



# Your guide to short-term restorative care



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The document must be attributed as the Department of Health and Aged Care *Your guide to short-term restorative care*.

### **Have your say on aged care**

We invite older Australians, their families and carers, the aged care workforce and providers to help shape and reform aged care. Register your interest at **[agedcareengagement.health.gov.au](https://agedcareengagement.health.gov.au)**

### **Contact us**

Enquiries regarding the licence and any use of this document are welcome via email at: [agedcarecomms@health.gov.au](mailto:agedcarecomms@health.gov.au)

You can find this product at [myagedcare.gov.au/resources](https://myagedcare.gov.au/resources)

This booklet is designed to help you, your family or your friends make important decisions about your care. Although we have tried to make it as comprehensive as possible, you may want to seek more specific information regarding your individual situation to make an informed decision.

Information is current as at September 2024.



# **Your guide to short-term restorative care**

# Is this booklet right for you?

This booklet explains how older people can receive support through the Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) programme.

Call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** (free call) between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 2pm on Saturdays, or go to [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au) or visit any Services Australia service centre for information on the assessment process and eligibility for other types of government-funded aged care:

THIS BOOKLET

## Short-term restorative care

Short-term care services in the home or residential care settings for situations such as restorative care (return to independence).

### Entry-level support at home

Ongoing or short-term care and support services through the *Commonwealth Home Support Programme* including help with housework, personal care, meals and food preparation, transport, shopping, allied health, social support and planned respite (giving your carer a break).

### More complex support at home

Four levels of consumer directed coordinated packages of services through the *Home Care Packages Program* including personal care, support services and nursing, allied health and clinical services.

### Residential aged care

Personal and nursing care in aged care homes for older people that need help to live independently in their own homes. This also includes residential respite for short stays in an aged care home.

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## Short-term restorative care

Short-term restorative care provides a range of care and services for up to eight weeks (56 days) to help prevent or reduce difficulties older people are having with completing everyday tasks. It aims to improve wellbeing and independence to help them continue living in their own home and can be accessed twice in any twelve month period.

### Services

Short-term restorative care is a package of services that can be delivered to you in:

- your home
- the community
- an aged care home, or
- a combination of these.

You can receive services in one of these settings, or a combination (for example, you may temporarily move to an aged care home at the beginning of your care episode and then return to your own home when your care needs change). Your provider will discuss what will best suit your needs. You are not eligible for short-term restorative care if you are already permanently living in an aged care home.

If you are approved for short-term restorative care, you can choose your own provider depending on availability. Each provider is different, so contacting them will help you understand what types of care, services and activities they offer. Short-term restorative care is delivered by a care team of at least three health professionals, one of which must be a doctor (usually your GP). Your provider will coordinate the services provided by the care team.

The types of services provided to you through short-term restorative care will be guided by an initial doctor's assessment. This will ensure your medical needs are met. Services will be selected with your input and chosen to meet your needs. They may include, but are not limited to:

- aids and equipment
- mobility aids such as walking frames and wheelchairs (excludes motorised wheelchairs, electric scooters and custom made aids)
- audiology
- chiropractic services
- continence management
- cooking assistance
- home maintenance and minor home modifications
- nursing
- nutrition, meal preparation and diet advice (dietetics)
- personal care and assistance
- physiotherapy and occupational therapy
- podiatry
- psychologist or counsellor support
- social work
- speech therapy
- support services including cleaning or laundry, medication management, emotional support
- therapy groups
- transport.

If you have already been assessed for short-term restorative care eligibility, go to page 9 (Pathway to accessing short-term restorative care)

## Contact My Aged Care and have an assessment

Before receiving short-term restorative care, you need an assessment to find out if you're eligible. You can apply for an assessment in three ways:

**Online** The online application form is quick and easy – and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The website also has an easy-to-use eligibility checker which you can use before applying.

