



# Consumer advisory body Meeting discussion guide



Australian Government  
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Engage  
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### Consumer advisory bodies

Consumer advisory bodies provide valuable feedback to governing bodies about the quality of care and services they deliver. They help build a person-centred culture committed to quality aged care.

Your aged care service needs to offer to form a consumer advisory body at least once every 12 months. A consumer advisory body is made up of people who receive care from that service. Its role is to give feedback on the quality of care and services they receive to the service's governing body.

Your provider must consider all the feedback they receive when making decisions. They must also let the consumer advisory body know how they considered the feedback. This helps to improve the services and care you and others receive.

### How to use this guide

This guide can be used to start conversations and encourage ideas on important topics at your service.

This discussion guide currently covers 3 topics.

- Food choices (residential care)
- Co-designed aged care (residential and home care)
- Care and service complaints (residential and home care)

To get the most from this resource:

- share the topic discussion guide with all consumer advisory body members and meeting guests
- read through the relevant topic/s you intend to discuss before the meeting
- think about the information and stories
- think about your answers to the questions
- come to the meeting ready to share your ideas.

### For more information



See our [Consumer advisory body webpage](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/consumer-advisory-bodies)

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/consumer-advisory-bodies>



Read our [Consumer advisory body fact sheet](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/consumer-advisory-body-fact-sheet-consumers)

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/consumer-advisory-body-fact-sheet-consumers>



Watch [this video](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/consumer-advisory-body-fact-sheet-consumers) where residents from Queen Victoria Care in Tasmania share their experiences and how they collaborate with their governing body in the design of their care.

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/consumer-advisory-body-fact-sheet-consumers>



# Discussion guide: Food choices in residential care

## Aged Care Standards and food choices

An enjoyable dining experience should meet the Aged Care Quality Standards.



### Standard 1: Consumer dignity and choice

*"I am treated with dignity and respect, and can maintain my identity. I can make informed choices about my care and services, and live the life I choose."*



### Standard 2: Ongoing assessment and planning with consumer complaints

*"I am a partner in ongoing assessment and planning that helps me get the care and services I need for my health and wellbeing."*



### Standard 4: Service and support for daily living

*"I get the services and supports for daily living that are important for my health and wellbeing and that enable me to do the things I want to do."*

## Your aged care service should offer you a food and dining experience that is safe, enjoyable and respectful.

Food, drink and the dining experience play an important role in maintaining your quality of life. Eating is not only essential to our survival, it is also important for our emotional and social needs.

The importance of food doesn't disappear with age. Choosing who you eat with, what you eat and when can impact your wellness and a sense of normality within aged care services.

Aged care services can find it challenging to keep a home-like environment for people receiving care while also meeting individual dietary needs and preferences.

People have a range of tastes, preferences and attitudes about food, and they bring these into care. Food that reflects a person's family background can act as a powerful source of comfort. It can help people recover from illness or adapt to their new accommodation.

## Food choices in practice

One aged care service in New South Wales has a creative approach to personalising food choices and dining options.

The food service team set up a suggestions box they've named a 'wishing well' in the dining area. Residents can write down their

food ideas and requests and put them in the wishing well for staff to read and action.

The wishing well is now really helpful for planning meals. It's also quite a novelty and brings residents, staff and management together to make a more fulfilling food and dining experience. This has added to the residents' sense of empowerment, community and wellbeing.

## Helpful resources

Explore our collection of resources on food, dining and nutrition at [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/health-wellbeing/food-and-nutrition](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/health-wellbeing/food-and-nutrition). You can share these with people at your aged care service.

You can also find a range of fact sheets, posters and videos to share with your governing body at [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/food-nutrition-dining](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/food-nutrition-dining).

## Things to think about before the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- What do you like about the food at your service?
- What do you dislike about the food at your service?
- Would you like to change anything about the food at your service?

## Questions to discuss during the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- What works well about the food choices at your service?
- Have you noticed any problems with food at your service?
- Does your service offer food choices that represent residents' different cultures and backgrounds?
- Do you have a choice about what you eat at mealtimes?
- Have you ever been served something you didn't like?
- Do you have any suggestions about how mealtimes could be more enjoyable?
- Can you give input into menus and service arrangements?

## Actions to consider after the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- What information do you want to report to your governing body about this topic?
- How will you do this (in conversation or in writing)?
- What support do you need from your service to do this?
- Does your consumer advisory body need to talk to other people receiving care and services before reporting to the governing body?
- What would you like the governing body to do after they get your feedback from this meeting?



# Discussion guide: Co-designed care

## Aged Care Quality Standards and co-design

The Aged Care Quality Standards recognise the benefits of co-design to develop and improve aged care and services.



### Standard 1: Consumer dignity and choice

*"I am treated with dignity and respect, and can maintain my identity. I can make informed choices about my care and services, and live the life I choose."*



### Standard 2: Assessment and planning

*"I am a partner in ongoing assessment and planning that helps me get the care and services I need for my health and wellbeing."*



### Standard 8: Organisational governance

*"I am confident the organisation is well run. I can partner in improving the delivery of care and services."*

## Co-design is where everyone involved in your care works with you to design and deliver care that is right for you.

Attitudes to how aged care is planned and delivered are changing in Australia. Many services and older Australians recognise the value of co-design.

