

Unannounced visits

Following the budget announcement in May this year, the Agency has been further developing its program of unannounced visits.

The Agency's Board and management team have reviewed the approach to unannounced visits and considered the benefits of a restructured thematic approach to reviewing homes' systems and processes.

The Agency's objectives in conducting unannounced visits are:

- to identify if there are any system weakness at a home in order to alert homes to areas for improvement with a view to preventing non-compliance occurring,
- to ensure that unannounced support contacts are sufficiently robust to give assurance about the continuity of quality of care; and
- to develop a range of assessment modules which would improve the likelihood of identifying non-compliance, if it exists.

The aged care legislation is quite clear that:

- a) approved providers must be compliant with the Accreditation Standards at all times, and
- b) some of the purposes of a support contact (as set out in the *Accreditation Grant Principles 1999*) is to monitor compliance with the Accreditation Standards and to help facilities with their continuous improvement.

The Minister for Ageing, Senator the Hon Santo Santoro, has said that "these extra spot checks will focus on care standards and provide an incentive for the consistent delivery of high quality care" (media release dated 9 May 2006), and that "these extra spot checks will provide aged care residents, their families and the public with greater confidence that the high standards of care required by the government are being met on a consistent basis." (in *The Standard*, June 2006).

The Agency is developing a number of assessment modules as part of the program, so that there is a broad review of quality of care provided to residents. The modules provide direction and information to assessors and focus on groups of expected outcomes or key systems and processes that underpin quality of care across a broad range of expected outcomes.

There will be 12 assessment modules. So far three are finalised and in use, with a fourth ready to be adopted.

It is the Agency's intention that once all 12 assessment modules have been completed and in circulation, they will be placed on the Agency's website for the benefit of industry. They will sit alongside the Agency's *Results and processes guide* and the Agency's *Audit handbook for assessors*, The *Results and processes guide*, and the *Audit handbook for assessors* are already available as free downloads.

The modules will be designed so that they can be combined, or used as stand-alone modules. In addition, unannounced support contacts will generally include assessment of home-specific aspects determined on a case management basis.

One issue that is sometimes raised is whether an unannounced visit can proceed if key personnel are not on site at the time the assessment team arrives.

The Agency recognises that management and other key staff are not always on site but expects that quality of care will be maintained. From our perspective assessors can conduct effective support contacts while management or other key staff are absent. Observation of the practices of the home, interviewing residents and staff and consideration of most records of the home relating to care of residents can occur. These assessment procedures can give confidence about the ongoing quality of care at a home. In the event that this process leads to concerns about compliance with the Standards, the Agency seeks input from the approved provider before any decision is made.

Where the senior person (from the home) on site believes the visit should not take place they should advise the Agency team leader who will contact the State Manager or Assessment Manager.

The Agency does not require homes to make a special presentation, or that assessors be given a guided tour of the facility.

Just a word...

In recent months I have attended the national conferences of ACSA and ACAA and our Better practice events where I have taken the opportunity to talk with a broad spectrum of approved providers and their staff.

While a broad range of topics is usually canvassed, one of the more common is what the Agency is doing and how we are doing it. My thinking is that the Agency must be open to criticism and should welcome constructive criticism of our operations (as should any company). How we receive and respond to criticism is how opportunities for improvement are made possible.

There are a number of ways we receive feedback. After every site visit, homes are given a questionnaire to fill out, to give us their opinion on how the audit went. To date this has provided generally positive feedback. I



encourage you to complete the form and add any specific comments. The form may be completed anonymously or your name included. Inclusion of your name or facility certainly helps us consider the specifics and take any internal action required.

The Agency's website has an on-line form for submitting comments to management. The Agency also holds regular national and state agency liaison groups with representatives of the industry.

In October I had the privilege of attending the 25th Annual

Conference of the International Society for Quality in Healthcare (ISQua). This brought together over 700 people from over 80 countries to discuss and hear about what is happening in safety and quality in human services around the world. While much of the discussion was about acute care there was considerable discussion about residential care, accreditation and the development and role of performance indicators. After the four-day conference I spent two days with the Healthcare Commission.

