

Home Care reforms information series

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Welcome to the 18th edition of LASA's newsletter on home care reforms. The newsletter is published monthly and is also available on our [website](#) along with previous editions. If you have specific topics or questions you would like addressed in future editions, please email homecare@lasa.asn.au. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and support members in response to current issues that have emerged with implementation of the [Increasing Choice Home Care](#) reforms (ICHC) on 27 February 2017.

PREVENTING INCORRECT HOME CARE PACKAGE WITHDRAWALS

Commencement of a new home care package consumer requires the following steps be completed in the following order to prevent the package from being withdrawn:

1. The home care service provider reviews and accepts the referral for service in the My Aged Care (MAC) provider portal.
2. Ensure there is enough time for the service provider and consumer to enter care before the package take-up deadline which is 56 days after assignment. The package take-up deadline is listed under the APPROVALS tab for the consumer in the MAC provider portal.
3. If the consumer is unlikely to enter care before the package take-up deadline, with the help of the service provider, the consumer contacts the MAC Helpdesk to request a package take-up extension. The package take-up deadline is extended for another 28 days.
4. If the consumer is likely to enter care before the package take-up deadline, the service provider reviews the consumer's MAC support plan, develops a care plan and individualised budget with the consumer, and enter into a home care agreement (all within the take-up deadline timeframe).
5. The service provider then submits the service entry dates to the Department of Human Services (DHS) before the package take-up deadline is reached. This can be done via direct entry to Aged Care Online Payment System (ACOPS) or through submission of an [Aged Care Entry Record](#) (ACER). Processing of service entries via ACER submissions will take longer than those directly entered to ACOPS.

NOTE: Submission of service entry information to DHS must be completed on or after care commences and NOT before care has commenced (allow at least 5 minutes for MAC to push service commencement information across to DHS). Following DHS having processed service entry information submitted, the consumer will move to SERVICES IN PLACE within the MAC provider portal.

UPGRADE OF HOME CARE PACKAGE CONSUMERS

Home care package upgrades occur automatically within MAC and ACOPS with communication about the upgrade provided by MAC to both the consumer and provider administering the package:

1. When a consumer has received an upgrade, he/she will receive a notification letter about the new care level while the provider will receive a care change notification through the MAC provider portal.
2. The provider should contact the consumer and arrange for the review of the care plan and revision of the individualised budget consistent with the new care level to commence from the date of the upgrade.

3. MAC and DHS payment systems will automatically make adjustments to reflect commencement and payment of subsidies consistent with the new care level. There is no system change or action required from the provider.

NOTE: Do NOT enter or exit the consumer when a package upgrade occurs – trying to transfer the consumer between NAPS IDs when an upgrade occurs is treated the same as a departure from the NAPS ID and may result in a package withdrawal. Remember that package upgrade information is automatically sent from MAC to DHS and the higher level of subsidy will be applied from the date of the package upgrade.

COMBINING OR TRANSFERRING OF HOME CARE PACKAGE SERVICES

Combining home care package services refers to the administrative process where two or more services are combined into one service of the same approved provider (generally in order to streamline administrative functions). The original service/s will only be closed if this is requested.

Transferring home care package services refers to consumer packages that are exited from a service and transferred to a service of another approved provider. This is likely to be the result of a merger or acquisition. The original service will only be closed if this is requested. Approved providers may wish to leave the original service open but will need to list it as inactive in MAC.

Further details on the correct procedures for combining or transferring home care package services are located [here](#).

1. Before combining or transferring home care package services, conduct feasibility checks to ensure all claims and payments are up to date for home care packages that will be affected. Make sure there are no outstanding financials and advise affected consumers of the planned change and impacts for them (in line with the [Charter of Care Recipient's Rights and Responsibilities - Home Care](#)).
2. Ensure the MAC provider portal is configured correctly so the continuing service is linked to the correct MAC outlet for display in the public Service Finder to allow MAC referrals to be issued to the service.
3. Complete the [Application to Combine or Transfer Home Care Services](#) and submit to the Department of Health's (DoH) State Network Office. This needs to be done at least 60 days prior to the date the proposed variations need to occur.
4. Processing teams within DoH will issue and accept referrals to the continuing service/outlet.
5. The Provider will need to exit/enter consumers in ACOPS once advised to do so by DHS. Following this the provider will need to check ACOPS claim forms/payment statements for accuracy with advice to DHS for adjustments as required.

NOTE: Do NOT make any changes in ACOPS unless specifically instructed to by DHS after they have suspended advance payments, as this may result in the withdrawal of a consumer's home care package.

DoH has also advised on a planned ICT upgrade for MAC –Release 10 in early December 2017 which will include improved functionality to assist with preventing incorrect home care package withdrawals.

While the above procedural measures are encouraged to prevent incorrect home care package withdrawals, DoH have advised that MAC/ACOPS anomalies can occur from time to time. If providers have experienced an incorrect home care package withdrawal then these should be reported to MAC on 1800 836 799. MAC will investigate the withdrawal as a priority and where errors are found they will attempt to resolve the issues within two weeks of it being escalated.

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LASA ADVOCACY – INCORRECT HOME CARE PACKAGE WITHDRAWALS

LASA Members should note the MAC reference number and date/time/details of each contact when dealing with MAC regarding incorrect home care package withdrawals. These cases can be escalated to our **LASA Member Advocacy Officer** via homecare@lasa.asn.au where additional support is provided in seeking a resolution.