

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-180

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: Extra Service Status

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

- a) What checks and balances does DoHA have in place to ensure that approved providers of residential care who apply for Extra Service Status have the capability to provide accommodation, activities, catering and other services which are of "substantially higher quality" than non-extra services providers?
- b) Who inspects the applicant providers before a grant of Extra Service Status and what criteria are applied to grant the status?
- c) Are there follow up visits following the grant of ESS? If so, at what intervals and by whom?
- d) How does DoHA ensure that extra services are provided to the standard specified in the ESS provider's Extra Services Agreement?

Answer:

a) and b)

All applications are assessed against criteria based on the provisions of the *Aged Care Act 1997* (the Act) and the *Extra Service Principles 1997*. The assessment criteria are set out in the 2012-13 Extra Service status Guidelines for Applicants, published on the Department of Health and Ageing's website at www.health.gov.au/ess. These are:

- applications must not be granted where it would unreasonably reduce access to residential aged care by specified classes of people (including those aged 70 years and over who would have difficulty in affording an Extra Service amount) living in the state, territory or region;
- the proposed standard of accommodation, services and food must be significantly higher than the average standard in residential care services that do not have Extra Service status;
- the provider must have a "very good record" of conduct;
- where the applicant has key personnel in common with another provider, that provider must also have a very good record; and

- the delegate must be satisfied that there would be significant benefit, diversity of choice and continuity of care for current and future care recipients.
 - a competitive assessment must be undertaken where more than one application is received in a region and granting Extra Service to all applicants would unreasonably reduce access. In these circumstances preference must be given to applications that best meet the criteria.

Whilst the Act provides the option for the Department to carry out on-site inspections of a service proposed for Extra Service Status, such inspections are not usual practice for the Department because the Department already requires significant details, including photographic evidence of grounds and buildings, floor plans, menus etc. to be submitted with the application. The provision of this information is sufficient for assessing an application.

- c) If a complaint is made about extra services, then in the course of resolving that complaint, Aged Care Complaints Scheme officers may visit an aged care service's premises. Not all complaints require a site visit to be resolved.
- d) Where a resident chooses to enter an Extra-Service aged care home, the aged care provider must enter into an Extra Service agreement with the resident, which sets out: what the home will provide at a higher standard, the extra service fees, and how often those extra service fees can be increased and by how much.

Compliance with an Extra Service agreement is an approved provider responsibility under the Act. Should a facility breach the terms of this agreement it may be investigated by the Department's Aged Care Complaints Scheme and could face compliance action and possibly sanctions. Care recipients in extra service facilities, and their representatives, are able to contact the Aged Care Complaints Scheme on 1800 550 552 at any time if they believe they are not receiving the services and standards of accommodation set out in their Extra Service agreement.