9. Where to get help

Questions for your health professional

As you get older, you may start seeing different types of health professionals for help with new issues. Sometimes it can be hard to know what questions to ask when you see someone for the first time. These examples may help get you started. When you think of new questions, you could also write them down here, or somewhere else safe, so you don't forget them.

Questions for all health professionals

Access

- Is your clinic/office accessible for someone who is in a wheelchair or has trouble walking?
- Is your clinic/office accessible by public transport?
- Does your clinic/office have disability parking?
- Is there anyone nearer my home who I can see?
- · Do you do home visits?
- Is there a way I can access funding for travel to come and see you?
- Do you see people in person, through telehealth, or both?

Finances

- Will there be out-of-pocket expenses I have to pay?
- Will there be a delay with reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs?
- Are you registered with my funding body?
- · How many sessions will I be funded for?
- What other paperwork will I need to complete in order to see you?



Appointments

- How often will I need to see you? How long will I need to come and see you for? How many sessions will I need?
- · Can I make regular appointments?
- · Can I make my next appointment, just in case?

Health professional's experience

- Have you worked with someone with my issues before?
- · How long have you been practicing?
- · Are you part of a group or sole practitioner?
- Will I always see you or will I sometimes see another team member?
- Will you communicate with other health professionals who I see? How will you do this?

Symptoms and treatments

- Is it normal to be so [tired/fatigued/ stressed/forgetful/etc.]?
- Is there any information I can read on brain injury or my health issues?
- · Why is this the best treatment for me?
- · Can you write that down?

Notes

- Can you send me some notes/videos/photos?
- Can I take photo of that note/exercise?
- Can you train my carer to do that (family/paid carers)?

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Questions for doctors and nurses

- What kinds of tests might I need for this problem?
- What kinds of treatments or procedures are available for this problem?
- Are there any side effects of this treatment/medication?
- I sometimes forget to take my tablets. How can I manage this?
- Can I reduce or change my medication?
- Is there someone you could refer me to who could help with this problem?
- Will you coordinate my care in the future?
- Do you have someone to do blood tests at your clinic or can I get someone do a home visit collection?
- Do you have a pharmacist you regularly work with?
- Can you send my script straight to the pharmacy?
- Do you have emergency/out of hours access or appointments?

Questions for physiotherapists/ neurological physiotherapists/ exercise physiologists

- Can you write down or demonstrate some exercises that might help me?
- Do you have an app where you can save these exercises for me?
- Are there any activities/ movements I should avoid?
- Is there equipment you would recommend for me? How can I access it? Do you rent out or loan this equipment?
- Are there some activities you could recommend for me in the local community?
- Do you do off site consultations, like at the pool/gym?
- Can you help me set some goals relating to physical activity?
- Can I try [this] activity? Could you help me to prepare for it?

Notes	

Notes

Questions for occupational therapists

- Can you help make dressing, showering or going to the toilet easier for me?
- How can I manage household tasks, including laundry, cleaning and preparing meals?
- I am having some difficulty with driving. What would you recommend?
- Is there any equipment you could recommend that might help me?
- Can you help with making my workload easier to manage?

Notes

Questions for psychologists/ neuropsychologists

- What is the difference between a clinical psychologist and a neuropsychologist?
- · What can you help me with?
- What kind of therapy or treatment do you provide?
- What is your therapeutic style?
- How much do you charge per session and are there any rebates?
- · How long will I see you for and how often?
- How much 'homework' will I be expected to do?
- Is there anything that might help with my memory?
- How can I better manage my stress or anger?
- What are some coping strategies you might recommend when I feel depressed?
- Are there any apps or tools you recommend to help with mood or anxiety?

Notes

Questions for speech pathologists

- I have noticed some issues with my swallowing. Is there anything that might help?
- · Can you help with my lack of smell and taste?
- How can I improve my speech and communication?
- · Can you help me with my reading and writing?
- Is there anything you would recommend to help me in social situations?

Notes

Questions for dieticians

- I have recently noticed that my energy levels are low. Is there anything you could recommend?
- Could you recommend some strategies for losing, gaining, or maintaining my weight?
- My digestive system is giving me some trouble recently. What might be causing this?

