Client Information Handbook

“Enhancing the quality of life of older people and people with disabilities”
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**Contact Details**

The name of your Community Options services coordinator is _______________________

I can be contacted on

Tel: ______________________
Fax: ______________________
E-mail: ____________________

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<th>Other key contact numbers are:</th>
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Notes
About Community Options

Our Mission

Community Options is a not-for-profit community-based organisation established in 1991 to provide care and support to older people, people with disabilities, their families and friends. Our mission is to provide support services to our clients that will enable them to achieve a greater degree of independence and continue living quality lives in the community.

Our Vision

Community Options’ vision is for older people, people with disabilities and their families and friends to live good and full lives. We believe that this can be achieved through the person continuing to be a contributing and valued member of their community. To do this we aim to support people to maintain relationships, roles and connections to enhance the opportunities for people to enjoy life.

Our Values

Commitment: We are committed to providing high quality support services to our clients in a manner that respects individual choices, enhances our clients’ self-determination and promotes their dignity and meaningful and valued social roles.

Excellence: We strive for excellence and quality in everything we do.

Professionalism and integrity: At all times we act with integrity, aim to provide quality service that is reliable and responsive to individual client needs and take pride in what we do.

Good working relationships and teamwork: We work with one another with enthusiasm, appreciation and respect.

Personal development: We value and actively pursue opportunities for staff professional growth and development.

Services Offered by Community Options

Community Options provides a wide range of in-home community based services to older people, people with disabilities and their families including personal care, social support, domestic assistance, respite, home modifications and case management through a number of short-, medium- and long-term programs.

- **COPS Brokerage/Case Management Program**
COPS Brokerage/Case Management Program is a long-term program that provides support to older people and people with disabilities with high level, complex support requirements. Through this program, Community Options assists individuals and families in identifying their needs and service options available to them in the community. The program may provide a range of in-home support services in consultation with the person and their family including social support and personal care. The program also provides service co-ordination, service monitoring and case management as required. Program eligibility criteria: (1) HACC
target group: frail aged and younger people with disabilities and their carers; (2) ACT residence.

- **Domestic Assistance Service**
  Domestic Assistance Service is a long-term program for older people and people with disabilities with low level support requirements. The program provides on-going domestic assistance service to those people who only require basic house cleaning service to continue living independently in their homes. Program eligibility criteria: (1) HACC target group: frail aged and younger people with disabilities and their carers; (2) People with low level support requirements; (3) ACT residence.

- **Continuity of Care Program**
  Continuity of Care Program is one of the short-term Post Hospital Support Programs that provides support to older people and people with disabilities following discharge from hospital for up to eight weeks. Services offered under the program include personal care, social support, domestic assistance and home modifications. Program eligibility criteria: (1) HACC target group: frail aged and younger people with disabilities and their carers; (2) People with low level support requirements; (3) ACT residence; (4)Recent hospital admission or procedure; (3) require short-term support to assist in recovery; (4) ACT residence (may be short-term).

- **Transitional Support Program**
  Transitional Support Program is another short-term Post Hospital Support Program that provides integrated support services to people in need of assistance as a result of illness and following discharge from hospital. The aim of the program is to assist individuals and their families who are “at risk” as a result of hospital admission and who require support services. This program can provide support for a maximum of twelve weeks. Program eligibility criteria: (1) recent hospital admission or procedure; (2) may or may not be within HACC target group: frail aged and younger people with disabilities and their carers; (3) complex care needs and other “risk” factors, such as living alone, single parent with young dependent children, clients with mental health issues and physical disabilities; (4) ACT residence (may be short-term).

- **Respite Links**
  Respite Links provides medium to long-term respite services to carers of older people with dementia. This program is particularly directed towards people supporting someone whose behaviours may be described as challenging. As a consequence, these individuals may experience difficulties in accessing mainstream respite services. The program also provides coordination and case management services as required. Program eligibility criteria: (1) carers of older people with dementia who have challenging behaviours; (2) ACT residence.

- **Flexible Respite Program**
  Flexible Respite Program provides short- to medium-term respite care services to carers of older people and people with disabilities with complex support needs, which are unable to be met by mainstream services. Program eligibility criteria: (1) carers of older people and people with disabilities with complex support needs; (2) ACT residence.

- **Community Support Options**
  Community Support Options provides support that will assist people to develop skills and increase their confidence and ability to participate and be involved in community activities of
their choice. Program eligibility criteria: (1) younger people with disabilities requiring community access services; (2) ACT residence.

