



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

transforming  
**DVA**



# *The veteran's guide to moving into an aged-care home*

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Accessing DVA services

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

Enquiries regarding the licence and any use of this document are welcome at:

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You can find this product at [dva.gov.au](http://dva.gov.au) and [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au)

Information current as at May 2020.

# Is this book right for you?

This book has been developed to help you, your family, and carers better understand the process of moving into an aged-care home. The Department of Veterans' Affairs acknowledges that this can be a difficult, emotional and challenging time.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Department of Health (Health) both offer aged-care services to older Australians. DVA services are only available to eligible DVA clients but Health's services are available to all eligible senior Australians, including veterans.

This book explains the services and support DVA provides to eligible DVA clients. It is a companion publication to ***Steps to enter an aged care home***, published by Health (see below).

This book also contains useful information on

- how to access DVA-funded travel to medical appointments
- staying connected with the community
- mental health support
- getting your affairs in order.

We suggest you start by looking at the tables on page 5. If you see services you need turn to the relevant section of the book for more information.

There is also a glossary at the end of this book.

## Services provided by Health

Health's book ***Steps to enter an aged care home*** is designed for senior Australians, their families and carers. It explains how older people can get access to care in an aged-care home. To access such care, you will need to go through the Australian Government's main entry point to aged care for all Australians: My Aged Care. To access My Aged Care go to its website ([myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au)) or call 1800 200 422.\*

***Steps to enter an aged care home*** is available on the Department of Health's website ([health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)). Type 'Steps to enter an aged care home' in the search field.

## DVA's supplementary services

DVA offers a wide range of supplementary services for eligible DVA clients who need a lower level of care. If you are not eligible for DVA services or they do not meet your needs, please refer to Health's *Steps to enter an aged care home*.

If you have questions after reading the information in any of these books or websites, please call DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372\*) or My Aged Care (**1800 200 422\***). There is also a veterans' page on the My Aged Care website ([myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au) and type 'veterans' in the search field).

\* Calls from mobile phones may incur additional charges.

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# Moving into an aged-care home



The decision to move into an aged-care home may often be difficult and emotional.

My Aged Care is the main entry point to access Australian Government funded aged-care services for all Australians. This service is administered by the Department of Health. Veterans and war widows(ers) you can visit the website [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) or call **1800 200 422** if you need aged-care information, advice and services such as a **Home Care Package** or if you are thinking about entering residential aged care.

When you start researching aged-care homes, it's essential to establish what's important to you and your family.

Some aged-care homes are familiar with providing care for the veteran community. However, this does not mean that you will receive priority access or any advantage over community members for vacancies.

To look for an aged-care home in your area, visit the **My Aged Care website** ([myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au)) and search for 'find an aged care home' or go to the [myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder](https://myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder).

# An overview of DVA and Department of Health aged-care programs

Whilst DVA provides mostly entry-level care services that focus on maintaining independence and self-care in your home, DVA will provide some residential respite and convalescent care for you if you are an eligible DVA client. However, DVA services are not designed to support clients with ongoing complex needs.

Permanent residential aged care is provided by the Department of Health and can be accessed through My Aged Care.

To enter an aged-care home, you will need to be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) in your state or territory, or Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) in Victoria. If eligible, you will then get a letter of approval.

| ENTRY LEVEL CARE   | HIGH LEVEL CARE  | SHORT TERM AND EPISODIC CARE   |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (DVA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veteran's Home Care (VHC)</li> <li>Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)</li> <li>DVA Community Nursing</li> <li>Respite Care</li> <li>Convalescent Care</li> </ul> <p><b>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)</li> </ul> | <p><b>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home Care Packages Program (HCPP)</li> </ul> <p><b>Residential Aged Care</b></p> | <p><b>DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (DVA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DVA Community Nursing</li> </ul> <p><b>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition Care</li> <li>Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC)</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Residential Aged Care</b> is covered in this book</p>  |  |  |

# Your ACAT or ACAS assessment

Your ACAT or ACAS assessment will determine the level of care you need.

Your assessment will identify options for you and your family.

A social worker may be able to assist you with this process if you are in hospital and waiting to be transferred to an aged-care home, talk with your treating doctor or discharge planner.

ACAT/ACAS cannot endorse or rate individual aged-care homes. However, they can help you find a home that you will feel comfortable in and that will meet your needs. Your doctor, family, friends and others who know people currently living in an aged-care home may also be able to assist.

After your assessment you will be provided with a letter. This letter will detail the level of care you need, your eligibility for entry into an aged-care home and the care you are approved to receive. If you are not approved for entry into permanent residential aged care, you will receive a letter stating why and who to contact for help. As a DVA client, you may be eligible for other care and services beyond those offered by the Department of Health.

**For more information** on the services provided by DVA refer to '**The Veteran's Guide to Living Independently – Accessing DVA Services**' or go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/ac](http://dva.gov.au/ac).

If your care needs change at any time, you can ask for a new assessment. Call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or go to the website [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au).

## Identify yourself as a DVA Client

During your assessment, when reviewing aged-care homes and on admission to an aged-care home, be sure to let them know you are a veteran and a DVA client and the type of Veteran card you hold.

Identifying yourself as a veteran may increase the range of support services you can access whilst in the aged-care home.

# Preparing for a stay or move into aged care

| Do you require assistance with  | DVA services  | Find out more about this service and the eligibility requirements   | Accessing this service   |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Organising an assessment</b> – for care in an aged-care home   |   | <b>Page 4</b><br><br><b>My Aged Care website</b><br><a href="http://myagedcare.gov.au">myagedcare.gov.au</a>                    | Assessments are conducted by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) or Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) in VIC. Call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 for an ACAT (or ACAS in Vic) assessment.  |
| <b>Short-term care in an aged-care home</b> – short-term care usually in an Australian Government-funded aged-care home to allow a carer or self-carer to have a break from the caring role | Residential Respite Care – Veterans’ Home Care  | <b>Page 9</b><br><br>Veterans’ Home Care on the DVA website<br><a href="http://dva.gov.au/carers">dva.gov.au/carers</a>         | Call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 for an ACAT or ACAS (Vic) Assessment.<br>Receive letter of approval.<br>Locate an aged-care home with an available respite bed. To find an Australian Government-funded aged-care home, visit the My Aged Care website at <a href="http://myagedcare.gov.au">myagedcare.gov.au</a> .<br>Once booked, call VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450 for DVA to fund reespite arrangement.  |
| <b>Residential aged care means-test assessments</b>   | DVA is responsible for completing the aged-care means-test assessments if you receive a DVA pension. Services Australia is responsible for processing the aged-care means-test assessments for anyone not receiving a DVA pension.        | <b>Page 12</b><br><br><a href="http://dva.gov.au/agedcarefinances">dva.gov.au/agedcarefinances</a>                              | Complete <b>Services Australia form: SA457 – Residential Aged Care Calculation of your cost of care</b> . The form is on the Services Australia website ( <a href="http://servicesaustralia.gov.au">servicesaustralia.gov.au</a> and type in ‘SA457’ in the search field). If you need assistance with completing the form, you can seek help from your financial adviser or accountant.   |
| <b>Finding an aged-care home</b>  |   | <b>Page 14</b><br><br>There are a list of questions that may assist you decide on the right aged-care home for you.             | Find providers in your local area with help from your assessor, by using the aged-care homes service finder on the <a href="http://myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder/aged-carehomes">myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder/aged-carehomes</a> or call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. You can then contact the home to arrange a visit.  |
| <b>Understanding your rights and responsibilities</b><br>Standards of care<br>Signing agreements  | Military Welfare Advocates are accredited to help clients access the entitlements, benefits and support available from DVA, other government agencies and community-based service providers. Other services are detailed on My Aged Care. | <b>Page 17</b><br>Advocates<br><br><b>Page 24</b><br><a href="http://dva.gov.au/agedcaresupport">dva.gov.au/agedcaresupport</a> | Find local Military Welfare Advocates on the website <a href="http://atdp.org.au">atdp.org.au</a> by clicking on the ‘Find an Advocate’ button.<br>Or<br>Information is on the My Aged Care website ( <a href="http://myagedcare.gov.au">myagedcare.gov.au</a> ) and search for ‘rights and responsibilities’.<br>Or<br>National Aged Care Advocacy Line 1800 700 600 (free call) or visit the Older Persons Advocacy Network website <a href="http://opan.com.au">opan.com.au</a> |

