



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 away from care, for example for a hospitalisation).

How many people leave aged care?

In 2016–17, there were around 206,000 exits from residential care, home care or transition care. Of these, the majority (145,000) was from residential care— split relatively evenly between permanent residential aged care (48%) and respite care (52%)—followed by home care (35,000) and transition care (25,000).

Why do people leave aged care?

The reasons people leave differ by the type of care. The largest proportion (82%) of exits from permanent residential aged care was due to death. In comparison, death accounted for just 3% of exits from respite care (Figure 1).

As 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, 2016–17

The time that a person spent using aged care varies depending on the reason for leaving. People who left permanent residential care to go home tended to have shorter lengths of stay (9 months on average) than those who left for other reasons (Figure 2). The longest average length of stay was for people who stayed in residential care until death (32 months) (Figure 2).

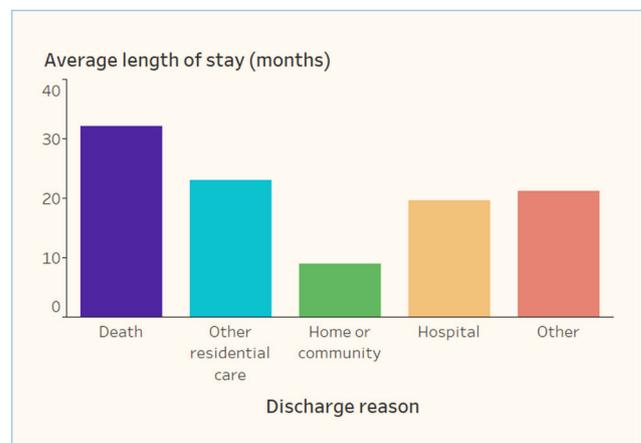


Figure 2: Average length of stay in permanent residential care, by discharge reason, 2016–17

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 82% in 2016–17 (Figure 3). There has also been a slight increase in the number of people returning home, from 2.9% in 2007–08 to 3.5% in 2016–17. Over the same period, the number of people moving to other residential care (changing residential facility) has decreased from 20% to 10% of exits. This suggests that people are increasingly likely to stay in one residential service rather than move between services.

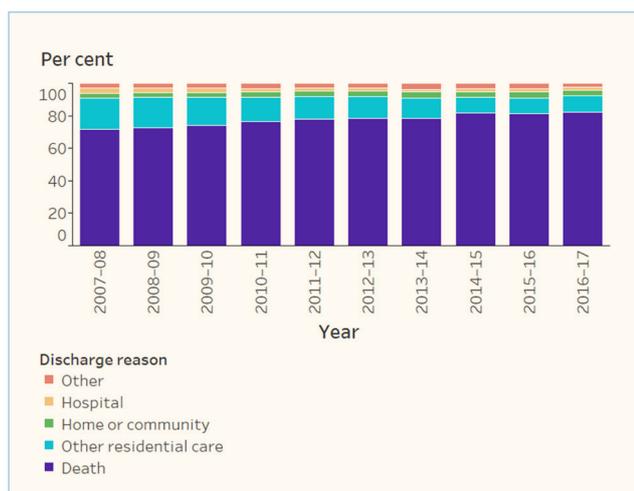


Figure 3: Exits from permanent residential aged care, by discharge reason, 2007–08 to 2016–17

How long are people in aged care?

In 2016–17, 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 under 1 month, with women staying on average 26 days and men 25.

The average length of stay in home care (19 months, or 1 year and 7 months) was almost a year shorter than in permanent residential care. Women stayed in home care on average 4 months longer than men (20 months, compared with 16 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). 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, 2016–17

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