



People’s care needs in aged care

How are needs met?

In Australia, aged care services are tailored so that each person receives the type of help they need. Care is generally provided through residential and community-based approaches. People in permanent residential care need help with most activities and their needs are assessed through the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) on three different areas of care—*activities of daily living, cognition and behaviour, and complex health care*.

What is the ACFI?

The ACFI is a tool used to assess and provide basic information on a person’s needs in permanent residential care. Questions are asked across the three areas of care (known as ‘care domains’). The ratings—high, medium, low or nil—are used to allocate government funds to the resident’s facility.

The ACFI showed that among people in permanent residential aged care on 30 June 2016:

- 57% had a mental health or behavioural condition
- 52% had dementia
- 46% had a diagnosis of depression.

What area of care has the highest level of need?

In 2016, care needs rated as ‘high’ were largest for *cognition and behaviour* (63%), closely followed by *complex health care* (61%) (Figure 1). *Activities of daily living* had the smallest amount of high care need ratings (56%).

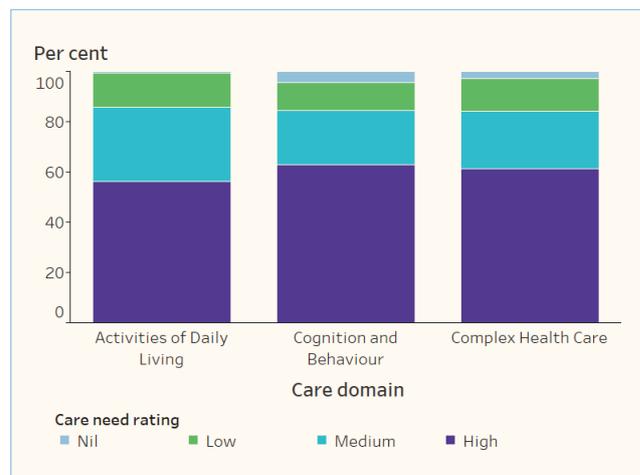


Figure 1: Care need ratings of people in permanent residential care on 30 June 2016, by care domain

How have care needs changed over time?

Since 2009, the proportion of people with high care needs has progressively increased on each care domain. The biggest change was in the *complex health care* domain where high care need ratings increased from 13% in 2009 to 61% in 2016 (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Care need ratings of people in permanent residential care for complex health care, 30 June 2009–2016

Who has high care needs?

Most people (92%) in residential aged care had a high care need rating on at least one of the care domains.

Older people

Generally, the proportion of people with high care needs increases with age, but this isn't always the case—high care needs decreased with age on the *cognition and behavior* care domain (Figure 3).

Women

A higher proportion of women were assessed with a high care need rating on the *complex health care* domain (62% compared with 59% of men), and *activities of daily living* domain (57% compared with 53% of men). Men and women had the same high care need rating on the *cognition and behavior* domain (63% each). However, at each age group, a higher proportion of women than men were rated with a high care need (Figure 3). This was the same for the other care domains.



Figure 3: Proportion of people with high care needs ratings for Cognition and behavior by age and sex, 30 June 2016

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Culturally and linguistically diverse people

On each care domain, a larger proportion of people born in non-English speaking countries and those who preferred speaking a language other than English were rated with high care needs than those who were born in English-speaking countries and those who preferred to speak English.

People with dementia

A higher proportion of people with dementia had a high care need rating than people without dementia in each care domain. As could be expected, the biggest difference was on the *cognition and behavior* domain, where high care needs were nearly double that for people with dementia (81%) than for those without dementia (42%).

Where can I find out more?

Department of Health:

Basic subsidy amounts (ACFI)

<<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/aged-care-funding/residential-care-subsidy/basic-subsidy-amount-aged-care-funding-instrument>>

ACFI user guide

<<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/acfi-user-guide>>

ACFI reports

<<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/tools-and-resources/aged-care-funding-instrument-acfi-reports>>

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Information and data on aged care in Australia

[GEN-agedcaredata.gov.au](http://gen-agedcaredata.gov.au)

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