- **Individual Support Packages (ISP)**
  Individual Support Packages (ISPs) is an individualised funding model where Community Options manages Disability ACT-funded support packages on behalf of clients and provides the administration support required. Service coordination and case management services are provided as required. Program eligibility criteria: (1) younger people with disabilities with complex support needs; (2) ACT residence.

- **Flexible Family Support**
  The goal of the Flexible Family Support program is to provide a wide array of options to families of people with disabilities and older people that enable them to stay together and to be welcomed, contributing members of their communities. This is done through developing the families’ natural capacity to meet the needs of family members; enhancing the capacity of communities to value and support people with disabilities and their families; and offering flexible respite services.

- **Case Manager: Services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Groups**
  The program provides support and intensive case management services to older people and people with disabilities from CALD backgrounds with complex support needs and requiring assistance with navigating the service system. The program aims to support clients from CALD backgrounds to live quality lives and ensure more cohesive service provision by promoting best practices, standards of care and performance measures. The program eligibility criteria: (1) HACC target group: frail aged and younger people with disabilities and their carers from CALD backgrounds with complex support needs requiring intensive case management services; (2) ACT residence.

How can I Access Services Offered by Community Options?

**How can I Apply for Support?**

Access to Community Options programs and services is subject to needs assessment, meeting program eligibility criteria and availability of resources. For program eligibility criteria, please see Services Offered.

Most referrals to Community Options are made by other service providers, so you can ask your current service provider to make a referral on your behalf. You can also self-refer by contacting Community Options. If you are self-referring, we will assist you in completing the forms that provide information about you and your support requirements. Your referral will be considered by the Intake Team. Intake meetings for Community Options programs are held weekly with an exception of the two Post Hospital Support Programs where intake meetings are held daily. Your referral will normally be considered by the Intake Team within a week and the final outcome will be communicated to you or the person making a referral on your behalf within three weeks of receiving the complete referral.

Depending on the nature of your request, we may ask to meet with you to discuss your referral. Together we will discuss your needs and service requirements and agree if we can support you. We will consider how best we can be of assistance and discuss this with you. If we can be of assistance, we will develop a care plan and agree on how we will support you,
the nature of that support and the cost (if any). We will also be in contact with you and regularly review and update your care plan.

What if we are Unable to Offer You Support?

If we are unable to offer you requested support, we will explain the reasons to you. If it is because we do not have capacity to provide support at that time, we may suggest contacting other services that are available in the community. If appropriate, we will also assist you to access other services available in the community. If we are unable to provide you support because you are not eligible for our programs and services, you will be welcome to reapply in the future if your circumstances change.

What if We Offer You Assistance and You no Longer Want It?

You have the right to refuse support or change support arrangements at any time. You can do this by contacting your Service Coordinator at Community Options. If you refuse our services, you will have the opportunity to give us a reason for your decision. If you refuse our services or no longer require support, you will be welcome to reapply again in the future.

What are the Circumstances under Which Type, Duration or Frequency of Service Delivery May be Changed, Refused, Suspended or Withdrawn?

On some occasions your services may be changed, refused, suspended or withdrawn. The following are the circumstances when this may occur:

- **Your support needs or circumstances have changed and you no longer require the support or you are no longer eligible for services:** Community Options programs are need-based services. We will therefore regularly review your support needs in relation to services you receive. If your circumstances have changed and it is determined that you no longer require the service or you are no longer eligible for service, we will change or withdraw your support.

- **If service provision raises safety issues for yourself or support staff:** On some occasions the service provision may raise safety issues for clients and/or support staff. In this case, we will consult with you, the service provider agency and any other relevant parties to develop strategies to control safety issues and minimise risks for you and/or your support staff. If you refuse to cooperate with us in addressing the safety issues for yourself or your support staff, we may need to suspend your services to ensure safe service delivery for you and/or support staff’s right to work in a safe environment.

- **If you request termination of services:** If you no longer wish to receive services from us, we will endeavour to find out the reason for this and will attempt to rectify any issues you may have with your services, if applicable. We will, however, respect your wishes in case you want your services to stop.

- **If our funding changes or if there are resource constraints:** If our funding for services changes and/or if we have funding constraints, we may need to change or withdraw your support. We will, however, attempt to refer you to other services available in the community.

- **If mutually agreed by you and Community Options:** There may be occasions when the change or withdrawal of services are mutually agreed by you and Community Options.

