



People leaving aged care

People leave aged care services for a number of reasons, including moving to another service for the same or a different care type. This fact sheet presents highlights from the GEN topic People leaving aged care.

When a person leaves an aged care service it is referred to as an 'exit' (excluding short periods of leave, such as for family visits or hospital stays). A person may exit aged care services more than once over a 12-month period.

The time that a person spends while using an aged care service in a single episode is referred to as 'length of stay', regardless of whether they used community or residential care. Here we describe length of stay at exit by using the median value: around half of people have a length of stay longer than the median, and around half of people have a length of stay shorter than the median.

In 2023–24:

- 84,100 exits were from home care, 68,400 were from permanent residential care, 94,600 were from respite residential care, 14,400 were from transition care and 8,900 were from short-term restorative care
- the median length of stay for permanent residential care was nearly 3 months longer than home care (18.8 and 16.1 months, respectively).

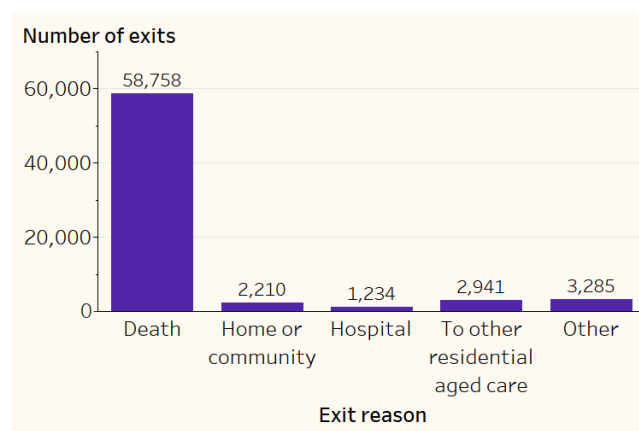
Reasons for aged care exits

People can leave aged care services for varying reasons. Reasons for exit include death, moving to another service, moving to another care type or returning to community-based living. How long people stay in aged care services and the reasons for leaving are likely to differ among care types.

For exits that took place in 2023–24:

- The most common reason for exit from home care was to enter residential care (39% of exits), followed by death (27% of exits).
- The most common reason for exit from permanent residential care was due to death (86% of exits); meanwhile, people leaving permanent residential care due to death had the longest median length of stay (21 months).
- The most common reason for exits from respite residential care, transition care and short-term restorative care was to return home or to community-based living (47%, 66% and 69% of exits, respectively).

Figure 1: Number of exits from permanent residential care by exit reason, 2023–24



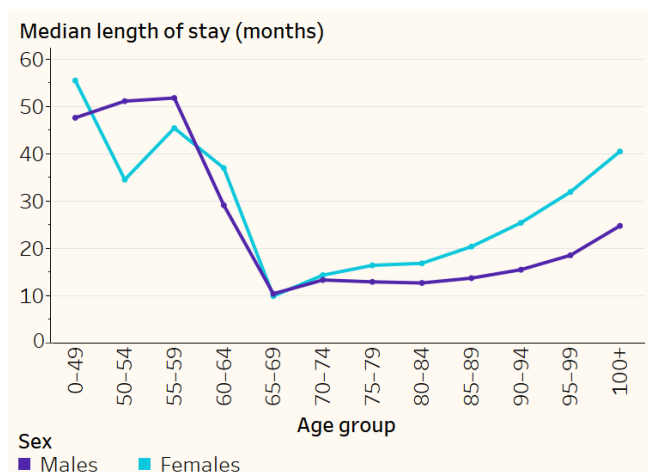
Aged care exits by sex and age

Although the majority of exits from aged care services are for people aged 65 and over, younger people also exit from these services.

In 2023–24:

- about 3 in 5 (59%) exits from aged care services were for women
- the median age at exit was 84 for home care and 88 for permanent residential care
- the median length of stay for women was longer than men for home care (about 2 and a half months longer) and permanent residential care (about 8 and a half months longer)
- older age groups represented a larger proportion of exits from permanent residential care than home care – 64% of exits from permanent residential care were for people aged 85 and over, compared with 49% for home care
- the median length of stay in permanent residential care generally increased with age from age 75 onwards both for men and women – the median length of stay for people aged 75–79 at exit was 12.9 months for men and 16.4 months for women, compared with 24.8 months for men and 40.5 months for women among people aged 100 and over at exit.

Figure 2: Length of stay in permanent residential care by sex and age group, 2023–24



Aged care exits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) people are eligible to receive aged care services at an earlier age than non-Indigenous Australians.

In 2023–24:

- First Nations people accounted for 1.7% of exits from mainstream aged care services (home care, permanent and respite residential care, transition care and short-term restorative care)
- exits for First Nations people from aged care more commonly occurred at younger ages – respectively for First Nations people and non-Indigenous Australians, the median age at exit was 72 and 85 for home care, 77 and 88 for permanent residential care, 75 and 85 for respite residential care, 70 and 82 for transition care, and 68 and 80 for short-term restorative care.

Aged care exits for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Many older Australians were born overseas, speak a variety of languages, may not speak English fluently or have different religious or cultural practices. These characteristics can influence how people access and engage with aged care services and the support they require.

The median length of stay for people leaving permanent residential care was 0.6 months (18 days) longer for people who preferred to speak a language other than English compared with people who preferred to speak English.

Aged care exits over time

There have been changes in the number of exits – mirroring changes in admissions into and people using aged care – and typical length of stay for different care types over time.

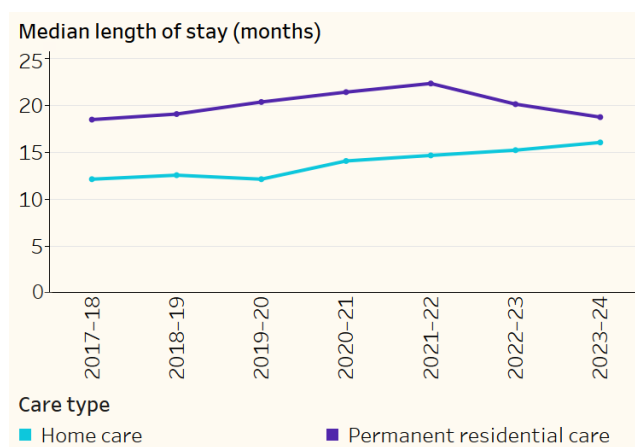
Between 2017–18 and 2023–24:

- the number of exits from home care more than doubled from 35,300 to 84,100 (a 138% increase), meanwhile, the rate of exits from home care among older Australians also increase, from 8.8 exits to 17.9 exits per 1,000 population aged 65 and over
- in general, the number of exits from permanent residential care remained relatively stable (69,900–68,400), however, the rate of exits from permanent residential care among older Australians declined from 17.4 exits to 14.6 exits per 1,000 population aged 65 and over.

The median length of stay showed different patterns for different care types between 2017–18 and 2023–24:

- it increased from 12.2 months to 16.1 months for exits from home care
- for exits from permanent residential care, it increased steadily from 2017–18 to 2021–22 (from 18.5 months to 22.4 months) before decreasing in the following 2 years to 2023–24 at 18.8 months.

Figure 3: Length of stay in home care and permanent residential care, 2017–18 to 2023–24



Where can I find out more?

GEN topic: People leaving aged care

<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Topics/People-leaving-aged-care>

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