



How aged care advocacy can help you

This fact sheet explains how advocacy can support you to raise and resolve concerns about the quality of aged care and services.

What is advocacy?

An advocate is someone who stands beside you and works on your behalf and at your direction in a way that represents your expressed wishes. Advocates can listen to your concerns, give you information and speak up for you if you want them to. They will always seek your permission before taking action. **Advocacy is free, confidential and independent.**



Who can access advocacy?

You can access free advocacy if you:

- receive Australian Government–subsidised residential care, Home Care Packages or HACC aged care services, or have received services in the past
- are a potential recipient of aged care services
- are the family of a person receiving aged care services
- are representing the interests of a person receiving aged care services
- have been assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).



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How can advocacy help me?

Advocacy agencies will:

- support you in making decisions that affect your quality of life
- provide you with information and advice about your rights and responsibilities and discuss your options for taking action
- support you when you raise an issue with the service provider or the Aged Care Complaints Scheme (the Scheme)
- support you at any stage throughout the complaints process.



If you have a concern, you may want to discuss it with the service provider first. This can achieve a fast and sustainable result through building relationships between all parties. You can ask an advocate to support you: they may speak on your behalf if you want them to, and they can contact the manager of the service. If anyone, including an advocate, is not satisfied with the outcome, they can lodge a complaint with the Scheme.

What are my rights?

If you receive aged care services in an aged care facility or in your own home, you have rights.

You have the right to:

- personal privacy
- be involved in decisions that affect you
- be treated with dignity and respect
- be free from discrimination
- good quality care that meets your needs
- full and effective use of your personal, civil, legal and consumer rights
- complain and take steps to sort out any problems
- advocacy support.

You can read the *Charter of Residents' Rights and Responsibilities* at myagedcare.gov.au/financial-and-legal/rights-and-responsibilities-residential-care and the *Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Home Care* at myagedcare.gov.au/financial-and-legal/rights-and-responsibilities-home-care

You can ask an advocacy agency for a copy of either charter.

How can I ask for an advocate to help me?

You can call the National Aged Care Advocacy Line on **1800 700 600*** or go to myagedcare.gov.au/how-make-complaint/advocacy-services for the details of the advocacy agency in your state or territory. Your confidentiality will be respected and you can request an interpreter service if required.

If you cannot resolve your concern with the service provider, you can contact the Scheme. Where needed and with your permission, the Scheme can phone an advocacy agency on your behalf to explain your concerns and arrange for the agency to contact you.

* If you are calling from a mobile phone, an answering service on this number will give you the local number to call. There may be a charge involved when calling from a mobile phone; ask the advocacy agency for further details about this.



Aged Care Complaints Scheme

Phone 1800 550 552*

Write

Aged Care
Complaints Scheme
Department of
Social Services
GPO Box 9820
In your capital city

Online

agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au

All information in this publication is correct as at June 2014.

DSS12893.1402 June 2014

* 1800 calls are free from fixed lines; however calls from mobiles may be charged.