shows HACC support that **does not have a fee**.

#### Fee Cap - WA HACC Support Services Inclusion and Exclusion

	Services <u>Included</u> in Fee Cap	Services <u>Excluded</u> in Fee Cap*	Services that do not have a Fee*
Domestic Assistance	✓		
Transport		✓*	
Food Services (meal preparation)	✓		
Meals on Wheels		✓*	
Home Maintenance	✓		
Home Modification		✓**	
Centre Based Day Care (excludes transport & meal)	✓		
Respite Care	✓		
Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shopping only accompanied</li> <li>• Activities to support the client to integrate into the community, including a group session</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer home visits</li> <li>• Telecross telephone support services</li> </ul>
Allied Health Care	✓	Podiatry*	
Nursing Care	✓		
Personal Care	✓		
Counselling Support Informatic & Advocacy			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Counselling support</li> <li>• Carer Support</li> </ul>
Other HACC Services			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client Care Coordination</li> <li>• Case Management</li> <li>• Provision of information</li> <li>• Assessment &amp; Review</li> </ul>

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.

### **HACC Social Support Service**

- **A fee is not incurred** when social support includes volunteer visiting and telephone based monitoring services.
- **A fee is incurred** when the main objective of taking the client shopping is to purchase food and foster independence. Therefore shopping regardless of whether the client is accompanied by the carer or not incurs a fee.
- **A fee is incurred** when activity is aimed at integration into the community, including group activities not associated with Centre Based Day Care.

### **HACC Centre Based Day Care**

- **A fee is incurred for** Centre Based Day care and may comprise three components of service:
  - Centre Based Day Care activity;
  - Meal;
  - Transport to and from the centre.
- A fee for Centre Based Day Care activity is included in the Fee Cap.
- Fees for meals at the Centre (delivered or centre based) and transport to and from the Centre are not included in the Fee Cap.

### **Counselling Support Information and Advocacy**

- **A fee is not incurred** when the primary focus of a service is information, advisory and advocacy support.

### **Service types outside the Fee Cap but which are Income Assessed**

- Home Modification is the only service type for which an income assessment applies, but there is no fee cap. A variable negotiated fee linked to the cost of service will apply.

### **Service types outside the Fee Cap but which are not Income Assessed**

- Meals and transport represent costs of everyday living. Service Providers providing meals (delivered or centre-based) or transport are required to charge a fee. These service types are not income assessed and will be charged for each instance of service.
- HACC funded podiatry is an occasional cost to clients, Service Providers providing this service are required to charge a fee. This service type is not income assessed.

## 1.5 Fee Reduction

Fees may be reduced where a client is experiencing hardship in paying fees. The aim of the Fee Reduction is to ensure that clients are not disadvantaged because of additional costs associated with their ongoing care or with any sudden changes in their circumstances.

As part of the income assessment process, Service Providers need to check if the client needs to be considered for a fee reduction. Service Providers should make an initial assessment, in consultation with the client about whether a long or short-term fee reduction may be necessary.

The Service Provider will need to consider the following factors when making a decision regarding reducing or waiving fees:

- Does the client incur any significant additional costs, which affects their capacity to pay the set fee for the service they receive?
- What fee, if any is the client able to pay?

### 1.5.1 Fee Reduction Process

The Service Provider negotiates how much a fee is reduced, when no fee should be paid and the period for which this would apply. Each Service Provider should develop its own guidelines and make them known to clients. The following Fee Reduction process offers a guide to Service Providers. Figure 2 illustrates the process and shows the steps to be taken when reducing a fee to the next level or to reduce the fee to zero.

**The first step** in reducing fees is to complete a Confidential [Fee Reduction Form](#).

There are a number of factors that could impact on the client's ability to pay. Many people with disabilities incur additional costs, both one off and ongoing, associated with their disability. Both will impact on their ability to contribute to HACC support. When assessing a client's ability to contribute to HACC services, it is important to take this into account. As a guideline if these additional costs represent ten per cent or more of the clients income then a decision to reduce a fee may be taken.

The confidential **Fee Reduction Form** provides information on how to assess the additional costs/other factors when reducing an assessed fee. These may include the following:

#### **Additional Costs due to disability**

- Medication/drug costs
- Aids and equipment, including continence products
- Specialist care, (e.g., occupational therapy, podiatry, physiotherapy)
- Special clothing
- Special foods
- Special equipment
- Temporary care or respite (non HACC)
- Medical supplies

### **Location Related Costs**

- Increased property costs where this is related to the additional cost of disability (for example, if the client had to modify their house or move to get access to services, or replace carpets and bedding).
- High accommodation costs for people on low income in private rental, boarding houses or supported residential services. This may also be a factor for low-income households paying rent.
- Specialist care or related costs, such as accommodation when travelling to another location to see medical specialist.

