



## Early signs of success with new aged care workforce responsibilities

### Statement from Janet Anderson PSM, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner

11 October 2023

On 1 October 2023, mandatory care minutes targets were introduced for residential aged care. Aged care providers must now deliver a sector average of 200 minutes of care per resident per day, including at least 40 minutes from a registered nurse.

Mandatory care minutes targets complement the requirement for aged care homes to have a registered nurse on-site, around the clock.

These new requirements mean that people living in aged care will have better access to personalised care to meet their individual care needs. Family members of aged care residents can have greater trust and confidence that their loved one is receiving the right level of care.

The majority of aged care homes are already meeting these new workforce responsibilities.

In August 2023, the sector reported that, on average, a registered nurse was on-site and on duty 98.08% of the time, 23.5 hours a day.

Before the mandatory care minute targets were introduced, data showed that aged care homes were already delivering approximately 194 care minutes per resident per day, including 37 minutes of registered nurse care, just shy of the now mandatory sector target.

The Commission will continue to take a fair and sensible approach to regulating aged care providers' compliance with their workforce responsibilities.

The Commission will be working with providers to ensure that they are taking reasonable steps to recruit and retain staff and that they have arrangements in place to ensure that their residents receive safe and quality care.

It is only in circumstances where an aged care provider is not working towards meeting the care minutes targets, or there are concerns about the quality and safety of the care being delivered, that the Commission will consider taking regulatory action. Whatever action the Commission decides to take will be proportional to the assessed level of risk and will be aimed squarely at prompting the provider to address the risk to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents.

The care minutes target of 200 minutes a day is a sector-wide average. Each aged care home has been allocated its own quarterly care minutes target based on an assessment of the needs of its residents in the previous three months. This means that homes with higher-needs residents will need to deliver more time, and those with lower-needs residents will have lower targets.

The Australian Government has acknowledged the challenges being experienced by providers to attract and retain a suitably qualified and skilled workforce. There is support available to help providers to meet the new workforce requirements. Providers who are concerned about meeting the requirements should contact the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care to discuss the support that may be available to them.

#### **Further information:**

Care minutes refer to the time spent by registered nurses, enrolled nurses, personal care workers and assistants in nursing in providing personal and clinical care to residents. Personal and clinical care includes a range of services such as nursing care, support to perform daily living activities such as bathing, continence and mobility assistance and support for residents to engage in social activities.



The Aged Care Royal Commission recommended the implementation of mandatory care minutes. The Royal Commission found that inadequate staffing levels, skill mix and training were the principal causes of substandard care in the aged care sector. The introduction of these new workforce-related responsibilities will help ensure that aged care providers have the right level and mix of staff to meet their residents' needs.

Information on the 24/7 registered nurse coverage and care minutes requirements is available on the Department of Health and Aged Care's website [here](#).

Information on the Commission's approach to regulating the 24/7 registered nurse coverage and care minutes requirements is available on the Commission's website [here](#).