

THE RESIDENTIAL MANAGERS' BULLETIN JULY 2023

The important updates
in one place.

There have never been more reforms and regulatory changes in aged care than now! Site management have had to understand, learn and implement all of these changes at a time where staff availability is at an all-time low.

To support aged care site management during this time of change, Ansell Strategic has prepared quarterly reports summarising key reforms and updates. Each quarter this report will consider the most recent changes and those next to come. We will talk about our observations across Australia and recommend how you can approach changes and identify areas for simplification and improvement across your service.

Key Updates



Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS): We have observed that the Commission is frequently using SIRS Priority 1 incidents to trigger investigations. In this bulletin we explore incident reduction strategies and how to ensure we are accurately identifying and classifying SIRS incidents.



Star Ratings: Now in effect for more than 6 months, we interpret what the data is saying and explore ways you can actively work to maximise resident experience and quality rating categories.



The National Quality Indicator Program (NQIP): NQIP has been expanded and includes additional data points. We consider how managers can use the information to improve resident outcomes.



Revised Aged Care Quality Standards: A draft of the revised standards has been released by the Department of Health and Aged Care. We touch on how you can prepare and assess your alignment to this proposed new approach.

Compliance



In the January to March 2023 quarter only **9%** of onsite assessments of residential aged care (RAC) facilities resulted in a non-compliance finding. This is a significant decrease from 19% in the previous quarter.

The most common non-compliant standards remained consistent with previous periods in 8, 3 and 2.



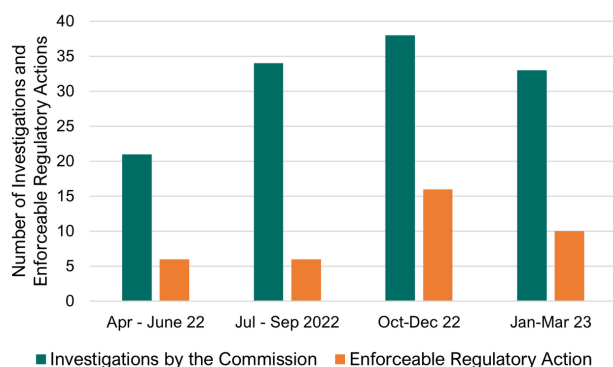
Continuous Improvement

Increasing our focus on meal services in RAC can dramatically improve the quality of life and health outcomes for your residents.

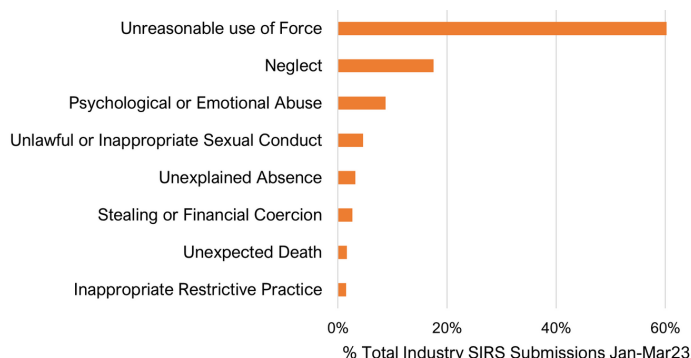
We explore interventions across food consumption, nutrition and hydration, food/fluid modification, weight management, self-reported satisfaction and cultural change, as well as the overall dining experience.

SERIOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE SCHEME (SIRS)

Commission Regulatory and Enforcement Responses to Reportable Incidents April 2022 to March 2023 (Number)



Most Common Reportable Incidents Residential Care Industry (Priority 1 and 2) January to March 2023 (Percentage of Total)