Notes

Questions for social workers

- Can you help me with accessing funding for health care, support, housing or equipment?
- Are there some activities you could recommend for me in the local community?
- Are there other resources, such as support groups, that you could recommend?

Notes

Telehealth

Why use telehealth?

Sometimes, it's better to see a doctor or health professional in person. But other times, telehealth works just fine. For example, if you need a referral or a prescription from your doctor, or if you want to talk to a counsellor, telehealth can be a good option. It can save you from having to travel, which can be time-consuming, expensive and exhausting. These days, the technology can work really well too. All you need is a normal telephone, smart phone, tablet or computer.

What you need to know about telehealth

If you're thinking about using telehealth, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- · Always ask your doctor or health professional if telehealth is an option for you. They can tell you if it's safe and if it will work for you. They'll also let you know about any payment required.
- · Telehealth appointments might be done over the phone, or sometimes through a video call.
- · Video calls can be better for certain appointments because sometimes it's easier to talk when you can see each other. You would need a smart phone, tablet or computer for this.

How to get ready for a telehealth appointment

For phone appointments:

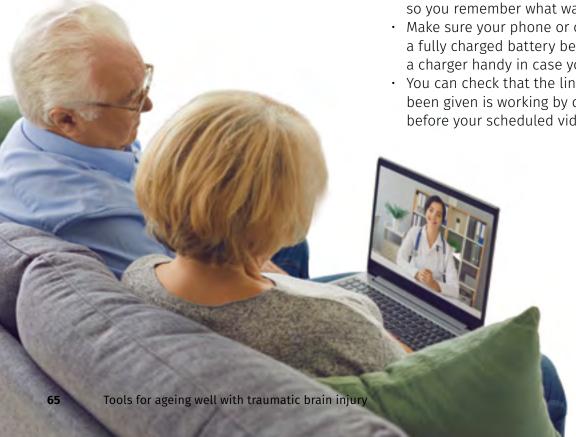
- Find a quiet, private place to be when your appointment starts. Your doctor will call you around the scheduled time.
- If you want others to listen in, like family members, you can put your phone on speaker.

For video calls:

- · Make sure you have a good Internet connection so the call goes smoothly.
- You'll usually get a link through email or text message before your appointment. Just click on it when it's time for your appointment.
- · Video calls work well on computers, but you can also use a phone or tablet (for example, an iPad). Just find a place to put your device so you don't have to hold it.

Tips for a successful telehealth appointment:

- Find a quiet and safe place for your appointment.
- · If you need help with the technology, have someone with you at the start.
- · Write down any questions you have before the appointment so you don't forget.
- Take notes during the appointment so you remember what was said.
- Make sure your phone or computer/tablet has a fully charged battery before the call, or have a charger handy in case your battery goes low.
- You can check that the link you have been given is working by clicking it before your scheduled video call.



Health professionals who can help to treat health issues associated with brain injury

There are a range of different health professionals who can help you with age-related issues. This is an alphabetical list of health professionals, with a description of how they can help you.

Audiologist

An audiologist will diagnose and treat hearing related disorders like hearing loss as well as balance disorders.

An audiologist can help with:

- · Hearing assessments
- · Diagnosis of hearing related disorders
- · Treatment planning
- Routine procedures (for example, fitting hearing aids)

Cardiologist

Cardiologists diagnose and treat disorders of the heart and the cardiovascular system. You will need a referral from your GP to see a cardiologist.

A cardiologist can help with:

- Diagnostic tests (for example, electrocardiograms and echocardiograms)
- · Chest pain
- · High blood pressure
- Heart and vascular issues
- Heart failure

Case manager

A case manager is someone who is usually funded by an insurer or Government agency (such as icare in NSW or TAC in Victoria). A case manager will help you to make decisions about your health care and rehabilitation and to coordinate your care and rehabilitation needs.

A case manager can help with:

- · Assessing your care and rehabilitation needs
- Coordinating your care with your clinical and rehabilitation team

Dentist

A dentist will help you to maintain good oral health and treat dental conditions, like cavities, oral infections, and gum disease.

A dentist can help with:

- · Dental examinations and diagnoses
- · Teeth cleaning
- Treatment and management of dental conditions
- · Surgery and restorative procedures

Dietician

A dietician can provide diet and nutrition education and advice.

