



# Your guide to short-term restorative care



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

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

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 June 2021.



# **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 Programme (STRC).

Call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or go to [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) 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 unable 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.

The Australian Government has committed to making at least 2,000 places available across Australia by 2021.

### 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 (including mobility aids)
- audiology
- chiropractic services
- continence management
- cooking assistance
- home maintenance
- 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 8 (Pathway to accessing short-term restorative care)

## Contact My Aged Care

If you have not already been assessed for short-term restorative care services you can apply for an assessment online at [myagedcare.gov.au/assessment/apply-online](https://myagedcare.gov.au/assessment/apply-online). By applying online you, or a family member or friend acting on your behalf, can register and complete a referral for assessment quickly and easily, at a time that best suits you.

You can also quickly find out if you meet the requirements for an assessment by using the eligibility checker, at [myagedcare.gov.au/eligibility-checker](https://myagedcare.gov.au/eligibility-checker).

If you prefer, you can apply for an assessment by calling My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. The contact centre staff will ask you questions to help them understand your needs and care arrangements to inform the next steps.

## 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.

## Have an assessment

If your care needs indicate you might be eligible for short-term restorative care, you will be referred for an assessment by a member of your local Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) (or Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) in Victoria). This assessment is free.

You are welcome to have someone else – a friend, family member or your carer – come to your assessment with you for extra support.

Your local ACAT member (usually a nurse, social worker or other health care professional) will make a time to come to your home and talk to you about how well you are managing in your day-to-day life. They will also explain the assessment process.

If you have concerns about your short-term restorative care assessment, try talking to your ACAT assessor or the ACAT team leader in the first instance. It might be possible to get a resolution that way. If you and the ACAT cannot resolve the issue, you can raise your concerns with the relevant state or territory government.



# 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

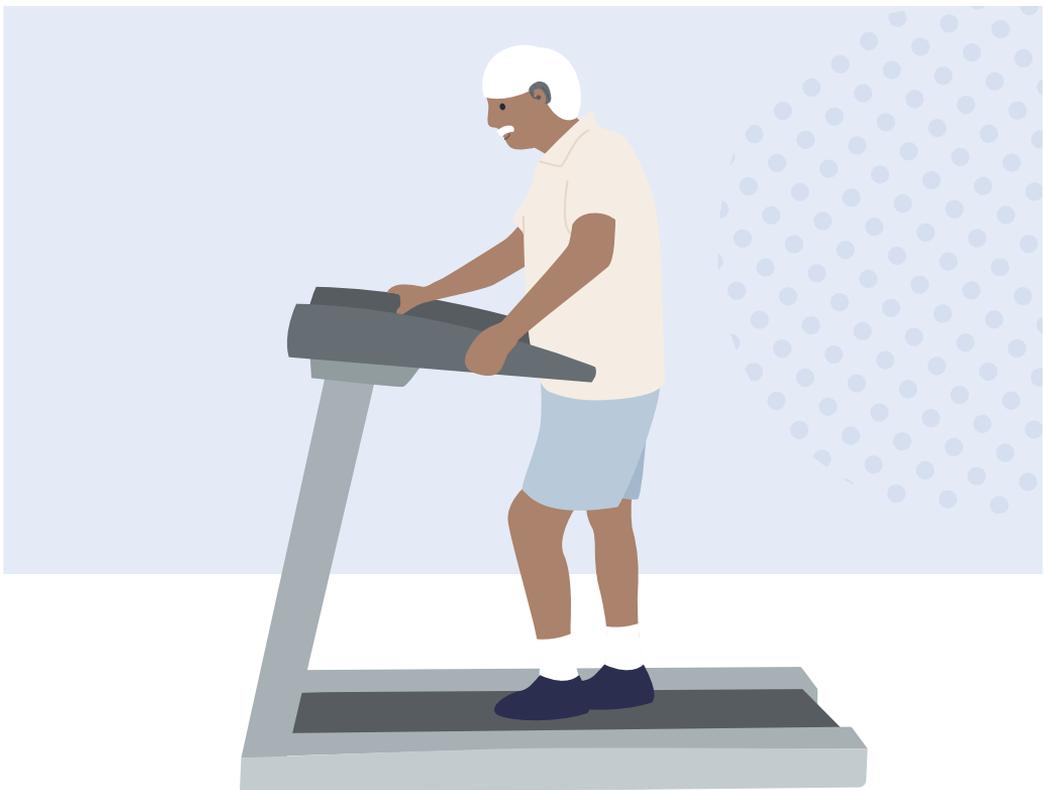
After your assessment, an assessor will make a formal decision about your care needs and your eligibility to receive Australian Government subsidised care.

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.

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, 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 outlining why you think it should be changed.

You should write to the following address:

The Secretary  
Department of Health  
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.

There is no charge to ask for a review of the assessment outcome. However, if you are not satisfied with the review outcome and would like to go to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, there is an application fee.

## 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.

### 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.

However, there may be a delay between your referral and when you can start receiving care:

- 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. However, you will need 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.

## 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 133 254 if you live in a city, or 1800 555 254 if you live in a regional area.

