



# New ways of working in aged care

## Toolkit to support communications with aged care workers

This toolkit provides information and materials to help providers, professional associations and unions inform aged care workers about the new ways of working under the new Aged Care Act (new Act) starting from 1 November 2025.

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## About this toolkit

This toolkit provides information to support you to discuss the changes that will affect aged care workers when the new Act starts from 1 November 2025.

We have also created materials that may help you to communicate the changes through your channels, such as newsletters, intranet sites, meetings and discussions.

### What's in this toolkit

- key messages
- discussion guide
- editorial content
- videos
- resources, including online training.

### Audiences

- Aged care workers.

### Call to action

We recommend including the following call to action in communication materials:

- Watch the [video](#) on working in aged care, under the new Act.
- Download the [Working in aged care booklet](#).
- Subscribe to the [Working in Aged Care Update](#), the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's newsletter for aged care workers, to keep up to date with changes to aged care.
- Learn about the [new ways of working in aged care](#) to understand how the new Act will impact you.
- Complete [eLearning](#) on the new Act and Support at Home.
- Follow the department on: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [X](#).
- Ask your employer for more information about these changes.

# Key messages

## New Aged Care Act

- The new Aged Care Act and Support at Home program start from 1 November 2025.
- The new Act will put older people at the centre of aged care. Under the new laws, all workers must treat older people with respect and deliver the quality of care they deserve.
- While older people are at the heart of these reforms, we also want to make aged care a great place to work.
- The changes we're making to aged care will support a better-regulated system so you can focus on what's important – providing great care to older people.

## Key changes for aged care workers

- There are 5 key changes that affect workers under the new Aged Care Act:
  - the Statement of Rights and Statement of Principles
  - worker screening
  - strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards
  - complaints
  - whistleblower protections.
- The Statement of Rights and Statement of Principles recognise the valuable role you play in aged care.
  - Under the Statement of Rights, you must have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to provide services to older people in a way that respects their decisions, wishes, preferences and needs. This is their right.
  - Under the Statement of Principles, the aged care system will support you to be innovative, continuously improve, deliver high-quality care and participate in governance and accountability requirements.
- The new Aged Care Act will introduce more robust worker screening checks to make sure you are suitable to work in aged care.
  - Changes to worker screening will begin from 1 November 2025 and will mostly impact people working for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) providers.
  - Broader changes to align aged care worker screening with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will not begin before mid-2026.
- Under the new Act, your expertise and perspective on quality aged care delivery will be recognised. We have strengthened the Aged Care Quality Standards so your employer must listen to your opinions when you raise them.
- You will have the ability to provide feedback, file complaints or make whistleblower disclosures – all without fear of retribution or professional disadvantage. This will apply if you:
  - think someone has broken the law
  - are worried about the quality of care your service delivers.
- Read about the [new ways of working in aged care](#).

## **Statement of Rights**

- The new Aged Care Act includes a Statement of Rights. It explains what rights older people have when accessing aged care services funded by the Australian Government.
- It gives older people the right to:
  - make their own decisions about their own life
  - have their decisions not just accepted, but respected
  - get information and support to help them make decisions
  - communicate their wishes, needs and preferences
  - feel safe and respected
  - have their culture and identity respected
  - stay connected with their community.
- You must deliver care in a way that supports these rights and respects older people's decisions, wishes, preferences and needs.
- You also must have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to provide aged care services to older people – this is their right.

## **Statement of Principles**

- The new Aged Care Act includes a Statement of Principles to guide how the aged care sector should work.
- It guides how providers, workers and Australian Government agencies, including the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, must behave and make decisions.
- Under the Principles, you must act in a way that puts older people at the centre of aged care, while recognising the important role of carers and advocates.
- Your employer must:
  - make you feel valued
  - provide you with appropriate training
  - support your diversity
  - encourage you to provide feedback
  - support you to innovate and continuously improve.

## **Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards**

- The Aged Care Quality Standards have been strengthened to define what quality care looks like, supporting older people to live their best life.
- The Quality Standards will:
  - include new focus areas – such as food and nutrition, dementia and clinical care, diversity and governance
  - be user friendly and measurable
  - reference the Statement of Rights.
- Increased protections will help older people feel confident in the care they receive. This includes:

- enhanced worker screening
- revised Financial and Prudential Standards – these make sure providers are open about their finances
- expanded obligations for providers.
- The Quality Standards also mean your employer is expected to create a culture of quality, safety and inclusion. Your employer must encourage and support you to make complaints and give feedback about how to improve the delivery of aged care services.
- Learn more about the [Quality Standards](#).