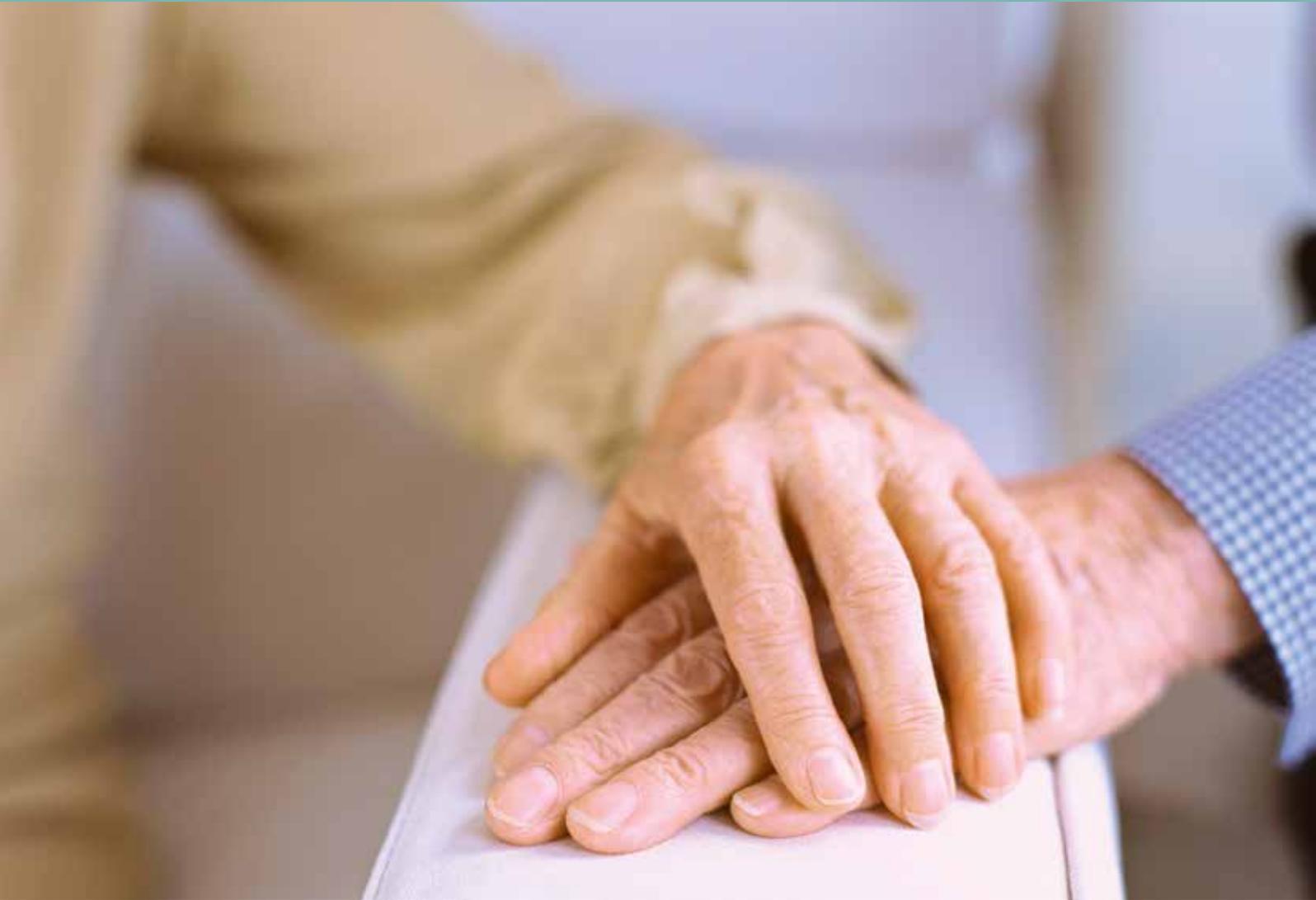
# Services you can access through DVA while in an aged-care home

Once you are in an aged-care home you will be assessed to determine your care needs. You will be provided with an Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) rating. This rating impacts on the level of support DVA provides. Please refer to page 19 for more information on the ACFI.

| Do you require assistance with  | DVA program or service   | Find out more about this service and the eligibility requirements   | Accessing this service   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Accessing an aged-care home when you have a service-related mental health condition</b>  | <b>Veterans' Supplement in Residential Care</b> – provided to aged-care homes when they care for veterans with service-related mental health conditions. Ensuring a veteran's mental health condition does not act as a barrier to accessing appropriate care. This is paid directly to an aged-care home. | <b>Page 19</b><br><br>On the DVA website <a href="http://dva.gov.au/agedcaresupplement">dva.gov.au/agedcaresupplement</a> | If DVA has accepted your service-related mental health condition then you will need to provide consent to the release of certain information to Services Australia which allow it to pay the aged-care home.<br><b>Note:</b> <i>No details of your accepted mental health condition is shared with Services Australia or the home.</i>   |
| <b>Medication</b> – the aged-care home will provide medication management including assistance with taking and ordering medications and you should not be charged for this. You will continue to pay a small contribution.  | <b>Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme</b>   | <b>Page 21</b><br><br>On the DVA website <a href="http://dva.gov.au/medicine">dva.gov.au/medicine</a>                     | You need to show either your Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card or Orange Pharmaceuticals Only Card to your aged-care home or pharmacist.   |
| <b>Mental health support and wellbeing</b>  | <b>Open Arms – Veterans &amp; Families Counselling</b> – Free and confidential counselling and group programs to support mental health and wellbeing for current and ex-service ADF personnel and their families.  | <b>Page 26</b><br><br><a href="http://openarms.gov.au">openarms.gov.au</a>  | Call Open Arms on 1800 011 046.  |
| <b>Specialist or customised equipment, aids, appliances and assistive technology</b> such as:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility aids</li> <li>• Oxygen therapy</li> <li>• Diabetes supplies</li> <li>• Customised aids or personal equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical grade footwear</li> <li>• Prosthesis</li> <li>• Orthoses</li> <li>• Speech pathology appliances</li> <li>• Hearing appliances</li> <li>• Cognitive, dementia and memory assistive technology</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Continence pads (only in low-level care if not supplied)</li> </ul> | <b>Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)</b> – access to aids and equipment while in an aged-care home depends on your Veteran card eligibility and the level of care determined by your ACFI rating.  | <b>Page 20</b><br><br>On the DVA website <a href="http://dva.gov.au/RAP">dva.gov.au/RAP</a>                               | Talk about your concerns with your GP or medical specialist.<br>Your GP or medical specialist will identify your clinical need and either:<br>a) undertake an assessment and prescribe suitable aids and appliances through RAP or<br>b) make a referral to an appropriate health professional for an assessment.<br>If referred to a health professional, they will access your circumstances and prescribe suitable aids and appliances through RAP. |

