

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**Inquiry into the Aged Care Legislation Amendment (Financial Transparency)
Bill 2020**

Written Question received 9 September 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000622

Reporting on staffing levels, skills and hours in aged care

Written

Senator: Wendy Askew

Question:

Some submitters have suggested that reporting about aged care staffing should include further transparency beyond financial cost, with several referencing the recent Queensland Health Transparency Act 2019 which requires the publication of information about care hours and staff ratios in residential aged care facilities in that state.

- a. How are staffing levels, skill mix and care hours currently assessed in the Commonwealth accreditation of aged care facilities and providers, particularly residential aged care?
- b. Is this information currently available to the public?
- c. Does the Commonwealth intend to introduce public reporting of aged care staffing in the vein of the recent Queensland changes?

Answer:

- a. Accreditation of residential aged care services involves periodic site audits conducted by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Commission) to assess compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards (Standards). Standard 7: Human Resources requires the aged care service to demonstrate that it 'has a workforce that is sufficient, and is skilled and qualified to provide safe, respectful and quality care and services'.

In assessing performance against this Standard, assessment teams make observations, review documents and speak to staff and aged care consumers and their representatives to determine if there is a sufficient number of appropriately skilled and qualified staff to meet the needs of consumers. This includes considering if documentation, including staff rosters, demonstrates the service has planned for and engaged an adequate number of appropriately skilled and qualified staff, seven days per week, 24 hours per day.

The aged care service is required to complete the '[Numbers of personnel in the service form](#)' to provide information to the assessment team about personnel working in the service during the seven-day period (Sunday to Saturday) before the site audit.

- b. The information collected by the assessment team is included in the performance assessment findings and evidence document, which is considered by the Commission when making a re-accreditation decision. The findings and evidence document is not made publicly available.

The assessment team also prepares a site audit performance assessment report, which contains an assessment of the approved provider's performance against the Standards and any other matters the assessment team considers relevant. The site audit report is published on the Commission's website, along with the Delegate's accreditation decision.

In addition, the My Aged Care website now includes the new Service Compliance Ratings, providing an easy and effective way for older Australians and their families to consider and compare the quality of residential aged care services. The Service Compliance Ratings are derived from the Commission's regulatory activity including displaying information on current non-compliance notices, sanctions, or notices to agree.

- c. The Commonwealth awaits the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety on these and other workforce matters.