To apply online visit: **[myagedcare.gov.au/apply-online](https://myagedcare.gov.au/apply-online)**

**By telephone** You can call the My Aged Care Contact Centre on **1800 200 422** (free call) to discuss your needs and complete the application over the phone. The Contact Centre is open 8am to 8pm weekdays and 10am to 2pm Saturday.

**In person** Visit any Services Australia service centre for help to apply online or to call My Aged Care. In some locations you can book a free, in-depth appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer. Freecall **1800 227 475** weekdays from 8am to 5pm.

## What to expect when applying

When you apply, we will ask you a few questions to find out if you are eligible for an assessment. If you are, you'll provide some personal information including your Medicare number and contact details.

During the application, you can also appoint a family member or friend as your My Aged Care representative. This means they can speak to My Aged Care on your behalf. You can change your representative at any time. Learn more at: **[myagedcare.gov.au/my-aged-care-representatives](https://myagedcare.gov.au/my-aged-care-representatives)**

We will also ask you for permission to create a personalised client record. This will hold up-to-date information on your needs, the results of any assessments and any services that you receive. The client record will reduce the need for you to retell your story.

You can access your client record through your My Aged Care Online account. This account is a free and secure way to manage your services, representatives and personal details. You can access your Online Account by linking it to your myGov account. For more information visit: **[myagedcare.gov.au/access-your-online-account](https://myagedcare.gov.au/access-your-online-account)**



## Eligibility

You may be eligible for short-term restorative care services if you are an older person and you:

- are slowing down mentally, or physically, or both
- need help with everyday tasks, and
- want to stay independent, and out of long-term ongoing care.

If you are receiving veteran services or support at home through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, you may still be eligible to receive short-term restorative care.

Short-term restorative care is **not** available if you:

- have needs that go beyond what can be met by the programme
- are already receiving a home care package or transition care
- are already living in an aged care home
- have received transition care in the past six months
- have already received short-term restorative care twice in the past twelve months, and/or
- are receiving end of life care.

You may not be able to receive short-term restorative care if you have been hospitalised in the three months before your assessment.

## The assessment process

If you are eligible, you will be referred to an aged care assessment organisation for a free assessment.

A clinically qualified aged care assessor should contact you within 2 weeks of your application to further understand your individual circumstances. The assessor will make a determination based on information gathered during the phone call and any additional information gathered during the registration process. If deemed appropriate, an assessment will be scheduled.

If it is safe to do so, an assessment may be conducted in a suitable face-to-face context (preferably in your home) to determine eligibility for government-funded aged care services.

If a face-to-face assessment is not suitable, the aged care assessor may arrange a telephone, video meeting or telehealth assessment. This may happen if, for example, you are in a remote area.

You may feel nervous, remember your assessor is trained to talk to people in your situation and will understand how you are feeling. Tell them honestly about your situation and any concerns you or your family may have.

We encourage you to have a friend, family member or carer with you for your assessment.



# Pathway to accessing short-term restorative care

This booklet outlines the usual pathway for people who have been assessed for short-term restorative care and includes information on the actions at each stage, so you can start and manage your short-term restorative care services.

- 1** Receive the outcome of your assessment
- 2** Find a short-term restorative care provider and work out the costs
- 3** Enter into a flexible care agreement
- 4** Manage your services
- 5** Finish your short-term restorative care

# 1 Receive the outcome of your assessment

After your assessment, an assessor will submit their recommendations to the delegate, who will then make a formal decision about your care needs and your eligibility to receive Australian Government subsidised care.

If you are assessed as eligible for short-term restorative care, you will receive an approval letter from My Aged Care that sets out the care you are approved to receive.

If you are not approved for short-term restorative care, you will receive a letter setting out why and who to contact for more help. You may be eligible for other care and services and, if so, this information will be included with your letter.

If your care needs change at any time, you can ask for a new assessment by calling My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** (free call).

If you don't receive an approval letter explaining your assessment outcome, call My Aged Care and ask for a copy.



## Concerns about the outcome of your assessment

If you are not satisfied with the assessment outcome in your approval letter, you have the right to seek a review of the decision.

