The Australian Government is working to reduce the number of younger people (under the age of 65) going into residential aged care, and to help younger people who are already in residential aged care to move into age-appropriate accommodation with the supports they need. This factsheet presents highlights from the GEN resource page Younger people in residential aged care.

**Number of younger people in residential aged care**

At 31 March 2022:

- **3,163** people aged under 65 were living in permanent residential aged care.
- **75** people aged under 45 were living in permanent residential aged care.

This was a **23% decrease** from March 2021.

**Age distribution**

At 31 March 2022, the majority (58%) of younger people living in permanent residential aged care were aged 60–64. Nearly 4 in 10 (39%) were aged 45–59, and 2% were aged 18–44. The age distribution was similar for men and women (Figure 1).

**Health conditions**

Younger people living in residential aged care often have multiple health conditions.

In 2019–2020, among younger people in residential aged care in Australia whose health conditions were known:

- **32%** had endocrine, nutritional and metabolic disorders
- **64%** had mental health and behavioural disorders
- **33%** had diseases of the nervous system
- **38%** had diseases of the circulatory system

Epilepsy, head injuries and incontinence are all more likely to be experienced by those under the age of 45 than among those aged 45–64. People under age 45 are more likely than people aged 45–64 to have (acquired and congenital) health conditions and disabilities related to brain function.

Younger People in Residential Aged Care Strategy 2020–25

The Strategy sets out to achieve the goal of reducing the number of younger people in residential aged care through the following targets, apart from in exceptional circumstances:

Target 1 - No people under the age of 65 entering residential aged care by 2022

During January to March 2022, 104 people under the age of 65 were admitted into permanent residential aged care in Australia. This is a 36% decrease from the same period in 2021.

Target 2 - No people under the age of 45 living in residential aged care by 2022

At 31 March 2022, there were 75 people aged under 45 living in residential aged care in Australia. This is a 29% decrease from the same date in 2021.

Target 3 - No people under the age of 65 living in residential aged care by 2025

At 31 March 2022, there were 3,163 people aged under 65 living in residential aged care in Australia. This is a 23% decrease from the same date in 2021.

Number of younger people in residential aged care by state and territory

The number of younger people living in permanent residential aged care in Australia has been steadily decreasing. This has largely been driven by the reduction in admissions of younger people to residential aged care. The number of younger people in permanent residential aged care decreased in every state and territory between 2021 and 2022 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of people under age 65 in permanent residential aged care, by state and territory, at 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Exits and length of stay

People leave residential aged care for a number of reasons. When a person leaves an aged care service it is referred to here as an exit. In the year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, 806 younger people exited from permanent residential aged care. Seven in ten (72%) exits from permanent residential aged care (580 people) had death recorded as the reason for leaving. Among the remaining exits, 51% (115 people) returned to family or home, 9% (21 people) exited to hospital, and 40% (90 people) exited to a destination recorded as an other location.

Access to NDIS supports has contributed to the ability of younger people to exit permanent residential aged care to a more appropriate setting. Based on data from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), at 31 March 2022, 2,735 younger people in residential aged care had an approved NDIS plan, including 704 people who had a goal to leave residential aged care (NDIA, 2022).

The average length of stay was 4 years and 11 months for younger people who were living in permanent residential aged care on 31 March 2022. See data notes for a description of how length of stay is calculated.