| Do you require assistance with  | DVA program or service  | Find out more about this service and the eligibility requirements  | Accessing this service   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Medical and/or allied health appointments</b> – your GP, specialist or allied health professional e.g. physiotherapist, occupational therapist, podiatrist | Accessing medical and/or allied health appointments while in an aged-care home depends on your Veteran Card eligibility and the level of care determined by your ACFI rating. | <b>Page 22</b><br>On the DVA website <a href="http://dva.gov.au">dva.gov.au</a>  | It is the responsibility of the aged-care home to organise access for you to health services. You can still choose to use the health services provided by the aged-care home or offsite health services. For offsite health services, you can use DVA transport arrangements (e.g. Booked Car with Driver, Non-Emergency Ambulance). |
| <b>Travelling to medical appointments and treatment</b>   | <b>Booked Car with Driver Scheme</b>  | <b>Page 23</b><br>On the DVA website <a href="http://dva.gov.au/transportbooking">dva.gov.au/transportbooking</a>  | Transport Bookings (during DVA business hours): 1800 550 455 (calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur additional charges).   |
|   | <b>NSW Country Taxi Voucher Scheme</b>  | <b>Page 23</b><br>On the DVA website <a href="http://dva.gov.au/transport">dva.gov.au/transport</a>  | A NSW Country Local Medical Officer (LMO) may, when medically necessary or at the request of DVA, issue taxi vouchers to entitled persons to travel for treatment.   |
| <b>Staying connected to the community – if you're feeling alone and don't have regular contact with family and friends.</b>                                   | <b>Ex- service organisations (ESOs)</b>   | <b>Page 25</b><br>A list of ex-service organisations is on the DVA website <a href="http://dva.gov.au/ESO">dva.gov.au/ESO</a>  | The aged-care home staff or your friends or family may contact your local ESO and make the necessary arrangements.   |
|   | <b>Community Visitor Scheme (CVS)</b> – is an Australian Government subsidised aged-care service.   | <b>Page 25</b><br>Visit <b>Social Support and Activities</b> on the My Aged Care website <a href="http://myagedcare.gov.au">myagedcare.gov.au</a> or call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 | Contact the CVS Network Member in your state or territory by visiting <b>Social Support and Activities</b> on the My Aged Care website <a href="http://myagedcare.gov.au">myagedcare.gov.au</a> or call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422   |

# Care in an aged-care home



You can receive two types of care in an aged-care home through an ACAT or ACAS assessment: **respite care** and **permanent residential aged care**.

# Respite Care – carer support

Respite care gives a carer a break by temporarily relieving them of their caring responsibilities.

A carer can be a friend, partner or family member who provides ongoing care to a person who is severely incapacitated or frail. A carer is not required to live with the care recipient. DVA defines a carer as someone who provides unpaid support. They may receive the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance from Centrelink.

DVA offers respite care to:

- the carer of a Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holder
- a Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holder who is a carer
- a Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holder who is a self-carer (for Residential Respite only).

**For more information** on the full range of respite care offered by DVA go to [dva.gov.au/carers](https://dva.gov.au/carers).

## Residential Respite Care

Residential Respite Care is short-term care, available to you as an eligible DVA client, on a planned or emergency basis. It can be used if a carer needs a break, or if the self-carer does not have a carer. It is usually provided in an Australian Government-funded aged-care home. In certain circumstances residential respite may be provided in other types of accommodation.

Residential Respite Care does not include convalescent care. Convalescent care is provided to help you recover from an acute illness or operation after being discharged from hospital.

## Eligibility

If you are an eligible DVA client needing residential respite in an Australian Government-funded aged-care home, you will need to be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) or the Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) before booking your stay. To organise an ACAT or ACAS assessment, call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 or visit the **My Aged Care** website at [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au).

After receiving your letter of approval following your assessment, you or your carer or family will need to locate an aged-care home with an available respite bed. To find an Australian Government-funded aged-care home, visit the My Aged Care website at [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au).

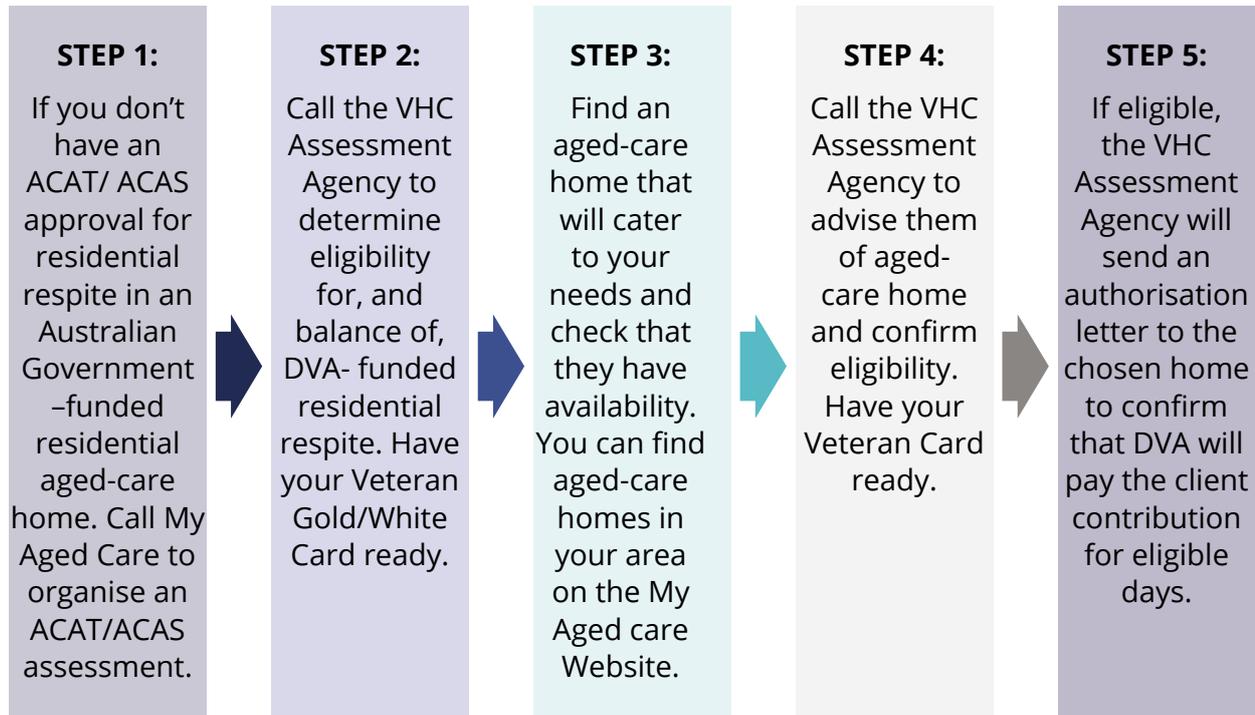
Once a respite bed has been booked, call a VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450. The VHC assessor will arrange for DVA funding for the residential respite stay within the service threshold. The VHC Assessment Agency will send a letter to you and to the home.

## Cost

There is no cost for residential respite care for the first 28 days (each day is equivalent to 7 hours) in a financial year. This can be taken as short stays or as one stay.