Over coming months I will be using the learning to ascertain where we can improve our systems and processes as an accreditation body.

Mark Brandon
Chief Executive Officer



More than 80 residents from eight aged care facilities in the Melbourne area joined together earlier this year to compete in the Celebration of Life Senior Sports Day.

Games included ten pin bowling, bocce, quoits and hopscotch.

Residents designed their own team outfits and practised the different games for the day with the anticipation for the day building up.

The planning committee, which consists of management from eight homes in the area, are now

gearing up for the next joint event, a Celebration of Life - Tea Dance called 'Putting on the Ritz' to be held in Collingwood town hall.

Sambell Lodge aged care facility manager Paul Brophy said the facilities coming together to organise a celebration event has brought untold benefits to the residents.

"Staff, residents, families and volunteers all agreed that the event was an outstanding success, and that the event could and should be replicated in other metropolitan and regional areas," Mr Brophy said.

"The positive outcomes of such an event impact on a variety of areas: all aspects of those residents in our care and a development of an ongoing connection between different staff of the eight facilities," he said.

Tips for getting the most from your internal audits

Submitted by Tina Magennis,
Research Coordinator,
Anglican Retirement Villages

Internal audits are a useful tool for monitoring performance and making sure that you keep on track. Most aged care providers routinely conduct internal audits on a range of topics. Below are some tips to make sure that you get the most from your internal audit system.

Audit key areas – check that your audits cover all of the key areas in your home that you need to monitor, including areas of risk, and of most importance to your residents.

Developing criteria – both processes and outcomes. Process criteria check that procedures are being undertaken correctly. Outcome criteria focus on results for residents. Focusing on both will give a better indication of your home's performance.

Keep audits short and specific – otherwise staff will feel they don't have time to complete them and they won't be done. It is often better to have a number of short audits on specific topics that can be conducted quickly.

Staff involvement – involve a range of staff in conducting audits. Conducting audits of their own work can focus staff attention on performance expectations and help them to become comfortable with internal auditing processes. Having staff conduct audits of other areas can provide a new perspective. Staff training is essential to ensure that staff understand the criteria, sampling and the audit process.

Look for trends – Analyse audit results to identify trends. Identifying the causes of problems can allow action to be taken early and prevent bigger problems in the long run.

Review your audit criteria – audits will be most useful if they are tailored to the home and its needs. Criteria should be added when new issues are identified for monitoring or when processes change, for example, if an issue was identified through a complaint.

Revise your audit schedule – if problems have been identified, schedule audits on the topic more frequently until problems are resolved. Audits may also be scheduled more frequently

depending on the degree of risk and seriousness of consequences if problems go undetected. Undertake audits soon after the introduction of major changes or new staff to check that everything is progressing smoothly.

Timely action – internal audits are only valuable if the results are used to implement timely actions to address any issues that are identified. Although actions do not necessarily have to be in place for all negative results, even if results are high, it is still important to at least consider possible actions.

Keep people informed – residents, staff and other stakeholders will only be eager to participate in audits and surveys if they are kept informed of results and any ensuing actions.

The success of corrective actions in fixing problems should be evaluated. Evaluations will be more efficient if they concentrate on only those criteria where problems have been identified. It is not necessary to repeat the entire audit.

A solution to vitamin D deficiencies

A research study reported in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, has confirmed that vitamin D3 supplements given orally (100,000 IU) every three months is a practical, safe, effective and inexpensive way to meet the vitamin D3 requirements of aged care residents.

A deficiency in vitamin D can be caused by lack of exposure to sunlight, poor conversion in aged skin and a diet lacking in vitamin D-rich foods. A deficiency can

result in reduced bone mineral density, high bone turnover and an increased risk of falls and fracture.

In the research study, a total of 137 residents from 11 aged care facilities in South Australia participated. Residents given three-monthly doses for up to two years maintained good vitamin D levels.

