

## Responses from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:

- 1. How many complaints, if any, has the Commission received about aged care home staff shortages this year? Could you please provide some details about the nature/scope of some of these complaints (do they reference the impact on resident care, on staff themselves etc)**

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) received 64 complaints in January 2022, that reference staffing numbers and/or sufficiency as part of the complaint.

Issues involved in complaints of this type generally relate to perceptions of inadequate numbers of rostered staff or insufficient kinds of staff to provide care or services to consumers.

- 2. Has the Commission taken any action over staff shortages this year and/or have any homes been found to be operating at unsafe staffing levels?**

The Commission considers staffing levels at residential aged care services under Standard 7 of the Aged Care Quality Standards (the Standards), which requires aged care providers to ensure that they have a workforce that is sufficient, and is skilled and qualified to provide safe, respectful and quality care and services to meet consumers' needs.

During January 2022 the Commission made decisions finding 10 residential services did not meet requirement 7(3)(a) of the Standards.

Additionally, the Commission has issued three Directions to Review Plans For Continuous Improvement, five Non-Compliance Notices, and three Sanctions related to non-compliance with Standard 7, in January 2022.

It should be noted that requirement 7(3)(a) of the Quality Standards relates to an assessment of the number and mix of members of the workforce.

- 3. How many complaints, if any, has the Commission received about aged care home lockdowns this year?**

The Commission received 14 complaints in January 2022 that reference service lockdowns as part of the complaint. In addition, there were 16 complaints regarding the isolation of residents and 39 complaints regarding visitor restrictions.

Residential aged care services are expected to comply with any specific restrictions on visitors' access that apply in their jurisdiction, as set out in public health or emergency management orders issued by the relevant state or territory government, while at the same time continuing to respect the rights of residents and provide care that meets the Standards.

Where concerns are raised with the Commission about the arrangements in place at a residential aged care service to manage visitor access, the

Commission will consider the specific circumstances to determine compliance with relevant approved provider responsibilities, including that care and services are being provided in accordance with relevant consumer rights and the Standards. Other relevant considerations can include the nature of the measures in place, the provider's rationale for the measures, the circumstances of an individual resident, and any actual or potential impacts on the health or wellbeing of one or more residents.

**4. How many complaints, if any, has the Commission received about access to RATs for aged care staff or visitors this year?**

Multiple issues and concerns about a service can be raised by a complainant in a single complaint received by the Commission, with some information being included for context. As such, it is difficult to categorically identify where specific complaints relate to rapid antigen tests (RATs), or where RATs are raised as contextual information for a different complaint.

Approximately 22 complaints received by the Commission in January 2022 involved the complainant referencing RATs.

**5. How many complaints, if any, has the Commission received about PPE for staff and visitors to aged care homes this year?**

The same difficulties as outlined in response to Q4 apply here and mean that a precise number is unavailable.

Approximately 200 complaints received by the Commission in January 2022 involved the complainant referencing PPE.