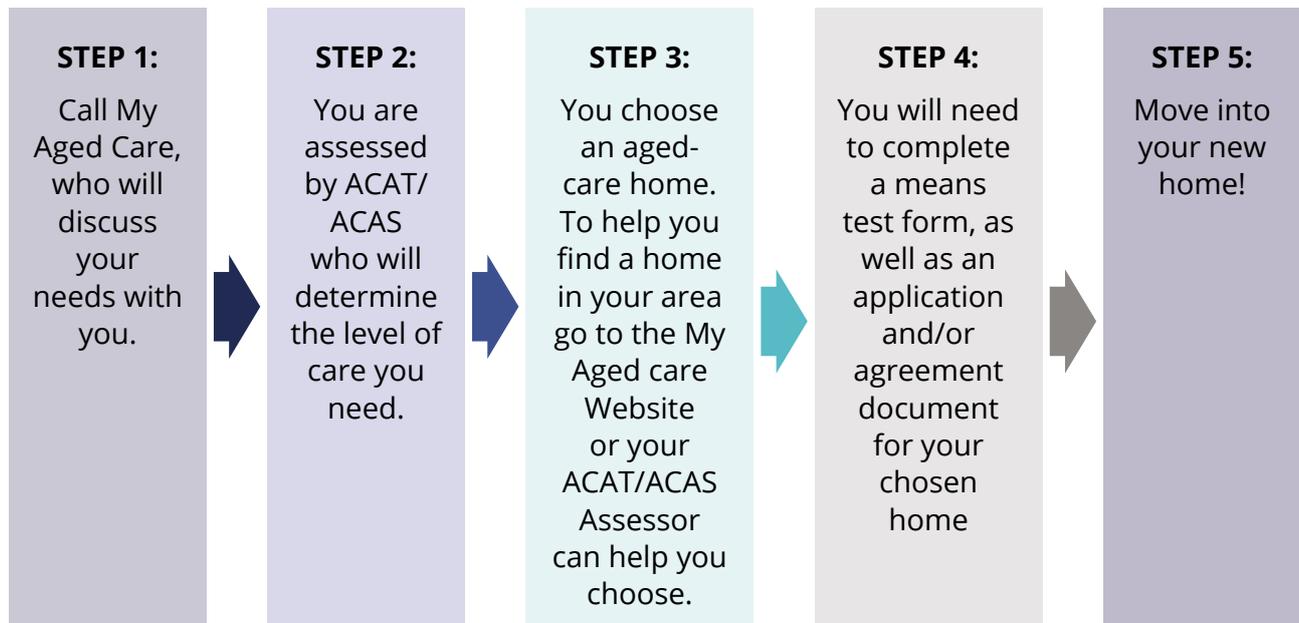
# Accessing residential respite care

The process for accessing Residential Respite Care is shown in the following:



# Accessing permanent residential aged care

The process for accessing permanent residential aged care is detailed in the following:



After you have had an assessment and understand what services you can access, you can choose your aged-care home. To do this, it is also important to understand the cost.

## Working out the cost

The Australian Government pays a subsidy and, if required, supplements for each resident in an aged-care home. All residents, including you as a veteran or war widow(er), are also required to make a contribution towards the cost of your residential aged care. This contribution is based on your income and assets. There are **annual and lifetime caps** in place to limit the amount of the Means Tested Care Fee that you will need to pay.

There are three fee types that you may be asked to pay. These are explained in more detail in the Department of Health's book ***Steps to enter an aged care home***:

- Basic Daily Fee (see glossary)
- Means Tested Care Fee (see glossary)
- Accommodation Payment (Refundable Accommodation Deposit, Daily Accommodation Payment, or mixture of both).

As a resident you may choose to pay an extra fee for extra or optional services.

What you pay in residential aged care will be set out in your **Resident Agreement** with your aged-care home.

**Please note:** Special financial arrangements are in place if you are a former Prisoner of War (POW) or Victoria Cross (VC) recipient. DVA pays the Basic Daily fee and you are also exempt from paying a Means Tested Care Fee.

## DVA clients and the residential aged-care means-test assessments

Means-test assessments for aged care include both income and assets. Both DVA and the Services Australia conduct aged-care income and assets assessments. These determine how much subsidy the Australian Government pays to the aged-care provider on your behalf (if you are eligible for government assistance) and the amount you can be asked to contribute towards your aged-care costs.

DVA manages the aged-care means-test assessments for:

- Veterans, their partners and war widows(ers) who receive one of the following DVA income support pensions:
  - > service pension
  - > income support supplement, or
  - > age pension administered by DVA
- Veterans in receipt of DVA disability pension and who have qualifying service (see glossary).

To check if the payment you receive is included, check with DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372)

*If you do not fall into one of the categories above then you will need to seek assistance from Services Australia to complete your aged-care means-test assessment.*

## Obtaining the residential aged-care means-test assessment

### 1. Complete the form

To ensure the income and asset data DVA includes in your assessment is up to date, please complete this form **Services Australia form: SA457 – Residential Aged Care Calculation of your cost of care** ([servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au) and type 'SA457' in the search field). It is not compulsory for you to complete this form but *if you choose not to do so*, you may be asked to pay the maximum fee.

### 2. Send your form

If you receive an income support payment from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, return your form and any additional documents to:

**Department of Veterans' Affairs, Aged Care Assets Assessments**

GPO Box 9998

Brisbane Qld 4001

You should do this before you enter care (if possible).

### 3. Receive the letter advising of aged-care fees

Once DVA completes your means-test assessment, it provides the information to Services Australia. They will then send you, your nominee and aged-care provider letters advising what aged-care fees are payable.

#### Assessment of DVA disability and war widows(ers) pensions as income

It is important to be aware that unless you have had your qualifying service (see glossary) determined and accepted by DVA, then your disability pension will be included as income in your aged-care means-test assessment.

If you are unsure whether you have previously had your qualifying service determined, contact DVA on **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372).

**For more information** about qualifying service and how to submit an application to determine your qualifying service, refer to the following DVA webpage at [dva.gov.au/QS](https://dva.gov.au/QS)

If you receive a war widows(ers) pension, this will be included as income in your aged-care means-test assessment.

If you have a partner, half of the combined income and assets owned by you or your partner are taken into account for the assessment.

#### Assessment of your former home as an asset for aged-care purposes

Your home will be counted as an asset for the purpose of your assessment for aged care, up to a capped amount, unless it is occupied by a protected person including:

- a partner, or
- a dependent child, or
- a close relative, who at the time of your entry into care, was eligible to receive an income support payment\* from Centrelink or DVA and had lived with you in the home for the past five years, or
- a carer, who at the time of your entry into care, was eligible to receive an income support payment\* from Centrelink or DVA and had lived with you in the home for the past two years.

\*A carer's allowance is not an income support payment.

# Finding an aged-care home

After receiving an ACAT or ACAS approval, the eligible DVA client (or their carer or family) will need to decide on an aged-care home. It is important to find out if the home has care and services you need, now and into the future.

All aged-care homes must provide the following to permanent residents:

**Accommodation services (also known as 'hotel services')** provide practical assistance with many day-to-day domestic tasks. These include meal preparation and cleaning and may also include social assistance services. Accommodation services cover:

- administration
- maintenance of grounds and buildings
- utilities
- furnishings
- bedding
- cleaning
- waste disposal
- laundry
- basic toiletry goods
- meals
- social activities at the aged-care home
- assistance in emergencies

**Personal care assistance** is available to assist with personal activities, personal hygiene and clinical care needs on a daily basis where necessary. It includes:

- bathing
- showering
- personal hygiene and grooming
- maintaining incontinence aids and products
- eating
- dressing
- moving
- communicating
- emotional support
- administering medicines and carrying out treatments
- designing a rehabilitation program
- arranging access to health professionals
- managing effects of any cognitive impairment.

The aged-care home may be able to, or required to, provide you with additional services, depending on your individual needs.

Find providers in your local area with help from your assessors. You can use the aged-care homes service finder on the website [myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder/aged-care-homes](https://myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder/aged-care-homes) or call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. You can then contact the home to arrange a visit.

