



Hearing Services Program Changes Update

The Department of Health (the department) is responsible for managing and administering the Australian Government Hearing Services Program (the program).

In October 2020, changes were announced to some services available under the program. Several program changes will take effect on 1 July 2021. To support the implementation of the changes, the program has sought feedback from stakeholders as part of the Hearing Services Program review.

The Schedule of Service Items and Fees 2021-22 is now available [here](#).

Further information can be found in the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#).

Key Changes

Voucher Period

From 1 July 2021, all new vouchers issued will be valid for five years. For clients with a voucher which has an expiry date after 30 June 2021, their voucher will automatically be extended by a further two years.

Client Review

Unaided Clients: For clients who are not aided but may need ongoing support and hearing screening, a new service Item: Client Review – Unaided (920) will be available from 1 July 2021. All unaided clients, will be entitled to an annual client review from 12 months after their initial assessment or previous review.

The service requirements for the unaided client review (920) are outlined in the [Schedule of Service Items and Fees](#). The claim amount will be in line with the 930.

Aided Clients: The current Monaural Client Review service (930) will be expanded to include clients who have been fitted with an Assistive Listening Device (ALD). This will allow clients fitted with ALDs to be reviewed annually, where required.

The service requirements for the monaural client review (930) and binaural client review (940) are outlined in the [Schedule of Service Items and Fees](#).

Maintenance Services

Initial Fittings: There will be no changes to initial fittings. If a client chooses to enter a maintenance agreement, the initial fitting claims with maintenance will still be available.

Refittings: Providers will no longer be able to claim for a maintenance service for 12 months from the date of fitting of the new device/s. Providers are able to offer clients a new maintenance agreement at the time of refitting. If a client enters into a new agreement, they may be charged a co-payment to provide assistance covering the cost of consumables. This will ensure that Maintenance Agreements remain in line with the anniversary of device fittings.

Replacements: For clients already on a maintenance agreement at the time of a replacement, there will be no changes to the current arrangements and the maintenance agreement will continue as normal. If a client has a replacement but is not on a maintenance agreement and wishes to commence one, the standard processes for establishing a maintenance agreement will apply.

Standard Maintenance: Standard monaural maintenance (item 700) and monaural maintenance for previously fitted (private) devices (item 790) will be increased to half of the equivalent binaural maintenance amounts.

Relocated Maintenance: Relocated maintenance will be reduced to one quarter of the current annual standard maintenance amount plus the full client co-payment amount. Relocated maintenance is available to clients who relocate to a new service provider and are already on a maintenance agreement. For clients who aren't on a maintenance agreement, they may sign up for one with their new provider, who may claim standard maintenance, unless it is within the 12 month maintenance freeze after refitting.

General maintenance information

- All existing maintenance service items (items 700, 710, 711, 722, 790, 791 and 777) will be retained.
- There will be no change to the client maintenance co-payment.
- Further information can be found in the [Maintenance Factsheet](#).

Revalidated Services

A voucher entitles program clients to a range of available services. Where the client has used an available service on their voucher and there is a demonstrated clinical need that meets the program requirements, providers can apply for a revalidated service.

From 1 July 2021, the Revalidated Service Request form will be completed [online](#) and will not require a client signature. If the revalidated service is approved by the program, providers can proceed with delivering and claiming for the service. A pre-approval number will be provided with the approval email which is to be entered into the portal when submitting the claim.

Revalidated Service Requests under ECR1, will also be checked against the new device fitting range information for devices.

An updated Quick Reference Guide will be released once the changes have been finalised in the system.

Schedule of Service Items and Fees

The [Schedule of Service Items and Fees](#) has been redeveloped to consolidate program standards and documentation including:

- Conditions for Claiming;
- Hearing Rehabilitation Outcomes;
- Minimum Hearing Loss Threshold guidelines;
- Eligibility Criteria for Refitting;
- Evidence Guide for Compliance Monitoring;
- Schedule of Service Items; and
- Schedule of Fees.

Having seven documents incorporated into the Schedule of Service Items and Fees will improve access for providers to relevant information in one place. The Schedule of Service Items and Fees includes the service requirements for the new Unaided Client Review.

Transition Support

To support providers and software vendors to transition to the new arrangements, the program will

- Maintain a [Program Changes webpage](#) to provide update information and links to key resources.

- Provide New and Updated Provider Factsheets.
- Release [Schedule of Services Items and Fees](#).
- Provide online discussion forums and virtual Q&A sessions.
- Update Hearing Services Online Portal Quick Reference Guides.

A [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the program changes is also available and will be updated as new questions are received.

Further Information

If you have any comments or questions regarding the program changes please email us at hearing@health.gov.au with the subject Voucher Scheme Changes.

You can also submit any questions or enquiries via the [online feedback form](#).