- **If you fail to pay the negotiated client contribution fee:** It is the policy of Community Options not to deny clients access to service if clients are unable to pay the client contribution fees. We therefore negotiate client contributions individually with clients and
depending on circumstances may partially or fully waive the fee. If, however, you fail to pay the negotiated client contribution fee, we may suspend your services. For more information on client contribution fees, please see Client Contribution Fee.

How does Community Options Provide Support?

We spend time getting to know the individual, their families and other important people in their lives. This assists us to understand their life and who is involved. We work closely with individuals and people around them to ensure we provide supports that will enhance opportunities for a good life.

By focusing on how best to support individuals to extend their abilities, to continue to live in their own homes and to have valued roles, we aim to get away from support that is merely functional or unconnected to their real needs. Our aim is to provide support in ways that build relationships, enhance skills and capacities and helps the person to have a good life within the community.

There are five principles that govern the way Community Options provides services. These are:

- Supports focus on strengthening and reflecting relationships around the person;
- Input from families and individuals in determining the type and nature of support is encouraged;
- Supports connect people with their community, their activities and their lifestyles;
- Supports are structured, planned and delivered in ways that are “user-friendly;”
- People are not labelled through their interaction with the service system.

Client Contribution Fee

Community Options collects client contribution fees. Income generated from client contribution fees is used to enhance and/or expand service provision. Client contribution fees are individually negotiated with clients on the basis of the following standard fee schedule:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th># of service hours</th>
<th>Contribution Fee</th>
<th>Fee Per hour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two hours of service per week/fortnight</td>
<td>$15 per week/fortnight, plus mileage if applicable</td>
<td>$7.5 per hour, plus mileage if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From three to seven hours of service per week</td>
<td>$25 per week, plus mileage if applicable</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For more than 7 hours per week</td>
<td>$43 per week, plus mileage if applicable</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One off services/equipment</td>
<td>18-20% of the total cost</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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If you are unable to pay the client contribution fee or would like to negotiate a reduced fee, you can discuss this with your Service Coordinator. Depending on your circumstances, the client contribution fee can be partially or fully waived.
Community Options invoices clients for contribution fees on a monthly basis. Clients have an option of opting for electronic billing by nominating an e-mail address for delivery of invoices and related information. If you would like to receive invoices electronically, please discuss this with your Service Coordinator or the Community Options Administration Team.

Other Services Available in the Community

If you wish to access other services available in the community, you can discuss this with your Service Coordinator. Below you will find the list of some service providers and their contact details:

**Home Help Service ACT Ltd.** is a community based not-for-profit organisation that provides in-home support to older people and people with disabilities and their carers in the ACT. Their contact details are:

Grant Cameron Community Centre  
27 Mulley St  
Holder ACT 2611  
Tel: (02) 6287 3777  
Fax: (02) 6287 3406  
E-mail: admin@homehelp.org.au  
Web: [www.homehelp.org.au](http://www.homehelp.org.au)

**Tandem** is a community based not-for-profit organisation that provides respite, personal care and social support services to children, young people and adults with disabilities, people living with mental illness, frail older people, and their families and carers living in the ACT. Their contact details are:

The Blaxland Centre  
25 Blaxland Crescent  
GRIFFITH ACT 2603  
Tel: (02) 6288 0955  
Fax: (02) 6287 2870  
Web: [www.tandem.org.au](http://www.tandem.org.au)

**Carers ACT** is a not-for-profit organisation that provides services to carers of older people and people with disabilities. Their contact details are:

2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent  
HOLT ACT 2615  
Ph: (02) 6296 9900  
Fax: (02) 6296 9999  
Web: [www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au)
Alzheimers Australia ACT is the peak body representing the interests of people affected by dementia in the ACT. Alzheimer's Australia ACT offers a range of services and support to people with dementia, their families and carers including counselling, education and information services. Their contact details are:

159 Maribrynong Avenue  
Kaleen ACT 2617  
Tel: (02) 6255 0722  
Fax: (02) 6255 0499  
E-mail: act.admin@alzheimers.org.au  

Koomarri is a disability service provider that provides community support and employment services to people with disabilities. Their contact details are:

Cnr Launceston & Callam Streets  
Phillip ACT 2606  
Tel: (02) 6280 6143  
Fax: (02) 6239 1603  
Email: reception@koomarri.asn.au  
Web: www.koomarri.asn.au

Hartley Lifecare is a Canberra-based organisation that provides accommodation support and respite care for children, adults and their families in the ACT with physical and complex disabilities. Their contact details are:

6 Hodgson Place  
Pearce ACT 2607  
Tel: (02) 6282 4411  
Fax: (02) 6282 5444  
Web: www.hartley.org.au

Sharing Places is an organisation that provides day services to people with disabilities with high support needs. Their contact details are:

Tel: (02) 6290 1964  
E-mail: admin@sharingplaces.com.au  
Web: www.sharingplaces.com.au

What are my Rights and Responsibilities as a Client of Community Options?

