



Governance within the Home Care Context



Flip Guides have been designed as supplementary supports for the learning modules. The Guides include key messages and insights for your continued reflection.

Need to Know: Obligations and Accountabilities of Home Care Providers

Aged care providers' governing bodies, executives and staff have an obligation to provide safe and quality care and services that align with the requirements of the Aged Care Act 1997 (the Act) and subordinate legislation.

It is essential that all governing body members, executives and staff are aware of their obligations and can effectively report on these obligations and facilitate continuous improvement with respect to compliance and care.

As outlined in the "Governance within the Home Care Context" online learning module, providers delivering home care services are subject to unique obligations and accountabilities, including:



Reporting
Obligations



Funding



Access

→ *Read about each obligation on the following pages.*

Need to Know: Obligations and Accountabilities of Home Care Providers

Reporting Obligations

Approved providers of residential aged care, home care, multipurpose services and respite care are required to complete an annual [Aged Care Financial Report \(ACFR\)](#). Providers must report on mandatory requirements to receive Australian Government operational approval and funding. Changes to the ACFR requirements are a part of the broader aged care reforms.

Residential care, home care and transitional care providers will be required to report additional information about their service to the Department of Health and Aged Care. View the Reporting requirements section of the Strengthening provider governance in aged care page for further information on these requirements.

Home care provider's must also:

- Publish service information on My Aged Care, including pricing information
- Notify Services Australia of any unspent funds when a consumer exits home care
- Notify the Department of Health and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission of any changes to their service.

Funding

The Home Care Packages Program has unique funding arrangements, where people who have taken up a package on or after 1 July 2014 can be asked to pay a [basic daily fee](#) and an [income-tested care fee](#).

Need to Know: Obligations and Accountabilities of Home Care Providers

Access

Aged care services in the home and community settings are delivered in a variety of funding models ranging from entry level support through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Flexible Aged Care Program(NATSIFAC), Short Term Restorative Care (STRC), transition care, centre-based day therapy services program, planned day/overnight respite services and Home Care Packages (HCP).

The [Home Care Packages Program](#) provides support to older Australians with complex needs, including palliative care to help them stay at home. Under the program, packages are assigned to consumers instead of a provider. This enables consumers to choose which provider to give will manage their package funding and allows them to change providers and

take the package with them. Note: exit fees may apply.

The [National Priority System for the Home Care Packages Program](#) is in place to assist with the fairer allocation of packages to people based on their assessed care needs and circumstances, no matter where they live.

Changes are coming!

This may include:

- Expansion of the Quality Indicator Program (QI program) to home care
- Potential introduction of a single support at home program to replace the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, the Home Care Packages Program, Short-Term Restorative Care Programme and residential respite programs.

On 1 December 2022, the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) was extended from residential aged care to include home care and flexible aged care delivered in a home or community setting.

View the [What is the SIRS? Information for home services care recipients](#) page for more information.

Governing bodies and executives will need to be aware of their new reporting obligations, funding arrangements and any changes to program and regulatory requirements to ensure the continued delivery of high quality care and services.

To gain a better understanding of the different obligations and accountabilities of all providers, please take a moment to review the Obligations and Accountabilities module.

Reflection

Governing body members and executives have a responsibility to understand their obligations and accountabilities. Take some time to reflect on the following questions.

01.

How confident am I that my governing body understands the unique obligations and accountabilities evident when delivering care in a home setting?

02.

Does my governing body regularly scan the horizon to determine how upcoming changes may affect your business?

03.

Does my organisation need to review the strategic plan/priorities to better align to our Home Care obligations and accountabilities?

04.

Does my organisation define and actively communicate the expectations of our workforce in regards to meeting our obligations and accountabilities? If not, what is an initial step our governing body can take towards this?

05.

Are we effectively communicating with those receiving home care services to ensure the continuous delivery of high quality care?

06.

If not, how can we strengthen the voice of the consumer and their advocates?

Need to Know: Governance approaches and practices

As outlined in the Governance within the Home Care Context learning module, compared to residential aged care, home care providers have much less control of their service delivery environment, oversight of delivery and less direct interaction with consumers. Some key differences are:

→ *Read more about each of these approaches on the following pages*

- Providers of home care are often required to adopt a different workforce model.
- Providers of home care have less control over the service delivery environment.
- Providers of home care have less oversight of service delivery.
- Providers of home care have less interaction with consumers.

This potentially brings additional risk for the providers and consumers.

Effective Home Care provides older Australians with:

- Increased autonomy
- Greater independence
- Personalised care
- Increased social connectivity

To assist your governing body in identifying and mitigating these risks, please take a moment to reflect on the questions below.



