

Frequently Asked Questions about Star Ratings

For older people and their families, carers and decision makers

Moving into an aged care home is a big decision. It can be challenging for the older person and their family, friends and carers.

If you or your loved one is considering residential aged care and needs your help to look at options, you can use Star Ratings to research and compare the quality of care, safety and services of aged care homes.

This resource is designed to help explain what Star Ratings is, how to access it and how to use it to consider if an aged care home is suitable for you or your loved one.

What is Star Ratings?

Star Ratings is an online tool that helps you research and compare aged care homes. Aged care homes get an overall rating between one and five stars. They also get ratings for 4 sub-categories — Residents' Experience, Compliance, Staffing and Quality Measures. Star Ratings can help you understand the quality of care in aged care homes.

To access Star Ratings, visit health.gov.au/StarRatings/translated and click through to the 'Find a provider' tool to search for homes by location.

If you need language support to navigate Star Ratings, you can use the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) by calling 131 450 and asking for My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. Alternatively, you can reach out to your family or a friend to help you with your research.

What is the 'Find a provider' tool?

Star Ratings is accessed via the 'Find a provider' tool on the My Aged Care website. It lets you look up aged care homes by name or by location and filter by the things that are important to you. If you want to see the Star Rating of a home that you or your loved one is considering living in, or is already living in, you can search for that home by name.

Once your search results appear, you will see an Overall Star Rating for each home. You can use the 'Compare' button to add homes to the 'Compare' page and see a more detailed breakdown of each home's Overall Star Rating and its ratings in the four sub-categories.

What are the four sub-categories?

1. Residents' Experience: how people feel about the care they receive. Around 20% of all aged care home residents are surveyed every year about their overall experience, including how the staff treat them, the food standards and feelings of safety, independence and belonging.
2. Compliance: based on decisions made by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission ('the Commission') on whether the aged care home is meeting its obligations to provide safe and quality services and support.
3. Staffing: based on the amount of care time residents receive from nurses, care workers, assistants and other staff.
4. Quality measures: this measures five crucial areas that are important indicators of care quality: falls and major injury, unplanned weight loss, pressure injuries, how medicines are used and the use of restrictive practices such as physical restraint.

What does the Overall Star Rating mean?

- 1 star: significant improvement needed
- 2 stars: improvement needed
- 3 stars: an acceptable quality of care
- 4 stars: a good quality of care
- 5 stars: an excellent quality of care.

How is the Overall Star Rating calculated?

The four sub-categories contribute to the Overall Star Rating score. Each sub-category carries a different weight in the overall score:

- Residents' Experience (33%)
- Compliance (30%)
- Staffing (22%)
- Quality Measures (15%).

How regularly are Star Ratings updated?

It takes about 3-5 months for aged care providers' self-reported data and the Residents' Experience Survey results to show in Star Ratings. Data for each sub-category is updated routinely:

- Residents' Experience: this data is collected once a year and the ratings are updated every quarter based on completed surveys.
- Compliance: ratings are updated every day if an aged care home has a formal regulatory notice. The Compliance rating is also updated weekly based on accreditation decisions made by the Commission.
- Staffing and Quality Measures: data for these ratings is collected every quarter and ratings are updated accordingly.

Why do some aged care homes have no Star Rating on the My Aged Care website?

There are several reasons why an aged care home may not yet have an Overall Star Rating, such as if the home:

- is new or has new owners
- has recently reopened after major repairs or renovations
- is having technical issues
- is temporarily exempt from ratings due to serious health or weather issues
- chose not to participate in the annual Residents' Experience Survey
- reported their data late or chose not to provide the data needed.

The Department of Health and Aged Care does not calculate Overall Star Ratings for the first 12 months after a new home has opened or an existing home has a new owner. This allows time for the home to collect and report information, for the Department to survey residents about their experience and for the Commission to assess the home.

You should contact the aged care home to find out more about why it is missing a rating.

How do I know if my aged care home is not complying with Aged Care Quality Standards?

Most aged care homes are accredited by the Commission. Granting accreditation involves checking the quality of care and services against Aged Care Quality Standards.

When the Commission finds a home is not meeting requirements under the Aged Care Act 1997, it might give the home a sanction or a formal notice to improve.

The Compliance rating shows you if a home has any specific formal regulatory notices. If a home shows it can fix its compliance issues, the Commission may not issue a formal notice. The Commission still checks on a home's progress even if it is not given a formal notice.

- **5 stars** means the home has had no formal regulatory notices for 3 or more years and has been accredited for 3 or more years.
- **4 stars** means the home has had no formal regulatory notices for 1 to 3 years.
- **3 stars** means the home has had no formal regulatory notices for at least a year.
- **2 stars** means the home has a formal regulatory notice and the Commission requires them to fix their issues.
- **1 star** means the home has a formal regulatory notice and the Commission has put conditions on the home until the issues are fixed.

Any home with a Compliance rating of 4 or 5 stars means it does not have any current formal regulatory notice. This may not mean the home is in complete compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards, but it does mean that any compliance issues are being fixed by the home and it is being monitored by the Commission.

To see how your home is meeting the Aged Care Quality Standards, you can click on its Compliance rating to see a full list of the standards and whether the home has 'Met' or 'Not Met' them.

My aged care home has a low rating. What should I do?

You can speak to your home to understand why it has a low rating and what it is doing to improve. These conversations can be difficult and if you would like support, please contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) at **1800 700 600** to connect with its free advocacy service. OPAN is available Monday to Friday (8am-8pm) and Saturday (10am-4pm).

If you need a translator or interpreter, OPAN can arrange one for you or you can use Translating and Interpreting Support (TIS) by calling **131 450** and asking for OPAN at **1800 700 600**.

How do I provide feedback on my/my loved one's home?

There are multiple ways you can provide feedback to your home. You can talk to any member of your care team. You can also participate in the Quality of Care Experience – Aged Care Consumers tool as part of the National Aged Care Mandatory Quality Indicator Program (QI Program).

Talking to your aged care home is often the fastest way to address any questions or concerns. If you are not able to resolve an issue with your home, the Commission can support you. To make a complaint, you can call **1800 951 822**, lodge it online at agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint or write to Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, GPO Box 9819 in your capital city.

For translating and interpreting services, you can call **131 450** and ask for My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**.

To find out more about how Star Ratings work, visit health.gov.au/StarRatings/translated.