When you use the services provided by Community Options you can expect us to recognise your rights as a care recipient as defined in the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Community Care. As a care recipient, you also have the right to receive a copy of the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities. The Charter of Rights and Responsibilities is outlined below.
Rights

General

- To be treated and accepted as an individual, and to have your individual preferences respected;
- To be treated with dignity, with your privacy respected;
- To receive care that is respectful of you, your family and home;
- To receive care without being obliged to feel grateful to those providing your care;
- To full and effective use of all your human, legal and consumer rights, including the right to freedom of speech regarding your care;
- To be treated without exploitation, abuse, discrimination, harassment or neglect.

Participation

- To be involved in identifying the community care most appropriate for your needs;
- To choose the care and services that best meet your assessed needs, from the community care able to be provided and within the limits of the resources available;
- To participate in decisions that affect you;
- To have your representative participate in decisions relating to your care if you do not have capacity.

Care and Services

- To receive reliable, coordinated, safe, quality care and services which are appropriate to your assessed needs;
- To be given before, or within fourteen days after you commence receiving care, a written plan of the care and services that you expect to receive;
- To receive care and services as described in the plan that take account of your lifestyle, other care arrangements and cultural, linguistic and religious preferences;
- To ongoing review of the care and services you receive (both periodic and in response to changes in your personal circumstances), and modification of the care and services as required.

Personal Information

- To privacy and confidentiality of your personal information;
- To access your personal information.

Communication

- To be helped to understand any information you are given;
- To be given a copy of the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Community Care;
- To be offered a written agreement that includes all agreed matters;
- To choose a person to speak on your behalf for any purpose.

Comments and Complaints

- To be given information on how to make comments and complaints about the care and services you receive;
To complain about the care and services you receive, without fear of losing the care or being disadvantaged in any other way;

To have complaints investigated fairly and confidentially, and to have appropriate steps taken to resolve issues of concern.

**Fees**

- To have your fees determined in a way that is transparent, accessible and fair;
- To receive invoices that are clear and in a format that is understandable;
- To have your fees reviewed periodically and on request when there are changes to your financial circumstances;
- Not to be denied care and services because of your inability to pay a fee for reasons beyond your control.

**Responsibilities**

**General**

- To respect the rights of care workers to their human, legal and industrial rights including the right to work in a safe environment;
- To treat care workers without exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment.

**Care and Services**

- To abide by the terms of the written agreement;
- To acknowledge that your needs may change and to negotiate modifications of care and services when your care needs do change;
- To accept responsibility for your own actions and choices even though some actions and choices may involve an element of risk.

**Communication**

- To give enough information to assist us to develop, deliver and review a care plan;
- To tell us and our staff about any problems with the care and services.

**Access**

- To allow safe and reasonable access for care workers at the times specified in your care plan or otherwise by agreement;
- To provide reasonable notice if you do not require a service.

**Fee**

- To pay any fee as specified in the agreement or negotiate an alternative arrangement with us if any changes occur in your financial circumstances;
- To provide enough information for us to determine an appropriate level of fee.
Privacy and Confidentiality Requirements

Ensuring Client Privacy and Confidentiality

To provide required services, Community Options needs to collect highly personal client information including your name, address, demographic details and health particulars. Community Options is committed to protecting privacy and confidentiality of clients. We will ensure that client information is collected, stored and used in accordance with statutory obligations.

Community Options will only collect information relevant to the services you require. Information you provide to us, or is provided to us with your consent by other parties on your behalf, will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used only for the purpose it was collected. You can also change or withdraw your consent at any time.

Your personal information will not be released to a third party without your permission except if required by law. The release of information without your consent might occur when the health or wellbeing of a person is threatened or there are other strong public interest reasons for information to be released. If these circumstances occur we will endeavour to contact you, prior to the release of information, and advise you that such a request has been made.

As a condition of receiving Government funding to provide support services, Community Options is required to provide the Government with data in relation to the type and volume of services we provide and characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) of people who receive these services. This data is provided in a format that does not allow the individual to be identified. You can request to have your data withheld from these collections. If you have questions or concerns about these data collections, or would like further information, please discuss this with your Service Coordinator.