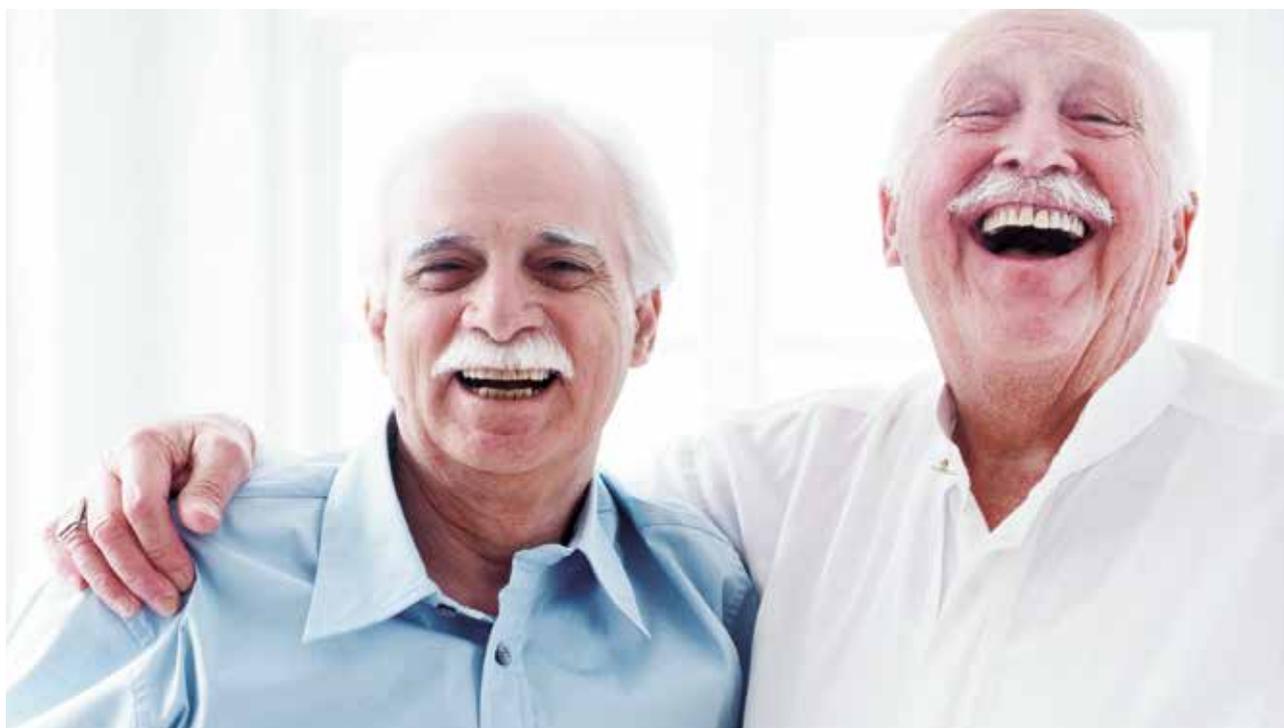
## Questions you can ask providers

When deciding on an aged-care home you may wish to make a list of the things that are important to you. As you start visiting aged-care homes you may also want to make notes about your experience. To help you when you visit homes, a list of questions is available in the My Aged Care book **'Steps to enter an aged care home'** and on the website [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) (search for 'find an aged care home').

As a veteran, as well as the questions above, you may wish to ask providers the following:

- Do you have other veterans living in the home?
- Do you have any veteran-specific activities?
- What do you do for significant days in the veterans' calendar, such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day?
- How will you assist me to access the health services I need?
- If I choose to use my existing medical practitioners will this impact on the care I'm provided?
- May I bring my customised rehabilitation appliance or aid I have acquired through DVA's Rehabilitation Appliances Program?
- Are there any extra services you provide and at what cost?
- What is your understanding of the veteran community?

# Applying to an aged-care home and accepting an offer



As you find aged-care homes that meet your needs, you can start applying for a place. You can apply to as many homes as you like. In fact, it's a good idea to apply to several homes as your preferred home may not have a place available when you are looking. When a place becomes available, the aged-care home will contact you or your nominated contact person.

## Filling in an application form

All aged-care homes have their own application process and may ask you to fill in a form. Talk to the homes you are interested in and find out what process they have and what information they need.

You will need to give the unique referral code you received from your ACAT or ACAS to your chosen provider/s. This will allow them to view your client record and consider your care needs. The aged-care home may ask you to pay a fully refundable booking fee or deposit. DVA does not pay or reimburse this fee.

## Accepting an offer

When a place becomes available, the aged-care home will contact you or your nominated contact person. Once you have accepted an offer of a place, the home will offer you formal agreements. These agreements cover things like services, accommodation costs, and your **rights and responsibilities**.

# Enter into agreements with your aged-care home

After you accept a place and before you move, your aged-care home must offer you a **resident agreement** and an **accommodation agreement**. These agreements may be together in one document or be two separate documents.

The resident agreement and accommodation agreement are legally binding documents between you and your aged-care home. They set out:

- the care and services available
- what fees you will have to pay
- how fees can be paid
- your rights and responsibilities.

It's important that you understand and feel comfortable with everything in these agreements before you sign them. If you have any questions, you should ask your new aged-care home. It is their responsibility to make sure the agreements offered to you are clear.

You may wish to seek advice from a family, friend, carer, financial advisor or a legal professional to help you understand the terms of your agreements. Advocates can also help you in these negotiations. Please see the section on advocates on page 24.

There is no time limit or a requirement for you to sign these agreements. However, it is in your best interest to agree to the arrangement that covers your rights and responsibilities as soon as you can.

If you choose *not* to sign these agreements, the aged-care home still needs to talk to you about your needs. This conversation will form the basis of a verbal agreement about the type of care and services you will receive and what fees will apply. You will still need to pay your daily fees and any relevant accommodation payments when you move in.

You have 28 days after moving into your aged-care home to decide how you want to pay your accommodation costs and enter into an accommodation agreement. You must pay for your accommodation by the rental-style payment (see Glossary) until you have made this decision.

## Rights and responsibilities

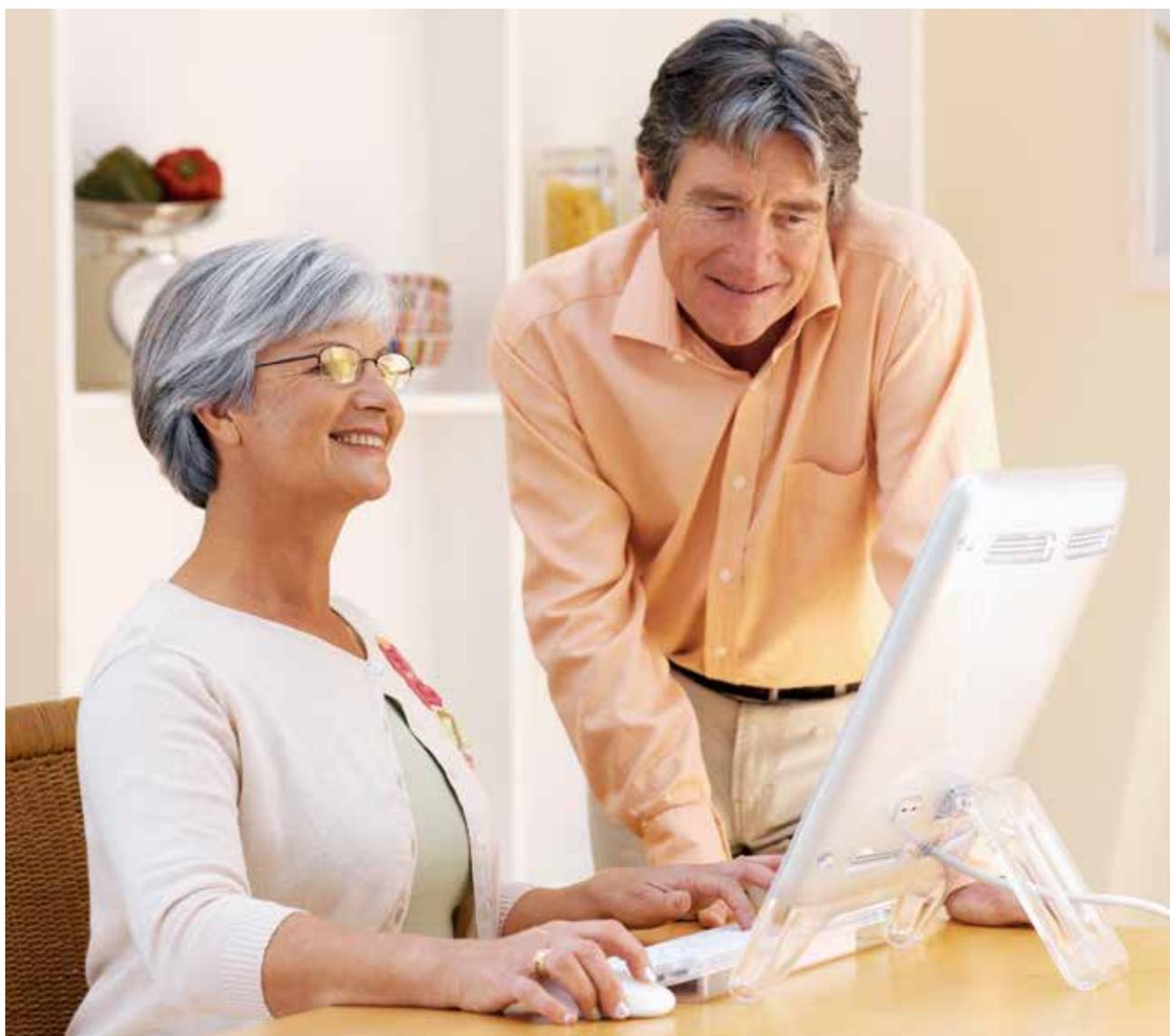
No matter which aged-care home you live in, your rights and responsibilities are the same. These rights and responsibilities are protected by legislation, such as the *Aged Care Act 1997*. All Australian Government-subsidised aged-care homes must follow this legislation.