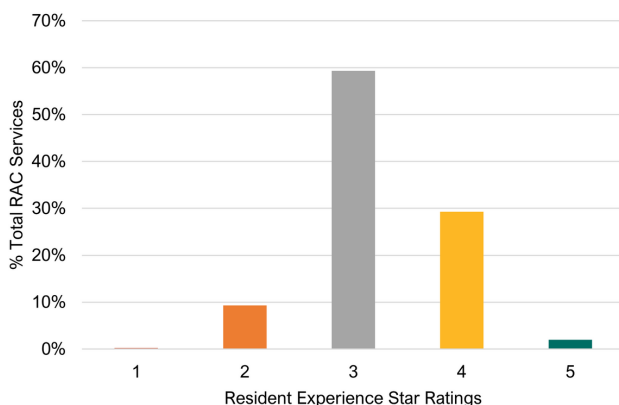
WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
In the past year we have seen an increase in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) investigations into Priority 1 SIRS incidents. The Commission also notes that this is their approach detailing <i>"The SIRS gives the Commission information on provider performance that, combined with other data sources, helps us to better identify and manage risk"</i>. The Commission's revised requirements for incident reports are detailed on page 17 of the Serious Incident Response Scheme Guidelines for residential aged care providers (v1.8 Oct 2022). To feel confident in your SIRS process, we encourage you to re-evaluate your service's identification and prioritisation of SIRS incidents as well as investigation, root cause analysis and mitigation strategies. Identification and Prioritisation: We recommend all sites use the Commission website's SIRS guidance tool available to assist with identifying SIRS incidents and priorities. This tool can be very effective to help guide decisions regarding SIRS incidents and ensure a consistent approach across your service. Documentation, Investigation & Causal Factor Analysis: Investigations into SIRS events and requests for further information are becoming more common. The key components of robust incident documentation are detailed on the following page.	Assess: What measures have you implemented to ensure compliance and appropriate reporting in relation to SIRS incidents? How are these monitored and managed? Consider: - Developing and implementing incident documentation, investigation and root cause analysis protocols. - Promoting a culture of reporting and learning from incidents. - Ensuring staff have access to appropriate education and resources to conduct investigations effectively. Ask: What measures has your organisation implemented to upskill your staff to improve consumer outcomes and reduce risk of non-compliances? For example, Do staff understand the necessary documentation and approach to incident investigations?

SERIOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE SCHEME (CONT.)

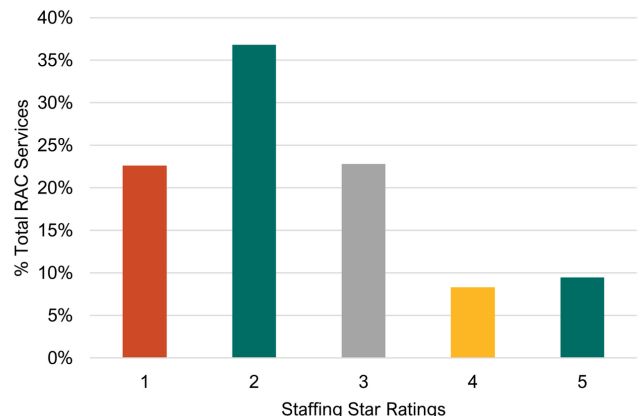
WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Components of robust incident documentation include: - Well-documented investigation. - Detailed root cause analysis. - Identified causal and contributing factors. - Strategies to address deficits appropriately and without delay. - Evaluation of effectiveness of strategies in reducing risk of incident occurrence. We recommend managers review their process for documentation, investigation and causal factor analysis to identify any areas for improvement and ensure compliance with the Standards. Possible actions for this review have been provided in the adjacent section.	Review: When was the last review of your incident management process to ensure its effectiveness?

STAR RATINGS

Industry Resident Experience Ratings May 2023



Industry Staffing Ratings May 2023

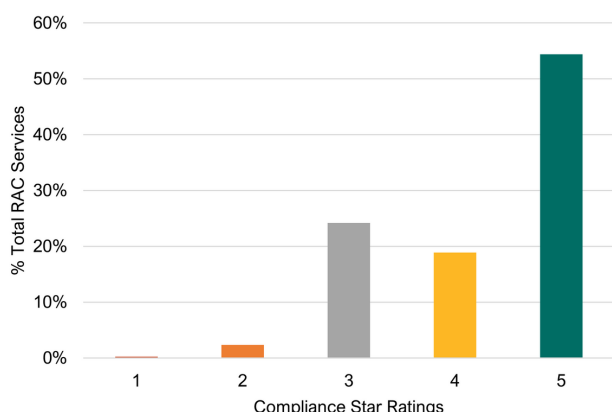


WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Six months have passed since the Star Ratings system was implemented. The Government recently released the Nation's quarterly report and the results show the majority of aged care services are achieving an overall rating that is "acceptable". Star Ratings related to staffing should remain a focus, however the broad bands of care minutes make increasing Star Ratings in this domain more difficult. Few providers are able to meet the staffing category in the current environment, but we have identified opportunities to make up ground in the consumer and quality categories.	If you have not already, review your home/s star rating which was updated in May 2023 to reflect the new Quality results. Identify categories where you may be able to improve.

