

Starting an attendant care program

What is attendant care?

Attendant care services help support you in your home and community. **icare lifetime care** pays for 'reasonable and necessary' attendant care services to help you with tasks you need support to do as a result of your motor accident injury. These may include:

- personal care, such as showering or dressing
- domestic tasks, such as preparing meals and cleaning
- help to attend your injury-related treatment and rehabilitation activities or appointments
- support with engaging in family and community activities
- registered nursing assistance
- gardening and general maintenance of your home.

To find out more about attendant care, including what a support worker does, and what it is like to have support workers in your home, see our website www.living-with-attendant-care.info.

Who determines my needs?

If you think you need attendant care, talk to your **icare lifetime care** coordinator or case manager about organising a review of your care needs. This will be done by a health professional, such as an occupational therapist. They'll meet with you and your family at your home to talk about your care needs. They may also talk to your case manager and any other service providers working with you to make sure they understand your needs.

Sometimes, attendant care isn't the only option, or the best option. If it's determined that this is the best option to meet your needs, you can talk to health professional about the support you'd like. Your case manager or health professional can then send us a report on your care needs and a request for services to meet the needs related to your injury.

How is a decision made about my request?

The amount and type of attendant care we can pay for depends on your needs relating to your injury, your goals and your personal circumstances. We'll review each request on an individual basis and refer to the 'reasonable and necessary' criteria in the *Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines* to help decide if the service or services you've asked for are the most appropriate to help you meet your goals and needs, taking into account the information that is provided in the request.

How do I find an attendant care provider?

We have a panel of approved providers selected for the quality of their service for people with severe injuries. Attendant care can only be provided by one of these approved providers. There is an attendant care finder tool on our website. This will help you find approved

providers in your area with the skills to manage your care needs related to your motor accident injuries. It also has information from each attendant care provider about their company, the geographical area they cover and the services they provide.

The attendant care finder tool can be found on our website at www.icare.nsw.gov.au.

Your coordinator or case manager can also talk to you about finding an attendant care provider. They'll talk with you about:

- how and when you want to receive care
- the types of services the support worker will provide
- how the service works (such as who to contact if you have any problems or questions).

How do I know which provider is best for me?

Deciding which attendant care provider is best for you depends on where you live and what support you need. You can speak to the providers to get more information to help you make your decision. You may also want to speak to other people, such as your doctor, service providers, case manager, coordinator or family members.

When you speak to a potential attendant care provider, you may like to ask the following questions:

- Can you tell me about your company and its experience?
- What qualifications and experiences do your support workers have?
- Do you have support workers experienced in working with people with my type of injury?
- What are your emergency procedures? (For example, what is your after-hours contact?)
- Can you provide registered nursing services? (For example, changing my catheter?)
- How will I be involved in selecting the support workers who'll be working with me?
- What are the working hours? (For example, what are the latest and earliest times a worker can come to my home?)
- If I have a problem with a support worker, what should I do?
- How long will it take before the service starts?
- Are there any other clients or families I can contact to get feedback about your services?

How do services start?

Once attendant care services have been approved and you've selected a provider, the provider will visit you and develop a care plan with you. This plan is called a *Participant Attendant Care Agreement*. This is based on the attendant care services that have been approved. It includes information about how and when you'll receive attendant care. You can negotiate with the provider about the times and days you'd like attendant care services to fit with your lifestyle. The provider will also explain how the service works, such as who to contact if you have any problems or questions.

Before the program can start, the attendant care provider will need to complete a home safety audit to make sure your home is safe for the support workers to work in.

What if my care needs change?

Your attendant care services will be reviewed regularly to make sure they're meeting your needs. If you'd like a review of your care needs, speak to your coordinator or case manager.

What if I'm not happy with my attendant care provider?

If you're not happy with your attendant care provider, you should speak to your coordinator or case manager. They can help you to raise any concerns and resolve any issues with the provider. If you're still not happy, you can request to change attendant care providers. You can choose another approved provider using our attendant care finder tool on our website at www.icare.nsw.gov.au.

Changing providers usually takes up to 4 weeks. Sometimes it may take longer, for example, if there are problems recruiting support workers or time is required for extensive training. Your coordinator or case manager and your current attendant care provider will work together to help you transition your services to the new provider.