

Considering a Supported Residential Service?

A guide for carers, family members and anyone considering moving into a Supported Residential Service (SRS)



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This guide, including without limitation any attachments, does not constitute and is not to be construed or relied upon as the provision of legal advice. Persons using this guide are advised by the Department of Human Services to seek appropriate legal and professional advice. This guide is current at October 2003.

Foreword

Residential care is for people who can no longer live at home for various reasons, such as illness, disability, or temporary accommodation in the case of bereavement, an emergency or due to the needs of their carer, family or friends. It is therefore important to ensure that you receive the care most appropriate to your needs.

This booklet is designed to assist family members, carers, and anyone considering moving into a Supported Residential Service (SRS).

It provides information about what an SRS is, the services provided, how the SRS is regulated and their relationship to other types of residential accommodation for aged, disabled and other members of the community who require assisted living.

This booklet is not intended to cover every aspect of the SRS sector. It aims to provide enough information to enable prospective residents to make an informed decision about whether an SRS is the type of accommodation that is best suited to their care needs.

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Part 1

What is an SRS?

SRSs are generally privately owned and operated businesses that receive no direct government funding, although a range of government funded services are available to individual residents of an SRS.

SRSs are defined as premises where accommodation and special or personal care are provided.

Special or personal care includes:

- assistance with one or more of bathing, showering, personal hygiene, toileting dressing, undressing or meals
- physical assistance for people with mobility problems
- assistance for people who are mobile but require some form of supervision or assistance, such as assistance with taking medication
- provision of substantial emotional support.

These are the types of services that most SRS provide. Some facilities may also provide a higher level of service, for example, nursing or allied health services.

Some SRSs provide services to particular client groups, for example, older people who are frail or younger adults with a disability.

SRSs also vary in the level of fees that are charged. Some facilities charge fees affordable on an aged care or disability pension, while others charge higher fees.

Before visiting an SRS, it is a good idea to call first to check the types of services provided, whether the facility caters for a particular client group and the types of fees. This will give you an idea of whether it might meet your needs.

Who are SRSs for?

SRSs are generally facilities that cater for people who are usually mobile but require assistance or supervision with daily tasks and personal care. Generally, SRSs provide hostel-type or low-level care.

An SRS may provide accommodation to:

- older people who, due to increasing frailty, are no longer able to live independently
- people who, due to physical, psychiatric, intellectual, acquired brain injury or other disability, may require care and support in activities of daily living
- residents with particular needs, for example dementia or acquired brain injury.

Management and staffing

The 'proprietor' is the person or company that owns the SRS business. It is the proprietor who is registered by the Department of Human Services to operate the SRS.

The proprietor may also be the manager of the SRS, but this is not always the case.

SRSs are required to employ a personal care coordinator (PCC) who is responsible for coordinating the personal care for all residents.

The PCC must have at least a Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care).

In some SRSs, the PCC may also be the proprietor or manager of the facility.

There must be at least one staff member for every 30 residents and additional staff to provide adequate levels of care for residents.

All SRSs must have a staff member on site overnight. This is generally a 'sleepover', meaning the staff member sleeps on the premises but may be woken to assist residents if required.

Buildings

Some SRSs are located in purpose-built facilities while others are in buildings that have been modified to accommodate the running of an SRS. Regardless of the type of building, SRS proprietors must take all reasonable steps to provide a home-like environment.

How much do I pay?

SRSs do not receive any government subsidies. Fees are charged but are not legislated by government and vary significantly.

Some SRSs charge a fee based exclusively on the rate of pension or benefit only, while some charge fees above the pension.

The range of fees can be anywhere from \$220 per week (approximately 85 per cent of the pension) up to \$1,000 per week.

You should ensure you understand the fees and charges that apply and how you will be informed of any changes to these fees and charges before moving into the SRS.

The fees and charges should be outlined in writing in *Information for prospective residents* (see page 13) available from the SRS and also included in the residential statement (see page 13) that is prepared after you have agreed to move into an SRS.



Part 2

Regulation of the SRS sector

All SRSs must be registered by the Victorian Department of Human Services and are required to comply with the requirements of the *Health Services Act 1988*, as they relate to SRSs, and the Health Services (Supported Residential Services) Regulations 2001.

The department has a number of authorised officers who are appointed under the Act to monitor the SRS facilities on a regular basis. The authorised officers are generally based at Department of Human Services regional offices (see page 19 for contact details).

Aged care accreditation is not applicable to SRSs; however, standards established under the Act are required to be met. These cover a range of activities such as staffing levels, hygiene, resident care and medication.

The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* does not apply to SRSs.

How do I find an SRS in my neighbourhood?

The Homes-Special Accommodation section of the *Yellow Pages* contains details of SRS facilities.

