



# 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 captured.

A person might leave and return to an aged care service several times throughout the year (or over 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 away from care, for example for a hospitalisation). This factsheet presents highlights from the GEN topic People leaving aged care.

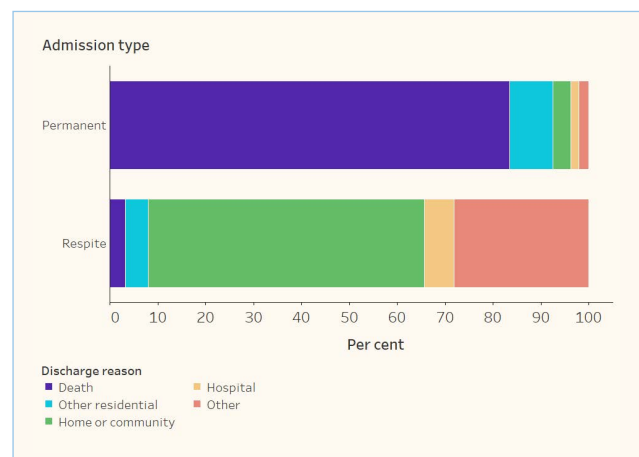
## How many people leave aged care?

In 2018–19, there were almost 203,000 exits from residential care, home care or transition care. Of these, the majority (151,100) were from residential care— split between permanent residential aged care (45%) and respite care (55%)—followed by home care (almost 27,700) and transition care (over 24,000).

## Why do people leave aged care?

The reasons people leave differ by the type of aged care. The largest proportion (83%) of exits from permanent residential aged care were due to death. Whereas, death only accounted for 3% of exits from respite care (Figure 1).

As respite care is focused on shorter-term care, just over half of exits were for people returning to their home or community (58%).



**Figure 1:** Exits from residential aged care, by discharge reason, 2018–19

## How have exits from permanent residential care changed?

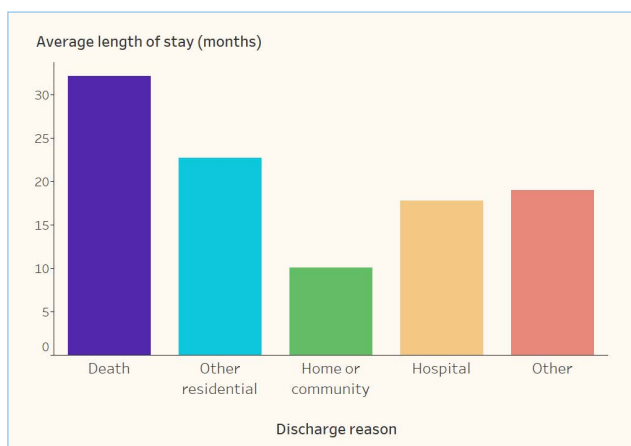
The proportion of exits due to death has increased from 74% in 2009–10 to 83% in 2018–19 (Figure 2). There has also been a slight increase in the number of people returning home, from 3.2% in 2009–10 to 3.7% in 2018–19. Over the same period, the number of people moving to other residential care (changing residential facility) has decreased from 17.2% to 9.1% of exits. This suggests that people are increasingly likely to stay in one residential care facility rather than move between facilities.



**Figure 2:** Exits from permanent residential aged care, by discharge reason, 2009-10 to 2018-19

## How long are people in aged care?

The time that a person spends using aged care varies depending on their reason for leaving. People who leave permanent residential care to go home tend to have shorter lengths of stay (10 months on average) than those who left for other reasons (Figure 3). The longest average length of stay was for people who stayed in permanent residential care until death (32 months) (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Average length of stay in permanent residential care, by discharge reason, 2018-19

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In 2018-19, people who left permanent residential aged care stayed on average for 30 months (2 years and 6 months). Women stayed on average almost a year longer than men (2 years and 10 months, compared with just under 2 years).

For respite care, the average length of stay was around 1 month, with women staying on average 26 days and men 25. The average length of stay in home care (25 months, or just over 2 years) was 5 months shorter than in permanent residential care. Women stayed in home care on average 5 months longer than men (27 months, compared with 22 months).

Length of stay generally increased with age for people in permanent residential aged care. In home care, people aged less than 60 years stayed on average longer than people aged 60 to 84 years. From the age of 85 years, the average length of stay in home care increased with age (Figure 4). People aged over 100 years recorded the longest average lengths of stay across all aged care types and sex, except for male home care clients, those aged 0-49 years had the longest average length of stay.



**Figure 4:** Average length of stay, by care type, and age group, 2018-19

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# Information and data on aged care in Australia

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