



Partnerships in care Caring together

A fact sheet for family and friends of those in residential aged care



The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission recognises the importance of social engagement and the continuity of close relationships for the health and wellbeing of aged care residents. We also know there can be negative health impacts when these relationships are restricted during COVID-19 outbreaks or similar circumstances.

Joining a Partnerships in care (PiC) program will help you to continue to provide care and companionship to the person you already support in residential aged care, even during periods of outbreak. This includes increasing your skills in infection prevention and control and formalising your care arrangements with the aged care home.

Partnerships in care take a person-centred approach to promoting existing relationships of care between a resident and their family members or close friends.

Partnerships in care build on recent public health advice relating to access for visitors to aged care residents including the [Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes During COVID-19](#) and the [Interim Guidance on Managing Public Health Restrictions on Residential Aged Care Facilities](#).

There are many different types of visitor arrangements, including specific arrangements during an outbreak. It is the right of the resident to request at least one visitor, even in an outbreak. Visitor access in an outbreak will always be subject to a risk assessment.



Who are partners in care?

A partner in care (also referred to as a partner) is a person identified by the aged care resident, or their representative, who they have a close and continuing relationship with, such as a family member or close friend. A partner regularly visits and provides care and companionship to the aged care resident.

Partners in care may provide support such as:

- helping with dressing
- sharing stories, food or other pastimes
- helping to practise exercise routines
- helping to visit places of special interest.

The type of care provided will depend on the needs of the aged care resident and the relationship with their chosen partner. A partner in care is not a casual visitor, a visitor not providing an aspect of care, or a visitor who the resident does not want to have assisting with their care.

What are the benefits of partnerships in care?

Partners in care play a key role in the quality of life and wellbeing of people living in an aged care home.

Becoming a partner can help:

- keep families together to support each other through life experiences and times of need
- support the daily routines of people living in aged care homes including during infectious outbreaks
- improve the overall health and wellbeing of people living in aged care
- decrease the psycho-social impacts associated with visitor restrictions, lockdowns and sustained social isolation including loneliness, anxiety, boredom, fear and depression and cognitive decline

- you learn or improve your knowledge and skills around infection control practices and other caring skills.

How to join a Partnerships in care program?

1. Have a look at the information and resources available on the Commission's website. They will give you an opportunity to learn key infection control practices and what to expect in an outbreak.
2. If your family member or close friend lives in an aged care home and identifies you as their partner in care, talk to the aged care home to see if you can join their PiC program.
3. If the aged care home does not have a PiC program, encourage them to read about partnerships in care on the [Commission's website](#). If you'd like support to talk to an aged care home about partnerships in care you can contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on **1800 700 600** or via their website – www.opan.org.au

What resources are available to help me?

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has developed resources to help family and close friends maintain social engagement and important relationships of care with people living in aged care, even during outbreaks.

The PiC resources will help you to build your skills in preventing the spread of infection. There are risks of infection any time you visit an aged care home, but as a partner you may be visiting during an outbreak or when the person you are caring for is COVID positive. We want to help you prepare, understand and manage the risks for you and others.

While this information package is tailored for formal partners in care, the content is useful for all visitors to an aged care home.



The Commission's fact sheet [Ensuring safe visitor access to residential aged care](#) contains more information about the different types of visitors to an aged care home and the obligations of residential aged care providers to ensure safe visitor access.

Thank you for supporting partnerships in care.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

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