

Ms Marie McMahon  
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Ref. DR201527

Tēnā koe Ms McMahon

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 August 2020 to the Minister of Justice, Hon Andrew Little, about staffing in rest homes. Your correspondence was referred to the Minister of Health, Hon Chris Hipkins, as the matters you raise fall within his responsibilities. The Minister has asked that I respond to you directly. I appreciate you taking the time to write.

I note your concerns about low staffing levels at rest homes and hospital level care. I appreciate your concern for the residents and staff at these facilities and note that you feel very strongly about this issue.

Aged residential care (ARC) providers need to be certified by the Director-General of Health under the Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2001. HealthCERT is the delegated team within the Ministry of Health that regulates these providers. Certified providers are routinely audited against the Health and Disability Services Standards 8134:2008 to ensure they consistently provide quality health care services.

The Standards require providers to:

- uphold consumer rights
- provide services that are safe and appropriate
- ensure that the environment where services are provided is safe and promotes minimisation of risk of harm
- adhere to infection prevention and control principles
- apply restraint and minimisation procedures safely.

To ensure that services are provided safely and appropriately, the providers are required to have:

- a suitably qualified and/or experienced person to manage the services provided
- a well-documented quality and risk management system
- an appropriate mix of skilled and knowledgeable staff
- well documented care delivery processes.

You may be interested to know ARC providers enter into a contractual agreement with their local district health board (DHB) to provide quality health care services. The Age Related Residential Care (ARRC) Services Agreement details the minimum requirement of care staff numbers at ARC facilities. You can find the national agreements here: [tas.health.nz/dhb-programmes-and-contracts/health-of-older-people-programme/aged-residential-care/#National](https://tas.health.nz/dhb-programmes-and-contracts/health-of-older-people-programme/aged-residential-care/#National). Staffing is stipulated in the Service Specifications of the ARRC contract.

If you have concerns with a certain ARC provider, we encourage you to approach this provider in the first instance, as this is the appropriate first step to take.

If you are not satisfied with the provider's response to your concerns, you can contact the local DHB as it holds the contract with the provider. You can also contact HealthCERT to make a formal complaint or discuss the complaints investigation process. You can contact the HealthCERT team on freephone 0800 113 813 or by email ([certification@health.govt.nz](mailto:certification@health.govt.nz)).

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope this information is useful, and I wish you well.

Nāku noa, nā



Clare Perry  
**Acting Deputy Director-General**  
**Health System Improvement and Innovation**