More details on the study are available in *A system for improving vitamin D nutrition in residential care*, Alison E R Wigg, Caroline Prest, Peter Slobodian, Allan G Need and Leslie G Cleland in

Medical Journal of Ageing 2006; 185 (4): 195-198

Tracing family history

The Seniors Portal Q&A Forum provides many useful tips about producing an accurate family history. A panel of experts is available to answer all of your questions and you can also see the panel's answers to other people's questions.

For more information on the Q&A Forum and other interesting matters in the Seniors Portal, long onto www.seniors.gov.au/qaforum

Stronger, fitter - younger! - St Joseph's, Hunters Hill, NSW



Almost two years into the program, there is a marked increase in the number of residents walking outdoors again. Most residents are reporting decreased pain levels. Many have returned to using public transport and a few have even enrolled in community based tai chi classes.

The program was developed by Rik Dawson from Agewell Physiotherapy and focuses on group exercise classes, similar to a gym program but at a reduced intensity. All exercises are aimed at improving balance, muscle strength and vision.

The exercise programs were incorporated into the residents' care plans and personalised for each individual, with every resident assessed and reviewed every three months or on an as-required basis.

For more information, contact Rik Dawson, Agewell Physiotherapy, agewell@bigpond.com

St Joseph's Hostel in Hunters Hill NSW has been awarded a Better Practice in Aged Care Award for maintaining or improving residents' mobility, dexterity and rehabilitation.

By developing an innovative strength and conditioning program exclusively for aged care residents, St Josephs and physio services provider Agewell

Physiotherapy, have rolled back the years for many of their residents.

The program includes a range of specific exercises and involves the entire nursing home. Since its inception, fall rates have fallen by 40%, with a 71% improvement in residents' cardiovascular fitness, and a 66% improvement in balance.

Handle with care



Mt St Joseph's Home in Young, NSW has been presented a Better Practice in Aged Care award for its manual handling program.

The award was made in recognition of the significant improvement the home has achieved in its safety record as a result of the program.

The program was implemented as a result of the home identifying that manual handling was the most significant risk to staff safety in the workplace. As part of the program, the manual handling needs of each resident is assessed and incorporated into the resident's care plan, as well as kept in each resident's room. The information indicates the type of equipment

required for each resident, as well as how many staff are required.

Two accredited manual handling trainers are employed at the home, who conduct training programs for staff and provide advice and monitor manual handling in the home to ensure it is performed correctly for the benefit of the resident and staff. All new employees receive two days manual handling orientation and training information.

The program has been successful in dramatically reducing the number of manual handling incidents reported, 19 in 1998 down to three in 2005. This has also led to the reduction in workers compensation costs of almost 4%.

Classical music calms

St Hedwig Nursing Home in Blacktown, NSW has been awarded a Better Practice in Aged Care Award from the Agency, for its program that uses baroque music to address challenging behaviours associated with dementia.

Older people with dementia sometimes display challenging behaviours like wandering, yelling, verbal and physical aggression. St Hedwig Nursing Home has discovered that the use of baroque classical music can dramatically reduce such behaviour, leading to happier residents and happier staff.

The home provides high care to 75 residents, those with dementia accommodated mainly on the first floor of the nursing home.

The home's annual resident/relative satisfaction survey highlighted a problem with the level of noise when residents became unsettled and restless during the afternoon. Staff



commented that residents were almost 'too difficult to handle', leaving them and other residents 'edgy' and 'stressed' and that the first floor was not a pleasurable place to work.

A solution to this increasingly unsettling situation was discovered in an article published in the *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, highlighting the positive effects of

ambient baroque music on patients with dementia.

Ambient baroque music (late 17th to early 18th century) including Bach, Handel, Vivaldi and Telemann was piped through the home's internal PA system during the most troublesome time of the day, between 3 and 7pm.