### **Other Factors**

- Health or medical insurance, where you pay higher costs due to disability
- The cost of other services, when there is no flexibility in the fee charged

**The second step** is to offer a reduction in the fee to the next lowest fee rate:

- A Level 3 fee rate client may be charged the Level 2 fee rate.
- A Level 2 fee rate client may be charged the Level 1 fee rate.
- A Level 1 fee rate client may contribute any amount they are able to make.

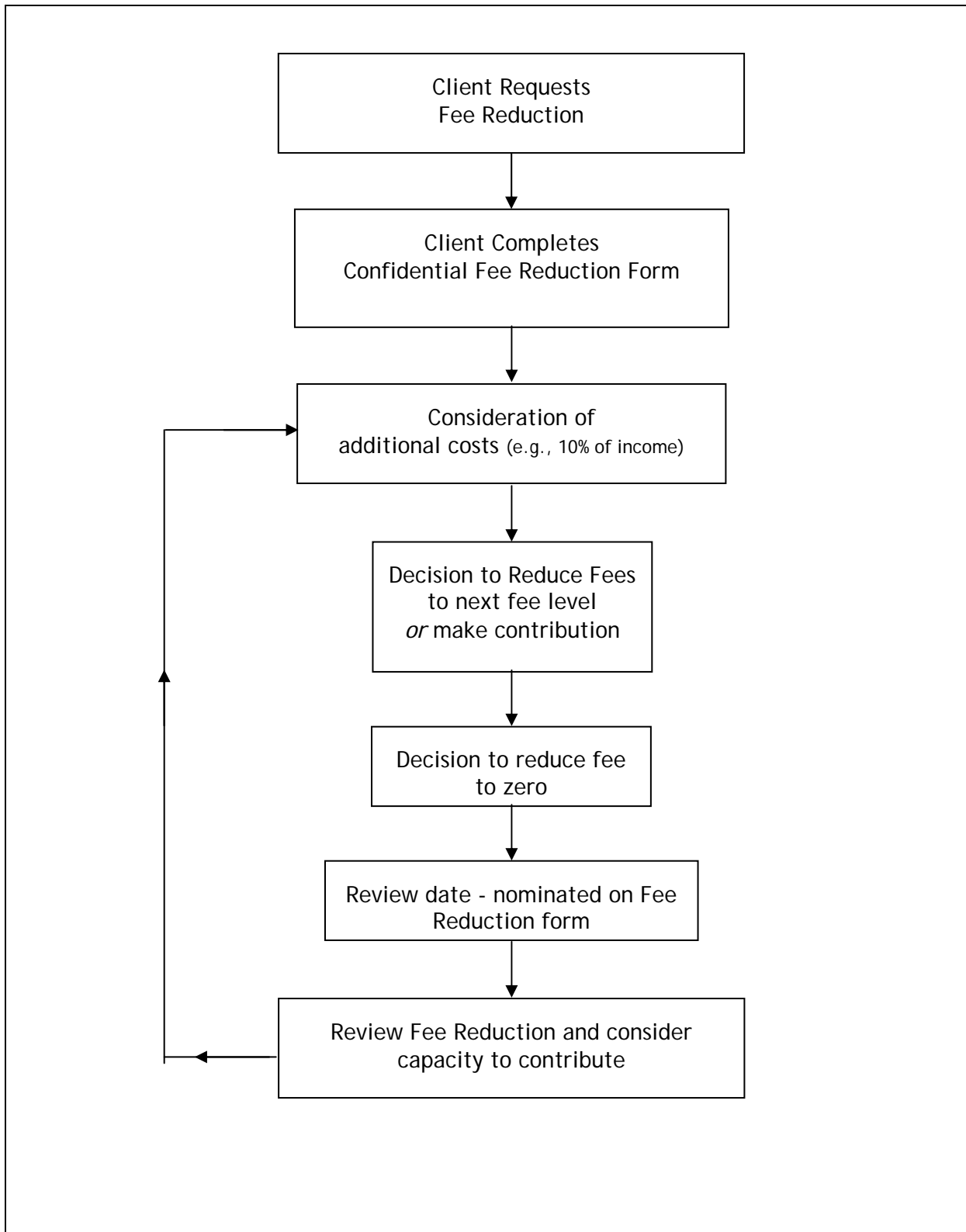
**The third step** is to offer a Fee Reduction to zero

Fees may be reduced to zero for some clients. This would normally apply to Level 1 clients.