Alternatively, contact the authorised officers at the Department of Human Services office nearest to you (refer to page 19 for contact details) for details of SRSs in your region.

Further details of SRSs may also be found in the *DPS Guide to Aged Care*. This is available from DPS publishing, or from the website address www.dpspublishing.com.au

The Association of Supportive Care Homes can provide a list of SRSs that are members of the Association (call (03) 9625 0646 or mail to PO Box 27, Fairfield 3078).

Your local council may also be able to provide information on the SRS facilities in your municipality.

Do I need an assessment?

Assessments are not a requirement for entry into an SRS.

An assessment by Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) is required only when considering entry to a Commonwealth funded hostel or nursing home.

For more information about ACAS, refer to 'Useful contacts' on page 19.

What should I look for in an SRS?

A good SRS has the following elements:

- Provides for the person's needs.
- Respects the person's individuality.
- Promotes the person's independence.
- Provides a supportive environment for the person and their family and friends.
- Invites input from the resident, their family and, where appropriate, their friends regarding the care and services they receive.
- Uses current care practices to support residents.

Choosing an SRS

It is recommended that before you decide on a particular SRS for either yourself or a relative, that you make an appointment to visit at least three facilities in the area you are considering.

At the back of this book you will find a *Checklist – Choosing an SRS*, which sets out some questions you may like to ask when deciding which SRS will suit you.

Information for prospective residents

The Health Services (Supported Residential Services) Regulations 2001 requires that the SRS provide prospective residents or other interested persons, on request, written information about the services they provide, including:

- the type of services being provided
- the objectives and philosophies of the management of the service and the number of residents cared for at the service
- goods and services offered directly to residents
- all fees and charges applying to those goods and services
- the date the information is given and how and when you will be informed of any changes to the provision of goods and services and/or fees and charges
- health and community services available to residents from outside the service
- times of routines affecting residents of the service, for example, meal times
- procedures for receiving and handling complaints, including the external avenues of complaint available to residents
- options for ongoing management of the resident's financial and legal affairs. (The principles of the Act require that wherever possible the resident should manage their own financial affairs).

The residential statement

When you agree to move into a SRS, a document referred to as a **residential statement** must be prepared within 30 days.

The information in the residential statement should clearly identify the care that is to be provided and the cost of that care.

It should detail the health services, including any personal care, and other programs or services that are to be provided to the resident.

The residential statement must be prepared in consultation with the resident and, where appropriate, a relative or guardian.

You should check that the information in the residential statement is consistent with the *Information for prospective residents* that was provided to you before you moved into the facility.

Negotiating your residential statement

Before you move into the SRS, you should confirm with the manager or proprietor the services that will be provided and the conditions of your stay.

The following are some points you should have included in your residential statement:

- Details of the services that will be provided to you.
- Details of the nature of the accommodation to be provided.
- The cost, including standard fees and any additional charges or ongoing fees.
- Any optional services that may be organised by the SRS and associated costs.
- How you will be informed of any changes in fees and charges.
- Length of notice that will be given relating to any changes in fees and charges.
- Arrangements if you need to be away from the SRS for a period of time, for example, either planned or an emergency, such as a hospital admission.
- Reasons and length of notice if the proprietor wishes to terminate your residency and require you to move out.
- Policy relating to smoking and alcohol.
- The grounds for eviction from the SRS.

Residents' rights and safeguards

Residents of an SRS should be informed about the processes for making a complaint before moving into the SRS. There are a number of options for making a complaint:

- Where possible, complaints or concerns should be raised with the proprietor or manager. All SRS facilities are required to have a complaints process and all complaints have to be recorded along with the response to the complaint.
- Contact one of the Department of Human Services authorised officers whose role it is to investigate complaints relating to an SRS.
- Speak with a Community Visitor when they visit the SRS on a regular basis. Alternatively, you can contact the Office of the Public Advocate and ask to speak with a Community Visitor to express your concerns.
- Contact the Health Services Commissioner if your complaint is about a health service provider, for example hospital, nurse, doctor.

* Details for these services are listed in the useful contacts section.



Part 3

What other services may be provided?

Residents of an SRS are able to access a range of community services.

These may be fee-for-service, for example, the SRS may organise for a private podiatrist to visit the SRS. The SRS or the resident may pay for this service.

In other circumstances, residents may be assisted to attend government-funded services or the service may visit the SRS, for no fee or a low fee. For example, allied health (such as podiatry or physiotherapy), mental health, disability services, community health, veterans' affairs and neighbourhood houses.

SRS residents generally need to meet the same eligibility criteria for government-funded services as those living in their own home.

