



Objectives of the Program

The **Department of Health and Aged Care** (the department) supports eligible aged care providers to improve their financial viability and capability through several financial assistance programs and grants to satisfy the demands of a strengthened aged care market. The Aged Care Business and Workforce Advisory Service is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care and is delivered by EY.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) offer a readily accessible resource of responses for broad enquiries from a diverse audience. These answers provide general advice only.

The FAQs for the Business and Workforce Advisory Service have been categorised by the following themes:

- A. [Understanding our services](#)
- B. [Eligibility and application process](#)
- C. [Application outcome and service delivery](#)
- D. [Scope of service](#)
- E. [Understanding reports](#)
- F. [Data protection and confidentiality](#)
- G. [Engagement timeline and program commitments](#)
- H. [Communication and support](#)

A. Understanding our services

1. What is the Aged Care Business and Workforce Advisory Service?

- ▶ The Aged Care Business and Workforce Advisory Service is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. These services are part of the Aged Care Viability Support Program and offer free, independent, and confidential advice to eligible aged care providers. The Business Advisory Service focuses on business management and financial strategies, while the Workforce Advisory Service assists with workforce challenges. Eligible providers may also receive integrated services where applicable.

2. What types of services are offered by the Business Advisory Service?

- ▶ The Business Advisory Service offers a range of services, including financial performance review, financial forecast and business plan review, funding review, corporate strategy appraisal, and business performance review. This service is designed to help address concerns such as cash flow management, occupancy, direct care costs, budgeting, pricing, and local competition.

3. What types of services are offered by the Workforce Advisory Services?

- ▶ The Workforce Advisory Service focuses on workforce planning and staffing, organisation design, talent management processes and strategies, employee experience, and culture and leadership review. This service addresses concerns related to resourcing levels, workforce capability, recruitment and retention, talent pathways, and cultural issues.

4. How long will the Aged Care Business and Workforce Advisory Service be available to eligible aged care providers?

- ▶ These services are currently funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care until 30 June 2025.

5. Why is EY delivering these services on behalf of the department?

- ▶ EY received the opportunity to deliver this service through a competitive tender process. EY has extensive experience working with aged care providers (for profit and not-for-profit), government agencies and regulators, helping to deliver on complex challenges as the aged care sector implements major reforms. EY is committed to maintaining independence and confidentiality which can give providers confidence when sharing commercial information.

6. How will EY work with my organisation?

- ▶ The EY team delivering the Business and Workforce Advisory Service has deep, on the ground experience working with providers to solve their financial and workforce challenges. We will work with your organisation to quickly understand the situation, support you, and provide practical, guiding pathways to a sustainable future delivering quality aged care services.

7. Who pays for the service?

- ▶ This is a free service for eligible providers that has been funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

B. Eligibility and application process

1. How can providers apply?

- ▶ To apply for the services, providers need to submit an application through a [secure form](#). For support with your application, consult the materials on the webpage or contact EY directly via agedcareadvisory@au.ey.com.

2. How much does it cost to lodge an application and receive the services?

- ▶ There is no cost involved for lodging an application. Aged care providers can lodge an application for free, independent, and confidential advice in relation to business and workforce matters relevant to each provider.

3. Which providers are eligible to receive business or workforce advisory services?

- ▶ Residential and Home Care providers are eligible for the Business and Workforce Advisory Service. Applications from CHSP providers may also be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Department of Health and Aged Care determine eligibility criteria. In assessing applications, the department will consider factors including location, service type, size and/or specialisation, as well as previous supports provided. Applications may be prioritised based on the availability of alternative services, and whether the provider would be unable, or significantly unlikely, to receive those services without the assistance of the department.

4. If my application is deemed ineligible, can I lodge a new application?

- ▶ Providers who lodged an unsuccessful application will receive an email advising them of the outcome and reasons why. If applicants wish to query the decision, or if their situation has changed, they are welcome to contact the team via agedcareadvisory@au.ey.com.

5. We received advice under the program previously, can we apply for this service again to assist with the advice previously received?

- ▶ Yes, noting priority for services will be given to providers who have not previously received advice through the service.

