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Aged Care

Preparing for the aged care conversation

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Introduction

As your loved one starts to consider residential aged care, the transition can seem overwhelming. This can be a difficult time for all involved and filling out forms or obtaining documents may be the last thing you want to do.

However, your financial adviser can help. Whether the first conversation with your adviser happens before, during, or even after making the transition, they can help ensure your loved one's needs, both financial and emotional, are being fully considered.

To prepare for your first conversation, there are several pieces of information they may require. This guide splits this information into five main areas.

When gathering information, permission from your loved one may be required.



1. Aged care needs

Information about your loved one's aged care needs can influence a financial adviser's ongoing funding strategies.

Questions you may be asked	Why are you being asked this?	How to get hold of this information
Are they currently accessing any Government funded aged care services?	Identifying what type of Government funded aged care services they are currently accessing (if any), and what their future needs could be, will influence the funding strategy a financial adviser develops.	The Government will be able to confirm what type of services your loved one is currently accessing.
If so, when did they start accessing these services?	Services can include the commonwealth home support program, a home care package or permanent residential aged care.	
Have they been assessed for Government funded services?	To access Government funded services, they must be approved by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT or ACAS in Victoria) to determine their eligibility for care.	You can access additional information and request a free assessment by visiting the Government's website www.myagedcare.gov.au .

2. Their finances

The Government will look at how much your loved one receives from any investments or other streams of income. This will help the Government work out how much your loved one may need to contribute to their residential aged care fees.

Questions you may be asked

Why are you being asked this?

How to get hold of this information

Are they receiving any income support payments? If so, what are the details?

They may be receiving income support from the Department of Human Services (DHS) or Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). These payments will be considered when determining how much they may need to contribute to their aged care costs.

There may be records of how much they receive each month from their income support. If not, contact the relevant authority who provides their support payments for details.

What are their current assets, income and/or liabilities? This can include savings, shares, account-based pensions, annuities, debts and/or loans.

This information is required by the Government to work out how much your loved one may need to contribute to their residential aged care costs. These details will also influence the funding strategy a financial adviser develops.

Historic financial statements can help identify potential holdings. Contact with relevant financial institutions or their accountant can also assist.

3. Confirming their plans with the former home

When transitioning into residential aged care, what your loved one wishes to do with the family home can make a big difference to their cash flow.

Questions you may be asked

Why are you being asked this?

How to get hold of this information

Is anyone currently living with them?

Aged care fees could be reduced if someone continues to reside in the former home after your loved one transitions into residential aged care. This will influence the funding strategy a financial adviser develops.

No additional information is required if the person residing in the former home is a spouse. Where not a spouse, confirm whether the person provides care and/or is a family member. How long they have lived in the former home and the name of any income support payment they may be receiving from the Government is also relevant.

How would they feel about renting out the former home? Is the home in a rentable state? If not, how much would it cost to get it to a rentable state?

Renting the home can generate a change in their circumstances which could affect their income support payment and/or aged care fees.

Getting in touch with family members to talk about the former home, and understanding their views, could impact what to do with the former home.

4. The care facility information

Whether you or your loved one has visited some aged care facilities prior to meeting with a financial adviser, or if your loved one has already transitioned into care, aged care facility details will help with the development of a funding strategy.

Questions you may be asked	Why are you being asked this?	How to get hold of this information
If they have chosen a facility, or currently reside in one, what are their expected or current costs?	Confirming how much the facility charges will help determine cash flow requirements.	If they have already transitioned into residential aged care, refer to their accommodation agreement, monthly invoices and/or contact the aged care facility. If transitioning into residential aged care, visit an aged care facility's website or the Government's website www.myagedcare.gov.au to view advertised prices and service details.
Do they have a preference regarding payment of these costs?	Facilities provide a choice regarding how to pay for their care. The funding strategy developed by an adviser will be influenced by your loved one's preference to retain or sell down assets etc.	Contact the aged care facility to confirm payment processes.

5. Other expenses

Additional lifestyle expenses can be included in a financial adviser's funding strategy. This could include haircuts, day trips or specialist medical appointments.

Questions you may be asked	Why are you being asked this?	How to get hold of this information
What additional expenses require ongoing funding?	These additional expenses will influence the funding strategy their financial adviser develops.	Bank statements can help determine their current spending requirements. Family members, close friends, case workers or a health care worker they regularly liaise with may be aware of relevant information.
Are there any ongoing health expenses that require funding?	Ongoing specialist medical treatments, medication, consultation fees and/or private health fund cover are some health expenses that could influence the funding strategy a financial adviser develops.	Contact their family doctor (if applicable) or specialist medical professional for details of potential ongoing health expenses. This could include approximate costs for future operations etc.

Further information

To find out more about aged care and how we can help you with the necessary plans and preparations, please feel welcome to contact us.

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