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A dietician can help with:

- Nutrition education
- · Creating a tailored nutrition plan
- Meal planning services
- Weight management
- · Chronic disease management

Endocrinologist

An endocrinologist can diagnose and treat disorders caused by hormonal problems, for example diabetes or menopause.
You will need a referral from your GP to see an endocrinologist.

An endocrinologist can help with:

- Diagnostic tests
- · Diagnosing and treating endocrine disorders
- Developing a management plan
- · Prescribing medication

Exercise physiologist

Exercise physiologists create tailored exercise plans to help manage health conditions and injury.



An exercise physiologist can help with:

 Designing lifestyle and exercise interventions to support acute and chronic injuries and illnesses



General practitioner (GP)

Your GP is often your first contact when you have a health problem. They can treat and manage common health issues and write prescriptions when needed. They will also know when and which specialists to refer you to when you need more specific testing or specialised care. It is good to develop a relationship with your GP so they can get to know you and your medical history.

A GP can help with:

- Treating and managing common medical conditions
- Performing routine physical exams
- · Health education and preventative care
- Coordinating your health care and ensuring continuity of care
- Referring you to medical services or specialists as needed
- · Providing a needs assessment

Geriatrician

A geriatrician specialises in the health of older people. You will need a referral from your GP to see a geriatrician.

A geriatrician can help with:

- Frailty
- Incontinence
- Nutrition
- · Dementia

Neurologist (vestibular specialist)

A neurologist can diagnose and treat neurological conditions.

Neurological conditions are disorders of the nervous system. You will need a referral from your GP to see a neurologist.

A neurologist can help treat:

- Brain injury
- · Headaches and migraines
- Stroke
- · Nerve pain
- Epilepsy
- · Alzheimer's disease and other dementias
- Spinal cord injury

Neuropsychologist

Neuropsychology is a special area of psychology that focuses on how the brain affects cognition and behaviour. You will need a referral from your GP to see a neuropsychologist.

A neuropsychologist can help with:

- Cognitive issues
- Memory
- · Dementia

Nurse continence specialist

A nurse continence specialist can provide care to people who have bladder or bowel incontinence or pelvic floor muscle dysfunction.

A nurse continence specialist can help with:

 Providing a comprehensive continence assessment and treatment plan

Occupational therapist (OT)

Occupational therapists develop tailored interventions to help restore and maintain people's ability to perform everyday tasks. This helps people to be able to work and engage in activities they enjoy.

An OT can help with:

- Recovery from injuries or illnesses
- Restoring and improving function in performing everyday tasks
- Providing training in adaptive methods for people with disability or mobility issues
- Recommending adaptive equipment and assistive technology

Ophthalmologist

An ophthalmologist can diagnose and treat eye disorders.

An ophthalmologist can help with:

- Eye exams
- Diagnosing, treating, and managing eye conditions and diseases (for example, retinal diseases and glaucoma)
- Eye surgeries (for example, laser eye surgery)

Optometrist

An optometrist will diagnose and treat eye and vision disorders such as loss of vision.

An optometrist can help with:

- · Eye exams
- Writing prescriptions for vision aids (for example, glass and contact lenses)
- Diagnosing, treating, and managing some eye disorders or disorders that impact eye health (for example, diabetes)

Orthotist/prosthetist

An orthotist/prosthetist can help manage disorders of the muscles, bones, or nerves.

An orthotist/prosthetist can help with:

- Designing and fitting splints and braces (orthoses)
- Diagnosing and managing muscle, bone, and nerve disorders

Physiotherapist

A physiotherapist will use a range of therapeutic techniques to help with injury recovery and management of symptoms.

A physiotherapist can help with:

- · Diagnosing and treating physical problems
- · Health education
- Tailored therapeutic programs, including exercise programs and hands-on therapy
- · Injury recovery and prevention
- · Regaining balance, mobility and function
- Pain management

Podiatrist

A podiatrist can help with the diagnosis and treatment of foot and ankle related conditions.

