

# FACT SHEET: CLIENT CONTRIBUTION POLICY



This fact sheet is for clients of the Darebin City Council, Supported and Connected Living Department. It should help you to understand our Client Contribution Policy.

## Background

In 2016 the Australian Government changed the way aged care works. The Home and Community Care (HACC) program has been replaced by the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

## What is the Policy?

The Policy is in line with the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) Client Contribution Framework and National Guide to the Client Contribution Framework 2015. These frameworks say that all clients who can afford to, will pay some part of the cost of their care.

## Who does the Policy apply to?

The Policy applies to:

- All eligible clients,
- agencies that are charged fees,
- Council staff.

## Letting you know about fees

We will talk to you about service fees and how you can pay these before you sign a Client Agreement. We review and update our fees once a year, and will let you know when this happens.

## How much will you be charged?

The amount that you will be charged depends on:

- Your income (how much you earn), and
- any other factors that may impact how much you can afford to pay.

There are three levels of fees that you may be asked to pay: low, medium or high. These are based on Centrelink guidelines.

We will let you know how much you need to pay before you sign a Client Agreement, and before services start. You can ask to have an advocate there whenever we talk to you about fees.

The agreed fee will be written on your Client Agreement before you sign it. Signing this agreement means that you understand how much you need to pay, and how to do this.

### **Fees for clients with limited funds**

If you are not able to pay the full amount, you can still get support from us. Client fees can be reduced or waived if needed.

You can ask us at any time if you need to have fees reduced or waived. We will review your request, and if it is approved we will let you know in writing. A new short-term client fee will be put in place that will be reviewed on a regular basis.

You will still get the same level of care and support from us if your fees are reduced or waived. You will not be treated any differently.

### **What if client fees are not paid?**

If you do not pay fees, this will go onto a client debt. We will take all reasonable steps to make sure you do not end up with a debt.

In most cases, these steps include talking with you/your carer over the phone or at home. We will talk to you about why you have not paid your fees, and what can be done to help you. Some solutions might be:

- Setting up direct debit,
- spreading payments out,
- reducing or waiving fees,
- putting fees on hold,
- linking with other support services.

The solutions that we agree on will be put on your file and sent to you in writing.

### **What to do if you are not happy or want to give feedback?**

You have the right to complain if you feel that the fee you are charged is not fair, or you cannot afford it. You can do this by talking to any member of our staff who visits you, or by calling 8470 8828.

For more information, see the full Policy. This can be downloaded at: [www.darebin.vic.gov.au/agedcare](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/agedcare), or call **8470 8828** to ask for a copy by post.