

Communication Supports in Aged Care

Checklist linked to the Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

Clear communication is a human right and the foundation of dignity, safety and belonging in aged care. Visual supports are tools that use pictures, symbols or photos to make information easier to understand and act on. They can show what’s happening now, what’s coming next or what choices are available. When used well, visual supports reduce refusals, ease transitions, lower anxiety and save staff time. They also align with the Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (2025), demonstrating a commitment to genuine, person-centred care.

How to use this checklist

- Tick what’s already in place
- Identify what needs updating
- Spot areas not yet started
- Involve families by asking for familiar photos, words and cultural cues

	Standard	Context (where challenges arise)	Communication Support Examples	Audit
1	The Individual Dignity, choice, individuality	Offering daily choices; respecting language and culture	Choice boards (clothing, meals); personalised visuals using family photos and home language	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The Organisation Partnerships & workforce capability	Families and staff co-creating consistent care	Shared visuals library; family-provided photos; cue cards for new staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Organisational Governance Continuous improvement	Monitoring and auditing communication practices	Regular review of visual supports; family/resident feedback loop	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The Care and Services Safe, tailored care	Toileting, hygiene, medication routines	Step-by-step visual sequences; daily schedules for transitions	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The Environment Safe, accessible settings	Orientation and wayfinding in facilities	Visual room labels; orientation boards; wayfinding signs with photos/icons	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Clinical Care Cognitive support, safety	Medication comprehension, procedural anxiety	Visual medication charts; pictorial preparation cues	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Food and Nutrition Enjoyable, safe dining	Mealtime choices, modified textures	Visual menus; food/drink choice cards; dietary preference prompts	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Residential Community Engagement & belonging	Activities, outings, community connection	Activity boards; outing schedules; transition visuals (e.g. “next: music group”)	<input type="checkbox"/>