## 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 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 My Aged Care website at [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.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.



## 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, you will no longer be able to receive short-term restorative care.

## 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

**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.

Call the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on 1800 700 600 to find out more about advocacy services.

## 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 to speak with someone about ongoing or other types of care that may be available to you.





## Further assistance

### Translation and interpreting services

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 for My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

### Help for people with hearing or speech difficulties

You can contact My Aged Care through the National Relay Service (NRS). For more information, visit the NRS website ([communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs](http://communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs)) or call the NRS Helpdesk on 1800 555 660.

\*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.

## Help 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:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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
- 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.

## Help for people about 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 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374).

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.

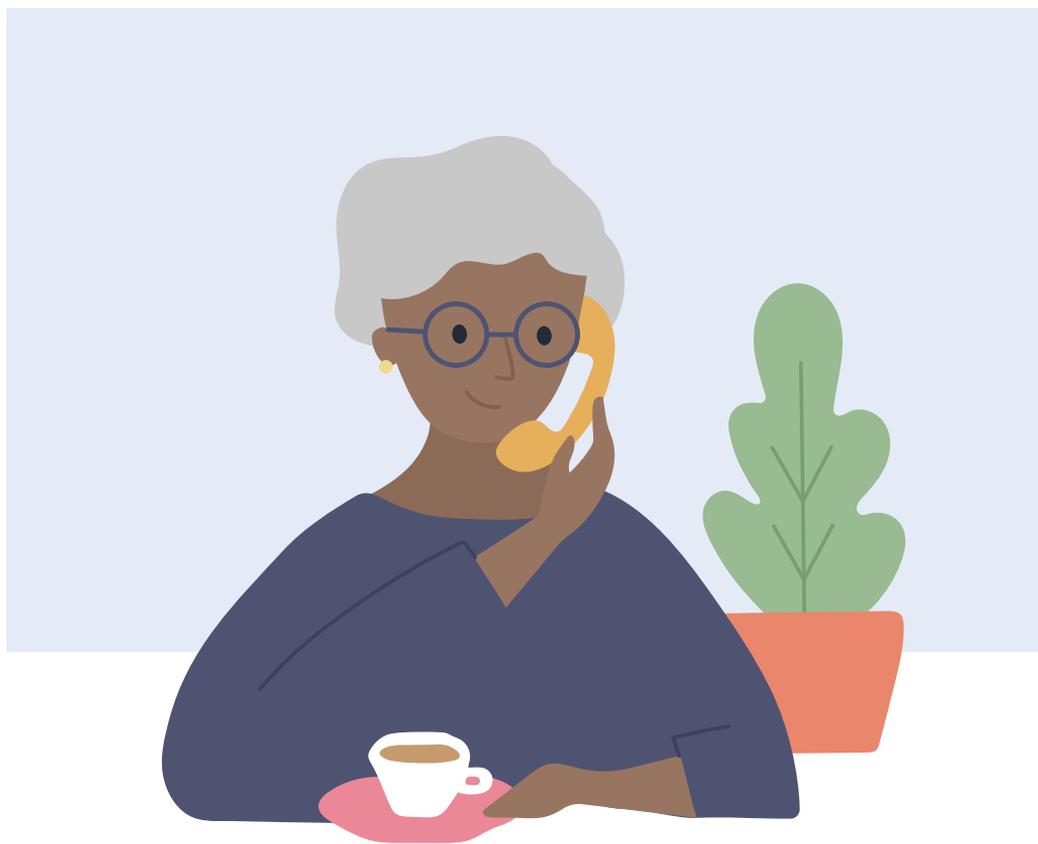
## Help for carer(s)

If your carer needs additional support, contact the Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737 or go to [carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au) to find out more about services to support carers.

## Call costs

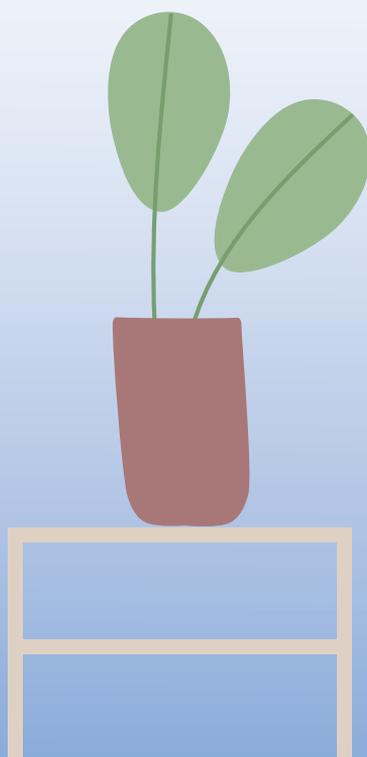
**13/1300 numbers** – Charges for calls to 13/1300 numbers from landline and mobile phones are different. Calls to 13/1300 numbers from a fixed landline are charged at a cost similar to a local call. Calls from mobile phones may incur a higher charge.

**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.









For help visit [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) or call 1800 200 422  
All information in this publication is correct as at June 2021