

NINE IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ACAT ASSESSMENTS

1. WHY DO I NEED AN ACAT?

Before you can move into any Commonwealth subsidised Aged Care Facility or receive any level of subsidised In-Home Care, you need to have a comprehensive assessment to determine the level of care you need.

This comprehensive assessment is undertaken by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) and is usually referred to as an ACAT Assessment.

An ACAT Assessment is also needed to:

- have Respite Care in an Aged Care Facility
- access Transition Care (a temporary stay after or sometimes before a time in hospital)
- receive Aged Care services through an In-Home Care package

2. WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN ACAT ASSESSMENT?

An ACAT Assessment is designed to understand your individual care needs. This means looking at all the different elements of your situation as a whole, including:

- your health and medical needs (both physical and cognitive) as well as any future health and medical concerns
- your physical needs – for example, how well you can get around; and whether you are able to do ordinary day-to-day activities like showering and dressing, shopping, preparing meals, cleaning, doing laundry and attending appointments
- your psychological needs – for example, how you are feeling? What you are most concerned about now and for the future? Have you experienced depression or another mental illness?
- your social needs – for example, do

you have friends, family or other networks to support you? What are your hobbies and interests? And are you able to participate in the social activities you'd like to?

- your special needs or concerns – things that are important to you and your lifestyle which could include your religious or cultural beliefs, recognition of your sexuality, language requirements etc.

This assessment of you and your situation is the way the ACAT works out how much help you need and what types of services you might be eligible for. The outcomes of the assessment are used to make a recommendation for the type and level of care that best meets your needs.

3. WHERE DOES THE ACAT ASSESSMENT TAKE PLACE?

The ACAT Assessment takes place wherever you are located at the time you need to be assessed. Preferably it will be in the comfort of your own home, but it could also be in Hospital or a Rehabilitation Centre if that's where you are.

4. WHO IS ON THE AGED CARE ASSESSMENT TEAM?

Aged Care Assessment Teams are small groups of Health Professionals based in local communities all around Australia. The members of each ACAT team represent a range of Healthcare skills and professions. There are more than 180 ACAT teams across the country and while they will vary from location to location an ACAT team is usually made up of:

- a nurse
- a physiotherapist
- an occupational therapist
- a social worker.

ACAT teams are experienced in:

- understanding the broad spectrum of needs of older people
- knowing the various services and service providers in their local areas.

5. HOW LONG DOES AN ACAT ASSESSMENT TAKE?

In most cases an ACAT Assessment will take between 45 and 75 minutes. Assessors can then take up to two weeks to complete their report which will be mailed to you. In most cases it is not possible to proceed in your search for a subsidised Aged Care Facility or In-Home Care service until you have received this report.

6. DO YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR THE ACAT ASSESSMENT?

No, the ACAT Assessment is free.

7. HOW DO YOU GET AN ACAT ASSESSMENT?

There are two ways to get an ACAT Assessment. You can:

- call the My Aged Care contact centre directly on 1800 200 422 from 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 10am-2pm Saturdays; OR
- get a referral from your Health Care Professional.

8. WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER THE ACAT ASSESSMENT?

Once the ACAT Assessment is complete, the ACAT Assessor will let you know the outcome in writing. This letter will specify:

- the services that you have been approved for and any conditions they come with
- the reasons for the decision, including specific evidence that the decisions are based on
- information about your right to appeal the decision if you're not happy with it.
- a name and contact number to call if

you wish to discuss the decision.

You will also be provided with:

- information about Service Providers in your area that can provide the services you need
- a copy of your Aged Care Client Record
- information about the Aged Care Complaints Scheme

You should keep a copy (or copies) of these documents. While service providers can access your client record electronically via My Aged Care, it is useful to have a copy with you when you are looking for an Aged Care Facility or In-Home Care Service.

Having these documents on hand will make it easier for service providers to confirm quickly that you are approved as eligible for the services you are looking for.

9. I'M NOT HAPPY WITH MY ACAT RESULTS – NOW WHAT?

The letter about your assessment explains how you can apply for a review if you are unhappy with the decision.

A review of the ACAT Assessment is free but your written application to the Department of Social Services must be received within 28 days of receipt of your letter from the ACAT. If you don't agree with the review outcome you can apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

This will incur a charge. Further information is available on the My Aged Care website.

We appreciate that this can be an overwhelming time so our friendly staff at Bundaleer are only too happy to assist you in any way we can. Call us on (02) 6858 2811 to let us know how we can help.