



Social & Community Services Consultants

Becoming an Aged Care Provider

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q1 Why become an Approved Aged Care Provider?

Under the Aged Care Act, all organisations wishing to provide Australian Government subsidised home, residential or flexible care services to eligible older Australians are required to be approved by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner (the Commissioner).

The Australian Government subsidises approved providers to ensure that the care and services they offer are more affordable and accessible to eligible care recipients. If an organisation is not an approved aged care provider, you will not be eligible for the delivery of subsidised care and services.

Q2 Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible to apply to become an approved Aged Care Provider you will be required to:

- Be an Incorporated Entity (Sole Traders are not eligible to be approved).
 - Comply with requirements set out in Part 7A of the Commission Act.
 - Demonstrate your organisation can provide care and services in accordance with Aged Care Act 1997 (particularly Division 54, Division 56 and Division 63), Aged Care Principles and Quality Standards.
 - Provide evidence that all Key Personnel involved in the provision of aged care are suitability qualified and can provide a National Police Check (NPC), National Criminal History Check (NCHC) or NDIS Worker Screening Check issued within 90 days prior to the application submission.
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Q3 Who assesses the application?

Under the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018** (Commission Act), the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner (Commissioner) is responsible for assessing and making decisions on applications from organisations seeking to become an approved provider. This assessment is conducted via a written based application process.

Q4 How long does it take to get approved?

Since the Royal Commission, the detail in which applications are being examined has substantially increased. While the outlined response time is 90 days, applying organisations should prepare themselves for some delays, especially where requests for clarification or further information are made.

Therefore, it is important to work with a team who has industry knowledge and has successfully worked with organisations to become approved providers. The SoCom Consulting team are aware of the key items that may arise throughout the application process (including common types of requests for further information) and are regularly engaged by organisations who have been unsuccessful under the guidance of inexperienced advisors and need assistance to resubmit or respond to requests for further information.

Q5 What does the application process involve?

Once the application is submitted to the Commission, it goes through four key stages:

STAGE 1	Validity Check – Within 10 business days after the submission of a new application, associated supporting documentation and the application fee, the Commission will briefly review the completeness of the application and confirm it is ready to progress to the initial assessment.
STAGE 2	Initial Assessment – Within 10 business days the Commission identifies whether information is missing or unclear. This will include conducting a check on your organisation and Key Personnel records held with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). Where further clarification or evidence is required, a Request for Further Information is issued.
STAGE 3	Formal Assessment – Within 90 days the Commission conducts a full assessment of your application against the suitability criteria established under section 63D of the Commission Act. Where further clarification or evidence is required, a Request for Further Information is issued.
STAGE 4	Decision and Finalisation – A written decision is sent to the organisation within 14 days after the decision is made by the Commission to approve or decline the application. A full outline of reasons will be provided.

Where a Request for Information is issued during the initial or formal assessment stages, the information will be required to be submitted within 28 days and additional fees may apply. It is important to note, the 90-day timeframe for formal assessment will stop when a Request for Information is given and will start again when the Commission receive the information.

Q6 What information will be required in the application?

Generally, in-home care and flexible care applications supported by SoCom Consulting are approximately 80-90 pages in length to ensure the necessary detail in responses. This excludes all supporting documentation, including, but not limited to, copies of organogram, business plan, policies, procedures, business plans, financial forecasts, police checks/worker screening, CVs, qualifications & certificates.

The application will need to confirm and demonstrate the following:

- the organisation is a corporation.
- each individual who is one of the Key Personnel of the organisation is suitable to be involved in the provision of aged care.

- your experience providing aged care or other relevant forms of care.
- what you understand about approved provider responsibilities.
- that you have, or will have, systems in place to meet your responsibilities.
- that you have, or will have, sound financial management records and practices.
- your compliance with financial obligations and other responsibilities as a care provider, if you already are one.
- whether an individual who is one of the Key Personnel of the organisation has at any time been convicted of an indictable offence or if a civil penalty order against an individual has been made at any time.

