

Explainer: How to apply for an Aged Care Assessment (ACAT)

Wondering where to start with the ACAT process? Our complete guide has got all your questions covered.



If you're making plans for your future care – whether it be home support services or a permanent move into residential aged care - sooner or later, you'll likely connect with the Government's Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT), a group of health professionals such as doctors, nurses, and social workers whose job is to establish whether someone is eligible for subsidised aged care.

Navigating the ACAT process can initially seem overwhelming, which is why we've broken the process down [into five easy steps](#), as well as answering your [most commonly asked questions](#).

In this article:

- [What is the ACAT process?](#)
- [Who can apply for an ACAT?](#)
- [How much does the ACAT assessment cost?](#)
- [How do I apply?](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [Who can support me?](#)

What is the ACAT process?

The role of the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) is to assess and confirm the care needs of older people in Australia and establish whether they are eligible for government-subsidised support services.

These services include:

- Residential aged care homes
- Home care
- Respite and short-term care

Who can apply for an ACAT assessment?

The ACAT assessment is for older people who are eligible for government-funded care and support services.

You can apply if you are:

- Over the age of 65 years old (or 50 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people)
- An Australian resident with a valid Medicare card (you do not need to be an Australian citizen to apply).
- [Meet the ACAT eligibility criteria.](#)

You can request an ACAT assessment in two ways:

- By contacting My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 or at myagedcare.gov.au
- By getting a referral from your GP.

How much does the ACAT assessment cost?

Nothing – the ACAT assessment is free of charge.

How do I apply? Five easy steps.

The ACAT application process can be broken down into five stages (click on each step for additional information).

1. Check your eligibility

The first stage is to check your eligibility for government-subsidised support services.

You may be eligible if you:

- Have noticed a change in what you do or remember
- Have been diagnosed with a medical condition or reduced mobility
- Have experienced a change in family care arrangements, or
- Have experienced a recent fall or hospital admission.

You can check your eligibility by calling My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 or online here: [How to apply for an assessment | My Aged Care](#)

This process takes around fifteen minutes and will involve answering some basic questions surrounding your current situation and needs.

If you are deemed eligible, you will then need to arrange an in-person assessment. Depending on demand, the wait time for this is usually between two and six weeks.

If you are not eligible for government-subsidised support, you can call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 to discuss your situation. You might also consider seeking support from [providers who are not government-funded](#).

Note - you can always reapply if your situation and care needs change in the future.

2. Have your in-person assessment

Your assessment can take place in any of the following ways:

- In the comfort of your own home, in person
- In the hospital, in person
- Over the phone with a family member or interpreter present, if required.

The ACAT assessment will last anywhere between one and three hours and will focus on some of the following themes:

- Your general lifestyle and wellbeing, along with any concerns you may have regarding your health
- The support you're currently receiving from friends, family, or service providers and whether you'd like it to continue
- How you're going with completing daily tasks and activities at home
- If you've noticed any recent changes to your memory
- How you feel about your personal safety, both at home and when you're out and about

You might like to have a family member or friend with you during your assessment. As well as providing moral support, they can also support with any necessary paperwork, help answer questions, and provide you with guidance throughout the session.

You can prepare for your assessment by:

- Having your Medicare card ready to present to the Assessor
- If someone is supporting you at the assessment, they will also need to have their Medicare card to hand
- Having your contact details ready for the Assessor
- Collating any referrals from your doctor, if necessary.

3. Organise an income and asset assessment

If you are applying for home care or are planning to move into a residential aged care home, the fees you pay will depend on your financial circumstances.

You may be eligible for more funding if your income or means are below a certain level.

The income and asset assessment is undertaken by Services Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. You can find out how to arrange your income and asset assessment here: [Income and means assessments | My Aged Care](#)

It can take up to six weeks to receive your assessment outcome.

Note. If you are applying for short-term care, you don't need to request an income and means assessment. Instead, your provider will ask you about your ability to contribute towards your services.

4. Find out your assessment outcome

After your in-person ACAT assessment, the team will review your application, and you'll receive the outcome by letter.

Depending on demand, the wait time for approval can vary from several weeks to several months.

Your letter will include the following:

- Your support plan
- Confirmation of the government-subsidised aged care services you've been approved to receive
- A unique referral code for each service – this is the unique reference that you will give to your chosen service provider (such as BaptistCare). They can then view your client record and support plan, accept the referral, and start to organise services for you.

Once your subsidised care is approved, there is an additional wait period while the funds are allocated to you. This may take anywhere from three to twelve months, depending on current demand.

This process can be fast-tracked if you or your loved one needs urgent care. Contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 to see if this is an option for you.

You may also choose to pay privately for your care with a [non-government subsidised provider](#).

5. Choose your provider

Once you've been approved to receive government-subsidised aged care services and your package has been allocated, you will have 56 days to choose a suitable provider.

This is where BaptistCare comes in. As one of Australia's largest and most trusted aged care providers, we've been serving seniors with quality, people-first care across our residential aged care and via our local home care services since 1944.

With over 33 aged care home locations and 857 suburbs serviced with home care support services, our BaptistCare teams are passionate about supporting older Australians to live as independent and full a life as possible.

Contact us on 1300 275 227 or send us an enquiry at [baptistcare.org.au/contact-us](https://www.baptistcare.org.au/contact-us) and one of our friendly staff will be in touch to discuss how we can help.



Frequently asked questions

Who can support me through the ACAT process?

There are several support channels if you need assistance at any time throughout the ACAT process:

- **My Aged Care** – In addition to ongoing assistance with your application, My Aged Care also provides support for people of different backgrounds and situations, including:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
 - People living in rural and remote Australia
 - Older people living with disabilities
 - Older people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity

Call My Aged Care at any stage on 1800 200 422.

- You can also **appoint a representative** to speak on your behalf. This can be:
 - A family member
 - A friend
 - Your carer
 - Your GP
 - A service provider
- **BaptistCare** - Our friendly team are on hand to assist you no matter where you are in the process. Call us on 1300 275 227 for practical advice and support.

What if I urgently need care but haven't had an ACAT assessment yet?

If you are in crisis and are in danger of harm, call My Aged Care and explain your situation to them. They can fast-track your application so that you can access subsidised care more quickly.

While you wait, you can also access BaptistCare's home care and residential aged care services privately. Just call us on 1300 275 227 to discuss your options.

What if my needs change while I'm waiting for my package to come through?

Given the long wait periods for each stage in the ACAT process, your situation may evolve during this time.

Here's what to do if you believe your care requirements have changed:

- **If you already receive government-subsidised care services**, contact your current provider and request a review of your care plan. They will contact your My Aged Care assessor and may recommend amending your current care plan or arranging a reassessment.

- **If you were assessed previously and were not eligible for subsidised care services**, you can request a reassessment. Contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 and explain that your situation has changed. They can then arrange for someone to come and visit you for another in-person assessment.

Find BaptistCare services near me

If you would like to know more about our care services across residential aged care or home care, why not chat with one of our friendly team – we'd be happy to talk with you about your situation and care needs and organise a tour around your nearest BaptistCare home.

Use our simple online search tool to explore [BaptistCare Aged Care Home locations across New South Wales and the ACT](#).