A podiatrist can help with:

- Diagnosing and treating foot and ankle disorders
- Prescribing orthotics (shoe insoles and corrective footwear)
- Prescribing medications (like antifungals)

Pressure care / seating specialist

Pressure injuries are caused by pressure being put on one area of the body over an extended period of time. At risk areas are the head, ears, shoulders, elbows, buttocks, knees, heels, and feet. Pressure care aims to prevent damage to the skin and infection and reduce pain.

A pressure care / seating specialist can help with:

- Treating pressure injuries
- · Preventative care
- Wound dressing

Psychiatrist

Psychiatrists evaluate people to diagnose mental health disorders.
Once diagnosed, they use a combination of psychotherapy and mediation to treat these disorders. Try to find a psychiatrist with experience with brain injury. You will need a referral from your GP to see a psychiatrist.

A psychiatrist can help with:

- Mental health assessments
- Treating mental health disorders (like anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia)

Psychologist

Psychologists use psychological evaluations to diagnose mental health conditions. Once diagnosed, they use a range of therapeutic strategies to help people to manage their mental health, behavioural issues, and relationships. Try to find a psychologist with experience with brain injury. Although you do not need a referral from your GP to see a psychologist, having one will allow you to claim a Medicare rebate.

A psychologist can help with:

- Cognitive issues
- Emotional issues
- · Behavioural issues
- Relationship issues
- Mental health disorders (for example, depression and anxiety)



Recreational therapist

A recreational therapist will use recreation activities like art and music as a form of treatment to support recovery from illnesses or disabilities and to help facilitate participation in leisure, social, physical, and community activities.

A recreational therapist can help with:

- · Identifying your goals
- · Creating a management plan for you
- · Designing a rehabilitation program for you
- Participation in leisure, social, physical, and community activities

Rehabilitation engineer

A rehabilitation engineer uses technology to support the needs of people with disabilities to help with mobility.

A rehabilitation engineer can help with:

 Designing and creating artificial body parts (prosthetics)

Rehabilitation physician

A rehabilitation physician will oversee and monitor your rehabilitation care with the aim of supporting your recovery and return to optimal functioning (work or everyday activities).

A rehabilitation physician can help with:

- Managing your rehabilitation
- · Performing routine exams
- Health education and preventative care
- Coordinating your health care and ensuring continuity of care
- Referring you to medical services or specialists as needed

Respiratory specialist

A respiratory specialist treats conditions and disease affecting the respiratory system, like pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma, lung cancer, tuberculosis, and sleep-related breathing disorders like sleep apnoea. You will need a referral from your GP to see a respiratory specialist.

A respiratory specialist can help with:

 Diagnosing, treating, and preventing conditions and diseases affecting the respiratory system

Sexual health nurse/counsellor

A sexual health nurse or counsellor can help you to manage issues with sex and intimacy.



A sexual health nurse/counsellor can help with:

- Mental and emotional issues that contribute to sexual dysfunction
- Painful sex
- · Sexual health education

Sleep specialist

A sleep specialist treats sleep disturbances and disorders, like sleep apnoea, lack of sleep, excessive sleepiness, and circadian rhythm problems.

A sleep specialist can help with:

- Diagnosing and treating sleep disturbances and disorders
- Providing a sleep assessment (physical exam and evaluation of medical history and sleep symptoms)
- Ordering and evaluating sleep studies
- Prescribing medications

Social worker

A social worker can provide counselling and support to people in crisis. They can also help you to find the support services you need.

A social worker can help with:

- · Physical health
- · Mental health
- · Health education
- Finances
- Living and accommodation services
- · Linking you to support services

Specialist neurologist

A specialist neurologist treats diseases of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and muscles. You will need a referral from your GP to see a specialist neurologist.

A specialist neurologist can help with:

- Neurological testing and examinations
- Diagnosing diseases of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and muscles
- Creating treatment and management plans

Speech pathologist

A speech pathologist can diagnose and treat language, speech, and communication disorders, like stuttering. You will need a referral from your GP to see a speech pathologist.

A speech pathologist can help with:

- Diagnosing and treating swallowing disorders
- Diagnosing and treating communication difficulties caused by cognitive impairment
- Difficulties with being able to smell things (anosmia).

Other professionals who may be helpful to you

Financial administrator

A financial administrator can help to manage your financial affairs.



