

Options in Aged Care

There are many types of aged care services, but finding out what options are available to you or your family member can be confusing. This information provides an overview of aged care services and how you can access them, along with some useful contact numbers. It describes three types of government-subsidised aged care services:

- **Community Care**
- **Respite Care**
- **Residential Care**

Even if you do not require these services now, it is important to know what is available so you can plan for any care needs that you may have in the future.

Community Care

Most older people prefer to continue living in their own home, but some people may find this difficult to do without assistance. There are a number of aged care services that help older people to continue living in their own home. This type of care is known as 'Community Care' and there are four different options, depending on your needs:

Home and Community Care (HACC)

Home and Community Care provides basic support services for frail aged people who are experiencing difficulties managing daily tasks but who wish to continue living independently at home. Services may include: nursing and allied health services, personal care (assistance with bathing, dressing and eating), Meals on Wheels and other food services, home help (assistance with housework, laundry and shopping), home modification and maintenance, transport, counselling and social support. Home and Community Care services are usually provided by local councils, community health centres and community organisations.

Community Aged Care Packages (CACP)

Community Aged Care Packages provide services to frail aged people with more complex care needs, or who require a greater range of services to help them continue living at home. The packages of services are flexible and designed to suit individual needs, and may include: personal care (assistance with bathing, dressing and eating), meal preparation, home help (assistance with housework, laundry and shopping), gardening, transport and social support. These services are planned and coordinated by an approved aged care service provider. Eligibility for Community Aged Care Packages is determined by an *Aged Care Assessment Team* (see page 3).

Extended Aged Care at Home Packages (EACH)

Extended Aged Care at Home Packages provide services to people who need more help than a Community Aged Care Package can provide. The packages of services are flexible and designed to suit individual needs, and may include: nursing and allied health services, personal care (assistance with bathing, dressing and eating), home help (assistance with housework, laundry and shopping), transport and social support. These services are planned and coordinated by an approved aged care service provider. Eligibility for Extended Aged Care at Home Packages is determined by an *Aged Care Assessment Team* (see page 3).

Extended Aged Care at Home Packages Dementia (EACH D)

Extended Aged Care at Home Packages Dementia provide services to people living with dementia. The packages of services are flexible and designed to suit individual needs, and may include: nursing and allied health services, personal care (assistance with bathing, dressing and eating), home help (assistance with housework, laundry and shopping), transport and social support. These services are planned and coordinated by an approved aged care service provider. Eligibility for Extended Aged Care at Home Packages Dementia is determined by an *Aged Care Assessment Team* (see page 3).

For more information about Community Care and how to find a service that meets your needs, call the **Commonwealth Carelink Centre** on **1800 052 222**.

Respite Care

Respite Care is short-term care, which enables the older person and their carer to have a break from their normal routine. Many older people are cared for by family members at home. It is important that carers are supported in this valuable role, especially as many carers are themselves elderly. Respite Care supports the carer to have a break from their caring responsibilities, while also helping the older person to continue living at home. Respite Care provides care services to the older person on a temporary basis, which enables the carer to rest, attend to other responsibilities (eg shopping), or to have a holiday. It is usually planned in advance, but may be arranged in an emergency (eg if the carer is unwell). Respite care may also be accessed by older people who live on their own and feel unable to look after themselves and need a break. It can be provided in the older person's home, in day-care centres or in Residential Care. Respite Care is provided through Home and Community Care, the National Respite for Carers Program and Residential Care. Access to Respite Care is based on eligibility, priority and need.

For more information about Respite Care and other support services for carers, call the **Commonwealth Carers' Respite Centre** on **1800 059 059**.

Residential Care

As an older person's level of frailty increases, it may no longer be an option for them to continue living in their own home and an aged care home may need to be considered. Aged care homes are also known as 'Residential Care'. There are two types of Residential Care: low-level care and high-level care. Both levels of care provide a range of specified services, including: accommodation, basic furnishings, laundry, cleaning, meals and refreshments, staff to help at all times, personal care (assistance with bathing, dressing and eating), occasional nursing care and social activities. High-level care is designed for people who are very frail, require 24-hour assistance and on-going nursing care. Some aged care homes provide low-level care and high-level care, enabling people to stay in the same home even if their care needs change. This is known as 'ageing in place'. Aged care homes are run by approved aged care service providers. Eligibility for Residential Care is determined by an *Aged Care Assessment Team* (see page 3).

