



Being part of a consumer advisory body

A resource for aged care consumers

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Being a part of your consumer advisory body helps your voice to be heard. The information you give to your service's governing body can help shape the way your service is run.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has put together some tips to help you get the most out of your time as part of the consumer advisory body.

Tip 1 – consider what is most important for your group to discuss.

A great way to start is by talking about how things work in your service, what you enjoy and where you would like to see things improved or done differently.

You will need to decide whether one consumer advisory group is what's needed at your service or whether it would be better to have different groups focussing on different things.

Topics you discuss could include things like:

- ✔ Food and dining – do you enjoy the food that you receive, and do you get the choices you expect? Is the dining experience at your service pleasant and enjoyable?

- ✔ Staff – are the staff well trained to do their jobs, and are they nice to you and others?
- ✔ Feedback and Complaints – how does your service encourage your feedback and respond to any complaints or suggestions for improvement?
- ✔ Safety – how does your service respond if something goes wrong? Do you feel safe?
- ✔ Activities and recreation – do you enjoy the activities that are provided? Are there any activities, special events or celebrations you would like your service to provide?

Tip 2 – be the voice for all residents

Your voice as a member of the consumer advisory body is important, but you should include the voices of others too.

Have a chat with other people before your meetings to get their views about the topics that you are going to discuss. This will help make your body as representative as possible.

Tip 3 – keep organised

It might seem like a lot of work but keeping organised will help make your consumer advisory body more effective. This might include:

- ✔ Formally deciding when, where and how often you will meet
- ✔ Making an agenda of what you plan to discuss at each meeting and sharing it with members ahead of time

- ✔ Giving roles to members of your consumer advisory body – like deciding who will chair your meetings, who will prepare agendas and who will take minutes
- ✔ Inviting guest speakers to your meetings when you are discussing relevant issues
- ✔ Documenting your discussions in a set of minutes
- ✔ Ask your service how they can help with the organisation.

Tip 4 – report your findings to the governing body, and follow up

The governing body can't make changes that you suggest if they don't know about them!

Make sure you have a formal way to report back to your governing body about what you have discussed at your meetings – that could be by having a discussion with someone or putting things in writing. This should be agreed with your governing body to avoid any confusion.

Your governing body has a responsibility to let you know what they are doing with the information that you provide and how they are changing.

Also, think about how you will share the feedback that you provide and what happens with other people at your service.



Remember

Consumer advisory groups are just one way to provide feedback

– not everyone will want to participate in a group. Your service should have other ways that people can raise a problem or concerns – ask your service about how this works.

How your service can support your consumer advisory group

Your service should support your consumer advisory group by:

- ✔ Letting everyone know about the group and how to get involved
- ✔ Providing a way to meet that is accessible and comfortable, this could be a physical place or an online place

- ✔ Ensuring that there are opportunities for everyone who is interested to participate including people living with visual and hearing impairment, cognitive decline, language barriers, or mobility issues
- ✔ Making sure that meetings are held at a time that works for everyone including people receiving care and family members
- ✔ Offering to provide a service representative to come to your meetings when you want them
- ✔ Asking you how you would like the service governing body to report back to your group and everyone in the service about how they are responding to your feedback, including new decisions and changes.

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Write

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