

Residential Care

Aged care homes



As we age we sometimes find that living at home becomes more difficult for a variety of reasons including illness, disability, reduced mobility, isolation or the problems of maintaining a large property. When considering where to live it is important to understand whether there are services available in your area to help you.

To find out about government-funded support and care services contact **My Aged Care, tel. 1800 200 422**, www.myagedcare.gov.au.

Care finders is a free service supporting vulnerable older people who have no one else who can assist them to access aged care services. The care finder will assist eligible people with navigating the aged care system, including identifying aged care homes with respite and permanent vacancies. No professional referral is required to access the care finder service. Further information and contact details for such organisations are available at www.myagedcare.gov.au/help-care-finder

For in-depth information, including aged care costs, you can talk to an Aged Care Specialist Officer if one is available in your area. To book an appointment call **1800 227 475** or ask at your local Services Australia service centre.

If living in your own home is no longer possible, aged care homes (also known as residential aged care facilities) may be one option. These places are sometimes referred to as nursing homes and hostels.

What is residential aged care?

In addition to providing accommodation, aged care homes provide:

- meals
- cleaning and laundry
- assistance with showering and dressing
- nursing care including medication management
- social activities

The Quality of Care Principles 2014 specify which services an aged care home must provide to all care recipients without any additional cost for the residents.

Facilities can vary in style, size and age. Some focus on community groups, such as Veterans, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or people from a diverse cultural and linguistic background.

Some homes provide a secure area and/or special programs for people suffering with dementia.

Aged care homes may be privately owned or run by church organisations, local councils and not-for-profit organisations. The Australian Government accredits,

regulates and subsidises aged care homes.

Will I need to pay?

Fees do apply to live in residential aged care homes and are calculated according to your ability to pay. There are three types of fees:

- Daily fees
- Means-tested fees
- Accommodation payments

Daily fees and means-tested fees are your contribution to your daily living costs and care (meals, laundry and cleaning, personal and nursing care). An assessment of your income and assets will determine if you are required to pay a means-tested fee and the amount to be paid.

Accommodation payments are your contribution to the cost of the accommodation. You will pay an accommodation payment if you have an income and assets over a certain amount. Aged care homes receive a higher government subsidy for residents who cannot pay an accommodation payment.

Hardship provisions exist to help residents who have a genuine difficulty paying fees and payments.

What are extra / additional services?

Some homes have *extra service status* which allows them to offer a higher standard of accommodation, food and services, at an additional cost. If you agree to an extra service room, extra service fees will apply, which are set by the facility and are not subsidised by the Government. It does not mean that a higher standard of care is offered. All facilities must meet the same care standards set by the Australian Government.

Aged care homes are also able to offer additional services which go beyond the care and services which they must provide. These fees vary from home to home, and within the same home may vary according to the client's financial circumstances. Check with your aged care home for details of these services and the fees that apply.

What is respite?

Some aged care homes offer short-term care called respite. This is normally used to give carers a break but can also be used when a carer becomes ill, needs time off for a planned hospital stay or other reasons.

Am I eligible for residential care or respite?

Eligibility is assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). ACATs assess and approve people for permanent or respite entry into aged care homes.

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Anyone can contact **My Aged Care** to arrange an assessment and there is no charge. If applicable a member of the ACAT will visit you and discuss your needs, including health, mobility and social needs.

Contact **My Aged Care on 1800 200 422**.
www.myagedcare.gov.au

Country services

Commonwealth-subsidised residential care facilities are also found in larger regional centres in country areas. In some small rural communities funding is provided by both states and Australian governments to enable hospitals/health services to provide aged care. These are called Multi-Purpose Services. An ACAT assessment is required and the same standards of care apply.

Are standards of care monitored?

The **Australian Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission** assesses and monitors care standards in all aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.

Accreditation is the formal recognition that an aged care home is operating in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Aged Care Act 1997 and its amendments, and is providing high quality care.

Aged care homes must be accredited by the Australian Government in order to receive funding.

If an aged care home fails to meet the Accreditation Standards or other responsibilities under the Act, depending on the nature of the non-compliance, it may:

- be issued a notice of non-compliance or notice to agree and be given time to make the necessary improvements
- be refused accreditation
- be sanctioned and stop receiving funding from the Australian Government for new residents until issues are resolved.

Accreditation Reports are available at the **Australian Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's website**: www.agedcarequality.gov.au.

From December 2022 a *Star Rating* has been gradually introduced, which combines the Commission's compliance rating, quality measures, staffing and customers' experience. When you use the *Find a provider* tool on My Aged Care you can view the aged care homes' overall *Star Rating*, which ranges between 1 and 5 stars. The rating allows consumers to compare the quality of residential aged care services, supporting more informed decision-making. www.myagedcare.gov.au/find-a-provider-choice

Aged care consumers' rights

People receiving Commonwealth-funded residential aged care services have their rights protected under the **Charter of Aged Care Rights**.

If you receive aged care, you have the right to:

- Personal privacy
- Exercise your rights without it adversely affecting the way you are treated
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Safe and high quality care and services
- Access all information about yourself, including information about your rights, care and services
- Complain free from reprisal, and to have your complaints dealt with fairly and promptly
- Have a person of your choice, including an aged care advocate, support you or speak on your behalf

The full charter is available at

www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights.

How do I make a complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the service or care provided you can make a complaint to the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**, tel.

1800 951 822, www.agedcarequality.gov.au.

The Commission resolves complaints about aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

offers free, independent and confidential services that focus on supporting older people and their representatives to raise and address issues relating to interacting with Commonwealth-funded aged care services. **Tel. 1800 700 600**, opan.org.au

Aged Rights Advocacy Service is the South Australian member of **OPAN**. Advocates provide support to assist you in making a complaint. This is a free confidential service. An advocate will always seek your permission before taking action.

www.sa.agedrights.asn.au

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