To make sure you get the best care, you and your provider have responsibilities under the **Charter of Care Recipients' Rights and Responsibilities – Residential Care** (go to [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au) and search for 'Rights and responsibilities'). The aged-care home should display this Charter, and you will normally receive a copy in your Residential Agreement.

## Standards of care

The aged-care system in Australia aims to make sure all older people can receive the care and services they need. The Australian Government monitors the quality of care and services provided in aged-care homes in several ways. Aged-care homes have to meet accreditation standards and show that they are continuously striving to improve the quality of their care and services.

If the Department of Health is aware that an aged-care home has not met their requirements under the *Aged Care Act 1997*, it may issue a notice of non-compliance or impose sanctions on that home. You can see if a home has a sanction in place on the aged-care homes service finder on the My Aged Care website [myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder/aged-care-homes](https://myagedcare.gov.au/service-finder/aged-care-homes) or call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.



# Managing your care and services in an aged-care home

## Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI)

Once in residential aged care, you will undergo an assessment using the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI). The ACFI is used to determine your care needs and the amount of basic subsidy the Australian Government will pay to the aged-care home for your care. The ACFI will identify if you need a lower or higher level of care and the types of services the aged-care home has to provide to you.

### Lower level of care

If you need a lower level of care, as identified by the ACFI score, and you are a Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holder, you may continue to access DVA-funded treatment and services in the same way you did before entering care. This includes allied health services and aids and appliances through DVA. However, there are some restrictions. For example, you are unable to access some Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) services, such as home modifications. That is because the aged-care home is responsible for these services.

DVA may pay a contribution towards the cost of transport, meals and accommodation to eligible veterans or war widows(ers) who are living in an aged-care home and need to travel to attend DVA-approved medical appointments. You may call **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) to check your eligibility.

### High-level care

If you are rated as 'high' for any of the three ACFI categories or 'medium' for two categories, you will need a greater level of care. In this case, the aged-care home will be funded and responsible for meeting all your allied health care and non-customised equipment needs.

DVA cannot duplicate funding for care and services for which the aged-care home receives Australian Government funding, except in exceptional circumstances and with prior approval from DVA. Any prior approval discussions would need to involve the home, treating health provider and the family.

## Veterans' Supplement in Residential Care

If you have a service-related mental health condition, DVA will pay the Australian Government-subsidised aged-care home the Veterans Supplement. This will ensure that your condition is not a barrier to you getting into the appropriate aged-care home.

DVA will only pay this with your (or your nominated representative's) consent to certain information being disclosed to the aged-care home. The information provided is limited and no details of your accepted mental health condition will be disclosed.

You will not need to apply or undergo an assessment for DVA to pay the Supplement to the aged-care home.

War widow/ers and dependants are not eligible for the Supplement.

## Access to aids and equipment while living in residential aged care

Aged-care homes provide necessary aids and equipment to meet your needs, depending on the level of care you are receiving. These include:

- bedding/mattresses, including appropriate pressure-relieving mattresses
- equipment to aid mobility – for example, non-motorised wheelchairs and walking frames
- seating, including armchairs
- shower chairs
- oxygen therapy and equipment
- lifting hoists
- continence pads

You may already have aids and equipment provided to you under DVA's Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP). If so, you may be able to bring these items with you when you move into the aged-care home. Before bringing the items, discuss with the aged-care home which items you can bring as some items may already be provided by the aged-care home. If you bring any of these items, DVA will continue to fund repairs on them. DVA will not repair aids and equipment provided by an aged-care home as the home is responsible for this.

After moving into the aged-care home, Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holders may be able to access RAP aids and equipment. This depends on the level of care you are receiving, your eligibility and assessed clinical needs.



If you are receiving a higher level of care, as identified by the ACFI, the aged-care home has to provide necessary non-customised aids and equipment. DVA cannot duplicate the aids and equipment that the aged-care home is funded to provide to you. However, you may be eligible to get customised personal equipment through RAP to meet assessed clinical needs. For example, the RAP may supply a customised wheelchair because the standard wheelchair is not suitable for you.

If you are receiving a lower level of care, as identified by the ACFI, you may be eligible to access RAP aids and equipment based on your assessed clinical needs.

The items that may be supplied through RAP while you are in the aged-care home are listed in the RAP Aged Care Eligibility Matrix. The Matrix is available on the DVA website at: [dva.gov.au/dvasupportinagedcare](https://dva.gov.au/dvasupportinagedcare)

## How to obtain an assessment for RAP items while in residential aged care

If you require aids and equipment after entering care, speak to the aged-care home about your needs. If the aids and equipment are not funded by the aged-care home, they can arrange for your eligibility and clinical needs to be assessed. This would be done by your doctor or another health professional, such as an occupational therapist, physiotherapist or registered nurse. If you are eligible and have a clinical need, they will prescribe an item through RAP.

For more information go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/dvasupportinagedcare](https://dva.gov.au/dvasupportinagedcare)

## Managing your medications

The aged-care home will manage your medications, including assistance with ordering, re-ordering and taking medications. If you are a Veteran Gold, White or Orange Card holder, you will pay the normal patient contribution for your medications under the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as you did before entering care regardless of the level of care you are receiving.

## Assistance managing medications and health conditions (Veterans' MATES)

You can access comprehensive information about a range of health issues through the Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services (MATES) program. DVA designed this program to help you and your treating doctor and pharmacist to manage common medical conditions.

Information is also available to other health professionals, for example directors of care at aged-care homes. The Veterans' MATES program aims to improve the health care of veterans and war widow(er)s through quality use of medicines and better use of health services.

More information is available through your general practitioner, pharmacist or through the [Veterans' MATES website](https://veteransmates.net.au) (veteransmates.net.au).

## Access to medical services when living in residential aged care

You may be able to keep your own doctor and/or specialist after you commence living in the aged-care home. The aged-care home must help you to make appointments and access doctors and/or specialists of your choice. The aged-care home will also have arrangements with different doctors and/or specialists that can visit you if you are unable to attend offsite appointments. You can choose to receive services from these doctors and/or specialists as well.