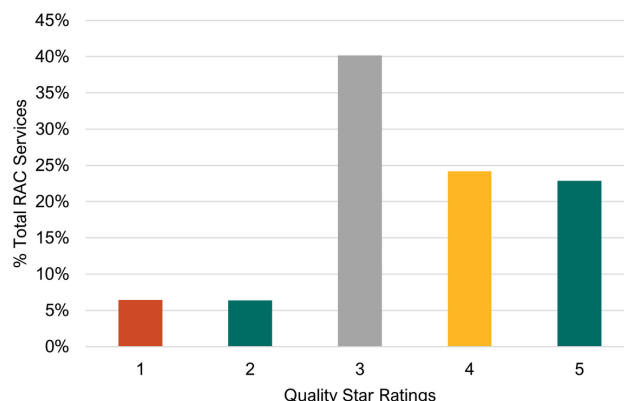
STAR RATINGS (CONT.)

WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
RESIDENT EXPERIENCE RATING We believe Resident Experience is the easiest rating category to influence and therefore is a crucial area which managers can focus on to improve their Star Rating. Improving your Resident Experience can be relatively low-cost and we recommend managers start with reviewing their current approach to engagement and feedback. Reviewing engagement may include assessing how you are leading and evaluating your teams in their day to day promotion of resident dignity and choice. This may result in reaffirming the important role of your staff in resident outcomes regarding their communication style, approach and understanding of the resident. Feedback and more specifically, evidencing a focus on the feedback cycle is critical. Ensuring your feedback management approach is not only identifying the issue, but also closing the loop on the issue is key. This involves supporting staff to document sufficiently, answer critical questions and review feedback progress. Suggested actions to review these elements have been provided as prompts to identify your homes' approach and ways you could enhance or adjust it to have a positive impact on your resident experience category.	Take time to understand your home's approach to monitoring the inputs that contribute to Star Ratings. For example, how are staff educated on their role in inputs? Consider ways this could be enhanced. Resident Experience Enhancement Conduct education sessions on engagement. Focus on how small changes can have a profound impact, such as: • Practicing communication styles which enhance dignity and choice. • Seeking new approaches to understanding and connecting with residents. To close the loop on your feedback cycle, we recommend answering the following: • What has been done in response to feedback? • What actions are still outstanding? • Who is responsible for completing actions? • What are the key timeframe considerations? • What communication has been provided to the resident/family? • How is your feedback informing continuous improvement?

Industry Compliance Ratings May 2023



Industry Quality Measures Ratings May 2023



STAR RATINGS (CONT.)

WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
QUALITY RATING Your home's Quality Star Rating is established by comparing your National Quality Indicator Program (NQIP) results to those of other homes across the country. We recognise that collection of NQIP data can be a time-consuming task. However, we see that considerable benefit can be realised through the analysis of the results. As we know, the data collected relates to individual residents. Therefore, it is important that the data is clean and well reported. If not, it cannot be effectively analysed to inform targeted improvements for residents. To ensure good, clean data, we must first understand how it is being sourced and question to establish the correctness of the results. Underpinning this is our team's understanding of the purpose and critical nature of the data collection. Once we have accurate, clean data, results can be analysed to understand the causal factors of adverse clinical outcomes. When these are known, relevant and appropriate minimisation strategies can be implemented. By ensuring tight processes and systems for the collection of data, your team will have the necessary information to improve your Quality indicators significantly. The collection and collation of data can feel like an exercise to 'tick a box', however, when a formalised process for review and analysis of the data is established, your staff can understand how their data collection is harnessed to drive quality outcomes for your consumers. Key to this is ensuring your team understands the link between data and care as well as reviewing how improvement strategies are informed by results, implemented, monitored and evaluated.	Review the Quality of Inputs: Do you have robust systems and processes in place to collect this data and ensure its accuracy? Can you rely on the quality of documentation from your team to ensure accurate data is collected? Are there any ways to streamline the collection of this data with other processes or technology? Do your team understand the link between data and care? Analysing Results How do you analyse and investigate your data? Is it clear and effective? How do you use results to inform improvement? For example, how do you ensure early identification of adverse trends such as increasing weight loss? How is this information then used to inform improvement strategies? When improvement strategies are implemented, how are they monitored, evaluated and managed? Education Opportunities Consider conducting education regarding: • Clinical risk. • Documentation, data collection and analysis. • Educating your team on the use of the data in improving resident care outcomes.