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Join the club

Northcliffe Lodge in Edithvale, Victoria, has been awarded a Better Practice in Aged Care Award for its innovative program of lifestyle choices for residents, where residents join a 'club' of their choice in consultation with lifestyle staff, to keep them stimulated and motivated.

Details of each person's personal preferences, lifestyle, leisure, interests and cultural life are captured through use of a comprehensive documentation process. The information gathered provides the structure for an individualised resident program that is blended into the existing

program, or provides the opportunity to create new features of the program.

Lifestyle staff meet with the resident and family at a pre-admission meeting and lifestyle staff visit the resident for 28 days, checking that they are settling in. An official welcome takes place at happy hour after a week, where the resident is introduced formally to the Northcliffe community. They are given a gift made by one of the clubs – the 'Sweat Shop'. After a month, assessments are completed, and analysis and evaluations provide the basis for an individualised plan that is implemented.

Information is used to team up the new resident with a club of interest, as well as an opportunity to get involved in new interests, or restoration of past interests or activities, in full consultation with the resident.

The philosophy of the lifestyle team is about looking for challenges that stimulate a person into new experiences, not about entertainment. The main focus is the end result, specific reason or purpose behind each 'club'. The team try to incorporate community into all that is programmed.

Volunteering a service - Adelaide Senior Citizens Village, SA

McQuoin Park, Catholic Healthcare's residential aged care community in Waitara, NSW has been awarded a Better Practice in Aged Care Award for its volunteer training program in spiritual ministry.

Coordinated by Spiritual Care Coordinators, Sister Marlene Fitzgibbon and Fiona Hancock, the program was introduced in response to a need for more spiritual care for residents than the existing staff could provide. The 14 volunteers taking part in the program have the opportunity to participate in two areas of spiritual ministry - bringing communion to residents and helping to set up the chapel for religious services, or meeting with individual residents for regular one-on-one conversations and discussions.

Before commencing their work, volunteers undergo a comprehensive training program. The course addresses various aspects of spiritual care particularly related to older people such as ageing, dying, grief and loss, dementia and health crises.

A key aspect of the program involves meeting regularly with the residents and their families to ensure that their individual needs are being identified and monitored. The Spiritual Care



Coordinators play a crucial role in debriefing volunteers. Having spiritual care volunteers available for residents, also assists care staff in the community's nursing centre and hostel.

Resident Yvonne Treuen, who meets with volunteer Kitty Marren each week, says having a volunteer to visit her one-on-one is wonderful.

"Kitty is a deeply spiritual person, and we are on the same wavelength. We talk about ordinary things and anything that

has a spiritual overtone or undertone, whether it is to do with family or anything else. She's a godsend - I'd give Kitty five stars!"

Kitty Marren says she discovers a lot about herself in her discussions with Yvonne and other residents.

"Issues come up that I often go home and think about. There is tremendous wisdom in the people I meet with at McQuoin Park. I have learnt a great deal from Yvonne and carry around lots of little notelets of wise things she has said to me."

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The effectiveness of the program was evaluated with behaviour charts, surveys, benchmarking results and positive feedback letters from staff and relatives. Residents were observed to respond well to the baroque music program showing a decrease in their previously challenging

behaviours, and an overall decrease in the noise level.

Also, residents were able to participate in individual activities, such as doll therapy and puzzles as well as group activities, which they were previously unable to focus on due to their constant restlessness and agitation.

Meaningful activities have often been associated with an improved quality of life.

The comparison of seven months of aggressive episodes before and after the introduction of the baroque music program showed a decrease in aggressive episodes by 70.6%.

Understanding care needs – Nuffield Village, NSW

Nuffield Village, an Anglican Retirement Village in Castle Hill, NSW has received a Better Practice in Aged Care Award for a project that provides care staff with better access to information about resident needs and as a result provides them with more insight into changing care needs.

Surveys of residents and relatives identified that it was most important to them that staff know when their care needs change; that staff know their main health problems; and that there is good communication among staff.

Lengthy nursing plans are typically not easy for care staff to access, read or understand. So the home developed a one-page resident profile that summarises residents' care needs and is quick and easy to access and comprehend.