If you are a Veteran Gold Card holder, you will be able to use your card to pay for all medical appointments, including admission into hospital. If you are a Veteran White Card holder, you will be able to use your card to pay for medical appointments, including admission into hospital, only when it relates to your DVA accepted condition.

For transport to and from offsite medical appointments, Veteran Gold Card and Veteran White Card holders and their medically-required attendants can use DVA's Repatriation Transport Scheme. The aged-care home can arrange this for you.

## Access to allied health services when living in residential aged care

If you are receiving a lower level of care, as identified by the ACFI, you may access allied health services in the same way as you did before entering care. You can do this by using your Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card.

As an eligible DVA client you have the option of choosing to use either the health services provided by the aged-care home or offsite health services.

You can keep your own allied health provider, such as physiotherapist, chiropractor, podiatrist or occupational therapist. The aged-care home must help you to make appointments and access your choice of allied health provider. The aged-care home will also have arrangements with different allied health providers who can visit you.

However, if you are receiving a higher level of care, as identified by the ACFI, the aged-care home is responsible for providing necessary allied health services to you. This includes rehabilitation support, maintenance therapy and individual therapy programs designed by health professionals, such as physiotherapists, to maintain or restore your ability to perform daily tasks. DVA cannot duplicate the services that the aged-care home is funded to provide to you. However, DVA may pay for short-term intensive allied health care following an acute episode, such as a serious injury, illness, surgery or trauma. DVA will do this when required with prior approval, based on assessed clinical needs.

For transport to and from offsite allied health appointments, Veteran Gold Card and Veteran White Card holders and their medically-required attendants can use DVA's Repatriation Transport Scheme. The aged-care home can arrange this for you.

## Travelling to appointments

DVA can provide transport assistance at DVA expense through the Repatriation Transport Scheme when you are travelling to and from approved medical appointments. This applies to both eligible clients and their medically-required attendant assistant.

The role of a medically-required attendant (normally a spouse, partner or family member) is to provide any necessary assistance to the client when he or she is travelling for treatment. A medically-required attendant assistant is any person who is responsible, competent and physically able to assist the eligible client. They do not have to be medically qualified.

### Booked Car (and Driver) Scheme

DVA may arrange pre-booked transport under the Booked Car Scheme (BCS) for travel to approved treatment locations. The BCS provides additional transport assistance for more aged and frail clients to attend approved medical appointments. The BCS uses contracted transport providers that offer a high-quality and reliable service. They arrange a suitable vehicle to transport entitled persons to their appointment on time.

To request a Booked Car, or to discuss your eligibility for the scheme, call 1800 550 455.

**For more information** go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/TFT](https://dva.gov.au/TFT).

### NSW Country Taxi Voucher Scheme

A NSW country doctor may issue taxi vouchers to entitled persons living in NSW country areas who need assistance when travelling for treatment purposes. This is done when it is medically necessary or at the request of DVA. This Scheme does not operate in the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Canberra or Wollongong, or for travel across the borders into Victoria and Queensland.

**For more information** and a list of NSW country DVA-contracted transport providers go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/TFT](https://dva.gov.au/TFT).

### Emergency and non-emergency ambulance

DVA will pay for ambulance transport in a medical emergency for Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card holders in relation to an accepted condition. DVA will pay for non-emergency ambulance transport only in certain circumstances.

**For more information** go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/TFT](https://dva.gov.au/TFT).

# Complaints about your care and services

If you are concerned about the care or service you are receiving in your aged-care home, you have the right to raise your concern or complaint without it affecting your care and services. We encourage you to raise the issue with your aged-care home in the first instance as it may be something that can be easily resolved.

Your aged-care home can tell you how to make a complaint through their internal complaints-handling process. If the complaint can't be resolved by them, or you don't feel comfortable raising your concern with them, you can raise your concern with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on freecall 1800 951 822 or [agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au).

## Advocacy

You may also like to get help from an advocate. Advocacy services can give you information about your **rights and responsibilities** when accessing aged-care services. They can also let you know if you should raise your concerns to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

**For more information** go to the Older Persons Advocacy Network [opan.com.au](http://opan.com.au) or call the National Aged Care Advocacy Line 1800 700 600 (freecall).

## Military Welfare Advocates

As a veteran or a representative of a veteran you can access the services of Military Welfare Advocates.

Welfare Advocates can support you by:

- Providing information and/or referrals for health, rehabilitation, housing, transport, household assistance, education schemes, and other government or community services and benefits
- Providing advice and information about government services for transitioning from the military to civilian life
- Providing information and/or referrals for medical, financial, legal and police matters
- Providing information and/or referrals for funeral arrangements and bereavement assistance

**For more information** and to find a local Military Welfare Advocate go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/Advocates](http://dva.gov.au/Advocates).

## National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP)

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) is funded by the Australian Government to deliver the NACAP. This is a free, national service to support older people and their representatives. It helps them to address issues related to Australian Government-funded aged-care services.

**For more information** go to the Older Persons Advocacy Network [opan.com.au](http://opan.com.au) or call the National Aged Care Advocacy Line 1800 700 600 (freecall).

# Staying connected to the community

Staying connected is very important when you move into an aged-care home. Maintaining friendships or connections to family and community can be difficult when you move into an aged-care home. The following are available to you if you need them.

## Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs)

As a member of the veteran community you may invite representatives from ex-service organisations (ESOs) to visit you in your aged-care home. The home staff may help you get in touch with your local ESO but will not provide your personal details to an ESO without your permission. Alternatively, your family or friends can contact the local branch and make the necessary arrangements.

**For more information** go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/ESO](https://dva.gov.au/ESO)

## Community Visitor Scheme (CVS)

The aged-care home can also arrange for you to be visited through the Community Visitor Scheme (CVS) if you are feeling lonely and do not have regular contact with family or friends. The CVS provides visits from volunteers to residents of Australian Government subsidised aged-care services, which includes aged-care homes. In each state and territory, CVS organisations have coordinators who will match people with a companion or link them with a group in their aged-care home.

A CVS coordinator will take into account your interests, hobbies and background in finding a suitable regular visitor.

To find out how to get in contact with a CVS organisation, contact the CVS Network Member in your state or territory or visit **Social Support and Activities** on the My Aged Care website ([myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) and search for 'social support') or call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**.

## Recreational Transport Allowance

If you have a specific severe disability accepted as service-related you may be able to receive the Recreational Transport Allowance. This provides financial assistance for your transport to recreational activities. The rate payable is determined by the individual veteran's accepted disabilities.

**For more information** go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/RT](https://dva.gov.au/RT)

# Mental health support

There are benefits to taking action to manage your mental health if you notice an issue. There may be times you feel anxious, sad or angry. You may be troubled by memories, drinking too much, not sleeping well or having difficulties relating to family or friends. It is usual to have these feelings, or to experience problems after stressful events or during stressful periods in life.

## How to take action

- **Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (formerly VVCS)**
  - Free and confidential 24/7, nation-wide counselling and support to eligible serving and ex-serving members, and their families, affected by war and mental health and well-being conditions.
  - **Go online** – Visit the website [openarms.gov.au](https://openarms.gov.au) to access information, self-help tools, mobile apps, and advice about how to seek professional help or call **1800 011 046**.
- **Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC)** – If you have had permanent full-time service in the Australian Defence Force, even for as little as one day, you are eligible to receive treatment for any mental health condition. It doesn't matter when you served, how long you served, or the nature of your service. If you are a Reservist with any period of full-time service, you may also be eligible for NLHC. Phone **1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) or email [nlhc@dva.gov.au](mailto:nlhc@dva.gov.au).
- **Talk to your GP** – If you are not eligible for NLHC, your general practitioner may provide treatment or refer you to a Medicare-subsidised psychologist, psychiatrist, mental health social worker or mental health occupational therapist.