The only exception is Home and Community Care (HACC) services. SRS residents are not eligible for HACC services that are already provided by the SRS, for example, delivered meals, home care, home maintenance and personal care.

The manager or PCC of the SRS should be aware of how to access these services.

This information may also be obtained from your local council or community health service.

What to expect when moving into an SRS?

The initial phase of moving into an SRS requires a period of adjustment to get to know the routine and the people living and working in the SRS.

The SRS is required by legislation to collect certain information about new residents.

This information includes the name of the resident, date of birth, gender, languages spoken, contact details of next of kin, contact details of medical practitioner, pension number and type of pension.

At the time of moving into an SRS, the SRS is also responsible for developing a care plan.

The care plan identifies the resident's health, welfare and personal care needs and the services that will be provided to assist in meeting those needs.

The care plan should be developed in consultation with the resident and, where appropriate, their relative or guardian.

The SRS must also take reasonable steps to ensure the resident's health care providers, such as their doctor or case manager, are consulted.

What can I bring to an SRS?

SRS accommodation is a mix of either single or shared rooms that will be furnished with a bed, side table and wardrobe.

Most SRS facilities have space for clothing and small personal items only, however, if you wish to bring other items of furniture with you, you will need to discuss this with the manager prior to moving in.

Also, if you have pets and would like to take them with you to the SRS, you will need to discuss this with the manager prior to moving in, as most SRSs do not cater for animals.

Useful contacts

Authorised officers are located at each of the Department of Human Services regional offices listed below.

Barwon South Western Region

Cnr Fenwick & Little Malop Streets
Geelong 3220
(03) 5226 4540

Eastern Metropolitan

883 Whitehorse Road
Box Hill 3128
(03) 9843 6000

Gippsland Region

43 Grey Street
Traralgon 3844
(03) 5177 2500

Northern Metropolitan

145 Smith Street
Fitzroy 3065
(03) 9412 5333

Grampians Region

Cnr Mair & Doveton Streets
Ballarat 3550
(03) 5333 6669

Southern Metropolitan

122 Thomas Street
Dandenong 3175
(03) 9213 2111

Hume Region

74 Ovens Street
Wangaratta 3677
(03) 5722 0555

Western Metropolitan

71 Moreland Street
Footscray 3011
(03) 9275 7000

Loddon Mallee Region

37 Rowan Street
Bendigo 3552
(03) 5434 5555

The Department of Human Services SRS and Accommodation Support Unit can provide general information relating to SRSs (03) 9616 7780.

Community Visitors Program

Level 5, 436 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne 3000

(03) 9603 9500 or 1800 136 829 (country areas only)

www.communityvisitors.vic.gov.au

The Health Services Commissioner

570 Bourke Street

Melbourne 3000

(03) 9601 5222 or 1800 136 066 (country areas only)

www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc

Aged Care Assessment Services

For information you can call the Aged and Community Care Information Line (free call) on 1800 500 853 or call a Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222

www.health.gov.au/acc/

Useful publications

A guide to services for senior Victorians (2002)

Published by the Department of Human Services.

This guide includes information about services such as aged care assessment services, pensioner concession cards, leisure activities and health information.

A guide for families and carers to the 'how, when, what and where' of residential care (2002)

Published by the Department of Human Services

Copies can be obtained by calling the Seniors Centre on (03) 9616 8241 or visiting www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/publications/index

SRS resident's handbook (2003)

A guide for residents of Supported Residential Services.

Meeting the need (2003)

A guide to providing quality care in Supported Residential Services.

Published by the SRS & Accommodation Support Unit, Department of Human Services

Copies can be obtained by calling the SRS Unit on (03) 9616 7780.



Checklist – Choosing an SRS

Name of SRS			
Are your first impressions good?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What services are provided? Do they meet your needs?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What are the fees and charges? Does the facility offer good value for money?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are there additional charges on top of the usual fees?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does there appear to be adequate staff available in the facility?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are there activities offered regularly that are of interest?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Do existing residents access external health and other services?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Do meals appear to be varied and nutritious?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the facility clean and tidy?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What are the arrangements if you need to be away from the SRS for a period of time? Does this suit you?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What are the grounds and length of notice if the proprietor wishes to terminate your residency? Does it suit you?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Name of SRS			
What are the policies relating to smoking and alcohol? Does it suit you?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there a home-like environment?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there enough space for belongings?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are resident's privacy needs catered for?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there a written policy regarding visitors?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the temperature comfortable?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are lighting and ventilation appropriate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there an outdoor sitting area?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are there areas for family and friends to get together?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Do staff appear to treat residents and their visitors with respect?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are your questions received positively?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there written information for prospective residents?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there written information about the residential statement?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Would you live in this facility?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

First impressions are always important - Rely on your common sense and ask lots of questions.

