Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

Client Contribution Policy

Policy Number:	2026/07	**Directorate:**	Connected Communities
Approval by:	CEO	**Responsible Officer:**	Manager Community Access and Support
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and requirements for client contributions within the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and to ensure that client contribution fees are set and managed in accordance with the Aged Care Act 2024.

Scope

Knox City Council is a registered provider of CHSP services, namely meals delivery, home adjustments, home maintenance and repairs and Allied Health – Occupational Therapy. Clients accessing these services, have been registered and assessed through the Commonwealth's My Aged Care system and referred for service provision.

This policy is a summation of the implementation of the adopted fees and charges which identify a relevant service fee based on income levels for both single and couple households of eligible clients.

Further, this policy also applies to CHSP client financial hardship considerations, client payment obligation and payment collection of the client contributions as agreed at commencement of service, or as advised to all CHSP clients at the commencement of each financial year.

All clients will be informed of the required contribution fee required for the relevant CHSP service and recorded accordingly in the system. This policy will be made available to all CHSP clients, and upon service commencement, the client contribution schedule will be provided with a copy of the CHSP Service Agreement, clearly outlining the cost of services.

Annually, Council reviews all fees and charges as part of the budget cycle. Following Council's annual budget process, clients will be notified in writing of any changes to the Fee Contribution Schedule each financial year.

Client Contribution Principles

The Commonwealth Home Support Program provides expectations and guidance to ensure fairness, transparency, and sustainability for clients accessing the CHSP services and the registered service providers. Contributions are applied consistently, with all clients who can afford to pay doing so.

Policies and information on Knox Community Care service fees will be made publicly available, (in addition to the adopted Budget document), provided to clients in writing annually and prior to service commencement, and accessible via the Knox City Council website or on request.

Client Contributions are determined fairly, taking into account the Community Health income ranges (2019), which are based on the Centrelink income test for pensions and are used to calculate low, medium, and high rates for CHSP service categories. Where a client is not receiving a pension, and has an undisclosed income threshold, the service fees are higher. This reflects the clients increased ability to pay for a service, reflective of a user pays model.

Each CHSP service has a client contribution determined across these four income levels. For both singles and couple household which give considerations to the income levels.

Client Responsibilities

Clients are responsible for paying agreed fees or discussing alternative arrangements if their financial circumstances change, and for providing sufficient information to enable Community Care Services to assess fees accurately.

Where a couple or family receives a service, each individual will be charged separately for the service provided.

In the event of a late cancellation (less than 24 hours or less than 48 hours for meal delivery clients), the client will be required to pay the full fee for the service.

Refusal to pay fees, when the client has the capacity to do so, may result in suspension or termination of services. Management endorsement of service termination is required, and the client must be notified in writing of this outcome.

Hardship Provisions

Clients experiencing financial hardship may request a review of their fees. The process includes an assessment of the client's circumstances and capacity to pay, requiring submission of a detailed explanation of their situation. Clients will be asked to complete a **Request for Reduction in Fees Form**, which may allow for a temporary reduction in charges subject to review. Temporary or permanent adjustments to fees must be reviewed on a as needs basis to ensure continued access to services.

Non-Payment of Client Contributions

CHSP Client accounts are issued on a four-week cycle, after services have been provided. Payment terms are 30 days upon account receipt.

If payment is more than 30 days overdue without prior arrangement, Community Care staff will contact the client to discuss reasons for non-payment. As required, Community Care staff will make all reasonable efforts to reach a mutually agreed fee payment arrangement.

Where a fee is identified to be in dispute, clients will also be informed of their right to appeal this fee and involve an advocate into the discussion about the client contribution.

If the outstanding amount remains unpaid, a written reminder will be issued requesting payment within 30 days. Where no resolution is reached, and the issue is not related to financial hardship, Community Care may review service continuity. In such cases, the Community Care Services Lead and/or Manager Community Access and Support will determine the appropriate course of action to manage the outstanding debt and service dependency.

Knox City Council will seek to receive payment for CHSP service delivery, and through best practices, have need for minimal debt recovery activity associated with these funded services.

Related Documents

- National Guide to the CHSP Client Contribution Framework
- CHSP Program Manual