

Aged care advice

Understandably, most people want to stay in their own home for as long as possible because it is familiar and comfortable. The thought of going in to an aged care facility is traumatic. If someone you care about are no longer able to manage at home on their own but are fortunate enough to have assistance with everyday tasks such as shopping, cooking and transport to medical appointments they may be able to stay in their home longer. They may even be eligible for Government subsidised home care.

However, if they are unable to manage, even with some additional assistance or they do not have anyone to provide assisted care in their home, you may need to make the decision to enter them into an aged care facility.

What comes next?

You can arrange for an Aged Care Assessment to determine the level of care required and the facilities that can provide this level of care. An ACAT assessment is a pre-requisite to entering Aged Care. You should research facilities to help you choose the right one for your situation.

Once you have chosen a facility you will mostly likely need to work out the finances with the assistance of a professional financial adviser who can look at the value of the family home and other assets and explain how various fees work.

A financial adviser can also look at any Centrelink benefits available and whether you are eligible.

Once the decision is made, a financial adviser can assist you with the application documents to help you secure a place in your preferred aged care facility.

Types of care

There are different levels of care appropriate for different people. An Aged Care Assessment can help you determine if you need to consider short term respite care or determine the level of care required in a permanent residential care facility.

These facilities are not government run and it is important to be clear on what services are provided by the ones of your choice and what the costs may be.

Cost

Each resident entering a permanent residential facility after 1 July 2014 will incur a standard resident contribution fee to cover basic daily care. Fees such as the means tested care fee, accommodation payments (or accommodation contribution) need to be considered as well as additional fees for extra services or other amounts agreed between them and the care provider. The cost will largely be determined by the level of care provided.

A financial adviser can look at your financial situation and explain the costs based on your individual circumstances and the type of facility you are applying to.

The family home

The decision on whether or not to sell the family home to enter an aged care facility can be one of the biggest and most emotional decisions you make. Your memories are tied up in your home and selling it is the final step in leaving your life behind to enter an aged care facility. As a financial adviser, we want to help our clients to keep their home where possible, but where it is not possible we want to help them through the process to ease some of the emotional burden.

What you choose to do with the family home will also have an impact on fee assessments and pension entitlements. We can look at whether or not the family home is counted as an asset in the assets test by looking at who lives in the home and whether they are an eligible dependent or carer, which can have an impact on the asset test and whether or not the home is sold.

Age pension

If you move into an aged care facility without selling your home, it will generally be exempt from the age pension assets test for 2 years from the date you move into care. This date may vary if you are, or were, a couple at the time you moved into aged care

If you are considering aged care for yourself or a loved one and need advice based on your situation, make an appointment to talk with us.

Whilst it is never too late to have this discussion, we recommend having it before a facility is required, so you have time to assess the possible options rather than being caught out if a quick decision needs to be made.