Accuracy of Information

Community Options will seek to maintain accurate records.

Storage of Client Information

Community Options will ensure the security of your personal information. Client personal information is stored electronically in our database and/or paper files. We take measures to ensure the integrity of our systems and to secure and protect client information. We safeguard client information on secure systems and have implemented appropriate security controls to protect the information. All staff employed by Community Options are also required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Access to Information We Hold about You

You can ask to see the information we hold about you. If you make such a request, we will make this information available to you within 10 business days of receiving the request. If access cannot be granted as required by law, we will inform you about a reason for access denial within 10 business days. Access can be denied for a number of reasons, such as where access to the record would contravene a law or a court order or access to records will
constitute a significant risk to life or physical, mental or emotional health of an individual, whether a client or another person.

Complaints and Feedback

Community Options is committed to establishing an environment in which clients feel confident and safe in their ability to express dissatisfaction or complain about provided services. Community Options believes that in an open and trusting environment it is important that people we support feel able to freely raise issues or concerns about the service they receive and have these issues responded to as quickly and efficiently as possible.

We welcome your feedback about the service we provide. Your comments or complaints help us to improve the services we offer. If you wish to make a complaint or raise any issues with the services you receive, you can contact your Service Coordinator, Team Manager, Client Services Manager or the Executive Director. Your complaint will be treated respectfully, fairly and confidentially. If you wish, you can also request to view Community Options complaints policy and protocols.

You may also make a complaint directly to the ACT Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body. There are three separate Commissioners within the Commission, each with different responsibilities and functions:

- Human Rights & Discrimination Commissioner
- Health Services Commissioner, and Disability & Community Services Commissioner
- Children & Young People Commissioner

The Human Rights Commission contact details are:

Level 4, 12 Moore Street
Canberra City
Tel: (02) 6205 2222
E-mail: human.rights@act.gov.au
Web: www.hrc.act.gov.au

For more information about the ACT Human Rights Commission, its functions, services and how to make a complaint, you can also visit www.hrc.act.gov.au/.

The Department of Health and Ageing will also look into any complaint or concern regarding services received under the National Respite for Carers Program. If you are receiving services under our Flexible Respite Program or Respite Links, you can contact the Aged Care Information Line with any complaints about your services on 1800 500 853 or 1800 555 677.

Your Right to an Advocate

We are committed to empowering our clients and enhancing their capacity for self-determination and expression. We therefore seek to promote and protect your right to nominate an advocate of your choice who will be involved in the decision-making process.
regarding your service needs. You also have the right to self-advocate, change your advocate or decide not to use your advocate. If you wish to nominate an advocate or want more information regarding advocacy services in the ACT, please let your Service Coordinator at Community Options know about your decision.

**Who is an Advocate?**

- An advocate is a person who acts in your best interest and promotes your rights by speaking, acting and writing on your behalf. An advocate can be anyone you nominate including:
  - A primary caregiver
  - A family member
  - A friend or neighbour
  - Another service provider
  - Staff - except if there is conflict of interest
  - A person employed as an advocate with a specialised advocacy services (please see below)
  - Employees of government departments such as the Department of Fair Trading
  - Employees of Statutory bodies, such as the office of the Public Guardian

**Specialised Advocacy Services in the ACT**

**ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)**
Address: Suite 207, Block C, Canberra Technology Park
Phillip Avenue, Watson
Tel: (02) 6242 5060
E-mail: adacas@adacas.org.au
Web: www.adacas.org.au

**ACT Public Advocate**
Address: Level 3, 12 Moore Street
Canberra City ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6207 0707
E-mail: pa@act.gov.au
Web: www.publicadvocate.act.gov.au

**Advocacy for Inclusion**
Level 2, Room 02, Griffin Centre
20 Genge Street, Canberra City ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6257 4005
Fax: (02) 6257 4006
E-mail: info@advocacyforinclusion.org
Web: www.advocacyforinclusion.org
Comment or Feedback Form

Community Options welcomes any comments or feedback you have about the service we provide. Your comments are important to us and will help us to ensure that we provide the best possible service into the future.

If you wish to make any comments about our service please use the space provided below and return the form to us. Alternatively, you can speak directly to your Service Coordinator or the Executive Director. Your comments will be treated confidentially.

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Your Name (optional): ...........................................
Program (if known): ...............................................

Send the Completed form to:  Executive Director
Community Options
GPO Box 3067