

St Marys Aged Care

TITLE:	Fee Information and Agreements	POLICY NO.	GOV-Fees and Agreements-Policy
---------------	---------------------------------------	-------------------	---------------------------------------

VERSION:	2025/01
EFFECTIVE DATE:	July 2025
REVIEW DATE:	July 2027
DISTRIBUTION:	All Staff
POLICY CONTEXT:	Quality Standard Outcomes: 1.3 1.1 3.3
RELATED POLICIES:	CLIN-Persn Centd Care-Policy: <i>Person-Centred-Care Policy</i> CLIN-Persn Centd Care-Decision Making-Policy: <i>Supported Decision-Making Policy</i> CLIN-Persn Centd Care-Rights-Policy: <i>Statement of Rights Policy</i>
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	Residential Care Agreements Schedule of Fees and Charges for Residents
APPROVED BY:	CEO

PURPOSE

To ensure individuals have the information required to understand the agreement they are entering into, including the fees and charges for care and services.

PRINCIPLES

Information about Agreements

Give information about agreements to Residents/Representatives before they enter into any agreements. It can also be before they start receiving care, whichever happens first. For example, give them information about:

- any agreements they will have to sign before receiving care or services
- any situations where a change needs to be made to a current agreement
- the terms and conditions about their rights and responsibilities
- the care and services you will provide.
- fees and other charges they need to pay.

Include information about fees and other charges in agreements and invoices.

Give Residents and Representatives time to understand the information you have given them before they enter into any agreements or start receiving care. In particular:

St Marys Aged Care

- Make sure workers give Residents enough time to consider their options when entering into a new agreement.
- They also need to do this when the organisation makes changes to the prices, fees and payments.
- Give Residents time and support to ask for external advice if needed.

Consider each Residents language and communication needs and preferences. Check to see if you need to use interpreters or translators.

Fees and Charges

We need to ensure that:

- the prices, fees and chargeable items specified in agreements and shown on invoices are accurate and transparent. This means invoices need to show the care and services given to the Resident. For example, invoices need to be itemised so the Resident knows exactly what you're charging them for. Make sure charges follow the older person's agreement.
- you give invoices to Residents or Representatives, in a **timely** way
- you give invoices to Residents in a format that they can understand clearly. Consider the Residents language and communication needs and preferences. Make sure that if they need any other support to understand this information, that you document this in their assessment and planning.
- you tell the Resident and those involved in their care when issues in invoices are found. Make sure you address these in a **timely** way and where needed, give refunds to Residents.
- you investigate any issues. Resolve any **system*** issues to stop any overcharging or undercharging from happening again.

Do regular checks to make sure invoices are accurate and any issues with agreements can be found and resolved in a **timely** way.

Give Residents or Representatives paying invoices ways to give **feedback** or make **complaints** if they have been given incorrect charges. Don't rely on the Resident to make **complaints** about incorrect charges. Instead, have strong **systems** in place to make sure billing is accurate at all times. These **systems** should also allow you to monitor **complaints** and record how you managed them.

Make sure that your system* for getting informed consent* from Residents includes situations where fees and charges have changed.

Use the **system*** for getting **informed consent*** when there are changes to:

- a Residents care and services
- fees and charges they have agreed to in the past.

Get **informed consent*** from the Resident before making any changes. This is so you can encourage them to choose freely and with **dignity of risk**. This makes sure that you record changes about the Resident when making decisions about their care and services. This means you will be able to find records of care or financial changes that may affect the ability of the Resident or their Representative to pay the agreed fees.

Staff Training for fees and Agreements

Make sure workers have the time, support, resources and skills to use the systems* for agreements, invoicing and payments.

Give workers guidance and training on how to prepare invoices and agreements that are clear and easy for Residents to understand. This needs to be in line with:

- the organisation's **policies*** and **procedures***
- workers' **roles and responsibilities***.

Make sure workers understand how to:

St Marys Aged Care

- give Residents prices, fees and payments:
 - that are sufficient, accurate and transparent
 - in a **timely*** way
 - in a way they can view and understand.
- give Residents enough time to think about their options before making decisions
- let Residents know about any changes to fees and charges they have agreed to in the past
- get **informed consent** from the Resident before you make any changes to fees and charges.

Monitor the use of your systems* for agreements, invoicing and payments and how well they work.

Check if your workers are following your **systems** for agreements, invoicing and payments (**Outcome 2.9**).

Talk with Residents and their Representatives about the care and services they receive. Ask them if workers have given them information about their agreements and fees in a **timely*** way and in a way they can view and understand. These conversations can then inform **continuous improvement*** actions and planning.

Assess if workers are following your quality **system*** (**Outcome 2.9**). You can do this through quality assurance and **system*** reviews.

If you find issues or ways you can improve through your reviews and assessments, you need to address them. If things go wrong, you need to:

- practise **open disclosure***. This means being open about what has gone wrong. Share what went wrong with Residents and their Representatives..
- put in place strategies to mitigate the risk of things going wrong again.

REFERENCES

Australian Government. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2024). *Strengthened Quality Standards*.
<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/quality-standards/strengthened-quality-standards>
