



People leaving aged care

What does it mean to leave aged care?

People use aged care services for as long as they need to. When the service is no longer needed, they are ‘discharged’ and information about their reasons for leaving care and how long they were in care are recorded.

A person might leave and return to aged care several times throughout the year (or across many years), or they might move between providers. In either of these cases, they are counted as a discharge or an ‘exit’ each time they leave care (excluding short periods of leave).

How many people leave aged care?

In 2015–16, there were around 206,700 exits from aged care. Of these, the majority (142,200) was from residential care—split relatively evenly between permanent residential aged care (48%) and respite care (52%)—followed by home care (39,300) and transition care (24,300).

Why do people leave aged care?

The reasons people leave differ by the type of care. The largest proportion (81%) of exits from permanent residential aged care was due to death. In comparison, death accounted for less than 4% of exits from respite care (Figure 1).

Considering respite care is focused on shorter-term care, the majority of exits from respite saw people returning to their homes (58%).

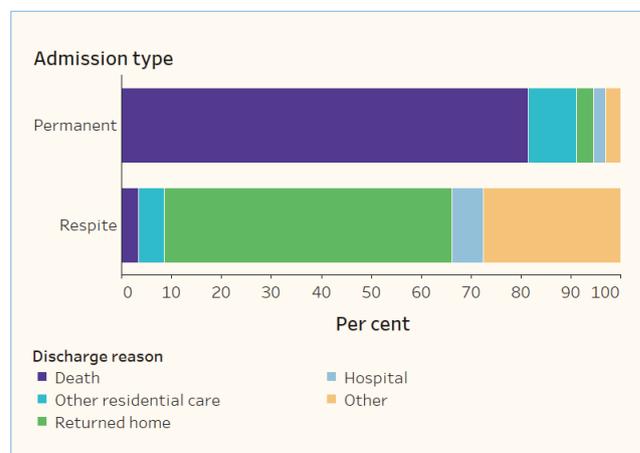


Figure 1: Exits from residential care, by admission type and discharge reason, 2015–16.

There was little difference between men and women in the reasons for leaving permanent residential aged care. In respite care, men were more likely than women to be discharged due to moving to hospital and death (7.3% and 4.6%, respectively, compared with 5.5% and 2.7%) (Figure 2).

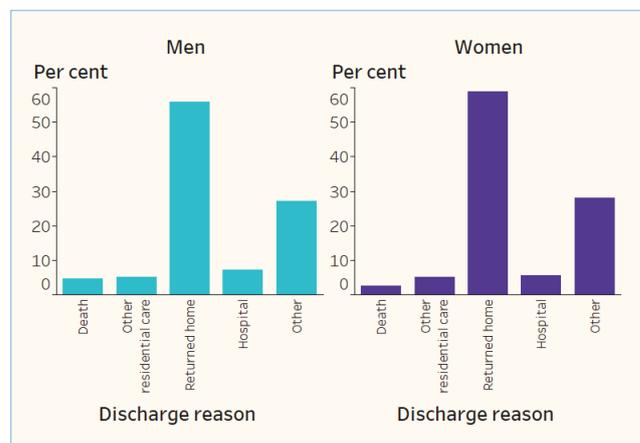


Figure 2: Exits from respite residential care by discharge reason, 2015–16.

How have exits from residential care changed over time?

The proportion of exits from permanent residential care due to death has increased from 71% in 2007–08 to 81% in 2015–16 (Figure 3). There has also been a slight increase in the number of people returning home, from 2.9% in 2007–08 to 3.4% in 2015–16. Over the same period, the number of people moving to other residential care (changing residential facility) has decreased from 20% to less than 10%. This suggests there has been a change in care preference and it is likely to be because people are entering care later in life—that is, they enter later and stay at the one facility until death.

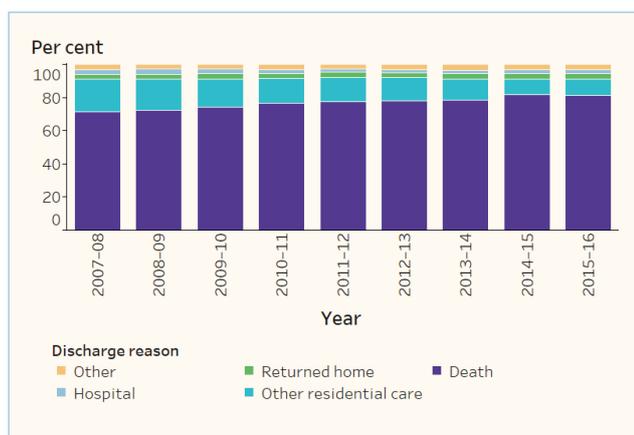


Figure 3: Exits from permanent residential aged care by discharge reason, 2007–08 to 2015–16.

How long are people in aged care?

In 2015–16, people who left permanent residential aged care stayed on average for 35 months (2 years 11 months). Women stayed on average 1.5 times as long as men (3 years 3 months compared with 2 years 3 months).

For shorter respite care, the average length of stay was 2 months, and this was the same for men and women.

The average length of stay in home care (29 months or 2 years 5 months) was 6 months shorter than in permanent residential care. Women stayed in home care on average 5 months longer than men (30 months compared with 25 months).

Length of stay generally increased with age for people in permanent residential aged care. In home care, people aged less than 55 years stayed on average longer than people aged 55 to 89 years. For people aged 70 to 89 years, the length of stay in home care remained constant at an average of 27 months (Figure 4). In both residential aged care and home care, people aged 100 years and over had the longest length of stay.

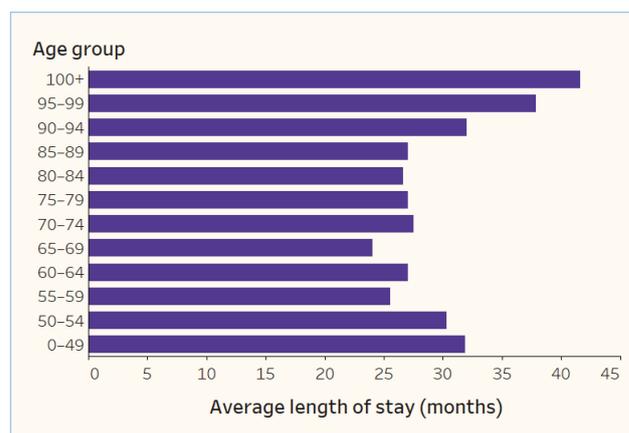


Figure 4: Average length of stay in home care, by age group, 2015–16.

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GEN-agedcaredata.gov.au

Contact

GPO Box 570, Canberra, ACT 2601
(02) 6244 1000 | GEN@aihw.gov.au

