

New Aged Care Quality Standards

From July 2019, new Aged Care Quality Standards will come into effect. This is a very significant change for Aged Care Chefs and hospitality staff.

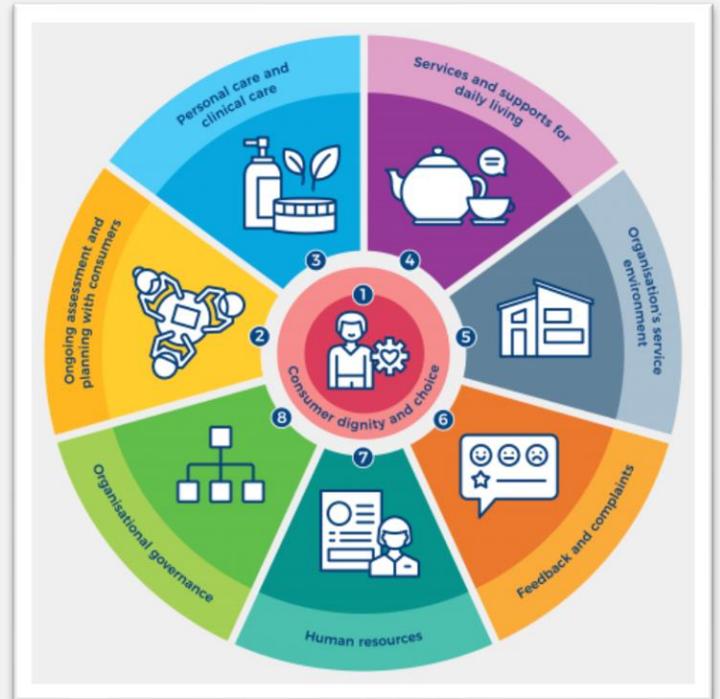
Resident as priority

An important change is the positioning of the resident as the priority. Consideration and commitment to meeting the residents' needs and improving their overall daily experience is paramount throughout the new standards.

The new guidelines state that the goal is for organisations & the services and supports they provide, such as food service, "to improve a consumer's well-being and quality-of-life."

"A consumer might have some challenges in their health and abilities, but they still have goals they want to achieve. They also have roles that have meaning, and they want to manage their day-to-day life and live as well as they can. Services and supports for daily living cover a wide range of options that aim to support consumers live as independently as possible and enjoy life."

Everyone has their favourite food or a certain way they like it cooked. From the taste, presentation, consideration of a resident's dietary needs or favourite dishes through to the overall dining experience, delicious, nutritious food can invoke a sense of positive wellbeing and really contribute to a happy daily life in an Aged Care facility.



A spotlight on food and the dining experience

The new Aged Care Quality Standard 4.6 explicitly states: 'where meals are provided, they are (to be) varied and of suitable quality and quantity.'

Aged care providers will need to demonstrate choice through a varied menu and show they are able to accommodate individual preferences and complex dietary requirements.



Making the dining experience more engaging

Meeting the new quality standards around food services requires a holistic, customer-centric approach, considering all aspects of the dining experience; such as the time allowed, how easy it is to manage and the social component of eating. The role of the dining experience as an engaging, relationship-building experience is a key opportunity for hospitality staff to facilitate genuine social connection between residents who love to have a chat over a meal.



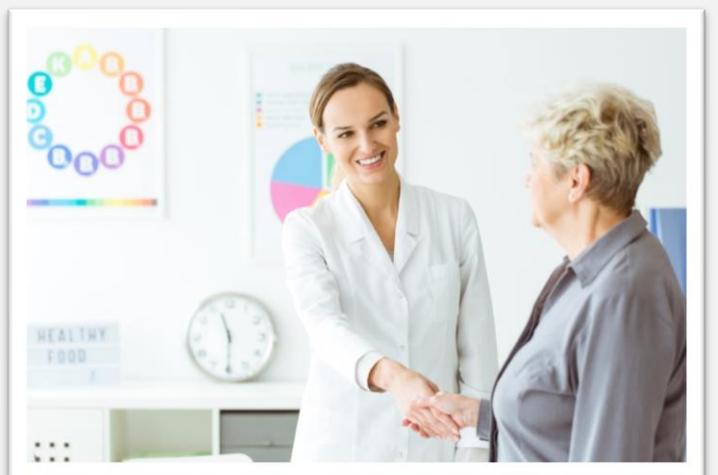
Giving residents choice and input into the menu, plus the support they need to eat every mouthful is another key way to ensure residents' needs and preferences are met, giving them control over their lives.



How Aged Care Chefs can meet new guidelines

- Residents are involved in planning the menu and they have a choice of suitable and healthy meals, snacks and drinks.

- Residents enjoy the meal and drink preferences and menu selections, the menu also meets their medical, cultural, religious or other needs
- The dining experience is comfortable and not rushed, with assistance to eat and drink readily available and provided in a dignified way
- Residents receive a variety of well-proportioned, quality meals and staff give them something to eat or drink if they are hungry or thirsty outside normal catering hours
- Food and drinks are placed within reach and in a form the resident can eat and drink, such as finger food, or modified meals or thickened drinks, where appropriate
- Staff describe how they create an engaging mealtime experience that encourages residents to eat and drink
- Aged Care chefs make sure meals vary and are of suitable quality and quantity
- Staff can meet a resident's request for changes to meals or drinks in a timely manner
- Aged Care Chefs know the consumers' nutrition and hydration needs, preferences and how to support consumers' independence (such as preferred meal size, dietary or cultural needs and any modifications needed)
- Aged Care Chefs report any changes to a consumer's appetite or eating habits, or concerns about weight loss or dehydration. This includes knowing when specialist nutritional advice is required and how to access it



- Training, communication and reporting processes are effective to achieve the above examples
- Being able to demonstrate compliance with the new guidelines will be a priority for every residential Aged Care facility and being well-prepared for audits will certainly help smooth the transition process.



Resources:

[Aged Care Quality Standards Fact Sheets](#)

References:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/>

[Unilever Food solutions](#)



Need to establish a plan to meet the new Aged Care Quality Standards?

Please call or email OSCAR Hospitality Operations Manager, Shannon Kee, via our contact details below.