

This leaflet is part of a series written by nurses, doctors and experts with experience in aged care. The series aims to make your journey into residential aged care easier. Look for other leaflets on questions to ask about specific care needs. These can be downloaded at: www.10questions.org.au

Aged care is very expensive, so it is important that you know what you're paying for. You can expect to pay a few different fee types, depending on your financial situation:

The daily fees cover living costs and personal care. The **basic daily fee** is payable by all residents, with an additional **means-tested care fee** payable based on Centrelink's assessment of your income and assets.

You will be asked to make a contribution towards your accommodation costs if Centrelink deems you can afford to.

You can pay in a lump sum called a **Refundable Accommodation Deposit** (RAD), which is refunded when you leave the home, a **Daily Accommodation Payment** (DAP), which is non-refundable, or through a combination of the two.

Extra service fees may apply if you have asked for an extra service place, which should include higher quality accommodation and additional services. The provider may offer **additional care and services for a fee**, but these are unregulated and only payable if you agree to do so. *You cannot be forced to pay additional fees.*



IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO ASK

The best way to find a residential aged care facility that suits you is to visit a few. To find your local ones, or for more information about aged care services contact: **My Aged Care**
 **1800 200 422**
myagedcare.gov.au

If you require advocacy or specialist advice about any matter not covered in this leaflet:
Seniors Rights Service
 **1800 424 079**

This leaflet has been developed and endorsed by:



For a full list of supporting organisations please visit www.10questions.org.au

If you have concerns about a residential aged care facility contact:



Australian Government
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

 1800 951 822

www.agedcarequality.gov.au



10 Questions to Ask

ABOUT CONTRACTS AND FEES IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE



www.10questions.org.au

1 **How long will I have to review the resident agreement* before I make a decision?**

A resident agreement is a legal document covering the arrangements for your care, accommodation and any fees you will pay. It is important that you and your loved ones have enough time to thoroughly read and understand the whole agreement before you sign it.

2 **Can someone help me to understand the terms of the resident agreement?**

The agreement should be written in plain English and there should be someone available to help you read and understand it. If you don't want to speak to an employee, you can ask to be referred to an aged care advocacy service for free independent financial and legal advice.

3 **Will my resident agreement specify the basic care and services I need and how this will be delivered?**

The resident agreement should set out the services you will be provided with in as much detail as possible. Ask that specialised services such as physiotherapy, podiatry and dental are included in your agreement. If you have high care needs it is important that there is a registered nurse (RN) on site to care for you at all times.

4 **Can I have the Charter of Resident Rights and Responsibilities and Aged Care Accreditation Standards included in my resident agreement?**

Your rights under the Charter of Resident Rights and Responsibilities and the Aged Care Accreditation Standards are only enforceable

if included in your resident agreement. Having these included will give you a better chance of getting your money back if you are due for a refund.

5 **What are my accommodation fees?**

Your accommodation fees are set out in an accommodation agreement*. You cannot be asked to pay more than Centrelink deems you can afford to pay. Some residential aged care providers may try to charge a 'refurbishment fee' or an 'asset replacement fee' based on whether you opt to pay a RAD or DAP*, but you should not agree to pay these charges as you are not obliged to.

6 **Am I being offered an extra service place?**

Some homes offer extra service places, which provide services and accommodation of a higher standard than is available to general residents. You will be charged an additional extra service fee if you want an extra service place.

7 **Beyond the basic daily care fee, accommodation fee and means-tested care fee, what fees am I being asked to pay?**

Your residential aged care provider can charge whatever they want for additional services and care as long as you agree to pay. You should not agree to pay for any additional care and/or services unless you think that the cost is fair and reasonable. Ask to negotiate if you think the fees are too high. Remember that you are entitled to care and personal support and should not be expected to pay extra for this.

8 **What costs aren't covered by my resident agreement?**

Generally, your medication and any medical appointments as well as the cost of your transport to and from appointments are not covered. You'll also need to buy your own clothes and pay for personal services like hairdressing. If you have opted for an extra service place, some of these costs may be covered. Ask exactly what you will be expected to pay for.

9 **What happens if my care needs change?**

You are entitled to high quality clinical care and personal support that meets your needs, regardless of your capacity to pay. Make sure you understand what will happen if your care needs change and you need more support. Ask if you will be able to include any additional care requirements in your resident agreement and whether the home can provide specialised care should you need it.

10 **What happens if I can't afford to pay?**

Some residential aged care providers will renegotiate your fees while others will stop providing particular services. It's important that you understand what will happen to you if you can't afford to pay the fees set out in the resident agreement. If you have paid a RAD, you may be able to have some fees deducted from the balance, but only if you agree.

* see back page for more explanation