

Rehab and Detox: Accessing Residential Withdrawal and Rehabilitation Services

We understand that it can be hard to navigate the residential withdrawal ('detox') and rehabilitation ('rehab') system. There are generally two types of residential services available: **publicly funded services** and **private services**.

Publicly funded services are funded by the State or Federal Governments and generally have very low fees (or no fees at all). They employ qualified workers and clinicians and deliver evidence-based treatments. However, they can have long waitlists.

Private services are not directly funded by the Government and so have an 'out of pocket' fee, and can be very expensive. In some private services (such as a private hospital), you can use private health insurance to reduce the amount that you pay out of pocket. Private services generally have a shorter waitlist than public services.

In Victoria, there are currently no regulations for privately run alcohol and other drug services so it can be difficult to know how good the service will be, how safe it is, what the costs will be and whether it is accredited. You also may not know if the service is providing recommended or 'evidence-based' treatment.

We strongly recommend accessing an accredited health service. All publically funded alcohol and other drug services and private hospitals are accredited health providers who meet strict quality and safety standards.

Choosing a residential withdrawal or rehabilitation service can be confusing. We have included some tips and questions to help you make the best decision for you or your family member. Remember you can also contact your local intake service first to discuss your options.

1. Call your local intake number

As a first point of call, we strongly recommend calling your local intake number, as they will be able to give you advice about what residential services are available in your area. If the waitlist is too long for an accredited service in your area, they will also be able to discuss private options with you.

2. Call the rehab and ask some questions

When calling a private rehabilitation center to work out if they're right for you or your family member, it's good to have a few questions ready to ask them.

- *Are you accredited? If so, what are you accredited against?* (Preferably, you want them to be accredited against the National Safety and Quality Health Standards, 'NSQHS'. Remember to write down any standards they say they're accredited against, so you can check their legitimacy.)
- *What is the fee structure?* (Prices for private rehabilitation services can vary drastically, so we recommend asking for the prices straight up. If they won't give you the price list, consider why.)
- *Can your services be claimed against private health insurance or Medicare?* (If services can be claimed against private health insurance or Medicare, it's generally a good sign! If they can't be, ask why, as this is a good indication of the quality of service and accreditation.)
- *What therapeutic strategies does your program use? What qualifications do your staff have?* (Are they using evidence-based strategies and treatments in their service? Are their staff qualified, and what are their qualifications?)
- *Are you associated or partners with other services?* (Some private services are actually run as part of a private hospital or health service.)

3. Call more than one service

It can be a good idea to call a couple of services to see which one is right for you or your family member. It will also help you get an understanding of what the average price and waitlist is for services, as well as what therapeutic strategies they use.

4. Consider private health insurance

If you are considering paying for a private rehab service, it may be worth finding out about your private health insurance options. Private health insurance can be used to access alcohol and other drug rehabilitation services at private hospitals, usually with a waiting period of two months. Contact a private health insurance company for more information.