



# Care minutes in residential aged care – information for workers

Every residential aged care provider is required to deliver a minimum amount of clinical and personal care time to people living at the home. This is a mandatory care minutes target, and it's different for each aged care home, depending on the needs of the residents living there.

## Key information

- Care minutes is a mandatory (legislated) responsibility on providers that commenced on 1 October 2023 and is regulated by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission).
- Each aged care home has targets for total care minutes and registered nurse (RN) minutes that the provider must meet on average over the quarter, called care minutes targets. The targets ensure residents get the clinical and personal care they need.
- Providers can only meet care minutes targets through direct care time given to residents by RNs, enrolled nurses (ENs), personal care workers (PCWs) and assistants in nursing (AINs).
- Only direct 'clinical care' and 'personal care' activities provided by aged care workers can be counted for the purposes of meeting the care minute requirement.

## How care minutes can be delivered?

If you're an RN, EN, PCW or AIN working at a residential aged care home, any 'direct' clinical or personal care you provide to residents counts towards achieving the home's care minutes target. Examples of what activities can or can't be included is in the next section of this factsheet.

Your provider can count care time provided by both direct employees and agency staff towards care minutes. However, they can only include your worked hours. For example, they can't include any staff leave, training and unpaid breaks.

## What are direct clinical and personal care activities?

Examples of direct clinical care activities include:

- Treatments and procedures, such as medication, nutrition and pressure management
- Assistance in obtaining health practitioner services, such as arranging and supporting residents to attend appointments
- Assistance in obtaining access to specialised therapy services, such as engaging with allied health services

- Nursing services, such as geriatric assessments and assessing resident's clinical care needs.

Examples of personal care activities include:

- Daily living activities assistance, such as mobility assistance, grooming and bathing, eating and toileting
- Assisting a resident to take part in social activities, such as participating in group activities or taking a bus trip
- Emotional support, such as when a PCW or AIN spends social time with a resident. This includes having a conversation or assisting them personally to do personal interests (such as reading or playing a game, gardening)
- One-on-one support for residents with cognitive impairment, such as those with dementia and behavioural disorders.

Direct care activities include both in-person and other assistance. For example, writing up care plans or organising a referral for an allied health service counts as direct care activities that are not done in-person. However, it is expected that the greater amount of time will be in-person support.

While the following example activities are important, your aged care home cannot count them towards care minutes:

- Any care activities provided by a worker that is not an RN, EN or PCW/AIN.
- Maintenance, cleaning, cooking and serving food (even if undertaken by a PCW/AIN).
- Running lifestyle and recreation activities (even if undertaken by a PCW/AIN).
- Funding management related work, for example, an RN or EN who assess residents to determine whether to request an AN-ACC reassessment.

Section 3 and Appendix 2 of the [Care minutes responsibility guide](#) has more information and examples of the types of care activities that can be counted towards care minutes.

## **How do I know if my workplace is meeting its care minute targets?**

You can find the latest care minutes targets for all aged care homes [here](#). Providers report care time delivered at the aged care home in the [Quarterly Financial Report](#) to the department. This is then published on the My Aged Care '[Find a Provider](#)' website under Staffing Star Ratings and on our [website](#).

## **What happens if a home does not meet its mandatory care minute targets?**

We understand that sometimes a provider may not be able to hire the right number of staff to meet their care minutes targets despite their best effort (eg, there may be workforce shortages in the area).

The Commission is responsible for regulating and monitoring aged care providers' compliance with workforce related responsibilities, including care minutes. Depending on the circumstances of the provider, the Commission may take compliance or enforcement action to get them to

comply with their care minutes targets and manage risks to residents due to one or more of the following:

- they are not complying because there are flaws in their workforce strategy or other business decisions
- they are not delivering quality and safe care to residents
- they are not meeting resident care needs
- they have not taken steps to reduce the risks to residents and achieve compliance.

It will take stronger action, such as imposing a sanction, if a provider's:

- residents are facing severe and immediate risk, and/or
- non-compliance is significant and repeated, and
- responses are deemed to be insufficient.

Detailed information about the regulation of care minutes is available in the Commission's [Regulatory Bulletin Workforce-related responsibilities – including 24/7 registered nurse and care minutes](#).

## **If I have concerns about the accuracy of a provider's care minutes reporting**

The department checks the care minutes providers report through [Care time reporting assessments](#) and also provides them to the Commission to support their regulatory activities.

If you're concerned about the accuracy of care minutes reported for your aged care home, you can raise it with your employer or union delegate. You can tell also us by emailing [anaccreportingassessments@health.gov.au](mailto:anaccreportingassessments@health.gov.au). We treat this information as confidential.

## **If I have concerns around the quality of care being delivered in an aged care home**

The Commission helps protect quality of life for people living in aged care homes. If you're concerned about the quality of care being delivered in an aged care home, including as a result of understaffing or other incidents, you can go to [Making a complaint](#) on the Commission website or call 1800 951 822. Complaints may be open, confidential or anonymous.

The Commission has a fact sheet for [Aged care workers](#) that explains how the Commission works with and supports aged care workers.

General information on [Whistle-blower rights and protections](#) is available on the Australian Securities and Investments Commission website.

Also, the new Aged Care Act and strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards will introduce new opportunities for you to engage with your employer about the way care minutes responsibilities are met. This includes a requirement for all providers to involve workers in strategic and business planning and consider and respond to feedback under the new [strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards](#).