6. Are we eligible for the service if we have other business advisors?

- ▶ Yes, providers that have existing business advisor relationships can still apply for the service. The department will determine the eligibility criteria. Support will be prioritised based on factors including availability of alternative services, and whether the provider would be unable, or significantly unlikely, to receive similar advisory services outside the program.

7. If we are planning to sell, buy or transact the facility, are we still eligible for the program?

- ▶ Yes. Providers planning to sell, buy or transact their facility are welcome to apply for the program to obtain advice regarding cash flow management, occupancy, direct care costs, budgeting, pricing of service offerings, level of demand for service/local competition and any other relevant financial concerns. The advice provided will account for the provider's transaction circumstances.

8. What information do I need to apply?

- ▶ The application form will collect information such as provider name, National Approved Provider Scheme ID number, address, contact details, type of entity (for-profit- or not-for-profit), and details about the services you currently provide (e.g., Home Care Packages, residential aged care, etc.). Additionally, the form will ask for information about your size, number of occupied beds, and full-time equivalent staff. You will also be asked to identify and provide details about the primary concerns facing your business.

9. Why do I need to provide the requested information?

- ▶ Collected information, such as details about your business and the services you currently provide, allows the Department of Health and Aged Care to assess your eligibility for the service.

10. What if we have questions in relation to the application process?

- ▶ For questions regarding the application process, consult the materials on the [webpage](#) or contact EY directly via agedcareadvisory@au.ey.com.

C. Application Outcome and Service Delivery

1. When am I notified on the outcome of my application?

- ▶ For applications with complete information, EY will notify the nominated email contact within 5 business days.

2. What does the outcome of my application mean?

- ▶ Providers with successful applications will receive an email notification regarding enrolment into the relevant advisory service, including information on next steps and a request to organise an introductory call.
- ▶ Providers who lodged an unsuccessful application will receive an email notification advising them of the outcome and reason for the outcome decision.
- ▶ EY may contact aged care providers to clarify any outstanding questions and if further information is required to finalise the outcome of the application.

3. What are the next steps following the approval of my application?

- ▶ EY will arrange an introductory call with the provider's nominated contact to discuss and understand provider concerns, provide an overview of the engagement approach, and detail the Request for Information (RFI) process. Upon receipt of all relevant information, EY will commence delivery of the service.

4. How will EY deliver the service?

- ▶ Services are likely to vary based on the needs and challenges of each provider. Depending on these circumstances, a typical service is likely to commence through engagement with key business representatives and detailed analysis of business data and indicators, such as historical finances, cash flow, workforce resourcing, or organisational structure. We may then review similar benchmarks and best practices within the broader sector. This analysis is then used to draw insights into respective challenges or risks as relevant to the provider and their concerns.
- ▶ Subsequently, recommendations and implementations are developed to address identified issues. This information is then incorporated into a report which is shared with the provider for feedback. Feedback is incorporated and a final version of the report is delivered to the provider.

5. How long does it take to receive my report after submitting the application?

- ▶ Once your application has been approved by the department and all relevant information has been received, EY aims to complete reports within 5 to 10 business days. For reports necessitating on-site consultations and in-depth research and engagement time, our timeframe is 10 business days. However, please note that the actual timeframe may vary depending on the complexity of your circumstances and the level of engagement required. EY will make every effort to deliver the report as quickly as possible without compromising the quality of the analysis and recommendations.



6. What happens after my report is finalised?

- ▶ After receiving the report, we offer quick reference guides on next-step programs available for providers. Following this, EY will engage with providers to understand their experience of the business and workforce advisory services and use the feedback to inform our continuous improvement measures.

D. Scope of Services

- 1. Can providers request assistance for challenges not specifically listed?**
 - ▶ Yes, providers are encouraged to seek clarification if they face challenges not mentioned above but believe they would benefit from the support offered by these services (for example transaction support, board and executive communications and engagement, orderly closure, and business turnaround).
- 2. Can EY provide a custom business or workforce plan with unique actionable steps?**
 - ▶ Yes, EY will submit a draft report to successful aged care providers summarising key findings and recommendations. Providers are then encouraged to give feedback to EY based on the draft report to ensure the final report addresses their needs.