For more information about Residential Care and how to find a home that meets your needs, call the **Commonwealth Carelink Centre** on **1800 052 222** or the **Aged Care Information Line** on **1800 500 853**.

Additional Information

Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)

The first step in accessing most government-subsidised aged care services is to receive an assessment by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). Eligibility for Community Aged Care Packages, Extended Aged Care at Home Packages and Residential Care is determined by an ACAT assessment, which determines eligibility by assessing a person's needs. This is a free and confidential service, and the process is not as daunting as it may sound. An ACAT representative (usually a doctor, nurse, social worker or other health care professional) will assess your situation and specific care needs. You will be informed about the services you are eligible to receive and how to find a service that meets your needs. You may choose to have a relative or friend with you during the assessment. You also have the right to ask ACAT to provide an interpreter. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the assessment, you have the right to appeal the decision. To arrange an ACAT assessment, you can ask your doctor for a referral or call the Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222.

Fees & Charges

The cost of receiving aged care services is based on a person's assessed care needs and their ability to pay. Special consideration is given to people who are financially disadvantaged. It is important to know that you will not be denied access to a service if you are unable to pay. All people receive the same quality of care regardless of the level of fees paid. To find out more about fees and charges, contact the Aged and Community Care Information Line on 1800 500 853.

Your Rights & Responsibilities

Aged care service providers are obliged to inform you of your rights and responsibilities regarding the services you are receiving. Whether you are receiving Residential Care or Community Care, it is important to be aware of your rights, which include the right to:

- Be informed about your rights;
- Be involved and informed about all decisions related to your care;
- Be in charge of your life, your money and your possessions;
- Be treated with dignity and respect;
- Continue your cultural or religious practices and retain the language of your choice without discrimination;
- Good quality care that meets your needs;
- Complain and take steps to sort out any problems;
- Privacy.

For more information about your rights and responsibilities regarding aged care services, contact the National Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600.

Concerns and Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint about the quality of care or services you are receiving, you may like to discuss this with the Manager of the aged care service. If you are uncomfortable doing this, or you do not like how your complaint has been handled, you can contact the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme on 1800 550 552. This is a free and confidential service.

Useful Contact Numbers

If you need an interpreter to help you to communicate over the phone, call the **Translating and Interpreting Service** on **13 14 50**. This is a free service.

Note that calls to numbers beginning with '1800' are free, except when made from mobile phones.

Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme: 1800 550 552

The Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme investigates complaints and concerns about government-subsidised aged care services, including community care, respite care and residential care. Contact the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme if you have a concern or complaint about the services you are receiving. Complaints can be made anonymously. This is a free service.

Aged Care Information Line: 1800 500 853

The Aged Care Information Line provides information about aged care services, including information on fees and charges, incoming testing and financial assistance.

Centrelink - Disability, Sickness and Carers: 13 27 17

Call this number for disability, sickness and carer enquiries, including Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance, Carer Payment, Carer Allowance and Sickness Allowance.

Centrelink - Multilingual Call: 13 12 02

Call this number to speak to Centrelink employees in your preferred language.

Centrelink - Retirement Services: 13 23 00

Call this number for retirement enquiries, including Age Pension, Pensioner Concession Cards, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, and for enquiries regarding income assessment for residential care fees. You can also call this number to access Centrelink's Financial Information Service, which is a free and independent service available to everyone in the community (even if you are not receiving a pension or benefit).

Commonwealth Carelink Centre: 1800 052 222

The Commonwealth Carelink Centre provides a single point of contact for information about aged care services. Contact the Commonwealth Carelink Centre to find out what aged care services are available in your area or anywhere in Australia, as well as information on costs, assessment procedures and eligibility criteria. This is a free and confidential service.

Commonwealth Carers' Respite Centre: 1800 059 059

The Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre coordinates access to respite services in your local area, provides information and advice about respite options, help with organising emergency or planned respite, and financial assistance for short-term or emergency respite. This is a 24-hour service.

National Aged Care Advocacy Line: 1800 700 600

Contact the National Aged Care Advocacy Line to find your local advocacy service. Advocacy services help to promote your rights in relation to aged care services and can increase your involvement in decision-making processes. These services may play an important role in supporting you through a complaint process and advising you of your

rights in negotiations with aged care service providers. This is a free and confidential service.

National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500

The National Dementia Helpline is a 24-hour national telephone and support service run by Alzheimer's Australia. It provides support, practical information and advice, as well as information on the full range of services provided by Alzheimer's Australia. This is a free and confidential service.

This information was compiled by the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing 2008.