

Aged care - helping people at home

Frail older people – or their carers – can contact a number of agencies for assistance. Programs have been developed to help older people remain at home and to prevent premature or inappropriate admission to residential care.

Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS)

Victorian ACAS is a joint Commonwealth and State funded program within the National Aged Care Assessment Program. The service provides information and assistance to frail older people and, in some circumstances, younger people with disabilities. This includes assisting people to gain access to services they need including aged care, community health and other community support services. ACAS is a free service.

ACAS can determine what help is needed

ACAS can help older people whose life circumstances are changing to make well-informed decisions about their lifestyle, by providing:

- Assessment to determine the needs of the older person and their carer
- Information about health issues and service providers
- Advice about available options – for example, when the person is considering moving into a hostel or nursing home
- Assistance in linking and coordinating services.

Accessing ACAS

Assessment teams accept referrals from any source, including GPs and self-referral.

For information about the location and telephone number of your local ACAS:

- Look in the 'Age Page' in the *Business and Government White Pages* telephone book.
- Ring the Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222.

Home and Community Care (HACC) Program

HACC is a joint Commonwealth and State Government program that aims to help frail, older people and younger people with disabilities live independently in the community. Help is also available for their carers.

Services include:

- **Home repairs and modifications** – for example, installing ramps and rails.
- **Personal care and nursing** – for example, help with showering and dressing, injections and wound dressings.
- **Telephone monitoring and home visits** – to check on the person's safety.
- **Help with household tasks** – for example, laundry, cleaning, shopping and keeping appointments.
- **HACC Linkages** – provides help for people with very complex needs.

A fee is charged for HACC services

Although a fee is charged for most services, people will not be refused help if they cannot afford to pay. The fee for HACC services is based on a person's income level.

Community Rehabilitation Centres (CRCs)

Community Rehabilitation Centres help frail older people and young people with a disability to live at home independently, by providing:

- **Consultative medical services** – access to health staff as required
- **Physiotherapy** – group and individual treatments that aim to help clients improve or maintain flexibility, strength and movement
- **Occupational therapy** – home modification and equipment advice to promote safety and wellbeing
- **Podiatry** – diagnosis and treatment of foot and lower limb problems
- **Nursing** – health advice, education, counselling and monitoring
- **Speech pathology** – help for people with speech disorders, to assist them to communicate more effectively
- **Social work** – help for clients and their carers with problems related to finances, accommodation or socialisation
- **Dietetics** – nutrition programs tailored for individuals receiving rehabilitation.

CRCs prefer a written referral from a doctor

Although older people, people with a disability and their carers can contact the coordinator of a Community Rehabilitation Centre directly, a written referral from a doctor is preferred.

Personal alarms ensure help in an emergency

Personal Alert Victoria provides isolated, frail older people and people with a disability with emergency contact and daily monitoring at the push of a button on:

- A pre-programmed telephone
- A personal alarm worn as a pendant or wristband.

In some cases, voice contact can be established – even if the person has fallen in the garden or is in a different room to the alarm.

Personal alarms are provided free to 'at-risk' people

Personal Alert Victoria gives you confidence to live independently in your own home by providing contact 24 hours a day. The Victorian Government funds this personal monitoring service free of charge for eligible clients.

Clients must be assessed for eligibility for this service. Contact your local council to find out how you can be assessed for this service.

If you are not eligible for the government funded service, you can contact a private personal alarm service by looking in the *Yellow Pages* under 'Alerting Systems &/or Services' or ask the Independent Living Centre for information on private services.

The Aged Care in Victoria website has more information about the Personal Alert Victoria service.

Where to get help

- Department of Health Victoria Tel. 1300 650 172
- Your local council (HACC program)
- Your local community health centre or district nursing service (HACC program)
- Migrant resource centre or ethnic or Koori organisation (HACC program)
- Carers association
- Aged Care Assessment Services – contact the Commonwealth Carelink Centre Tel. 1800 052 222

- Independent Living Centre (personal alarms) Tel. (03) 9362 6111
- Yooralla Independent Living Centre
- Your doctor

Things to remember

- A number of services are available to help frail older people and people with disabilities to stay living at home.
- Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) will link older persons, and – in some circumstances – younger people with disabilities, and their carers with these services.
- Personal alarms can be used to summon help in an emergency and also provide daily monitoring of a person's welfare.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Department of Health - Ageing and Aged Care

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