# Getting your affairs in order

As you age and your needs change it is important to get your affairs in order. Now is a good time to set up or review your:

- General Power of Attorney or Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPOA) arrangements
- Advance Care plan
- Will.

The laws regarding these documents differ in each state and territory. Therefore, the information in this book is just a guide. We encourage you to seek advice from your solicitor or from the public trustee (see glossary) in your state or territory.

**For more information** DVA has also created a book to help you navigate this. It's called *Planning Ahead – A Guide to Putting Your Affairs in Order – Preparing for and coping with bereavement*. This can be found on the DVA website [dva.gov.au/publications](https://dva.gov.au/publications).

## Providing DVA with copies of your documentation

DVA will need you to provide documents that prove your identity when you are submitting a claim for a pension, benefit or allowance. We will also need to know if you have a nominated representative such as your partner, a family member, friend or professional to act on your behalf. We respect your privacy but need to ensure that people acting on your behalf have been chosen by you or your relevant state or territory body.

**For more information** go to the DVA website [dva.gov.au/ID](https://dva.gov.au/ID) or to nominate a representative [dva.gov.au/nominatedrepresentative](https://dva.gov.au/nominatedrepresentative).

## Power of Attorney

A Power of Attorney is a legal document that authorises an appointed person (such as your spouse, sibling, child, other relative, or friend) to make decisions on your behalf. You can only do this when you have the capacity to make this decision.

There are different types of powers of attorney, and there are differences between each state and territory in Australia. Despite these differences, there are three main types of 'powers':

- General power of attorney
- Enduring power of attorney
- Enduring power of guardianship.

## General Power of Attorney (GPOA)

A general power of attorney is a legal document that gives the appointed person the authority to make decisions about **financial** and **legal** matters on your behalf. This power lasts only for as long as the person who appoints them has capacity. The general power ceases to operate if you lose capacity to make decisions.

A general power of attorney is often used as a tool of convenience. For example, a person might appoint a general power of attorney to look after their financial and legal affairs in Australia while they travel overseas.

## Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA)

An enduring power of attorney is similar to a general power of attorney except that the powers continue to last (or 'endure') after you lose capacity. You need to appoint your EPOA when you have the capacity to make the decision, so they can act on your behalf when you lose capacity.

In some jurisdictions, such as Victoria, the ACT and Queensland, an enduring power of attorney may also be used to authorise medical and health decisions.

## Enduring Power of Guardianship

An enduring guardian is appointed by you to make lifestyle decisions on your behalf when you lose capacity, for example about accommodation and daily activities.

In some jurisdictions, such as New South Wales and Tasmania, an enduring guardian may also be authorised to make medical and health decisions. An enduring power of guardianship continues after the donor loses capacity.

## Guardianship and Administration

An application can be made to the relevant state or territory administrative tribunal for the appointment of a guardian or administrator. This applies where there is no valid or relevant power of attorney or enduring guardian (or equivalent) documents and there are concerns that a person has impaired decision-making capacity and may make detrimental decisions, be neglected or exploited. A guardian can be authorised to make decisions about lifestyle, health care and certain other decisions.

## Advance Care Plan / Advance Health Directive

Advance care planning is now a routine part of managing your health care. Putting together your plan enables you to have a conversation where you can openly discuss your health care preferences, values and choices.

Having an advance care plan in place can empower and prepare you, your loved ones, carers and healthcare professionals for important healthcare decisions in the future. This approach reduces anxiety and improves outcomes for all involved.

An advance care plan is a personal statement that goes beyond filling in a form. It's a commitment that will be honoured and respected at a time when you cannot voice your decisions. Keeping your advance care plan up to date requires cooperation between you, your family, care workers, and health professionals as well as community and healthcare organisations.

Advance Care Planning Australia is a national program that provides information and resources to individuals, care workers and healthcare professionals to improve this cooperation. To find out more about Advance Care Planning Australia go to [advancecareplanning.org.au](https://advancecareplanning.org.au).

## Your Will

A will is a legal document that details what you'd like to happen with your estate. It can help ensure your assets are protected and your final wishes are carried out.

It also names who is responsible for carrying out your wishes. This person is known as an executor.

Your will is your voice after you're gone. The clearer your instructions, the better it is for the people you leave behind. A well-written and current will helps ensure:

- the right people are provided for when you die
- you know who will be your children's guardian
- your assets will be distributed according to your wishes
- there are no disagreements among those who expect to benefit from your estate
- the people responsible for managing your estate understand how you would like your affairs managed
- your estate can be settled quickly.

To make a will you must be 18 years or over and have legal capacity. Legal capacity means that you are of sound mind and you understand what a will is and what it does, you know the property you own and who is important to you.

If you don't have a will, state and territory laws determine who will benefit from your estate. The state will also determine who will administer your estate. This can mean your assets might not be distributed as you want.

# Glossary

**Accommodation costs** – This is for your accommodation in the aged-care home. Some people will have their accommodation costs paid in full or in part by the Australian Government, while others will need to pay the accommodation price agreed with the aged-care home. Services Australia will tell you which applies to you based on your income and assets assessment.

**Aged Care Assessment Team** – ACAT helps the elderly and their carers determine what kind of support will best meet their needs when they are struggling in their current living situation. The team often comprises a doctor, nurse, social worker and occupational therapist. They will ask the client a series of questions to determine the best care options available, either at home or in an aged-care home. This service is delivered by the Health department in each state or territory.

**Aged Care Assessment Service** – ACAS is Victoria's equivalent to ACAT.

**Aged Care Funding Instrument** – ACFI is an assessment used to determine your care needs and the amount of subsidy the Australian Government will pay the aged-care home for your care.

**Basic daily fee** – A basic daily fee is to cover your daily living costs such as meals, cleaning, laundry and power. Everyone moving into an aged-care home is asked to pay this fee. This is in addition to the means-tested care fee. For some this is the only fee that they pay. DVA will pay the basic daily fee for eligible former Prisoners Of War (POW) and Victoria Cross (VC) recipients.

**Means-tested care fee** – If your income and assets are over a certain amount, you can be asked to contribute towards the cost of your care. Services Australia will tell you if you need to pay this fee and the amount will be based on your income and assets assessment. DVA will pay this fee for eligible former POWs and VC recipients.

**Public Trustee** – Public/State Trustees are established by state/territory governments to provide professional, affordable and accessible trustee services to their respective communities. See website [moneysmart.gov.au/wills-and-powers-of-attorney](https://www.moneySMART.gov.au/wills-and-powers-of-attorney).

**Qualifying Service** – is one of the criteria for getting a Service Pension. Having Qualifying Service means that you can get a Veteran Gold Card when you turn 70 years of age and can access the Veterans' Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme.

**Rental-style payments** – is the payment of your daily accommodation payment paid regularly as a lump sum, usually monthly in a similar manner to rental payments for a house or apartment.

**Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF)** – This is a term used by some other government agencies. It means aged-care home.

**Treating doctor** – within this document the term treating doctor refers to medical doctors, general practitioners (GPs), local medical officers (LMO) and specialists.

**Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA)**– the VEA provides coverage for those who served in wartime and certain operational deployments, including certain peacetime service, between 7 December 1972 and 30 June 2004. It is one of three pieces of legislation for which DVA is responsible.

**Veterans' Home Care (VHC)** – The VHC program is a service to assist eligible DVA clients wishing to stay at home with a small amount of practical help. It also assists carers by providing respite care in recognition of the vital role they play in the veteran and defence community.

**VHC Assessment Agency** – Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agencies are contracted by DVA to determine your eligibility for respite services. The VHC Assessment Agency will arrange to pay the aged-care home providing the respite care if you are eligible.