### **Worker screening changes from 1 November 2025**

- Working screening checks examine a person's criminal and work misconduct history to make sure they are suitable to work in aged care.
- No matter what provider type you work for, you will continue to need a police certificate (no older than 3 years) or an NDIS Worker Check.
- Your employer will assess your police certificate for the following offences:
  - conviction for murder
  - conviction for sexual assault
  - conviction and imprisonment sentence for any other form of assault.
- From 1 November 2025, you will not be able to work for a CHSP provider or a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFAC) provider if your police certificate includes the following offences:
  - a conviction for an offence involving the death of a person
  - in the past 5 years, a conviction and imprisonment sentence for 1 year or longer for:
    - a sex related offence or a crime, including sexual assault (whether against an adult or child)
    - child abuse material offences
    - an indecent act involving a child
    - a crime or offence involving dishonesty.
- Learn more about [screening requirements](#).

### **The future of worker screening**

- The department is working closely with states and territories to expand the NDIS Worker Check to the aged care sector. This will not come into effect before mid-2026.
- The check will provide a more rigorous criminal screening check and additional information to assess if someone poses a risk of harm in working, or seeking to work, in aged care.
- It will:
  - provide aged care workers with a nationally consistent process for the assessments of applications
  - prevent unsuitable workers from providing care to older people
  - maximise safety for older people
  - make it easier for workers to move between sectors.

- Existing NDIS or police checks that have not yet expired will still be valid after the new process commences. However, once a person's existing checks expire, workers will need to apply for the new check.
- The department will release a range of tools to support both current and prospective aged care workers to:
  - understand the new aged care worker screening process
  - navigate the system
  - submit an application.

### **Complaints and feedback**

- You should feel confident that you can raise concerns and provide feedback to your employer, without fear of punishment or professional disadvantage.
- Feedback is an important way for providers to understand what is working well and identify areas that can be improved.
- You must also support the people in your care to:
  - understand how you manage and resolve complaints
  - feel welcome to share feedback, raise concerns or make a complaint.

### **Whistleblower protections**

- Whistleblowers play an important role in identifying and calling out misconduct.
- If you think someone has not followed aged care laws and you make a whistleblower disclosure, you will be protected under the new Aged Care Act.
- Your employer must have an internal whistleblower system and policy in place to ensure disclosures are effectively handled.

### **Code of Conduct for Aged Care**

- The Code of Conduct for Aged Care describes how you, and your employer, must behave and treat people receiving aged care.
- It helps ensure that older people can have confidence and trust in the quality and safety of the care they receive.
- Learn about the [Code of Conduct for Aged Care](#).

### **Training opportunities**

- [Learning and development](#) is available to help you deliver safe, consistent, high-quality aged care services that meet the needs and rights of older people.
- [eLearning for the new Aged Care Act](#) – 4 training modules being released in stages.
- [Support at Home training packages](#) – 7 self-paced online learning modules for people who deliver in-home aged care.

## Discussion guide

This discussion guide can be used to guide conversations with your workforce about the changes under the new Aged Care Act.

### New Aged Care Act

#### Why do we need a new Act?

- The new Aged Care Act responds directly to recommendations 1 to 3 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and addresses or partially addresses 58 other recommendations.
- The Royal Commission found the existing *Aged Care Act 1997* was no longer fit for purpose and did not adequately consider the rights and needs of older people in the delivery of aged care services.
- The new *Aged Care Act 2024* will ensure older people are at the centre of aged care. It will make the system safer, fairer and more respectful.
- The aged care workforce plays a vital role in achieving this transformational change for aged care in Australia.

#### What can I do to better understand the aged care reforms?

- The department has developed a range of resources in a variety of formats to show how the different parts of the new Act fit together and how it impacts different people, including aged care workers.
- These resources are accessible, accurate and aligned to the needs of our diverse community and made available across a variety of forums and platforms, so no one gets left behind.
- A range of communication, engagement, guidance and training activities, including self-paced eLearning modules, are available on the [department's website](#).
- You can access the training on [Alis](#), the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's online education platform. Access is free for Australian Government-funded providers and workers.
- You can also download a [checklist of training opportunities](#) to keep track of your learning.

#### How will the new Aged Care Act support me?

- The new Aged Care Act acknowledges the valuable role you play in making sure the rights and needs of older people come first.
- The new Act will deliver a better-regulated work environment so you can focus on delivering safe, high-quality care.
- Under the Statement of Principles, your employer must make you feel valued, give you training opportunities, support your diversity, encourage your feedback and support you to innovate and continuously improve.
- There will be a greater ability for you to provide feedback or make complaints without fear of retribution or discrimination.

