



2. Aged care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessments

If you need some help at home or are considering moving into an aged care home, you may first need a free assessment by an ACAT*. A member of an ACAT will talk to you about your current situation and work out if you are eligible to receive government subsidised aged care services.

*Note: In Victoria, Aged Care Assessment Teams are known as the Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS).

When do I need an ACAT assessment?

You will need an ACAT assessment and approval if you have complex aged care needs and want to:

- access aged care services through any level of Home Care Package
- receive services through the Transition Care Program
- receive respite care in an aged care home
- move into an aged care home.

You will need a Home Support Assessment if you have entry level or aged care needs and want to access services through [Commonwealth Home Support Programme](#), such as meals and transport. You won't need a Home Support Assessment or an ACAT assessment for aged care services that are not subsidised by the government. For example, services offered by volunteer groups and charitable organisations.

What happens at an ACAT assessment?

A member of your local ACAT – usually a nurse, social worker or other health care professional – will make a time to come to your home (or the hospital, if you are currently in hospital) and talk to you about how well you are managing in your day-to-day life. You are also welcome to have someone else – perhaps a family member, friend or your carer attend your assessment with you for extra support.

The ACAT member may ask your permission to talk to your doctor to discuss your medical history before they meet with you. If you agree, your consent will be recorded by the ACAT member.

The following steps briefly outline what you can expect to happen at an ACAT assessment. The ACAT member will:

- ask your permission to conduct the assessment
- ask you if you wish to apply for approval to receive certain aged care services. They will explain these service options to you, and if you do want to apply, they will ask you to sign an application form
- ask you questions about your day-to-day living activities and if you need help with all or some of them. They'll also want to talk about your general state of health and specific health conditions. This will help them work out how much and what type of help you need
- talk to you about whether they think you need more support so you can keep living in your own home, or if they think you might be better supported in an aged care home
- give you information about all of the services available in your local area.

After the assessment

After the assessment, the ACAT will write to you to let you know the outcome of your assessment. The letter will specify the services you are approved to receive, as well as the reasons why. You will also receive other assessment information.

You should keep a copy of these documents because it will make it easier for service providers to confirm that you are eligible to receive government-subsidised aged care services.

If you are not happy with your assessment outcome, the letter will also explain how to ask for a review of the ACAT decision.

Rights during an ACAT assessment

You may feel slightly anxious about the idea of being assessed by someone you don't know such as a member of an ACAT.

If you're feeling this way, just remember that the nurse, social worker or other professional visiting you is experienced in talking to people in your situation and will understand how you are feeling. Tell them honestly about your situation and what your concerns are.

You have the right to:

- be treated with dignity and respect
- information about the assessment process, to be told what is happening and why
- express your own views and ideas
- have your personal information, such as a medical history, treated in confidence
- have someone with you during the assessment if you wish. This may be a family member, close friend or carer
- have an interpreter, which the ACAT can arrange
- talk to an independent advocate who can help you with advice, or act on your behalf.

If you are not satisfied that your rights were observed during the ACAT assessment process, you can make a complaint to your relevant state or territory government who employ the ACATs.

Raising concerns about the ACAT assessment

The ACAT's role is to undertake an assessment of your needs and help you connect to a service. In some cases, you may have concerns how you were treated during the assessment process. You have the right to raise these concerns. Raising your concerns can help improve services, not just for you, but for others as well.

What should I do?

Every ACAT has procedures in place to work through your concerns. We suggest you first talk to the ACAT to see if they can help. It often works best if you, or the person representing you, talks directly to the ACAT team leader to sort out any problems. They are there to help you and will listen to your concerns. You can also consider asking someone to support you when you raise your concerns.

What if my complaint was not resolved?

If you and the ACAT cannot resolve the issue, you can raise your concern with the relevant State or Territory Government. ACATs are employed by State and Territory Governments, so each team is covered by their Government's complaints procedures.

What if I'm not satisfied with the assessment outcome?

If you think the assessment outcome should be changed you can write to the Secretary of the Australian Government Department of Social Services and tell them why you think it should be changed. You should write to the following address:

The Secretary
Department of Social Services
C/- Director
Aged Care Branch (NSW and ACT)
GPO Box 9820
SYDNEY NSW 2001.

You must write to the Secretary within 28 days of receiving your letter from the ACAT. Your letter from the ACAT will include further information on how you can complain or appeal.

If you don't receive a letter explaining your assessment outcome from the ACAT, or a copy of your Aged Care Client Record, you should contact the ACAT and request a copy.

It will not cost you any money to request a review of an ACAT approval in the first instance. If you don't agree with the review outcome and wish to progress to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, then there will be a charge.

Aged care advocacy services

Another way for raising a concern or for getting advice about your rights is through aged care advocacy services. These services are available in each state and territory. They can also represent you if you need to make a complaint about any other aged care issues.

Next steps

For further information or help locating an ACAT, call the My Aged Care Contact Centre on 1800 200 422.

My Aged Care 1800 200 422



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