The letter you receive from My Aged Care will include further information about how you can make a complaint or appeal the decision.

If you do not agree with the assessment outcome in your letter or want to discuss any concerns about the decision, you should first contact your aged care assessor.

If you do not know their organisation's details, the My Aged Care contact centre can give you this information.

If, after you have spoken to your assessor, you still do not agree with your assessment outcome, you can write to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Aged Care outlining why you think it should be changed.

You should write to the following address:

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

You must write to the Secretary within **28 days** of receiving your letter.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this review, you can go to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. There is a charge for this. Find out more on their website at **[aat.gov.au](http://aat.gov.au)** or call **1800 228 333** (free call).

## 2 Find a short-term restorative care provider & work out the costs

If you are approved and agree to receive short-term restorative care, your assessor will either refer you to a short-term restorative care service or give you a referral code.

There is a list of short-term restorative care providers on the My Aged Care website – [www.myagedcare.gov.au/connect-short-term-restorative-care-providers](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/connect-short-term-restorative-care-providers)

### What should I do with my referral code?

You can:

- take your referral code directly to your preferred short-term restorative care provider, or
- give your referral code to the My Aged Care contact centre to be referred to a service in your local area.

When you receive approval to receive short-term restorative care, you have six months from the day after your approval is given to find a service provider and start receiving services.

There may be a delay between your referral and when you can start receiving care:

- as a short-term restorative care service may not be available in your area, or
- if a service is available, there may be a waitlist.

If you need to wait to receive short-term restorative care, you may be given the option to receive Commonwealth Home Support Programme services (while you stay on a short-term restorative care waitlist).

Please note, the Commonwealth Home Support Programme is different to a home care package. If you start receiving a home care package you will no longer be eligible for short-term restorative care.

## Things to consider

If you have been approved for short-term restorative care you should be aware of the following before meeting with a provider:

- Short-term restorative care lasts for up to eight weeks (56 days). You can take a maximum of seven days leave from your short-term restorative care service. Any longer will end your approval to receive the service. Leave days can be taken together or in parts.
- Your approval will end if you don't receive short-term restorative care within six months of being approved.
- You can access short-term restorative care twice within any 12 month period. You will need, however, to be assessed and approved before each episode.
- If you enter permanent care or residential respite care in an aged care home or start receiving a home care package, you will no longer be eligible for short-term restorative care.

If a short-term restorative care place is available in your area, the service provider will contact you and arrange a meeting to discuss your needs and make a flexible care agreement.

It is important to note that the STRC program is not a package of funding and you do not have discretion to spend funds in the same way you might under a home care package. Rather, STRC provides a range of services that form a multidisciplinary package of care designed to optimise your functioning and independence.

## Work out the costs

If you can afford to do so, you will be expected to contribute to the cost of your care and services.

The maximum amount you may be asked to pay is set out in the table below. Each person's circumstances are taken into account, and the care fees for your service can be discussed with your provider.

<b>Where you receive care</b>	<b>Maximum daily care fee as a percentage of the single pension daily rate</b>
In your home or the community setting	17.5%
In an aged care home	85%

The fees you pay must be included in the flexible care agreement between you and your service provider.

Your service provider will let you know how your government subsidy and your care fees will be spent.

You will have to pay for care provided by a doctor and for any medication you may need. You may be able to claim some of this back through Medicare.

## Fees paid by the Department of Veterans' Affairs

If you are a former Prisoner of War or a Victoria Cross recipient, please let your provider know. Your basic daily fee may be covered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and your provider will make arrangements for this on your behalf.

You or your care provider can confirm your eligibility for this by calling the Department of Veterans' Affairs on **1800 838 372** (free call).



## 3

# Enter into a flexible care agreement

When a provider offers you short-term restorative care, they will work with you to develop your flexible care agreement.

The flexible care agreement between you and your service provider will include a care plan. The care plan will include what care will be provided, who will provide the care, and where you will receive it.

Your agreement will also include information on how much your care will cost, and how much you may be asked to pay. There is a checklist of what must be included in your agreement at the end of this section.

