

This leaflet is part of a series written by nurses, doctors and experts with experience in aged care. The series aims to make your journey into residential aged care easier. Look for other leaflets on questions to ask about specific care needs. These can be downloaded at: [www.10questions.org.au](http://www.10questions.org.au)

In addition to the questions contained in this leaflet you should also observe the environment of each facility as you walk around to decide if you want to live there.

**The home should not have an unpleasant smell.** This may indicate insufficient cleaning or poor continence management.

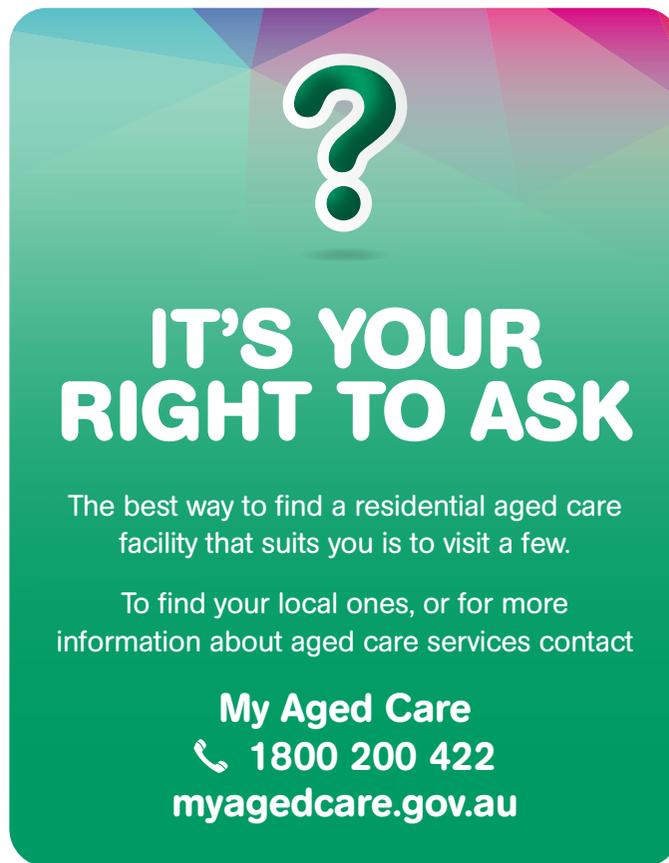
**People should be engaged** and not visibly bored and unoccupied, this may indicate insufficient staffing or lack of individual activities.

**Staff (including managers) should treat residents with respect.** This will be your home, you should expect to be treated with respect. Staff should acknowledge this and ensure they include you in discussions.

You can book an appointment to ask questions of the staff and management and to receive a formal tour of the home. You may also like to visit unannounced, to observe what day to day living in the home is like.

Staffing ratios and activities may differ depending on whether it is a week day or weekend so try to vary the times you visit.

See if you can speak to other residents and their relatives about their personal experience of living there.



# IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO ASK

The best way to find a residential aged care facility that suits you is to visit a few.

To find your local ones, or for more information about aged care services contact

**My Aged Care**  
 **1800 200 422**  
[myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au)

This leaflet has been developed and endorsed by:



For a full list of supporting organisations please visit [www.10questions.org.au](http://www.10questions.org.au)

