

Residential Care

Finding and choosing an aged care home



Discussing your needs

Requiring accommodation in an aged care home can become apparent following a sudden health crisis or after a long period of decline where it has become increasingly difficult to manage at your own home. It is a good idea to discuss concerns about declining health with your family, your doctor or health workers involved in your care.

Assessment by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)

The ACAT assesses eligibility for entry to residential aged care. To organise an assessment ring **My Aged Care Contact Centre, tel. 1800 200 422**

A member of the ACAT will visit you at home or in hospital and will ask you questions about your health, care needs and lifestyle. With your approval they may ask your doctor about your medical history. You may want your carer, a family member or a friend to be there with you.

After the assessment a letter will be posted to you. It will include the assessment approval decision, services you are eligible to receive including referral codes and your support plan. You need to keep this letter as the information will be required when you apply at aged care homes. You may be approved for permanent and/or respite care.

The ACAT also assesses for Home Care Packages if residential care is not required.

Review of assessment outcome

If you have concerns about your assessment, you should first talk to your assessor or their organisation. Assessment organisations have their own complaints procedures in place to work with you to address your concerns. If you do not know the organisation's details, you can call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 to find out.

If you cannot resolve the issue with your assessor or their organisation you or your authorised representative have the right to seek a review of the decision. You can write to the Secretary of the Australian Government Department of Health stating why you think the decision should be changed. Within 28 days of receiving your letter from ACAT write to the following address.

The Secretary
Department of Health
Attn: Aged Care Assessment Program
Reconsiderations
GPO Box 9848
ADELAIDE 5001

Finding residential aged care homes

The My Aged Care website www.myagedcare.gov.au features a searching tool 'Find a provider'. By selecting a given suburb or locality and the type of care required you can search for aged care homes in the local area. (**Catalyst Foundation (including Seniors Information Service)**) can assist you with navigating the My Aged Care website.

Apply to aged care homes

Contact various homes in your preferred area to make an appointment to visit. Most homes offer regular tours or appointments for prospective residents or their families to be shown through.

Looking for a vacancy

Catalyst Foundation keeps a register of residential aged care vacancies (permanent and respite). Anyone can contact the Foundation to obtain information about vacancies. Vacancies are also published on the website (www.catalystfoundation.com.au).

The following checklist is a guide to what you might look for and the questions you might ask.

- 1. Location** - Is the home in a familiar area and conveniently located for family visits? Is there access to public or other transport?
 - 2. First impressions** - Is it clean, bright and welcoming? Does the home have a pleasant smell? Is the room temperature comfortable? Do the residents appear happy and well cared for? Do members of the staff seem caring and attentive? Are the communal indoor and outdoor areas safe, comfortable and attractive?
 - 3. Buildings** - Are the buildings well-maintained? Is the building layout suitable for older people, wheelchairs or walking frames? Is there good wheelchair access inside and outside? Is there suitable lighting?
 - 4. Safety and security** - Are there fire safety and security measures in place? Are smoke detectors in evidence and well maintained? Are there adequate locking systems, accessible emergency call bells, secure windows and doors?
 - 5. Costs** - If you are required to pay a * Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) how much will it be? Is there an extra services cost you will be required to pay? Are there any optional extra services you may consider?
- * The requirement to pay a RAD is dependent on a person's income and assets (see fact sheet *Care Fees and Accommodation Payments*)

- 6. Accommodation** - Are there single rooms or shared rooms? What arrangements are made to ensure privacy, particularly when sharing rooms? Are there ensuites or are bathrooms shared? Can new residents bring their own furniture and belongings? What furniture is supplied? Can belongings be stored securely? Can residents change to a preferred room if one becomes available? Is there provision for couples?
- 7. Special needs** – Is there a need to consider any of the following - specific cultural needs, special diets, smoking, access to your own doctor, pets, religious observances, sexuality, war service, needs of care leavers or any other individual needs?
- 8. Daily living** - What "house rules" and arrangements are in place - e.g. cleaning rooms, bed times, etc.? Are the meals varied and appetising? Are meal arrangements flexible i.e. can food be provided in your own room or at different times? Is there provision for small private purchases such as toiletries or snacks? What activities and outings are organised? Does the home have its own transport for outings? Are residents' interests taken into account? What arrangements are made for visitors? What access is there to telephones, TV, and the internet? Does a hairdresser visit the home?
- 9. Privacy and dignity** – Is the privacy of all residents considered at all times? Do members of the staff wait for permission before entering rooms, except in emergencies? Are residents addressed courteously at all times?
- 10. Consultation** – How are residents and their families consulted and informed about events, issues and changes? Do residents or their families/carers have input into the way the home caters for their needs? Are residents able to make choices about their daily living activities? Is there a Residents' Committee in place?
- 11. Feedback/Complaints** - How do residents raise issues? How are complaints handled? Is the *Charter of Aged Rights* easily accessible?
- 12. Health care** - What health care procedures and homes are in place, e.g. dental or podiatry care? Are rehabilitation programs and therapies readily available? How do residents attend medical appointments? How can family/friends be involved in care?
- 13. Accreditation and quality standard** - From July 2020 every residential aged care service has a Service Compliance Rating in the 'Find a Provider' section of the My Aged Care website. The rating

allows consumers to easily compare the quality of residential aged care services, supporting more informed decision-making. The rating reflects a service's current compliance position; that is whether a service has a sanction or non-compliance notice and the outcome of the most recent performance evaluation

- 14. Staff** - How many staff are on duty? What qualifications do the staff members have? What staffing is provided at night? What training is provided for staff? How do residents contact the staff for assistance? Is there a staff member available who is able to care for you in a culturally appropriate way?
- 15. Palliative Care** – Does the home have special provision for the palliative care needs of residents? Are the wishes of residents sought and respected? What special arrangements are made for families at this time? Are the feelings of other residents considered and respected at this time? Does the home have a resource person who is responsible for describing national initiatives in palliative care and the *Guidelines for a Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care*?

When you find a suitable aged care home

Once you are offered and accept a place in an aged care home, the aged care home should then offer you a *Resident Agreement* outlining the terms and conditions of your accommodation and care, including services, fees, rights and responsibilities.

Make sure you read and understand the agreement. Ask for additional information you feel should be included. Seek financial and/or legal advice if necessary.

Also consider making arrangements for *Enduring Power of Attorney* and *Advance Care Directive*, so that your instructions are known should you become incapacitated and unable to make decisions for yourself.

Ageing SA is a full-fee aged care placement service provided by Catalyst Foundation. Ageing SA provides assistance in the selection of and placement in an aged care home to suit your needs. **Tel. 0429 998 704** to speak with the consultant or contact Catalyst Foundation.

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