E. Understanding Reports

1. What can providers expect from the reports received?

- ▶ The reports will provide an overview of your operating context in the aged care industry. The findings and recommendations will focus on improving efficiency and performance through actionable steps and “quick wins”. They will include clear next steps, timelines, and action owners. The recommendations will be evidence-based and aligned with best practices. The reports aim to provide actionable insights and guidance to enhance your operational performance in line with industry standards and best practices.

2. Will someone talk us through the report?

- ▶ Providers will receive verbal advice and/or written reports designed to assist management better understand challenges and opportunities affecting resourcing, viability, and profitability.

3. What if we disagree with the contents of the report?

- ▶ It is anticipated that providers may also require assistance on their strategic direction and options available to the Board and executive on next steps. Providers are encouraged to voice their concerns through our post-service engagement consultations or contacting EY directly via agedcareadvisory@au.ey.com.

F. Data Protection and Confidentiality

1. Who has access to the providers report?

- ▶ EY will independently deliver the reports directly to the provider. A copy of the report will only be provided to the Department of Health and Aged Care if the provider consents to its distribution.

2. How is our data handled, will our data be safe?

- ▶ Our [privacy notice](#) details how EY collects and uses personal data, and describes the rights you have with respect to your personal data.
- ▶ All data will be collected and will reside on EY's managed servers, which will be stored on and backed up by Australian based servers. The servers are hosted within the EY environment in a Melbourne data centre, with back-up servers also located within Australia.
- ▶ The data servers comply with Australian and International standards and are ISO 27001 security compliant. They are wholly managed onshore in Australia by security cleared staff. They are not available to the public and are maintained in a secure environment 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- ▶ Where required, secure data transfer arrangements, including encryption protocols, will be established with the department to ensure that any transfer of data is done in a manner that will minimise any risk of security breaches.

3. How long will data be stored for?

In complying with EY's data storage protocols, the following data retention protocols would apply:

- ▶ Data related to personal information will be retained for 2 years.
- ▶ Data related to non-personal information will be retained for 7 years.
- ▶ EY's data privacy and information security program and practices are focused on sharing information appropriately and lawfully, while providing confidentiality, integrity, and availability. We maintain a controlled, secure environment to ensure integrity and security throughout all aspects of data collection.

G. Engagement Timeline and Program Commitments

1. How long is the engagement process with EY?

- ▶ Following approvals and depending on the providers' circumstances and the information provided, reports will be typically completed within 5 to 10 business days of application approval.
- ▶ EY will confirm the timeline for each service with the provider.

H. Communication and Support

1. Who from EY will be leading the delivery of this program?

- ▶ Our integrated delivery team is led by:
 - ▶ **Colby O'Brien:** Colby is a partner in EY's Strategy and Transactions team, with extensive experience in aged care. This includes directly advising regional providers on viability issues through to undertaking broader market impacts on the various aged care reforms. Colby's ability to cut through to the challenges facing providers is underpinned by experience providing specialist advice on financial performance, financial viability, governance, strategy and exit or merger options.
 - ▶ **Sonia Sharp:** Sonia is a partner in EY's Workforce Advisory team with 20 years' experience working in human services across Australia and the UK, supporting providers through large and complex reforms. Sonia brings an acute understanding of aged care reforms and their impacts on providers and the aged care workforce.
 - ▶ **Cassandra Gandolfo:** Cass is a Director in EY's People Consulting team. She has a strong track record of delivering practical outcomes for aged care providers on workforce management, strategic workforce planning, and HR process optimisation. Cass has worked with providers in regional and remote areas to become reform ready, and established collaborative, regional provider networks to solve complex challenges on workforce, skills, and training.
 - ▶ **Clare Windle:** Clare Windle is a Senior Manager in EY's Strategy & Transactions Practice located in Canberra. Clare specialises in financial management and works closely with government and private sector clients to achieve their operational and strategic objectives.

2. Who do we contact if we have questions about the process?

- ▶ For further enquiries, please contact agedcareadvisory@au.ey.com
- ▶ For general information on the Business Advisory Service and Workforce Advisory Service visit the [Department of Health and Aged Care Financial Viability and Capability Support page](#).