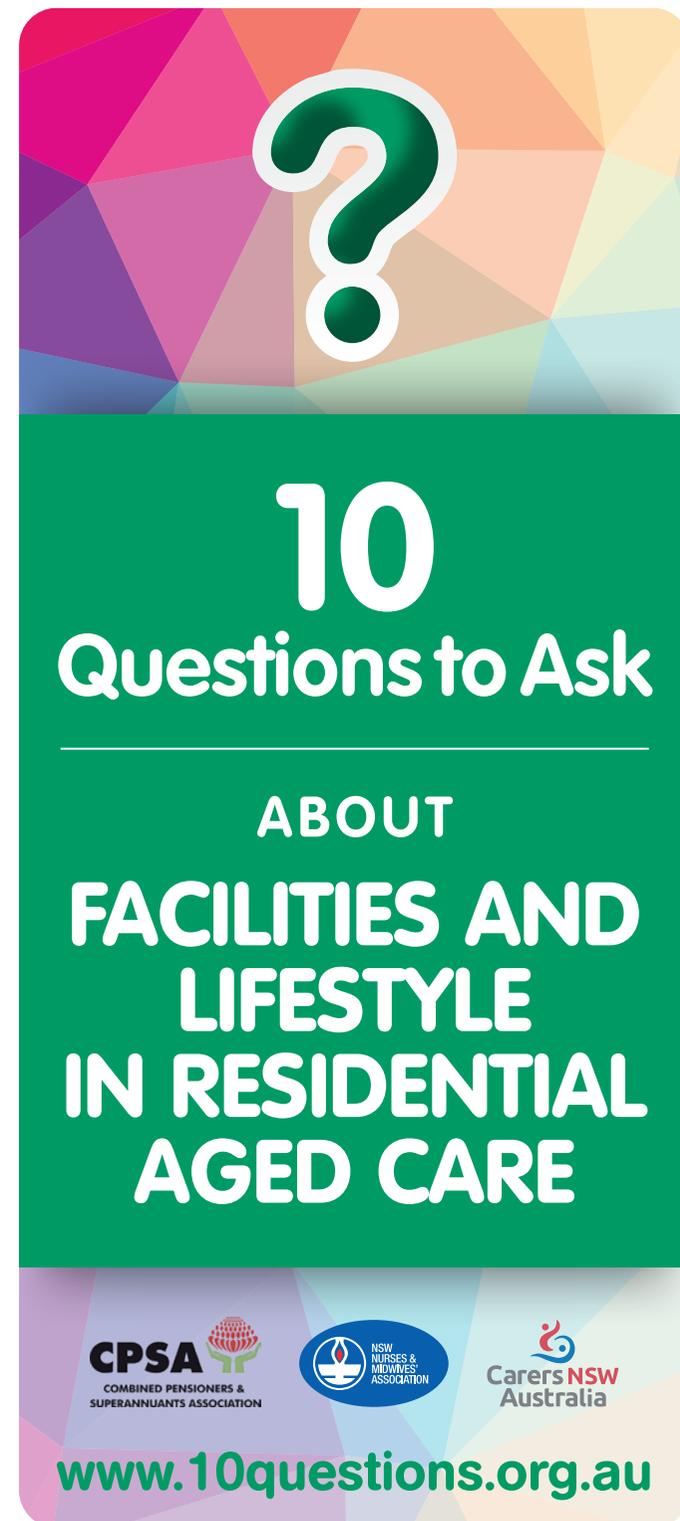
If you have concerns about a residential aged care facility contact:



**Australian Government**  
**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

 1800 951 822

[www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au)



# 10 Questions to Ask

## ABOUT FACILITIES AND LIFESTYLE IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

**CPSA** COMBINED PENSIONERS & SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION

**NSW NURSES & MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION**

**Carers NSW Australia**

[www.10questions.org.au](http://www.10questions.org.au)

**1 What sort of room can I have?**  
Room options may have different prices and you may need to join a waiting list for your preferred room type. Ask what is included in each room and what you will need to bring. Are couples rooms available? How are shared rooms allocated, and can you change rooms if you don't get on with your roommate? Are you allowed to have overnight visitors?

**2 What shared areas does the home have?**  
There may be shared areas like gardens or common rooms where you can spend your time, but check if there are rules about when you can access these areas. Ask about your freedom to move around the home. When can you spend time outside? Is there space to pursue the hobbies and interests you enjoy?

**3 How will the home support me with my daily living?**  
Most residents need some assistance with daily activities like getting around, grooming and having meals. Will you be able to choose the time you wake up, have a shower, eat your meals and go to bed? Or are these activities scheduled according to staffing levels? How long will you need to wait to have your call bell answered?

**4 What is the staff to resident ratio for each shift?**  
You should know how many of each type of staff, including activity staff, are provided on each shift. Observe if there are enough staff around to supervise people and help them eat, go to the bathroom, socialise and move around. What is the ratio overnight and on the weekend?

**5 What social and recreational activities are available?**  
Diversional therapists are trained to plan and deliver meaningful activities that support social, mental and physical wellbeing. Ask to speak to the diversional therapist about the activities on offer and their day-to-day involvement in running the activities. Do these activities interest you? Will you have a say in what activities you do?

**6 What food options are available?**  
Food may be prepared on site, delivered ready-to-eat or to be reheated. Ask about the menu and how often it changes. Make sure there are a variety of meals that you enjoy and that you have options to choose from. How will your special dietary requirements be managed?

**7 Can I have visitors at any time?**  
Some homes have strict visiting hours and others are more flexible. Ask if you can have visitors at any time, or if there are times of day when guests are not allowed to visit. Are pets allowed to visit? Under what circumstances can the home stop family or friends from visiting?

**8 How will you help me to feel safe, comfortable and welcome?**  
This will be your home and it is important that you feel safe, welcome and supported by both residents and staff. Your beliefs and interests should be respected and you should have control over how you express your culture and identity. If it is important to you, ask if there are residents at the home who share your beliefs or interests. You don't have to be friends with everyone, but you should still be able to relax in a supportive environment.

**9 How are hospital transfers minimised?**  
You may become unwell and need to go to hospital, but there are things that staff can do to minimise the need for hospital transfers and reduce the time you spend in hospital. Having at least one registered nurse (RN) on each shift may reduce the chances of hospital admissions, so ask how many are employed and consider if this would be enough given the size of the place and needs of people living there.

**10 Will I have a say in how the home is run?**  
Is there a consumer advisory body or carer advisory body that give feedback on how things are being run? Ask about any recent changes that have been introduced following feedback from residents and carers. You should also ask about making complaints and what happens when there is a disagreement between the home and a resident or their carer.