A case management system was also introduced, where each resident has a registered nurse as their case manager, and multidisciplinary teams have been introduced to facilitate seamless holistic care.



Also, a computerised system has been developed to profile the care needs of groups of residents and to allow changes in care needs to be identified.

Results

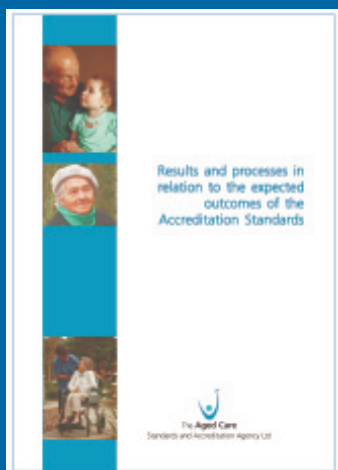
As a result of the improved communication and improved understanding of resident care needs:

- A 15% improvement on the Care Standards Peer Review which is

an audit of all aspects of care and documentation

- Falls decreased by 11%
- The annual resident satisfaction survey showed that: 90% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that staff understand and respond to their medical and physical needs; 94% agreed or strongly agreed that overall they are satisfied with the care and services they receive.

Accreditation essentials

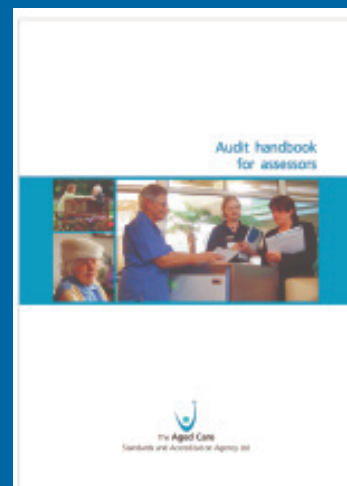


Agency assessors refer to the *Results and processes handbook* and *Audit handbook* when conducting and writing reports for site audits, review audits and support contacts.

To own a copy of the documents, either download them from the Agency's website www.accreditation.org.au or purchase a bound copy from the Agency for \$15 each.

The *Pocket guide to the Accreditation Standards* is also a popular tool among assessors and aged care staff. Copies are available for \$10 each.

To download an order form for any of these items, go to www.accreditation.org.au/resourcesforsale.



New online resource on culturally appropriate aged care

Officially launched at the Aged and Community Services Australia's national conference, the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing website was developed in Victoria by the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing.

The purpose of the website is to support the aged care industry to deliver culturally responsive services that meet the needs of Australia's diverse community.

The first step in the provision of culturally responsive services is to address issues around language and communication. Effective communication is essential to the physical, emotional and psychological well being of care recipients, as well as ensuring a risk management approach to service delivery.

The website addresses language and communication across all levels of service design and delivery, providing information and resources to facilitate:

- the development of effective communication policies and practices
- the use of professional interpreting and translating services

- the recruitment of bilingual staff
- community and care recipient participation in service delivery and
- cultural awareness education and training.

The website also contains two language resources: the Online Resident Handbook and the

been developed to ensure consistency of translations of aged care terminology and thus enhance the quality of information provided to older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The website also features aged care services information translated into 13 languages and links to multilingual age-related health information.

Information provision is not the only aspect of providing culturally responsive services; the website assists service providers to meet the social and emotional communication needs of care recipients across lifestyle and leisure services and other support programs.

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing is supported by the Australian Government through the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care initiative, which aims to ensure the needs of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are identified and addressed. The initiative provides funding to eight organisations, one in each state and territory.

Visit www.culturaldiversity.com.au for more information on the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing and its services.



Glossary of Aged Care Terminology.

The Handbook enables residential aged care providers to compile and publish resident handbooks in multiple languages and thereby supply residents and their families with essential information in their preferred language.

A resource for interpreters and translators working in aged care settings, the Glossary contains around 1000 terms translated into 13 languages. The Glossary has

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