

5. Manage your care and services

Visiting your doctor, dentist or specialist

You can keep your own doctor, dentist or specialist. Your aged care home must help you make appointments and access doctors or specialists of your choice if needed. You do not have to pay the home for arranging these appointments. You will, however, generally need to pay the consultation fee.

Your aged care home can also help you arrange transport to and from your medical appointments. You may have to pay for the transport and for a staff member to accompany you.

Social activities

Your aged care home will organise social and other activities. Let them know about your hobbies and interests so they can help you continue with them while you are in the home. They might also be able to suggest other things to try.

Community visitors

If you are feeling alone and don't have regular contact with family or friends, the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) can provide opportunities for social contact.

If you would like a community visitor, you can let your aged care home know. Your family and friends can also let the home know if they think you would benefit from the CVS. Your aged care home may also approach the CVS directly.

Visit the Department of Health website (www.health.gov.au) and search for "CVS Network Members" for contact details in your state or territory or call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**. There is also a CVS to cater for the needs of LGBTI elders.

Taking leave

Can I go on holiday?

If you want to go on a holiday or visit family and friends you can use up to 52 nights of social leave from your aged care home in a financial year. You will still have to pay your usual fees and accommodation costs.

If you stay away for more than 52 nights in a financial year, the Australian Government will stop paying subsidies and your aged care home might ask you to make up the amount.

What if I need to go to hospital?

If you need to go to hospital, the time away won't count towards your social leave, but you'll still have to pay your usual fees and accommodation costs.

Changing rooms

If you are satisfied with your aged care home but want to change rooms, you can ask the manager of your home. They must consider your request, even if it isn't possible to offer you another room straight away.

You may need to negotiate a new accommodation agreement and accommodation price if you change rooms, for example, if you choose to move from a shared room to a single room. You may also be asked to pay extra or additional service fees associated with the new room.

Can the home make me change rooms?

There are circumstances where you could be moved to another room without you asking for the change. If you have any concerns about being asked to change rooms or how your move is being handled, talk to the manager at your aged care home.

Raising your concerns

If you are unhappy about the care or services you receive, you have the right to raise your concerns:

- It is often best to talk to your service provider about your complaint first to see if they can help as it may be something that can be easily resolved.
- If you like, you can have a family member, friend, carer or an aged care advocate with you when you meet with your aged care service provider.

If the complaint can't be resolved by the service provider, or you don't feel comfortable raising your concern with them, you can raise your concern with the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.

This is a free service and you can contact them by:

- Phone – **1800 550 552**
- Online – www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au
- In writing – address your written complaint to:

Aged Care Complaints Commissioner
GPO Box 9848
(Your capital city and state/territory)