

What to look for when choosing an aged care facility



This factsheet is designed for hearing impaired clients and families considering a residential aged care facility and wondering what to look for in terms of hard of hearing and deaf-friendly support options.

Up to 85% of residents living in Australian aged care facilities have a hearing loss.

The following features in a facility can provide support to hard of hearing and deaf residents. The more features a facility has the better:

- A strong emphasis on communication - communication is valued and hearing needs are prioritised.
- Hearing test results are kept on each resident's care plan and shared with family and other health professionals as required.
- The majority of residents are identified with a hearing loss, with approximately half of these actively wearing hearing aids, headphone listening devices, and/or Cochlear Implants.
- Staff encourage residents to wear hearing devices daily, especially during family visits and interactive times such as in the dining room and other group activities.
- Staff use communication strategies and tactics with residents and visitors eg. reducing background noise such as TV or radio, getting residents' attention prior to speaking, getting up close and at the same eye level, and ensuring hearing devices are worn and in good working order

Questions to ask Aged Care staff

1. How are residents assessed for hearing loss?
And how often?
2. How are residents' hearing needs communicated to staff?
3. When are hearing aid batteries changed and how is this ensured?
4. What is the process for checking the functioning of residents' hearing devices?
5. What training is given to new and experienced staff? How is attendance tracked, and how are staff assessed for competence?
6. How is staff use of communication tactics encouraged and monitored?
7. Do you have any arrangements in place with hearing service providers?
8. How are residents assisted to access hearing services such as the Commonwealth Hearing Services Program?
9. Does the facility have any special hearing equipment that residents can use (eg. room loops, amplified telephones). If so, how often is equipment checked and maintained?
10. How does the facility ensure good acoustics eg. soft furnishings to reduce reverberation

**For more information please contact
Hearing Australia on 131 797 or
see our website at www.hearing.com.au**