

HOME CARE VS RESIDENTIAL

Options for assisted living

If there is ever a time when stress levels and emotions can run high it is facing the myriad decisions around caring for an elderly family member or loved one.

Discussions around where someone – whether it is yourself or a nearest and dearest – is going to live and how it is going to be paid for, are often fraught not least because decisions are commonly made under extreme pressure. A fall or a rapid deterioration in health can trigger the necessity for people to make crucial calls about a loved one's future care within days.

Australia's ageing population means it is inevitable that more people will need some sort of living assistance, either at home or in a residential facility. According to the Productivity Commission the number of people needing aged care services will increase from more than one million today to 3.5 million by 2030.

Home based support

While the preference for most people is to age gracefully in their own home, there are a number of reasons why it may not be an option for the long term.

Fortunately there are numerous private and Government supported services which are available to allow people to stay living in their own home for as long as possible.

The Home and Community Care program is the simplest way for people to get help which allows them to remain at home. Someone who needs services such as domestic help or basic nursing care can seek Government assisted care following a simple assessment by

an approved provider. How much a person pays for services will depend on their financial situation, including whether or not they receive any Age Pension.

Where several services are needed for a person to remain in their own home a more comprehensive Home Care Package would be required.

As with any move into residential aged care, the Home Care Package requires an assessment by an Aged Care Assessment Team. Generally these can be arranged through a General Practitioner or within a hospital. They can also be found via the Governments ACAT Finder through its website myagedcare.gov.au.



Supported Living

Unfortunately not everyone's health allows them to remain at home. There is a wide range of residential care available for those people who for medical or physical reasons need to be in a supported living environment.

The cost of securing a bed in an aged care facility can depend on a number of factors including its location, the facility type and the level of care they require.

Where an accommodation bond is required the payment options are generally a lump sum or periodic payments, both of which could be several hundred thousand dollars.

It will depend on an individual's financial situation as to what is the best way to pay, including whether they are in a position to and want to sell their house to make the lump sum payment.

In addition to the emotional attachment some people have to their home there may be someone still living in the home. The sale of a house can also have further financial implications, including impacting one's Age Pension.

An alternative to selling is to rent the house and use the rental income to meet the accommodation or care costs or look at alternative income producing assets such as those within a superannuation fund.

The cost of care inside an aged care facility also depends on an individual's financial circumstances.

Choosing the best form of aged care and working out the most beneficial way of paying for it from a Centrelink and personal financial point of view requires expert knowledge of various systems, including aged care, Centrelink and taxation.

Please don't hesitate to call us and to discuss issues concerning aged care for yourself or your loved ones.

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