A financial administrator can help with:

- Providing advice and support around spending and budgeting
- Paying accounts
- · Managing assets and liabilities
- · Overseeing real estate sales and purchases
- Preparing and lodging tax returns

Lawyer

A lawyer can provide legal advice, representation, and advocacy.



A lawyer can help with:

- · Legal advice
- · Making a will
- Making a claim for compensation or insurance claim

State or private trustee

State or private trustees charge a fee and often take a percentage of your estate.



A state or private trustee can help with:

- · Making a will
- · Acting as executor of your will
- · Powers of attorney preparation
- Trusts
- Financial administration
- Financial management of your estate
- · Overseeing real estate sales
- · Deceased estate administration
- · Organising end-of-life or funeral arrangements

Vocational providers

A vocational provider can support you with returning to work safely and successfully and education and training.



A vocational provider can help with:

- Returning to work
- · Vocational education and training

Organisations providing funding, care and support to people with traumatic brain injury

Brain injury organisations and service providers

Organisation	What the organisation does	Website and phone number
Brain Injury Australia	Central clearinghouse of information and gateway to nationwide referral for optimising the social and economic participation of all Australians living with brain injury	https://braininjuryaustralia.org.au
		Phone: 1800 272 461
Connectivity	Australian-wide, not-for-profit	https://connectivity.org.au
Traumatic Brain Injury Australia	organisation working to educate and raise awareness of traumatic brain injury (including concussion) in the community	Phone: 0480 496 267
Synapse	Australia's Brain Injury Organisation,	https://synapse.org.au
	providing a range of support services for people who have been impacted by brain injury and disability	Phone: 1800 673 074
Families4Families	Peer support network for people with	https://families4families.org.au
	acquired brain injury and their families	Phone: 0433 388 250
arbias (Victoria	Provides specialist services for people with acquired brain injury, particularly alcohol and other drug-related brain injury	https://arbias.org.au
and NSW)		Phone: 02 9736 1821 (NSW) or 03 8388 1222 (Vic)
Brain Injury	Supports and empowers people	https://braininjurymatters.org
Matters (Victoria)	to advocate for themselves and enhance the lives of other people with acquired brain injury	Phone: 03 9639 7222
Brain Link (Victoria)	Provides comprehensive information	https://brainlink.org.au
	& support services for people living with brain injury	Phone: 1800 677 579
Acquired Brain Injury	Non-profit specialist service	https://abis.org.au
•	providing support to people with an acquired brain injury	Phone: 02 9334 2247
Headway Acquired	Brain Injury Australia disabilities caused by acquired brain	https://headwayabiaustralia.org
Brain Injury Australia (Queensland)		Phone: 07 5574 4311
Brain Injury	Non-government, state-wide,	https://biat.org.au
Association of Tasmania	not-for-profit organisation working for people with acquired brain injury, their families and other stakeholders	Phone: 1300 242 827

Health care services

Organisation	What the organisation does	Website and phone number
Alfred Health State- wide Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Centre (Victoria)	Victorian public rehabilitation provider for people with severe brain injuries, including community rehabilitation	https://alfredhealth.org.au/ services/hp/acquired-brain- injury-rehabilitation Phone: (03) 9076 7410 or (03) 9076 7423
Epworth Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit (Victoria)	Victorian private rehabilitation provider for people with severe brain injuries, including community rehabilitation and transitional living	https://epworth.org.au/our-services/ rehabilitation/brain-injury-and- neurological-disorders/acquired- and-traumatic-brain-injury
NSW State-wide Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program Service Directory (NSW)	This page lists the brain injury rehabilitation programs in NSW, including community rehabilitation	https://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/ networks/brain-injury-rehabilitation/ resources/service-directory
Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (Queensland)	Specialist community-based rehabilitation service for people with acquired brain injury in Queensland	https://health.qld.gov.au/abios Phone: 13 74 68
State Head Injury Unit (Western Australia)	Rehabilitation and community reintegration of people in WA, including community rehabilitation	https://nmhs.health.wa.gov.au/shiu Phone: 08 6457 4488
South Australia Brain Injury Rehabilitation Services	South Australia's state-wide brain injury rehabilitation service, including outpatient rehabilitation	https://sahealth.sa.gov.au

