

Assessing your Eligibility

To find out if you are eligible for Australian Government support for residential aged care, you will need to be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).

Aged Care Assessment Teams are known as Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) in Victoria.

What is an ACAT?

Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) are teams of health professionals, such as doctors, nurses or social workers, who provide information, advice and assistance to older people who are having difficulty living at home.

How do I find an ACAT?

You can contact an ACAT directly, or your doctor, health centre or local hospital can provide a referral to the ACAT nearest to you. Commonwealth Carelink Centres can provide you with information and guidance about aged care homes and can help to put you in touch with an ACAT in your local area. A list of ACATs is also available on the Department of Health and Ageing's internet site at <www.health.gov.au/acc>.

What does an ACAT do?

An ACAT can:

- approve eligibility for entry into residential aged care, in either **low level care** or **high level care**;
- give you information about residential aged care and home care services in your area;
- help you arrange special **respite care** if this is what you require; and
- approve eligibility for a package of community care to help you continue living at home or refer you to other services that will help you to continue living at home.

How will I be assessed?

A member of an ACAT will visit you and ask you some questions about your lifestyle and your health needs to help work out the best care option for you. With your approval, your doctor may tell the ACAT member about your medical history. You may want your carer, friend or family member to be present.

When the ACAT member has assessed your needs, she or he may leave you with a copy of a completed assessment, or it may be posted to you, which will tell you whether you are eligible for residential aged care. If you are assessed as eligible, you should keep this copy of the assessment as it is the approval for your move to residential aged care.

How often do I need to be assessed?

ACAT approvals are valid for 12 months from the date the ACAT member signs the assessment form. You will need a new ACAT assessment if you do not move into an aged care home within 12 months of that date, or if your care needs change significantly after you are assessed.

Does the assessment cost anything?

No. ACATs are funded by the Australian Government to provide free assessments.

What if I am not happy with the result of my assessment?

If you are not satisfied with the assessment, or recommendations, made by the ACAT you should tell the person in charge of the Team who conducted your assessment.

If an ACAT considers that residential aged care or a Community Aged Care Package is not appropriate for you, you can appeal against the decision. You will be sent a letter explaining how you, or someone acting on your behalf, can appeal an ACAT decision.

What should I do next?

If your ACAT has determined that you are in need of residential aged care, either permanently or on a respite basis, you may wish to begin the process of finding an aged care home.

The next section of this booklet will take you through the process of looking for an appropriate residential aged care home.



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