CHSP Customer Contributions - Policy

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Purpose

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (**CHSP**) is a consolidated program providing entry-level home support for older people who need assistance to keep living independently. The framework allows for a flexible approach on a per-customer basis that also considers financial hardship. The fee schedule is subject to change.

Scope

This policy applies to all ACH Group CHSP Customers

Policy

1. Practice Outcomes

- **Consistency**: All customers who can afford to contribute to the cost of their care should do so. Customer contributions should not exceed the actual cost of service provision.
- **Transparency**: Customer contribution policies should include information in an accessible format and be publicly available, given to, and explained to, all new and existing customers.
- **Hardship**: Individual policies should include arrangements for those who are unable to pay the requested contribution.
- **Reporting**: Grant agreement obligations include a requirement for Mater at Home to report the dollar amount collected from customer contributions.
- **Fairness**: The Customer Contribution Framework should take into account the customer's capacity to pay and should not exceed the actual cost to deliver the services. In administering this, Mater at Home must consider partnered customers, customers in receipt of compensation payments and bundling of services.
- **Sustainability:** Revenue from customer contributions should be used to support ongoing service delivery and expand the services we are currently funded to deliver.

2. Access

2.1 All customers are briefed on ACH Group's CHSP Fee Contribution Guide prior to service delivery. Customers will be given at least 14 days' notice of any changes to the Fees Schedule and or Fee Contribution Guide.

2.2 In assessing, setting and charging fees, ACH Group at all times respects the rights of customers and carers.

3. Invoicing and Payment Method

3.1 Customers will be invoiced monthly.

- Payments must be made using a customers preferred payment method on a monthly basis. Payments will be processed in arrears.

- **Our Responsibility to the Customer**

3.2 We will ensure that fees are determined in a way that is transparent, accessible and fair.

- We will provide invoices and statements that are clear and in a format that is understandable.

3.3 We will review fees on request when there are changes to financial circumstances.

3.4 We will not deny care and services because of an inability to pay fees due to financial hardship.

4. Customers have a responsibility to

4.1 Pay any fees as agreed or arrange for an alternative with ACH Group if any changes occur to their financial circumstances.

4.2 Provide enough information for ACH Group to determine an appropriate level of fee if a reduction or waiver is requested.

- Provide 24 hours notice to cancel services or the standard contribution fee will be charged as per ACH Group's cancellation Policy.

5. How we apply the CHSP Customer Contribution Framework Principles

- Payment of fees that contribute to the cost of CHSP support are only sought from customers who have the capacity to pay.

5.1 Our fees will not exceed the actual costs of service provision.

- Customers who do not have the capacity to pay will have their fee reduced. A Hardship Application form is to be completed and approved by ACH Group to determine the reduced fee. The agreed fee is to be included in the Service Plan. The fee reductions are time limited and reviewed at least annually.

5.2 If the customer's financial situation changes, the customer should contact ACH Group and arrange for a review of the agreed fees.

5.3 The customer must inform ACH Group if they have received (or are receiving) a compensation payment, which is intended to cover some or all of the costs of home-based care. ACH Group will then assess if the full cost of the service/s is applicable.

5.4 Where a service benefits two CHSP customers, only one customer will be asked to contribute. For example, Domestic Assistance provided to a couple for one hour; only one customer will be charged for the hour service.

5.5 Where customer transport is provided, any parking fees are the responsibility of the customer.

5.6 This Policy is publicly available. It is accessible in electronic and hard copy and is explained to all new and existing customers.

6. Non-payment of Fees

- If the customer fails to respond to payment reminders and payment is still not made within a total of 30 days of the original due date, non-essential services can be ceased at the discretion of ACH Group. The customer will be informed in writing of ACH Group's decision and will have their right of appeal explained to them.
- Essential services (i.e. Meals, Personal Care) will not be ceased without consultation with and approval from the General Manager and ensuring customer needs are alternatively met.

6.1 If a customer is not paying the required fee, ACH Group will review their ability to pay. Depending on the circumstances, a number of fee payment options may be considered, including the customer paying the outstanding amount in instalments or reducing it.

6.2 All reasonable attempts will be made by ACH Group to arrive at a mutually agreed fee with the customer. The customer will be made aware of their right to appeal any decision, and use the services of an advocate.

- If the customer still fails to pay the agreed outstanding amount, and all avenues have been explored, ACH Group's Finance Manager will decide how to manage the debt.
- If ability to pay is not an issue, ACH Group may notify the person that services will be ceased and the debt referred to a debt collection agency.

Related Legislation

Aged Care Act 2024
Aged Care Rules 2025

Related Documents

CHSP Manual 2025 – 2027

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