Carers organisations

Organisation	What the organisation does	Website and phone number
Australian	A program providing free services	https://carergateway.gov.au
Government's Carer Gateway	and support for carers	Phone: 1800 422 737
Carers Australia	National peak body representing Australia's unpaid carers	https://carersaustralia.com.au

Compensation schemes and funding

Organisation	What the organisation does	Website and phone number
Centrelink	Delivers social security payments and services to Australians	https://servicesaustralia. gov.au/centrelink
Department of	Support for veterans, Australian	https://dva.gov.au
Veterans' Affairs	Defence Force members and their dependants	Phone: 1800 838 372
My Aged Care	Support for people aged 65	https://myagedcare.gov.au
	years and over regardless of injury, illness or disability	Phone: 1800 200 422
National Disability	Support for eligible people	https://ndis.gov.au
Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	with disability aged under 65. However, people can choose	Phone: 1800 800 110
	to remain on NDIS after they turn 65, if previously eligible	

Transport injury schemes

Organisation	What the organisation does	Website and phone number
Transport Accident Support for people with Commission (Victoria) transport injuries in Victoria	https://tac.vic.gov.au	
	Phone: 1300 654 329	
icare (NSW)	Provides insurance and care services to the businesses, people, and communities of NSW. This includes people severely injured in the workplace or in motor vehicle accidents.	https://icare.nsw.gov.au
		Phone: 1300 738 586
Lifetime Care and	Support for people with workplace	https://treasury.act.gov.au/ltcss
Support Scheme (ACT)	or transport injuries in the ACT	Phone: 132281
National Injury	Support for people with transport	https://niis.qld.gov.au
Insurance Scheme Queensland	injuries in Queensland	Phone: 1300 607 566
TIO Motor Accidents	Support for people with transport	https://tiofi.com.au/macscheme
Compensation Scheme (Northern Territory)	injuries in the Northern Territory	Phone: 131 846
Insurance	Support for people with transport	https://icwa.wa.gov.au
Commission of Western Australia	injuries in Western Australia	Phone: 08 9264 3333
Lifetime Support	Support for people with transport	https://lifetimesupport.sa.gov.au
Scheme (South Australia)	injuries in South Australia	Phone: 08 8463 6131
Motor Accident	Support for people with	https://maib.tas.gov.au
Insurance Board (Tasmania)	transport injuries in Tasmania	Phone: 1800 006 224

Workplace injury schemes

Organisation	What the organisation does	Website and phone number
WorkSafe Victoria	Support for people with workplace injuries in Victoria	https://worksafe.vic.gov.au
		Phone: 1800 136 089
SafeWork NSW	Support for people with workplace	https://safework.nsw.gov.au
	injuries in NSW (also see icare)	Phone: 13 10 50
WorkSafe ACT	Support for people with workplace injuries in the ACT (also see Lifetime Care and Support Scheme)	https://worksafe.act.gov.au
		Phone: 13 22 81
WorkCover	Support for people with workplace	https://worksafe.qld.gov.au
Queensland	injuries in Queensland	Phone: 1300 362 128
NTWorkSafe	Support for people with workplace injuries in the Northern Territory	https://worksafe.nt.gov.au
(Northern Territory)		Phone: 1800 250 713
WorkCover WA	Support for people with workplace injuries in Western Australia	https://workcover.wa.gov.au
		Phone: 1300 794 744
ReturnToWorkSA	SA Support for people with workplace	https://rtwsa.com
(South Australia) injuries in Sout	injuries in South Australia	Phone: 13 18 55
WorkSafe Tasmania	Support for people with workplace injuries in Tasmania	https://worksafe.tas.gov.au
		Phone: 1300 366 322
Comcare	Support for people with workplace injuries who are Australian Government employees or people who are self-insured	https://comcare.gov.au
		Phone: 1300 366 979

Legal matters

Organisation	What the organisation does	Website and phone number
Advance Care Planning Australia	Australian Government service	https://advancecareplanning.org.au
	providing expert advance care planning advice	Phone: 1300 208 582
Department of Health and Aged Care	Provides information about a range of topics, including advance care planning	https://health.gov.au/topics/ palliative-care/planning-your- palliative-care/advance-care-directive
		Phone: 1800 020 103