



Consumer advisory bodies

Obligations and support for providers

Your obligations

Consumer advisory bodies are a way for older people to give feedback and influence their aged care and services. A group of older people and their supporters come together in a structured way to discuss their provider's quality of care and services. They give feedback to their provider's governing body. The governing body must give a written response explaining how they used the consumer advisory body's feedback.

Feedback from consumer advisory bodies help resolve issues and influence the strategic direction of organisations. This is so organisations can better deliver rights-based, person-centred care and services.

This information outlines your consumer advisory body obligations as a registered provider of Australian Government-funded aged care services.

These obligations **apply** if you're registered in:

- Category 5 – Nursing and transition care
- Category 6 – Residential care (including respite).

They **don't apply** if you're a:

- government entity
- local government authority.

Work with older people

You **must** give a written offer to all older people and their supporters at your service, providing an opportunity to set up a consumer advisory body **at least once every 12 months**.

You **must** do this even if you already have a consumer advisory body.

When you make your offer, you should give information about consumer advisory bodies and how to join.

Governing body obligations

Governing bodies should genuinely consider consumer advisory body feedback. They **must write** to consumer advisory bodies to tell them how they considered their feedback.

Keep records

You **must** keep all these records:

- written offers to set up a consumer advisory body
- dates you made offers
- feedback from consumer advisory bodies
- written advice from governing body to consumer advisory bodies about how they've considered the feedback
- minutes of meetings of consumer advisory bodies.

How to help

Consumer advisory bodies should have their own sense of purpose and members should lead them. They should be independent so they can be confident, free and fearless with their feedback. Rather than own, manage or control consumer advisory bodies, you should work with members to find out what they need.

Tips to support consumer advisory bodies

Use the below information to best support consumer advisory bodies in your organisation.

They're the right size and fit.

Every organisation is different. Consider yours and then set up consumer advisory bodies that are the right size and fit for older people, their supporters and your organisation. This might mean if you're an organisation with two or more buildings, you could have one consumer advisory body for each building or even one for each floor. It might mean you have one small group of people, several small groups, or one or more larger groups.

Membership should reflect the people you care for and the services you provide. For example, if many of the people you care for speak a different language, the membership should reflect this. You could also set up a specific consumer advisory body to represent cohorts of older people.

Find what works for the older people in your care, and your organisation. Then, improve and adapt as things change.

Most members receive current care and services.

Consumer advisory bodies must include people who are currently receiving care and services. These people are most affected by decisions, have current lived experience and can give relevant and useful feedback. This will make sure the changes the governing body makes are appropriate and meaningful.

You may want some representation from people who are not currently receiving care and services. You can reach out to people who received care and services in the past and ask them to get involved. This might also include their supporters.

Engage families, friends and carers.

Ask if older people want their family, friends and carers involved and offer to help them join. This can help people feel more comfortable, confident and able to contribute.

Encourage diversity and remove barriers.

Consumer advisory bodies should include people from different backgrounds and a range of ages, genders, cultures and experiences. This brings new and different viewpoints which can lead to better and more meaningful advice.

Make it inclusive by arranging services like:

- translation
- hearing and vision support
- assistive technologies, such as mobility aids or speech recognition software.

Involve older people from all care and service types.

Consumer advisory bodies should have members that represent all care and service types you provide across all service locations. This means they can give feedback and inform the governing body about the full range of experiences across your organisation. This is so your governing body can make better decisions.

Continue to review and improve.

Some people are afraid of consequences if they raise issues. Both inside and outside the consumer advisory bodies, build trust and improve effectiveness by proactively seeking information in safe and different ways, for example, anonymous surveys, group discussion and one-on-one. This helps you hear from everyone.

As you offer to set up a consumer advisory body at least once every 12 months, use this as an opportunity to revise what works and what doesn't so you can fix it.

Effectively allow for feedback.

Facilitate the feedback process between the consumer advisory body and governing body. Make it visible so your governing body is accountable. You could do this by publishing the process on your internal or external websites, having a reporting schedule or including the process in your policies.

Allow feedback from the consumer advisory body in any form. This could be in writing, in person, audio or video. Tell them how the governing body will respond to their feedback. Make sure the governing body response gets to them quickly and in a way they can understand.

Make sure older people know what to do if you are not meeting your obligations as a registered provider.

Build and maintain membership

Here are some ways to help older people to get and stay involved in consumer advisory bodies.

- Give clear, easy to understand information.
- Make information easy to find online, in writing and in person.
- Give new members a welcome pack explaining what to expect.
- Put up notices, send newsletters, have posters and placemats with contact information.
- Hold regular group and one-on-one sessions about how to join and what's involved.
- Educate workers, give them resources with key information and contact details.
- Regularly connect in person with older people across your services to check their interest.



- Share the value of consumer advisory bodies and outcomes they achieve with older people, their supporters and workers.
- Help store, find and manage information to keep good records.
- Be patient, welcoming and open to questions.
- Give people time to feel safe enough to talk about their concerns.

Taking part in a consumer advisory body is voluntary. If older people aren't getting involved, that's okay, but you must still make an annual written offer to set up consumer advisory bodies. You can also try and find out what might be stopping them.

More information

Resources for you

- [Provider Governance](#) page on our website for resources and to learn more about your obligations.
- [Older Persons Advocacy Network \(OPAN\)](#) website to find out how they can support and advocate for older people at your service.
- [The Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) website to find out what services are available to you and older people who speak languages other than English.

Resources for older people

Visit the [CAB toolkit](#) on our website to find a toolkit of resources for older people to help them get started with their consumer advisory bodies.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

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