#### Were aged care workers consulted on the reforms?

- Seeking the views of everyone involved in aged care, including the lived experience of aged care workers, has been critical in getting the right balance in these new laws.
- The department consulted on the development of the new Aged Care Act, including:
  - Public consultation on the [foundations of the new Aged Care Act](#) and the [exposure draft of the Bill](#). These consultations saw almost 14,500 points of engagement across

workshops, webinars, and roundtable meetings, and around 450 public submissions and 1,100 survey responses.

- Feedback received during consultation on the design of the new Support at Home program and the work of the Aged Care Taskforce into aged care funding arrangements.
- The Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee's inquiry into the Bill involved 9 public hearings and 189 submissions. The Committee heard from older people, their families and carers, providers, peak bodies, unions, academics and advocates to discuss provider readiness for the start of the new Act, outstanding barriers to reform implementation and the new funding arrangements to support longer-term sustainability of the sector. The Committee's [final report](#) was released in November 2024, with the committee recommending the Bill be passed.
- [Consultation on the Aged Care Rules](#) has helped develop a better understanding of what these changes will mean for the sector, including actions and timing. More than 450 public submissions were received on the draft Rules. Feedback has been considered closely and used to refine the final Rules. The development of the Rules also incorporated feedback from past consultations.

### **What role do workers play in providing culturally safe care?**

- The new Aged Care Act recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to culturally safe care and includes a definition of cultural safety. This means you must provide care that is trauma aware, healing informed and respectful of culture, spirituality and identity.
- The new Act also supports the right to stay connected to community, Country and Island Home. This is essential to the wellbeing of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## **Worker screening**

### **Can I work in aged care if I have a criminal history?**

- The types of offences that stop you from working in aged care depends on the type of provider type you work – or want to work – for.
- Your employer will assess your police certificate for the offences relevant to your provider type.
- You must immediately notify your employer if your circumstances change after your certificate is initially assessed.

### **What do I need to do to prepare for the new worker screening check?**

- The new check will not come into effect before mid-2026.
- Final arrangements are still subject to agreement between the Australian Government and the states and territories.
- You do not need to do anything to prepare for the new worker screening process yet.
- More information will be released soon so everyone has plenty of time to prepare for this change.

# Aged Care Quality Standards

## Why did the Australian Government strengthen the Aged Care Quality Standards?

- The Aged Care Quality Standards define what quality care looks like.
- The 2021 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended an urgent review of the Quality Standards. The Royal Commission called for the following areas of the Quality Standards to be improved:
  - dementia
  - diversity
  - governance
  - good and nutrition
  - clinical care.

## How are the Aged Care Quality Standards strengthened?

- The standards are strengthened by:
  - placing older people at the centre of aged care
  - supporting people living with dementia
  - being more inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds
  - stronger requirements for clinical care, food and nutrition
  - reference the Statement of Rights
  - providing more protections for older people.
- The strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards are more measurable, detailed and comprehensive than the previous standards.

## What do the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards mean for me?

- You play a key role in delivering quality aged care services.
- The strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards means your employer is expected to create a culture of quality, safety and inclusion.
- Your employer must encourage and support you to make complaints and give feedback about how to improve the delivery of aged care services.

# Complaints and feedback

## Does my employer need to listen to my feedback?

- Your employer must encourage and support you to make complaints and give feedback about how to improve the delivery of aged care services.
- A strong feedback culture will allow you, your colleagues and your employer to:
  - build capability
  - celebrate your achievements
  - respond to and learn from your mistakes
  - develop an environment of continuous improvement.

## **I don't want to raise my complaint with my employer. Who else can I make a complaint to?**

- If you do not feel comfortable raising a complaint with your employer or are not satisfied with the outcome, complaints can be made to:
  - the [Complaints Commissioner](#) (who is independent from the regulatory functions of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission)
    - email [info@agedcarequality.gov.au](mailto:info@agedcarequality.gov.au)
    - call 1800 951 822 for general complaints
    - call 1800 844 044 for food, nutrition and dining related complaints
  - a staff member of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
  - the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
  - a police officer
  - an independent aged care advocate.

## **Whistleblower protections**

### **How do I make a whistleblower disclosure?**

- To make a report, you can contact:
  - the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
  - the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, or an official of the department
  - a registered provider
  - a responsible person of a registered provider
  - another aged care worker of a registered provider
  - a police officer
  - an independent aged care advocate.