A flexible care agreement must be offered to you before you start receiving care.

## Your agreement's care plan

A care plan is developed with you and a care team who have the experience to help you reverse or slow the difficulties you are having with everyday tasks. Your provider must ask if you agree to the care plan. If you don't agree with the care plan, let your provider know and work with them to create a plan that better suits your needs.

The care plan should include:

- your needs and goal(s)
- the services you have agreed will be provided (including whether they will be provided at home, in the community, in an aged care home or a combination of these)
- how the services will help you to meet your goal(s)
- who will provide the agreed services.

You and your service provider can review your care plan as needed during your short-term restorative care, particularly if your circumstances change.

## Help with making your agreement

You can have another person, such as a family member, friend or carer, with you when you develop your care plan and flexible care agreement.

Advocacy services provide information to consumers, their families and carers about their rights and responsibilities when accessing Australian Government funded aged care services.

An advocate can help you by:

- participating in the discussion about your flexible care agreement and care plan
- talking about any complaints you may have.

Advocacy services are free, confidential and independent. Call the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on **1800 700 600** (free call) from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays to find out more about advocacy services.

## Your rights

The Charter of Aged Care Rights sets out your rights as a person receiving short-term restorative care. All aged care providers must comply with the Charter and respect your rights.

Your provider must help you to understand your rights under the Charter and give you a copy of it before you start receiving services. Your provider must sign the Charter and give you (or your representative) the option of signing it too. This is in addition to your flexible care agreement. By signing the Charter, you acknowledge you have received it, been assisted to understand it and understand your rights. You don't have to sign the Charter; you can begin to receive care and services even if you do not sign it. More information about the Charter is available on the My Aged Care website at [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au)

## Aged Care Quality Standards

All Australian Government funded aged care providers must provide care that complies with the Aged Care Quality Standards. The Standards clearly define what good care should look like, and make it easier to check that people receive good care. The Standards reflect the level of care and services you can expect from your provider. Read more about the Aged Care Quality Standards on the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission website at [agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au)

## Signing the flexible care agreement

If you cannot sign the flexible care agreement because of any physical or medical problems, another person representing you may sign the agreement for you.

If you choose not to sign the agreement, the service provider still needs to talk with you about the care and services you need. It is important the service provider records your reasons for not signing the agreement and why you are getting the types of services you have agreed on.

The service provider should always be able to provide proof that you have agreed to your care. This may include a copy of your agreement, a file note of the discussion with you about the agreement (including the date) and that you are receiving short-term restorative care as shown in the agreement.



Contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 (free call),  
go to [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au) or visit any Services Australia service centre

## Your flexible care agreement checklist

Your flexible care agreement must be written in plain language and:

- identify your goals
- include your personalised care plan
- identify when the plan will be reviewed
- include start and end dates of your care arrangement
- outline any care services you may need at the end of your short-term restorative care service and how the provider will help you access those services
- state that any change to the flexible care agreement must be agreed to by both you and the service provider after consultation, and be consistent with the *Aged Care Act 1997*
- include a statement of fees to be paid and how they are worked out
- include information on how you will be informed of the cost of the services you will receive
- state the conditions under which you, or the provider, can end the short-term restorative care service
- state your rights and responsibilities as a recipient of short term restorative care
- guarantee all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the information you have provided
- outline how you can make a complaint if you are not happy with your care.

## 4 Manage your services

When you have a flexible care agreement and a care plan, your agreed care and services can begin.

Your short-term restorative care begins on the agreed start date in your flexible care agreement. This date cannot be before your flexible care agreement was agreed to.

Your short-term restorative care is available for a maximum of eight weeks (56 days).

### If your care needs change

If you think you need a change to your care plan while you are receiving short-term restorative care, you should:

- think about other types of services that could meet your needs so they can be added
- talk with your short-term restorative care provider about revising your care plan to meet your changed needs.

If short-term restorative care is no longer able to meet your needs, your provider will help you to be reassessed, or to move to another type of care that may be available to you.

