



National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines

Factsheet for residential aged care providers and staff

The National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines help to improve quality of life for older people living in residential aged care and to support safe workplaces for staff.

What does this mean for providers of residential aged care?

The Principles and Guidelines are an evidence-based resource that help providers make practical changes to aged care homes to create welcoming and safe living environments. They include design features that range from simple, low-cost changes that can be introduced to existing aged care homes, to more substantial features that better suit new buildings.

What do providers need to do?

Providers are encouraged to use the Principles and Guidelines to consider where they can make practical changes to improve design for the benefit of the people living and working in their aged care homes.

To help implement the Principles and Guidelines, providers should be supported by a well-defined 'model of care' that considers governance, operations, staff training and daily activities. Care should be person centred, culturally safe and appropriate, and trauma aware.

The Principles and Guidelines were introduced as voluntary and uptake by the aged care sector will help inform long-term arrangements and future regulatory considerations.

How have the Principles and Guidelines been structured?

The Principles and Guidelines are structured around four principles:

- 1. Enable the Person – Help people live in a place that looks after their health, wellbeing and sense of identity.**
 - Thoughtful design can reduce the impact of changing mobility, cognition, continence and frailty that residents may experience.

2. **Cultivate a Home – Create a familiar space where people have privacy, control and feel they belong.**

- Evidence shows that small household models can reduce agitation, pacing and exit-seeking behaviours and improve social interaction, eating and infection control.

3. **Access the Outdoors – Support people seeing and spending time outdoors in nature.**

- Accessing the outdoors is linked with a range of health, psychological and social benefits, which have a positive impact that is hard to achieve in other ways.

4. **Connect with Community – Encourage people to connect with family, friends and community and to stay involved in meaningful activities.**

- Many people in aged care homes are at risk of social isolation and exclusion. Creating opportunities for residents to connect with each other and with family, friends and the broader community is important for wellbeing.

Each principle addresses a design challenge in an aged care home. They are supported by a series of guidelines that promote social and care outcomes and contain checklists of practical changes that can be made.

What support is there?

We are developing resources to support aged care providers and staff adopt the Principles and Guidelines. This includes a tool to help providers review their aged care homes to determine how well they meet the Principles and Guidelines and help plan future projects.

A webinar on improving aged care homes through design is also available. The webinar supported the aged care sector in understanding how to adopt the Principles and Guidelines and how to create enabling and dementia-friendly environments to benefit both residents and staff. To view the webinar, visit health.gov.au and search 'improving aged care homes'.

The Aged Care Capital Assistance Program provides grants to build, extend or upgrade aged care services. Organisations can apply for these grants to support aged care infrastructure projects. Eligible activities are determined on a round-by-round basis and are outlined in grant opportunity guidelines. For more information visit health.gov.au and search 'capital assistance'.

You can find more information about accommodation reform at health.gov.au using the search term 'improving accommodation'.

Scan the QR code to view the full set of the Principles and Guidelines.



Let's change aged care together

We invite Australians to continue to have their say about the aged care reforms.



Visit agedcareengagement.health.gov.au



Phone **1800 318 209** (Aged care reform free-call phone line)

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