

Case Management

CASE MANAGEMENT MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE IN GLENDA'S LIFE

Glenda is 87 years old and has been living by herself for the last few years since her husband died. Her two children live overseas and worry about their mother's welfare and safety. They would prefer Glenda move into residential care, but Glenda is determined to remain living independently. She has had a level 3 home care package for the past two years. Her needs are quite complex and she receives a range of services, mostly in her home. She regularly has to see her GP and other medical specialists. Due to her mobility problems, she does need someone to transport her to and from her appointments. Glenda has no interest in computers or technology, and her eyesight is declining, making it hard for her to read. Her hearing has also declined and she can find it hard to communicate over the phone. Glenda's social circle is also diminishing as some friends sadly pass away or move into residential care, so she is feeling more and more isolated.

Her case manager, Marion, worked with Glenda to develop her care plan, which has been regularly adjusted as her circumstances changed and her needs increased. Without her case manager, Glenda would find it very hard to manage remain living at home. Marion meets with Glenda every four weeks as phone conversations have become difficult. They talk about how she is managing and discuss any upcoming doctor's appointments, with Marion making sure that a care worker is available to escort Glenda. Marion also goes through the monthly statement with Glenda to ensure she understands and to answer any questions she has. The care workers also let the case manager know if any issues come up. Glenda's podiatrist recommended that Glenda wears special orthotic shoes to improve her balance and reduce her risk of falling. Marion arranged for her care worker to take her to a specialist store and arranged payment for the shoes from her package. At the last visit, it became obvious that Glenda's budget for her care is not covering all her needs. Glenda is a full pensioner and she is not able to boost her budget with additional payments. Marion suggested that she be referred to the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) whereby Glenda hopes she will be approved for a level 4 home care package, which would make it easier to manage the budget to meet her needs.

What is case management?

Case management is an important aspect of home care packages, particularly for people with more complex needs who require support to coordinate the range of individualised services that enable them to remain living at home.

Case management tasks can be very diverse, but essentially include:

- conducting initial assessment and ongoing review of care and support needs
- developing an individualised care plan in collaboration with the person receiving care
- establishing and monitoring the home care package budget
- regularly contacting with the person receiving care to monitor how they are going and to identify and resolve any issues
- liaising with family or other carers, as well as medical practitioners and other professionals

- planning and arranging services identified in the care plan, and monitoring the quality of care delivery
- arranging brokerage of services to external providers or businesses
- advocating for the consumer on relevant issues.

Your case management options

Many home care package providers offer a range of case management options for consumers to choose from.

Fully supported case management

Fully supported case management, which is what Glenda receives, covers all the coordination and management of the package, including regular contact with the person receiving care to ensure the services they receive meet their identified needs and goals.

Partial self-management

Some people are happy to take on some of the responsibilities of managing their package. Through consultation with the case manager they identify what aspects of the coordination they are happy to manage themselves. For example, they might identify the services they require and when and by whom they are delivered (these services must be part of the agreed care plan). This task could include doing research to find out the costs and monitoring the budget to ensure the services and support they use are within the agreed budget.

Self-management

People who choose the self-management option often have high-level organisational skills, are computer literate or have a family member who can assist. They organise care and support which has been identified in the care plan, and they take the responsibility to let service providers know if their circumstances change (including changes to when they receive a service). They also carefully monitor their spending to ensure it is within the budget, and they check and approve invoices, which are paid by the provider. The provider undertakes the initial assessment, develops the care plan in partnership with the client, undertakes an annual review and provides a monthly statement.

Case management costs

The cost of the case management varies between providers. Sometimes there is a fixed case management fee; other providers charge by the hour depending on how much support is required. Before choosing a provider, it is important to do some research to find out the cost of case management and what it includes, as contact with the case manager can range from monthly to once or twice a year.

What was the outcome for Glenda?

Glenda loves her case manager! They have established a wonderful relationship and without her support, Glenda would not be able to manage living at home. Glenda spends a significant amount of her package on case management, but for her it is worth the investment as it gives her and her family peace of mind. Due to Marion's diligence and commitment, the services Glenda receives are well-coordinated and reliable. Any concerns are followed up promptly. Marion supported Glenda to get a new assessment and she has been approved for a level 4 package. She is still on the national queue, but will hopefully be assigned a level 4 package soon.

Find out more:

[My Aged Care, Consumer Directed Care](#)

[Department of Health, Charter of Care Recipients rights and responsibilities](#)

[User Rights Principles 2014](#) Compilation Number 5