### Taking leave

You can take up to seven days leave from your short-term restorative care episode. To take leave, you will need to ask your provider to pause your care. They must meet this request.

Your seven days of leave can be used for any reason, except if you access residential respite care. They can be taken at any time and you can choose to take them all at once or in parts. While you are on leave, you are not expected to pay any fees.

If you take more than seven days leave for any reason, including hospitalisation, your short-term restorative care episode will cease.

## Raising your concerns

If you are unhappy with the care or services you are receiving, you have the right to raise your concerns. It is often best to talk to your service provider about your concerns first to see if they can help, as this can achieve a fast and effective outcome.

## Other ways to raise concerns or make a complaint

Sometimes complaints can't be resolved by the service provider, or you might not feel comfortable raising your concerns with them.

You can make a complaint to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (a free service) by:

**Phone** – **1800 951 822** (free call)

**Online** – [agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au)

**In writing** – address your written complaint to:

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission  
GPO Box 9819  
(Your capital city and state/territory)

## Getting help from an advocate

You have the right to an advocate to help you make a complaint.

Are you concerned about, or do you need assistance in, any of the following areas?

- Aged care provider services or fees
- Assistance with visits or services
- Accessing or getting the most from your services
- Guardianship advice
- Concern that you may not be treated respectfully, fairly, or appropriately.

Advocacy services can give you information about your rights and responsibilities when accessing aged care services. Advocacy services are free, confidential and independent. Call the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on **1800 700 600** (free call) between 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays to find out more.

## 5 Finish your short-term restorative care

You can receive short-term restorative care for up to eight weeks (56 days). Before your short-term restorative care has ended, your service provider must work with you to prepare an exit plan. This plan will include detailed information about the care you received and ongoing supports available to you.

If you need additional support at the end of your short-term restorative care, your service provider must work with you to set up other care or services that you are approved to receive. If needed, your service provider will refer you back to My Aged Care for a support plan review or a new assessment. If you have to wait for an assessment, your provider must help you access other services available to you while you wait.

You can call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** (free call) to speak with someone about ongoing or other types of care that may be available to you.



Contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 (free call), go to [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) or visit any Services Australia service centre



## Further assistance

### What if you need assistance with interpreting?

If you speak a language other than English, you can phone the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) for the cost of a local call on **131 450**. TIS National covers more than 100 languages. Call and tell the operator the language you speak and ask them to call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

### What if you need assistance due to hearing or speech difficulties?

If you are Deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing, you may be eligible for sign language interpreting and captioning services through the National Sign Language Program to fully participate in your aged care journey. Contact Deaf Connect - SMS Only: 0476 857 251, FaceTime: 0407 647 591, call: 1300 773 803, email: **[interpreting@deafconnect.org.au](mailto:interpreting@deafconnect.org.au)** or online **[deafconnect.org.au/services/interpreting#book-interpreter](https://deafconnect.org.au/services/interpreting#book-interpreter)**

The National Relay Service can also assist if you find it hard to hear or speak using a phone. Choose your preferred access option at **[accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs](https://accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs)** and ask for a relay to call **1800 200 422**.



## What help is available to track and maintain healthy ageing?

You, or a loved one, can check your health and find personalised suggestions for products and services that promote healthy ageing on the LiveUp website.

Healthy ageing means staying well, being connected, and maintaining your independence at every age - by making choices that prioritise your physical, mental, and emotional health.

LiveUp can suggest low-cost assistive products and equipment to help you with everyday living, as well as personalised exercises and services, to help you or a loved one with age-related wellbeing. At the LiveUp website you can download the free LifeCurve™ App that can track your health, giving you easy to understand long term advice tailored to your needs.

To learn more about LiveUp, and the products and services that are available in your area, visit [liveup.org.au](https://liveup.org.au) or call **1800 951 971** (free call).

## What help is available for people with dementia?

The Australian Government expects all aged care providers to offer services that meet the needs of people with dementia. It funds the National Dementia Support Program, delivered by Dementia Australia to provide advisory services, education and training, support programs and other services for people with dementia, their families and carers.