### **How will I be protected?**

- The new and expanded whistleblower framework protects:
  - you from punishment, unfair treatment, threats and victimisation
  - your identity – except in limited circumstances or with your consent.

## Editorial content

We have produced 2 short editorials for use in internal communications, such as intranet news or newsletters.

### Your new ways of working in aged care

The new Aged Care Act and Support at Home program starts from 1 November 2025.

The new Act will:

- put older people at the centre of aged care
- create a safer and fairer system for everyone
- ensure older people have the dignity, choice and quality of life they deserve.

While older people are at the heart of these reforms, changes to the system will also make aged care a great place to work.

Changes to aged care will support a better-regulated system so you can focus on what's important – providing great care to older people.

Workers are at the front line of these once-in-a-generation reforms. Whether you are a personal care worker, chef, nurse, lifestyle coordinator or working behind the scenes, you play a vital part in delivering safe, high-quality and rights-based aged care.

#### Build your knowledge

It's important that your employer supports you to build your knowledge, capability and skills so you can adapt to your new ways of working.

A great way to do this is to take the time to complete the self-paced eLearning modules to understand what's changing and your obligations under the Act.

To learn more:

- access [resources and training](#) to help you understand what's changing
- watch the [video](#) on working in aged care.

## Building a strong feedback culture

Feedback is an important way for your employer to understand what is working well and identify areas that can be improved.

A strong feedback culture will allow you, your colleagues and your employer to build capability, celebrate your achievements, respond to and learn from your mistakes and develop an environment of continuous improvement.

Under the new Aged Care Act, you have the power to voice your concerns, provide feedback or make complaints without fear of being punished or treated unfairly.

### Voice your concerns

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, including an independent Complaints Commissioner, will support all aged care providers to have a system and process in place to manage complaints both quickly and effectively.

If you do not feel comfortable raising a complaint to your employer or are not satisfied with the outcome, you can make a complaint to:

- the Complaints Commissioner
- a staff member of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- a police officer
- an advocate.

You can make a complaint to the Complaints Commissioner online, by phone or by letter. Visit the [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission website](#) for more information.

Understand how you are [protected to voice concerns, provide feedback or make a complaint](#).

### Supporting older people

You must also support the people in your care to:

- understand how your organisation manages and resolves complaints
- feel welcome to share feedback, raise concerns or make a complaint.

## Videos and animations

The below videos explain the new ways of working in aged care and can be used in your communications to your workforce.

- [Working in aged care](#)
- [Complaints in aged care](#)
- [Whistleblower protections in aged care](#)
- [Statement of Rights and Statement of Principles](#)
- [Aged care worker screening](#)
- [Aged Care Quality Standards](#)

The below video provides an overview of the new Support at Home program and can be used in your communications to your workforce.

- [Support at Home overview](#)

The following videos and animations, designed to directly explain the changes under the new Act to older people, can also be shared with your workforce to support broader awareness of the reforms.

- [A trusted aged care workforce](#) (available in 7 languages and [Auslan](#))
- [I am the centre of my aged care](#) (available in 7 languages and [Auslan](#))
- [Your aged care rights](#) (available in 7 languages and [Auslan](#))
- [New Aged Care Act](#) (available in 7 languages and [Auslan](#))

## Resources

Below are resources you can download and share with your workers.

### New Aged Care Act

[About the Aged Care Act 2024 – plain language fact sheet](#) (available in 22 languages)

[About the Aged Care Act 2024 fact sheet – Easy Read fact sheet](#)

[Working in aged care booklet](#)

[New Aged Care Act – What is new or changing?](#)

[New Aged Care Act – Sector Change Plan](#)

[Guide to Aged Care Law](#)

### Training

[New Aged Care Act eLearning modules](#)

[Support at Home training packages](#)

[Training checklist](#)

### Statement of Rights

[A new Aged Care Act for the rights of older people – plain language fact sheet](#) (available in 25 languages)

[A new Aged Care Act for the rights of older people – Easy Read fact sheet](#)

[Statement of Rights double-sided A4 explainer](#)

[Statement of Rights double-sided A3 poster](#)

### Strengthened Quality Standards

[Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards manual](#)

### Culturally safe care

[Culturally safe care for older Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people fact sheet](#)

[Transforming Aged Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – Community Booklet](#)

### Dementia training

[Dementia Training Program](#) for free accredited online and in-person dementia training courses and free resources and tools for health and aged care workers.

[Dementia Respite Education and Mentoring \(DREAM\)](#) offers free flexible learning on dementia respite care through educational modules, specialised dementia support coaching, and a DREAM support network for workers.