So, what is co-design in aged care? Co-design is where services, workers, you, your family and representatives work together to design and deliver care that is right for you. Co-design includes exploring and discussing your needs with everyone involved in your care. Co-design:

- improves the quality of your care and services
- improves your experience of the care you receive
- improves your care outcomes and your satisfaction with care and services
- encourages you to be more involved so you get the care and services you need
- helps service staff to provide tailored care and services to people with different needs.

## Co-design in practice

An example of successful co-design is Uniting AgeWell's physical exercise program. They used a seniors' gym (HUR gym) and had physiotherapists work with people to design gym programs to meet their individual goals.



They also set up a buddy system with gym goers and matched them with a partner for motivation. People in the program said that the social and community connections they built motivated them to go to the gym and exercise.

The co-design program was so successful gym membership more than doubled in a year.

### Helpful resources

For more information on co-designing care and services, see:

- [Care that is right for me](#) on the Commission's website ([www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au))
- [Step Forward Together toolkit and resource guide](#) on the Council on the Ageing's website ([www.cota.org.au](http://www.cota.org.au))
- [Co-design toolkit](#) on the NSW government's Agency for Clinical Innovation's website ([www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au)).

### Things to think about before the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- Have you experienced, or do you know of examples, where providers have worked with the people in their care to design their care and services? Did it work well? If it did, why? If it didn't, why not?
- Do the care and services you receive meet your needs and wants? If not, do you think co-design could help? Do you have any suggestions for how your service could do this?

- Who's involved (or has been involved) in planning your care and services?

### Questions to discuss during the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- Do you feel you're an equal partner in your care planning?
- When are you, your family and representatives involved in your care and service planning?
- Do you think your service understands and uses key principles of co-design? If not, how can you change this?
- How do people with barriers (for example, cognitive impairment or English as a second language) take part in co-design at your service?
- Do you think any part of the care and services you receive can improve? If yes, do you think co-design could help?

### Actions to consider after the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- What information do you want to report to your governing body about this topic?
- How will you do this (conversation or in writing)?
- What support do you need from your service to do this?
- Does your consumer advisory body need to talk to other people receiving care before reporting to the governing body?
- What would you like the governing body to do after they get your feedback from this meeting?



# Discussion guide: Complaints

## Aged Care Quality Standards and complaints

Your right to give feedback and make complaints is supported in the Aged Care Quality Standards.



### **Standard 1: Consumer dignity and choice**

*"I am treated with dignity and respect, and can maintain my identity. I can make informed choices about my care and services, and live the life I choose."*



### **Standard 6: Feedback and complaints**

*"I feel safe and am encouraged and supported to give feedback and make complaints. I am engaged in processes to address my feedback and complaints, and appropriate action is taken."*



### **Standard 8: Organisational governance**

*"I am confident the organisation is well run. I can partner in improving the delivery of care and services."*

It is also recognised by the Charter of Aged Care Rights.

**Item 12:** *"I have the right to complain free from reprisal and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly."*

**Resolving complaints is one of the Commission's most important responsibilities. We work with you, your family, representatives and the service to address concerns and make sure you are safe.**

We regularly share information about the number and types of complaints we receive. You can find this in our [Sector performance reports](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/news-publications/reports/sector-performance#reports) published on our website (<http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/news-publications/reports/sector-performance#reports>).

Understanding the types of complaints we receive helps us know where we need to support and monitor aged care services, so quality care is provided.

## Common areas of complaint in residential services

- Medical administration and management
- Personnel number and sufficiency
- Personal and oral hygiene
- Representative and family consultation
- Falls prevention and post fall management

## Common areas of complaint in home services

- Lack of consultation and communication
- Fees and charges
- Consistent client care and coordination
- Management of finances
- Reimbursements

## Complaints improve care and services

If you're worried about the quality of care or services you or someone else is receiving, it's important to talk about it. The best way to do this is to make a complaint directly to the service.

Your service must have a complaints process and let you know what to do and who to talk to. Making a complaint isn't being 'difficult', it's a normal part of service delivery.

Complaints help your service become aware of an issue and find solutions. They help to improve care and services for everyone. This means you, other people receiving care and the service can all benefit from your complaint.

## Things to think about before the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- Have you made a complaint about aged care, or do you know someone who has?
- What was it about?
- How did you/they feel? Why?
- Have you ever wanted to make a complaint about any of the common complaint areas at your current service?

## Helpful resources

Explore our website for useful information about complaints and feedback at [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint).

See the [Resolving concerns about aged care](#) and [The complaints services we offer](#) fact sheets at [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-concerns/complaints-process](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-concerns/complaints-process).

You can also share the [Better practice guide to complaints handling in aged care services](#) with your governing body at [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-concerns/good-complaints-practice](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-concerns/good-complaints-practice).

## Questions to discuss during the meeting

✓ Tick each box after you've covered the question.

- Does your service have a complaints process?
- How do they let people know how they can raise a complaint and who to talk to?
- Could more be done to make sure people know what to do?
- Are complaints and feedback encouraged at your service or would you feel uncomfortable making a complaint?
- How do people with communication barriers (for example, cognitive impairment or English as a second language) make complaints at your service?





