

New Aged Care Act and Strengthened Standards

With the introduction of the new Aged Care Act and the Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards on 1 July 2025, the rights of older people will be enshrined in legislation. We believe the new Act is a great outcome for older people, the broader community and the future of aged care. The changes reflect our commitment to delivering high-quality person-centred care and supporting older people to live their best lives.

We are committed to supporting residents, clients and their families as they navigate this period of transition – which includes the introduction of the new Support at Home program.

Chris Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

The new Aged Care Act and the Strengthened Standards will come into effect on 1 July 2025. These industry-wide changes have been developed by the government to put the rights and needs of older people at the centre of the aged care system, better supporting individuals, their families and carers.

As an approved aged care provider, Helping Hand has been busy preparing for these changes for some time. We have always followed the principles of person-centred care. Getting to know you as an individual, understanding your story, knowing what matters to you and your family. Our values of respect, community, excellence and compassion underpin everything we do.

Statement of Rights

One of the key features of the new *Aged Care Act* is the introduction of a Statement of Rights. This is about your rights as a person within the aged care sector and what you should expect from Helping Hand and the aged care system.

In essence, the Statement of Rights ensures you are at the centre of your aged care needs, you are treated with dignity and respect and have the right to:

- ✓ make your own decisions about your own life
- ✓ have your decisions not just accepted, but respected
- ✓ get information and support to help you make decisions
- ✓ feel safe and respected
- ✓ communicate your wishes, needs and preferences
- ✓ have your culture and identity respected
- ✓ stay connected with your community.



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Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

The Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards define what high-quality care should look like, ensuring you feel safe, well cared for, and respected in any setting. These seven standards are measurable, detailed, and reflect the expected quality of aged care.

Here is an overview of what to expect under these standards. While there may be some changes before they come into effect on 1 July 2025, the core intent and purpose of the Strengthened Quality Standards will not change. We'll keep you updated as these regulatory changes roll out.

If you have any questions, please email newagedcareandqualityqueries@helpinghand.org.au



Standard 1 The person

This is the foundation for all aged care standards. It recognises that every older person is unique and deserves care that respects their individual needs, preferences, and cultural background. This standard ensures that you receive person-centred care and are treated with dignity and respect.



Standard 2 The organisation

Sets out the expectations providers are required to meet, to deliver quality care. This includes the need to have clear plans, listen to feedback from residents, families and staff, and use this information to continuously improve services.



Standard 3 Care and service

Describes the way providers must deliver funded aged care services for all the types of services they deliver. It ensures that services are tailored to what matters to you, supporting your independence and preferences. This standard makes sure your care is flexible and adapts to help you live your best life.



Standard 4 The environment

Ensures that the environment in which you are provided aged care services is safe, clean, and comfortable. This standard protects everyone; residents, visitors, and staff, by maintaining spaces that feel welcoming and homely while meeting all safety requirements.



Standard 5 Clinical care

Outlines the responsibilities of aged care providers in providing safe, high-quality health care by qualified health professionals and skilled aged care workers. This includes ensuring clinical care is delivered in partnership with you and your supporters, respecting your choices and adapting to your changing care needs.



Standard 6 Food and nutrition

Is about the importance of enjoying food, which is nutritional and meets your preferences. This standard ensures meals are tasty and varied, served in comfortable settings, and that you have freedom of choice over what and how much you eat whilst also supporting your health and wellbeing.



Standard 7 The residential community

Ensures that you feel safe and at home in the residential community. It supports you in maintaining important relationships and participating in activities that bring you joy and meaning. This standard gives you confidence in the continuity of your care and the security of your accommodation.



Support at home

Australia's ageing population has changing expectations, with more people wanting to stay in their own homes for longer. The new Support at Home program has been designed to enable this and represents the most significant update to home care in almost 30 years.

From 1 July 2025, the existing Home Care Packages (HCP) model will be replaced by a program called Support at Home. The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) will transition to Support at Home, no earlier than 1 July 2027.

Support at Home will aim to:

- better support older people to remain independent at home through an increase in places, with an additional 300,000 people supported by 2034-35
- increase focus on early interventions through the introduction of a "wellness and reablement" model of care to help people to stay active and independent
- ensure higher levels of care for those with complex needs who require more help to remain at home – this includes more packages (levels 1 to 8) and more funding for the top tier package.

It will also add three new streams of funding including:

- a Restorative Care Pathway to regain or maintain independence
- an End-of-Life Pathway to support older people who have 3 months or less to live and wish to remain at home
- the Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM) Scheme for older people with an assessed need for equipment, products and/or home modifications.

How will the New Support at Home Program affect current package holders?

If you are on a Home Care Package or have been approved for a package before 30 June 2025, your budget will remain at your current level. If you had unspent funds as of 30 June 2025 you will retain these funds for use under Support at Home.

Under the Support at Home program you won't be able to accumulate further unspent funds. Package budgets will be managed on a quarterly basis and you will only be able to roll over \$1,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) from one quarter to the next.

After 1 July 2025, should you need additional services you will be reassessed within the new Support and Home program.

What about new clients?

Under the new system, people will still be able to access the same home care services that are available now, including nursing, gardening, cleaning, transport, personal care and allied health.

For people entering the Support at Home program after 1 July 2025 the government has introduced client contributions for some services, including services to maintain your independence and everyday living (clinical services will be free).

For people who, on 12 September 2024, were either receiving a Home Care Package (HCP), or on the National Priority System, or assessed as eligible for a package, a no-worse-off principle applies. These people will make the same contributions, or lower, than they would have had under HCP program arrangements, even if they are re-assessed into a higher Support at Home classification at a later date.

We understand that these changes may cause some concern, and you may have questions. We will be sharing more information as soon as it becomes available over the coming months to help people understand the changes.



Next steps

The new Aged Care Act, Strengthened Standards and new Support at Home Program all represent unprecedented change for the aged care sector. Our priority is to work with you, our valued residents, clients and families, to ensure a smooth transition.

We will be sharing regular updates as we know more so we can work through this together.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please email us at supportathome@helpinghand.org.au.



To find out more scan the QR Code.



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