



## Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

# Quick reference guide

## Provider fact sheet



The strengthened Quality Standards came into effect with the commencement of the *Aged Care Act 2024* (the Act).

The strengthened Quality Standards are designed to deliver a better aged care experience. They explain what safe quality care should look like. They also help providers to lift their performance and deliver the care that older people need and expect.

## What do the strengthened Standards look like?

There are 7 strengthened Quality Standards.

1. The individual
2. The organisation
3. The care and services
4. The environment
5. Clinical care
6. Food and nutrition
7. The residential community

The structure of each strengthened Quality Standard includes:

- Intent – which describes the intended overall purpose of the Standard.
- Expectation statement – which describes what the older person can expect from you related to that Standard.
- Outcomes – which describe what you will be assessed against.
- Actions – which describe what you can do to meet the outcome.



## The new provider registration system

The new Act also introduced a new provider registration system. A single registration process covers all the types of aged care services (such as home care and residential care) delivered by a provider.

Under this system, all providers delivering Australian Government-funded aged care services need to be registered. This replaced the previous system where only some providers were approved or accredited by the Commission.

Providers are registered in registration categories. There are 6 registration categories that group service types based on complexity of care, and risk.

It's important you understand your registration category because your category determines the Standards that you need to meet. For more information, see the provider registration category table below.

## What does this mean for you in practice?

The registration categories help you to understand which strengthened Quality Standards you need to meet (as demonstrated in the table below).

- Category 1–3 providers aren't audited against the strengthened Quality Standards. However, these providers must still meet registration requirements and provider obligations under the new Act.
- Category 4 providers must comply with Quality Standards 1–4. They must also comply with Standard 5: Clinical Care –Outcome 5.1 Clinical Governance if they're responsible for care management or restorative care management.
- Category 5 providers must comply with strengthened Quality Standards 1–5.
- Category 6 providers must comply with strengthened Quality Standards 1–7.

Provider registration category	Description	Service types	Application to registration categories	
			Aged Care Quality Standards 1 – 4	Aged Care Quality Standards 5 – 7
<b>Category 1</b>	Home and community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Domestic assistance</li><li>• Home maintenance and repairs</li><li>• Meals</li><li>• Transport</li></ul>		
<b>Category 2</b>	Assistive technology and home modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equipment and products</li><li>• Home adjustments</li></ul>		
<b>Category 3</b>	Advisory and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hoarding and squalor assistance</li><li>• Social support and community engagement</li></ul>		



Provider registration category	Description	Service types	Application to registration categories	
			Aged Care Quality Standards 1 – 4	Aged Care Quality Standards 5 – 7
<b>Category 4</b>	Personal care and care support in the home or community (including respite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allied health and therapy</li> <li>• Personal care</li> <li>• Nutrition</li> <li>• Therapeutic services for independent living</li> <li>• Home or community general respite</li> <li>• Community cottage respite</li> <li>• Care management</li> <li>• Restorative care management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 1:</b> The Individual</li> <li>• <b>Standard 2:</b> The Organisation</li> <li>• <b>Standard 3:</b> The Care and Services</li> <li>• <b>Standard 4:</b> The Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 5:</b> Clinical Care –Outcome 5.1 Clinical Governance <i>(Applies to the service types of care management and restorative care management only)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Category 5</b>	Nursing and transition care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursing care</li> <li>• Assistance with transition care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 1:</b> The Individual</li> <li>• <b>Standard 2:</b> The Organisation</li> <li>• <b>Standard 3:</b> The Care and Services</li> <li>• <b>Standard 4:</b> The Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 5:</b> Clinical Care</li> </ul>
<b>Category 6</b>	Residential care (including respite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential accommodation</li> <li>• Residential everyday living</li> <li>• Residential clinical care</li> <li>• Residential non-clinical care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 1:</b> The Individual</li> <li>• <b>Standard 2:</b> The Organisation</li> <li>• <b>Standard 3:</b> The Care and Services</li> <li>• <b>Standard 4:</b> The Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 5:</b> Clinical Care</li> <li>• <b>Standard 6:</b> Food and Nutrition</li> <li>• <b>Standard 7:</b> The Residential Community</li> </ul>

Provider obligations and the Code of Conduct apply to all providers in all categories



## Audits

We do audits to assess if providers can conform with the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards and deliver safe and high-quality care.

Audits help us make decisions about registration, renewal of registration and variation of registration. We announce audits, so providers know when they're happening.

We do an audit when a provider applies:

- for registration in categories 4, 5 or 6 (registration audit)
- to renew their registration in categories 4, 5 or 6 (renewal of registration audit)
- to add a new category (4, 5 or 6) service to their registration (variation of registration audit).

Audits assess if a provider can conform with the Quality Standards. Audits focus on:

- your governance arrangements
- your systems and processes for delivering care
- the experience and outcomes for people in your care
- if you have safe, high-quality practices across your services.

## How can you demonstrate conformance with the strengthened Quality Standards?

The strengthened Quality Standards – Provider Guidance is the key resource to help you understand the intent of each strengthened Quality Standard. There is also guidance for governing bodies and workers. These resources also explain new topics and support you to look at systems and processes that can help you comply.



## Reflective questions for providers

- How do you create and support a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in your organisation to deliver high-quality, safe care that complies with the strengthened Quality Standards?
- How do you provide a more transparent care and service environment for employees and older people?

During an audit, conformance will be assessed and determined at the Outcome level. You can use the actions under each outcome to understand the evidence you can use to show that you comply.

## What can you do to support your staff to understand the strengthened Quality Standards?

To support your staff you must:

- make sure management help them to understand what they need to do to fulfill their role and increase the safety and quality of care of older people
- provide step by step instructions and guidelines about your organisation's processes for delivering services and expectations.



## **Strengthened Quality Standards**

Quick reference guide

### **Resources**



#### **Strengthened Quality Standards – Provider guidance**

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/strengthened-quality-standards>



#### **Strengthened Quality Standards resources**

[www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/quality-standards/strengthened-quality-standards](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/quality-standards/strengthened-quality-standards)



#### **Quality Standards Resource Centre**

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*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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