



# Accreditation in residential care facilities

## What is accreditation?

Accreditation standards apply to all Commonwealth funded aged care facilities. This means that you can expect to receive a standard level of care and support from each Commonwealth funded facility.

## Who does the checks?

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd does the checks. This involves an accreditation assessment that usually takes 2-3 days and reviews thereafter to ensure that facilities are meeting the standards.

Accreditation is awarded for up to 3 years. Facilities with 3-year accreditation have met the standards effectively. Those with 1-year or 2-year accreditation generally have identified issues that require further attention. This is important for you to know.

Each facility is seen annually. These visits are mostly planned - occasionally they are unannounced.

## How to access accreditation reports

The most up-to-date report for each facility is available from the:  
[Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency](#) - phone (02) 9633 1711.

While these reports provide worthwhile information, they are not easy for carers and families to read and make sense of. However, they may help you to identify areas of concern - you could then ask the facility specific questions about how they are addressing this.

## How to get involved in accreditation

Under the legislation, facilities must inform residents and their carers when an accreditation audit is to be conducted. When the Agency assessment team visits the facility, they will want to speak with residents, families and carers. This is your opportunity to compliment the facility on its successes, while also raising any concerns you have about the quality of care.

It would be hoped that any concerns you raise would have already been mentioned to the director of nursing or manager of the facility, in the interests of it being addressed as soon as possible. This is the benefit of having a 'continuous improvement' philosophy.

*"It can take a bit of courage to say what you think,  
but facilities need feedback if they are to improve things."*

## What is continuous improvement?

Continuous improvement is a belief or philosophy based on working to make things better. It suggests that while things may already be good, we can always strive for better. Under the aged care legislation, all facilities must practice continuous improvement - it's about working in partnership with everyone involved.



## How to get involved in continuous improvement

Everyone has a role in continuous improvement. Here are some suggestions for how to get involved:

- ☑ Compliment the facility on what it's doing right.
- ☑ When you raise concerns make suggestions for improvements.
- ☑ Offer to help with implementing improvements.
- ☑ Complete satisfaction surveys when available.
- ☑ Join the residents' & relatives' group - or start one up.
- ☑ Attend a quality assurance meeting or join the quality assurance committee.
- ☑ Talk to relatives involved with other facilities - seek new ideas for improving things.

## What is certification?

Certification is different to accreditation. It is generally a one-off process to ensure that the facility meets standards relating to things like buildings, equipment and funding obligations.

The government is using this process to improve and upgrade the physical quality of aged care facilities and to ensure space and privacy for residents. Many long established facilities with 'old style' buildings are working to renovate their existing premises or rebuild by 2008.

## Further information:

- ☑ [The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency](#) - brochure.
- ☑ [What is certification?](#) - fact sheet.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636\* to request the above information sheets be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

\*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at [website@carersvic.org.au](mailto:website@carersvic.org.au)