## **1.5.2 Appraising the Fee Reduction**

- Fee reduction arrangements for clients are not intended to apply automatically or permanently. Each case of fee reduction should be reviewed. The reduction should be reviewed at a specified period of time (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually) and the review date nominated on the confidential Fee Reduction Form. Service Providers should establish consistent mechanisms for reviewing the nominated fee reduction arrangements.
- Monitoring the client's ability to pay the fee is part of the formal and informal review. Renegotiation of fees should occur where a client's financial circumstances have changed.
- The client or the Service Provider can initiate a review of fees. When a client initiates a fee review, these requests should be responded to promptly.
- If the fee is to be reduced, support provided for part-fee paying clients must not be any different than support provided for full fee paying clients.
- Clients should be made aware of their right to appeal against any determination by a Service Provider regarding fee reduction and the appeals process that applies.

Figure 2: Process for Fee Reduction



## 1.6 Appeals

Clients are entitled to appeal the level of fees they are paying if they believe they face financial hardship. Clients may appeal themselves, or request an advocate to represent them.

The Service Providers written Fees Policy must describe the appeals process that applies to fee arrangements. The policy should be:

- freely available;
- clearly explained to consumers of the service at the time of initial assessment and also during follow-up reviews or re-assessments;
- well publicised;
- be in writing and in appropriate languages;
- include information about consumers' right to complain; and,
- provide information explaining the services offered by Advocare and the assistance they can provide to a consumer when they wish to make a complaint.

At the outset of the complaint management process, the Service Provider should explain that Advocare is able to support the consumer to advocate to resolve the complaint with the agency and that the Service Provider can refer and assist the consumer to access these services.

Refer to the Aged Care Policy Directorate's [WA HACC Complaints Management](#) for more information.

### Contacts

#### Advocare

Freecall™: 1800 655 566

[www.advocare.org.au](http://www.advocare.org.au)

Unit 1, Byblos House

190 Abernethy Road

Belmont WA 6104

Telephone: (08) 9479 7566

Fax: (08) 9479 7599

Email: [rights@advocare.org.au](mailto:rights@advocare.org.au)

#### WA Department of Health

Aged Care Policy Directorate

Telephone: (08) 9222 4061

#### HACC Website

<http://www.health.wa.gov.au/HACC/home/>

**FORMS**

### **[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, couple). This is identified on the Income Assessment Form.
- The Income Assessment Form is to be completed by the client, or their representative. 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 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 cap in consultation with industry and consumer representatives. The fee cap, as at July 2008 is:

<b>Income</b>	<b>Fee Cap</b>
Level One: Full pensioner or equivalent pension eligibility income	\$43 per week
Level Two: Part pensioner or equivalent pension eligibility income	\$53 per week
Level Three: Non-pensioner	\$118 per week

The fee cap applies equally for clients receiving services individually or jointly. For example, the fee cap for a single maximum rate pensioner is \$43.00 a week. Likewise the total fees payable or fee cap for a maximum rate pensioner couple living in the one household is also \$43.00 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 cap.

### **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 cap.

### **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 cap and ask for permission to contact the other Agency/ies regarding the calculation and payment of fees in accordance with the fee cap.

If permission is given, *[Insert Agency]* will contact the relevant HACC Agency to negotiate the application of a fee cap 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	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Food Services (meal Preparation)	Per hour	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Respite Care	Per hour	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Social Support	Per hour	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Nursing Care	Per hour	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Personal Care	Per hour	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Centre Based Day Care (excludes transport & Meal)	Per occasion <sup>◇</sup>	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Allied Health Care	Per hour	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Home Maintenance	Per hour	\$	\$	Unit Cost
Services Excluded in Fee Cap				
Home Modification**	Per job <sup>◇</sup>	\$	\$	\$
Transport*	Per trip	\$		
Transport* to and from Centre Based Day Care	Each way	\$		
Meals on Wheels*	Per meal	\$		
Meals at Centre Based Day Care	Per meal	Full cost of meal		
Allied Health Care – Podiatry*	Per hour	\$		
Services that do not have a fee				
Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer home visits</li> <li>• Telecross telephone support services</li> </ul>			
Counselling Support Information and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Counselling support</li> <li>• Carer Support</li> </ul>			
Other HACC Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination of services</li> <li>• Case Management</li> <li>• Provision of information</li> <li>• Assessment &amp; Review</li> </ul>			

Note: <sup>◇</sup>These units are recorded as hours and dollars respectively in MDS.

(UC) = Unit Cost – the unit cost of the service may vary between Service Providers.

\*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].

Appendix B

**Useful Contacts**

**Advocare**

Freecall™: 1800 655 566

[www.advocare.org.au](http://www.advocare.org.au)

Unit 1, Byblos House

190 Abernethy Road

Belmont WA 6104

Telephone: (08) 9479 7566

Fax: (08) 9479 7599

Email: [rights@advocare.org.au](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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 cap, 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 Form

***See Separate Forms***

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