

Financial Planning Weekly

Aged Care – Part 2

In our [previous weekly](#), we discussed how to start the conversation with loved ones on Aged care, and the assessment process for government funded support. This week we will talk about what options are available. Next week, we will dive into the costs of these services. It is crucial to understand that aged care is a complex and evolving area, subject to specific laws, regulations, and practices that may vary over time. Therefore, any information provided should be considered as educational in nature and not a substitute for proper professional advice. Services Australia's [Financial Information Service \(FIS\)](#) is a free service available to everyone and can help you to understand the financial implications of aged care.

While we offer educational insights, it is essential to verify any information provided with professionals before making any significant decisions or taking actions related to aged care.

Working out where and with whom?

There are wide ranging choices for care, from the occasional help at home, to a retirement village to living in residential aged. The result of your assessment may influence which path you decide to take given the funding available. Once you have decided on the type of care, it's time to start exploring options.

A good summary of the main considerations when deciding on a provider can be found on the My Aged Care website [here](#):

- Services – Finding aged care providers that meet your needs.
- Quality – Making sure there is a good standard of care.
- Costs – Determining what you will need to pay.

1. Home Care & Granny Flat

When it comes to granny flats, it's important to remember, living with family isn't the same as a weekend visit. Think about the dynamics of the house now and in the future and Services Australia recommends you have a written agreement in place ([Granny Flat Interest](#)). If you have an interest in a Granny Flat it needs to be disclosed to Services Australia, as it may affect your payments.

For home care, generally you would like someone who is close in proximity to you, has a great reputation, flexible with your arrangements and within your budget. The My Aged Care website has a [Find-a-Provider](#) tool that you can use to identify providers who are regulated by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

2. Aged Care Communities

Most retirement communities will have opportunities to tour their facilities. All aged care organisations offer services differently and charge different amounts. So, it's important to look around and compare providers before deciding. The assessment letter can be a handy guide to what you would be looking for in a retirement community.

Below are some of the items to check, an expanded list can be found [here](#):

- Does the retirement community meet the needs of the assessment letter?
- What training do staff have (are there registered nurses, enrolled nurses or trained carers employed)? How many staff provide care overnight?
- What are the meal arrangements - seating, mealtimes, menus and special diets?
- Can special needs be met, such as language, culture, religious observances and pets?
- How are social and cultural activities decided? Are residents' interests considered?
- How can family and friends be involved in care? Can they stay overnight if needed?
- What transport access is available for visiting shops, friends, and family?
- Can medical needs such as assistance with medication be met?
- Are health services such as podiatry, physiotherapy, or speech therapy available on site?
- What type of care services cannot be provided and at what will be the cost to you?

As you visit each community, make notes about what you like, don't like, and whether you would feel comfortable there. Impressions of the staff and the environment will help you decide about which one is right.

3. Short Term Care

Care and support services can be provided for a set time frame. There are three types of short-term care, depending on your needs. They all aim to help you with day-to-day tasks and either restore, or maintain your independence. These services are generally for a few days to a few months.

- Restorative Care – Designed to help you reverse or slow difficulties you have with everyday tasks.
- Transition Care – For assistance with recovery after a hospital stay.
- Respite Care – Giving you and your carer a break for a short period of time.

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