NEW (DRAFT) AGED CARE QUALITY STANDARDS



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Simplification and Clarification

- Reduction in size 165+ pages to 46!
- Simplified explanations.
- Reduction in ambiguity.
- Removal of unnecessary complexity.
- Clarity and guidance regarding what safe quality care looks like in practice.

WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
The Revised Draft Standards are currently being piloted throughout a sample of 40 providers with diverse service types, sizes, locations and care recipients. This will help determine if further changes are needed to ensure these are fit for purpose before they are implemented. While these Revised Standards are in draft for purposes of testing and may have further revision, there are certainly some positives. The Revised Standards comprise many of the concepts and elements contained in the current Standards, which means organisations that have mastered the intent of the current Standards will not have to make significant changes to their guidance material and practices. Positively, the proposed Revised Standards are much simpler and their intent is more clear. For example, there has been inclusion of actions, where the Commission are providing insight into how we might evidence compliance in this area. The Revised Standards comprise seven standards with food and nutrition given an elevated status as a standard in its own right. There is a focus on wellness, reablement, independence and maintenance of function with the role of allied health reflected in the commentary. It is expected that the new strengthened standards will be implemented in July 2024. We recommend managers start preparing now for the implementation. A suggested approach to preparation has been provided in the adjacent section.	Take time to read and familiarise yourself with the (Draft) Revised Standards so you are able to understand the intent. Think critically about how these standards may look like in practice at your home. Are there any gaps you see between your current practice and the standards? Can you develop or participate in an organisational working group to facilitate developing resources to assist with the transition? To understand the key changes we recommend review of the new or altered material in the Revised Draft Standards. A useful resource for this has been provided by the Department of Health and Aged Care.

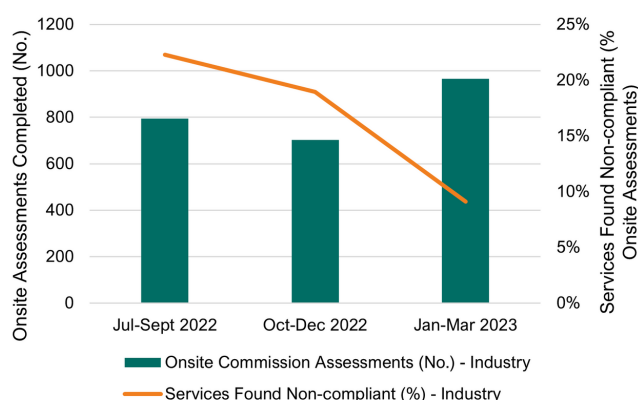
AN-ACC

WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Updated AN-ACC assessment pathway information has been published for RACS to use as a quick reference. This is a useful tool for providers and can be found here .	Assess: What is the process your service uses to identify resident's general decline, palliative phases and end of life trajectory? Have you been able to effectively assess residents for end of life care or classification 13?

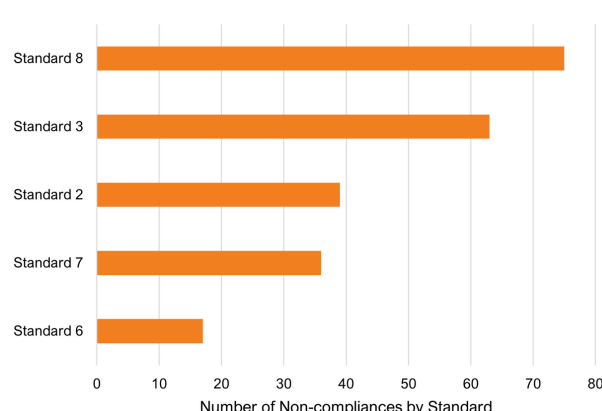
COMPLIANCE

AGED CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY COMMISSION (ACQSC)

