

# Aged Care: Challenges and Opportunities

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## Overview

### Community Aged Care: Challenges and Opportunities

CESPHN Strategy Day | At-a-glance

#### What has changed

The new Aged Care Act and Support at Home commenced on 1 November 2025. CHSP remains in place, with transition no earlier than 1 July 2027.

#### Potential risks

Reform turbulence may deepen access gaps through delay, cost, package complexity and uneven ability to navigate the new system.

#### Why it matters

When support at home becomes harder to access or use, pressure shifts onto older people, carers, providers, general practice and hospitals.

#### Key messages

- The reform direction is **positive**, but implementation risk is real in a **large, diverse and ageing region**.
- **Access is about more than eligibility**. It depends on timely assessment, affordability, continuity, and the ability to understand and manage support.
- **Delay is not neutral**. Some older people deteriorate while waiting and carers can reach exhaustion before support arrives.
- **This is not only an aged care issue**. It is also a population health, equity and system performance issue for CESPHN and partners.

#### The CESPHN region

- The region has a **fast-growing older population**, including strong growth in the 85+ cohort.
- Cultural and **linguistic diversity, dementia, social isolation and people living alone** all increase the risk that complexity becomes inequity.
- The paper aligns closely with CESPHN's Healthy Ageing Strategy, particularly the **focus on ageing well at home, equitable access** and **stronger coordination** across the health and community system.

#### At a glance: Who is most at risk

- **Long waits** for support.
- **Package complexity**.
- **Higher out-of-pocket costs**.
- **Carer strain** and **hidden workload**.
- **Unintended** outcomes from the Integrated Assessment Tool with **lack of collaboration and integration** with an older person primary care provider and previous medical history.
- Hospital and primary care **spillover**.

#### Who is most at risk?

- Older people **living alone**.
- **Multicultural communities**.
- People with **dementia** or **frailty**.
- **Carers** already **under strain**.
- Those with **limited financial flexibility**.

#### Potential reform impacts

- **Waitlists matter** because some people worsen while waiting.
- **Costs matter** because they can quietly change behaviour and reduce service use.
- **Complexity matters** because rights are harder to realise when packages are difficult to understand or manage.
- **System impacts matter** because pressure is displaced rather than removed.

#### Discussion questions

- Which older people in the region are most at risk of poorer access, and why?
- What are the earliest warning signs that waitlists, pricing or package complexity are reducing care uptake?
- How are these pressures affecting carers, the workforce and community providers?
- What are the likely downstream impacts on general practice, hospitals and discharge pathways?
- What practical actions should CESPHN and partners prioritise to minimise access gaps and unintended consequences?