Need to Know: Governance approaches and practices

Workforce Management

- What can our governing body do to ensure all staff members, including sub-contractors and casualised workforce, comply with the organisation's regulatory requirements including the [Code of Conduct](#).
- What educational and monitoring frameworks do we have in place to ensure all staff members are trained in, understand and adopt the organisation's systems, policies and processes?
- How can we more effectively monitor the quality and safety of service delivery in the home care setting?

Managing uncontrolled environments

- What processes do we have in place to ensure staff are kept safe when operating in an uncontrolled environment?

Management and improvement of service delivery

- How can we engage with a workforce that largely operates autonomously and outside an office environment, with a large proportion casualised?
- How can we identify, manage, resolve and prevent incidents occurring given that we have less oversight of service delivery?

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Need to Know: Governance approaches and practices

Consumer-centred obligations

- How can we engage with consumers, families and carers in a meaningful way?
- How can we better incorporate the insights gained via engagement activities into our home care service delivery?

Governance of Home Care

- Does our governing body have the appropriate supporting structures in place to support the delivery of home care in line with current and upcoming regulatory obligations and accountabilities?

For example:

- Do our policies, procedures and guidelines support all staff, executives and governing body members to understand and meet their duties?
- Does our governing body have effective delegation policies and procedures to enable delivery of high-quality home care services? For example:

Corporate

- Executing legal documents with no financial implications

such as memorandums of understanding and/or intellectual property

- Communication with third parties such as media

Clinical (Where provided)

- Supervision and delegation of clinical care by a registered nurse to other care staff (where clinical care is provided)
- Involvement of a service manager in the review and approval of a consumer's care plan
- Responsibilities of registered nurses and care staff regarding administration of medication

Operational

- Engaging sub-contractors

Quality standards

Quality reviews of home care services are an important part of the regulatory process. They provide the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission), providers and consumers with assurance and support to ensure the ongoing delivery of high quality and safe care.

The Commission recognises there are many types of home service providers working in a wide range of care and service settings, ranging from relatively small or niche to very complex. As a result, some Aged Care Quality Standards or specific requirements may not apply to all Home service providers, for example where a home service provider does not provide clinical care.

(A proportionate approach) The Commission has created the Guide to Assessment of Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) Services, to provide an indication of the Quality Standards that apply to CHSP services delivering particular types of care and services.

As the Commission can carry out a quality review of home care services announced or unannounced, the role of governing bodies and executive is to ensure they can demonstrate compliance against the Aged Care Quality Standards at all times. Providers can gain assurance by conducting regular self-assessments against the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Providers who regularly self-assess are better placed to achieve ongoing compliance, and importantly drive continuous improvement in their consumer-centred care.

To find further information about quality reviews of home services and to access a self-assessment tool template and guidance, please click below:

[Further information](#)

[Self-Assessment Tool Template](#)

The role of the governing body and executives in monitoring the service delivery context

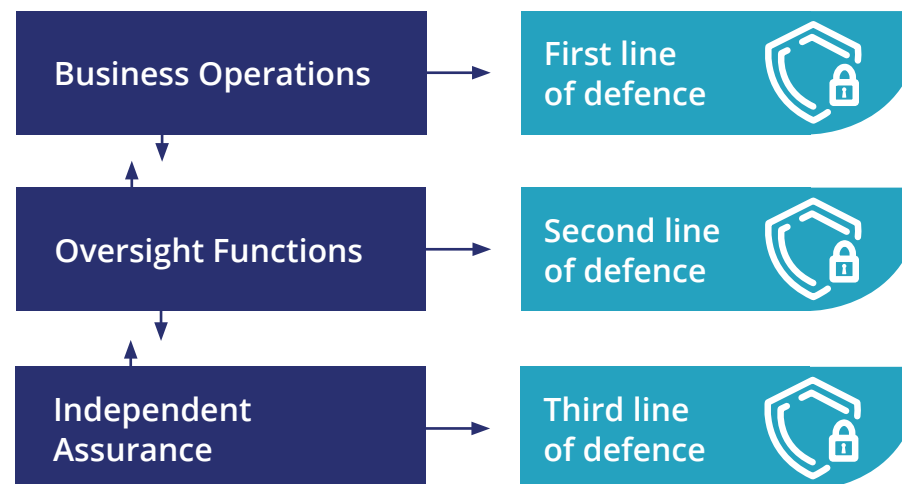
Internal Risk and Compliance Frameworks

Given the complexities of delivering care in a home setting governing bodies should obtain comprehensive assurance on the effectiveness of their organisation's business risk management and compliance frameworks and the controls applied to manage these.