For more information visit the Dementia Australia website at [dementia.org.au](https://dementia.org.au) or call the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500** (free call).

Or alternatively, the Australian Government-funded Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) and Severe Behaviour Response Teams (SBRT) provide both telehealth and in-person support in caring for people experiencing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

Aged care providers, family members, primary care and acute care services can request support from Dementia Support Australia online at [dementia.com.au](https://dementia.com.au) or via the 24/7 phonenumber on **1800 699 799** (free call).

## What help is available for people with diverse needs?

The aged care system is designed to meet the aged care needs of all Australians. It is important that any specific needs are taken into account when planning short-term restorative care.

The *Aged Care Act 1997* gives particular consideration to the needs of older people who identify with or belong to one or more of the following groups:

- First Nations people(s)
- people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people who live in a rural and remote area
- people who are financially or socially disadvantaged
- veterans, their dependents and widows or widowers
- people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex
- people who are Care Leavers (an adult who spent time in institutional or foster care as a child)
- parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal.

Providers need to be respectful of your needs when delivering care and support. They need to ensure they treat you with dignity and support choices you make when choosing your care and services.

## What help is available for elder abuse?

If you witness, suspect, or experience elder abuse, call the National Elder Abuse phone line for free and confidential information, support, and referrals.

Call **1800 353 374** (free call).

Elder abuse may involve physical harm, misuse of your money, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.

You can also visit the COMPASS website at [compass.info](http://compass.info) for information, a support directory and resources about elder abuse.

## What assistance is available for your carer?

If you have a carer, let them know they can access carer specific support through Carer Gateway. Carer Gateway provides carers with in-person, phone, and online services and support nationally to assist them in their caring role.

If your carer needs additional support, the Carer Gateway provides in-person, phone, and online services and support nationally to help your carer in their caring role.

- Your carer can call **1800 422 737** (free call), Monday to Friday, between 8am and 5pm, and select option 1 to speak to your local Carer Gateway service provider. They will talk with your carer to understand their needs and provide the support and services to assist them in their caring role.
- For access to practical information, advice, resources and online support services, visit the Carer Gateway website at **[carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au)**
- You and your carer can also visit the My Aged Care website for more resources, services and support groups at **[myagedcare.gov.au/caring-someone](http://myagedcare.gov.au/caring-someone)**

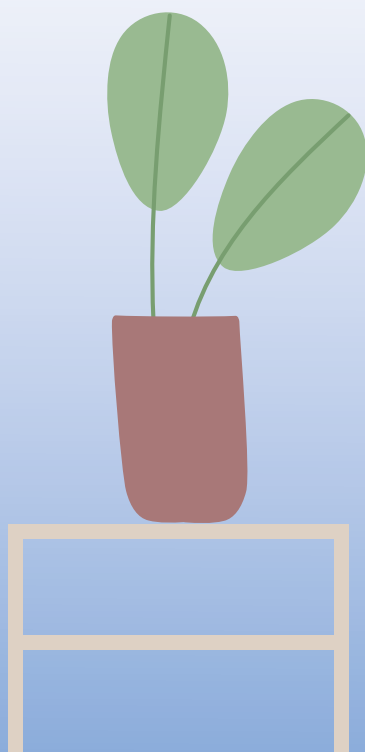
## Call costs

**13/1300 numbers** – Charges for calls to 13/1300 numbers from landline and mobile phones are different. Calls to 13/1300 numbers from a fixed landline are charged at a cost similar to a local call. Calls from mobile phones may incur a higher charge.

**1800 numbers** – Calls to 1800 numbers are free from fixed landlines and most Australian mobile phone providers now offer free calls to 1800 numbers – check with your mobile phone provider.



*Contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 (free call), go to [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au) or visit any Services Australia service centre*



For help visit [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) or,  
call **1800 200 422** (free call)  
or visit any Services Australia service centre

All information in this publication is correct as at September 2024