Rate of Non-Compliance Findings from Onsite Assessments July 2022 to March 2023



Common Standards of Non-Compliance in Residential Aged Care January to March 2023



WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
The ACQSC has continued to increase the number of onsite reviews of RAC homes across the Nation over the past quarter (Jan-Mar 2023). However, the proportion of reviews resulting non-compliances has declined. This is in line with our findings across the sector that the ACQSC appears to be softening in their approach to audits. Standards 2, 3 and 8 continue to be the most prevalent areas of non-compliance. For Standard 3 in particular, a key issue has been related to understanding, management and prevention of high impact high prevalence risks (also known as clinical risks).	To better understand your position on prevalent industry compliance issues we recommend: Ensuring your staff education includes: - How to conduct an appropriate assessment using validated tools; and - How to conduct sound analysis of causative factors to ensure prevention and management strategies are fit for purpose.

AGED CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY COMMISSION (CONT.)

WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Understanding of clinical risk ties in with our previous commentary on Quality Star Ratings. A key success factor in the collection and reporting of clinical indicator data is the knowledge of the teams who are collecting the data regarding how to analyse it and then how to use information to manage and develop strategies for prevention and improvement. Effective and accurate data collection is critical. A key factor to successfully educating in this area is supporting your team to translate learnings into practice. This must be founded upon effective documentation practices and guidance in best practice from policies, procedures and protocols. Accreditation Extensions: We have observed that some services that received accreditation extensions over the last 3 years are receiving Commission visits well before their extended accreditation is due to expire. We recommend conducting a pre-accreditation review well in advance of your expiration to ensure your service is informed and able to address any challenges prior to your Commission visit.	Answer the following questions: • Do you and your staff understand high impact high prevalence risks? • Are you confident your staff understand your compliance requirements? • How confident are you with your home's compliance? Are there any particular areas that are concerning you? If so, what strategies have been implemented to ensure your home is compliant with the aged care standards? • How confident are you that your service is capturing all feedback? • Do you have defensible documentation of the feedback cycle, including open disclosure conversations? • Are you using your feedback to drive improvement and do you have evidence of this? • If your home received an extension to your accreditation, are you prepared for an imminent visit?

MEAL SERVICE

WHAT WE ARE SEEING	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report released in 2021 identified food and nutrition as a priority area of attention. As part of feedback specific to food services, it was suggested that increased spending was likely necessary to improve the quality of food in these settings. In response to this recommendation, a basic daily fee supplement of an additional \$10 per day, per resident was introduced in July 2021. This has since been replaced by the "hoteling" supplement. This is intended to support aged care providers to deliver better care and services to residents, with a focus on food and nutrition. We have observed that the ACQSC has increased their focus on meal services offered in RAC services. This focus can also be seen through the proposed (draft) Revised Standards including a standard specifically for meals. Therefore, we recommend managers review their approach to meal service including how they manage continuous improvement. A key resource to inform your review is the survey analysis published in April 2023 by the ACQSC. The survey reviews the food and dining experience of 365 aged care residents from across the Nation. The survey was conducted by Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and offers current and useful information to help aged care services to improve on food and nutrition. The report identified seven elements or characteristics which may contribute to a more positive dining experience, including: 1. Familiar or favoured foods with a focus on fresh. 2. Food delivery and service processes that maximise timeliness and temperature. 3. Regular events and occasions. 4. Homelike social dining environment. 5. Staff quantity and quality. 6. Resident participation. 7. Resident Co-Design.	Assess: What measures has your organisation implemented to improve food service at your home? Are you satisfied that your home has provided sufficient training to enable staff to promote a pleasant dining experience to the residents? How is the meal service of your home monitored? What measures have been implemented to enhance the overall dining experience for your residents? When analysing the quality of your meal services consider: • Meal temperature, taste and type. • Mealtime ambiance, timeframes and engagement. • Are meals what your residents want and enjoy?

OPERATIONS EDUCATION



Ansell Strategic is available to discuss the content of this bulletin or provide education and coaching to your operational team to enhance understanding, knowledge and best practice in any of these areas. Please don't hesitate to contact our clinical consultants.



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