Some of the key things the assessor may look for in your application include:

- Evidence that individuals in senior management positions have appropriate and relevant clinical qualifications and experience. Effective 1 December 2022, the changes to Provider Governance and Advisory, requires specific governance and management structures – For more information please read our recent update [here](#).
- Detailed information, either in a policy document or in your application, that clearly explains HOW you will meet each specific requirement and obligation.
- Demonstration that you are up to date with the most recent aged care legislation and used this in the preparation of your application and any supporting documentation such as policy and procedure documents. If you purchase **SoCom Consulting's four-part Policy Pack**, all the documents have been updated to include the most recent changes, however you should take time to work with your senior management and clinical advisory team to tailor and understand these documents.
- If you intend to engage another organisation to deliver services on your behalf (e.g. brokerage), you will need to explain why you would need to do this and HOW you would ensure oversight of that organisation, with consideration of providing a management agreement.
- When referring to agreements, that you provide detail of WHAT is included in the agreements or alternatively, a copy of the agreement.
- That you have a clinically qualified person in a position that could assist with development of a comprehensive Clinical Governance Framework. It also needs to be clear that this person has capacity to manage the demands of this role (e.g. consider not using the same person for oversight of care workers and rostering on a day-to-day basis, so they may focus on Care Plans, medical oversight, escalations and interfacing with other care providers to meet the needs to aged care clients).
- That you have provided details of appropriately qualified and experienced staff (preferably in aged care) in relevant positions within the organisation and their roles and responsibilities.
- That your answers are in your own words, and you have not used large excerpts from aged care legislation.
- If you are still investigating the use of software, that you have begun this process and can provide details of the software you are looking at, why and how it will assist you to meet specific requirements. If you have already selected your software, you must provide an outline of how it will work and why you feel it fulfils the requirements. This needs to include examples of the Care Plans, Budgets and Monthly Updates that the system will generate to ensure their compliance.

- Demonstration and understanding of the specific aged care funding and financial reporting requirements and how you will meet these. It is always best to have an internal accountant/finance manager with aged care experience, however if you intend to use an external accountant to assist with this work, the accountant must be noted as a Key Personnel and needs to demonstrate their past experienced in Aged Care financial matters. It is recommended that you are very clear as to how this relationship will work in terms of who processes invoices, manages budgets, provides reports, how often your internal team interfaces with the accountant, how the information is transferred to enable the accountant to do their job etc.
- Demonstration you have the financial capacity to support the development of an aged care business and have developed a sound financial forecast for growth and to ensure the ongoing trading and continuity of service of your organisation.

Q7 What supporting evidence do I need to provide?

The specific documents that will need to accompany the application will vary depending on the organisation's structure and services delivered, however may include:

- Business Registration Certificate
- Organisation Chart
- Business Plan
- Subcontractor Agreements
- Financial Statements
- Budgets and Forecasts
- Example Care Plans, Budgets and monthly statements
- Brokerage Agreements
- Aged Care Policies and Procedures
- Position Descriptions, CVs & Qualifications
- Example Client Budget and Monthly Reports
- Key Personnel Police checks/NDIS Worker Screening Check, insolvency check and statutory declaration.

Q8 What types of organisational policies and procedures are required?

SoCom offer a four-part Policy Pack and supporting forms and registers that are compliant with the Aged Care Standards. These packs have been reviewed by the Commission in previous successful applications and include:

- **Governance and Management**
- **Human Resources**
- **Service Delivery and Clients**
- **Specialist Nursing Interventions**
- **Forms to accompany policies**



For the full list of inclusions and prices, please click on the above links. To ensure that the content reflects your organisation structure and services, SoCom can tailor these to your organisation. We would generally recommend approximately 5 hours to adjust the policies to reflect your organisation. However, as noted above, we recommend your senior management and clinical governance team is involved in this process to ensure they are appropriately tailored and understood. Please feel free to contact us for a quote.

Q9 SoCom Consulting Services – Our Process

When you engage SoCom Consulting to assist you with your application, we recommend the following process:

STAGE 1	Organisation purchases the aged care policy packs to ensure their position in the application queue.
STAGE 2	Kick off meeting to get to know you, your team, and your business. We see this as a partnership, so we are keen to understand your goals and how we can support the key personnel who will be working as part of the application team.
STAGE 3	We work with your senior management and clinical governance team to tailor and finalise your policy packs and supporting documentation (e.g. Business Plan and Financial Forecast). This process enables us to learn more about your organisation which is vital for the personalisation of your application.
STAGE 4	Application drafting commences. This is a co-drafting process to ensure your application reflects the real delivery process of your organisation. The approach can be tailored to your capacity and expertise (e.g. co-drafting section by section, or you can do a first draft for our review).

Time/Cost Estimate

In our experience, we require approximately 60 – 80 hours (@ \$200 p/hr = \$12,000 - \$16,000) for this length of application. Blocks of time are purchased 10 hours in advance and we provide you with full timesheets and updates so you can manage your budget appropriately. We will let you know immediately of anything that is holding up the processes or blowing out time unnecessarily.



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