Assurance can be sought by the governing body for dual purposes:

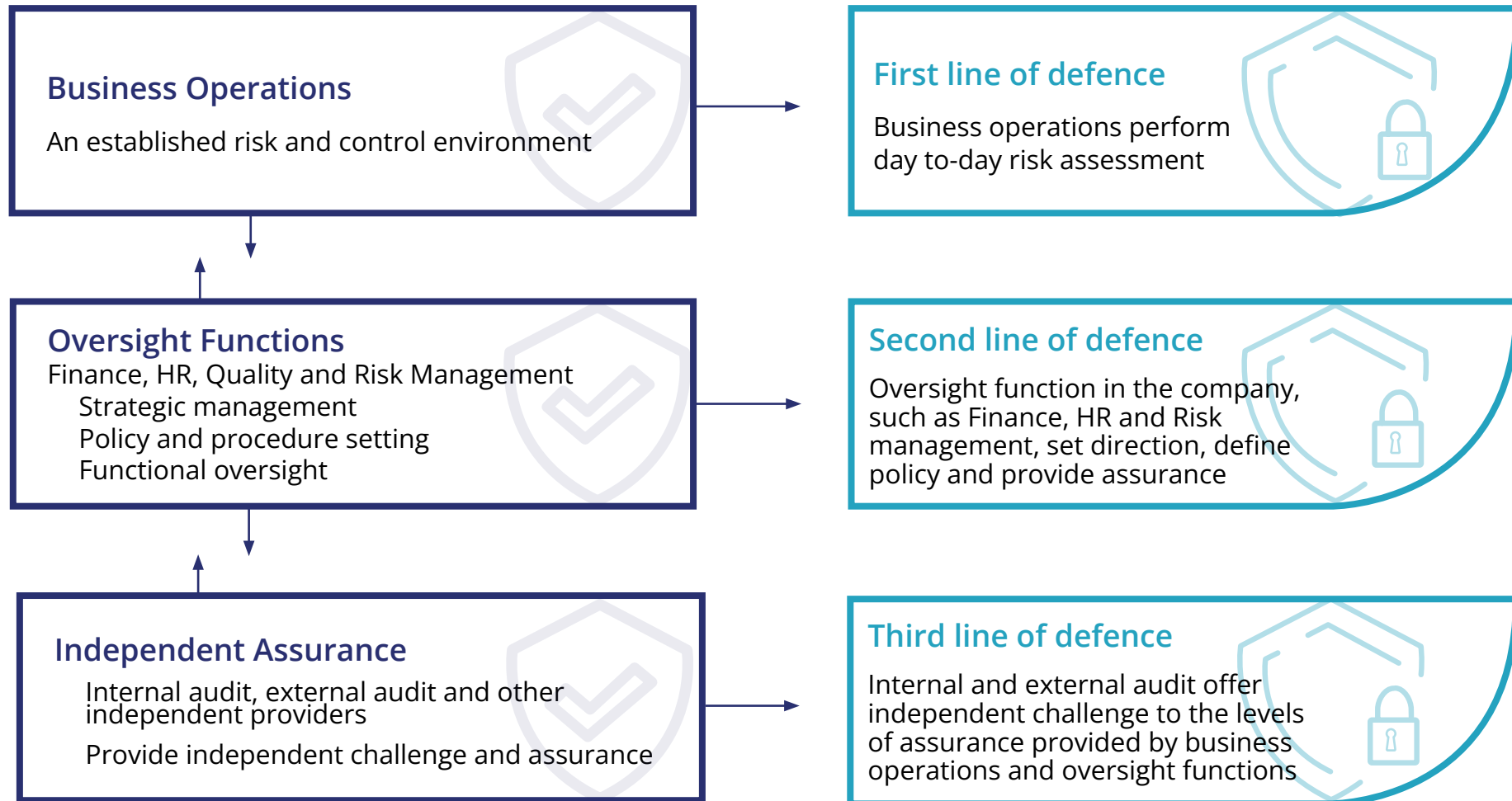
- As a means of gaining confidence over the implementation and effective management of internal controls over the aged care provider's risks.
- To provide external stakeholders, such as consumers and their families, with an independent assessment of how well an aged care provider is meeting mandatory or voluntary performance and reporting standards.

Please **review the framework below** and identify the areas in which your governing body may have opportunities to improve.



For more information on risk and compliance frameworks, please take the time to review the **Audit and Assurance Topic Guide**.

The role of the governing body and executives in monitoring the service delivery context





Additional Resources

