Client Information Handbook

“Enhancing the quality of life of older people and people with disabilities”
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About Community Options

About Us
Community Options is a local ACT community based non-profit organisation with more than 24 years’ experience in providing services to older people, people with disabilities and their families and carers.

We specialise in providing intense and complex coordination services to people with complex needs to enable them to improve their quality of life and achieve a greater degree of independence in the community.

We offer a range of in-home and community based support services under ACT Government Home and Community Care Program and other ACT Health-funded programs and services and; the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP); the My Aged Care Regional Assessment Service; and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

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.
What Happens If I Do Not Respond To A Scheduled Visit?

To ensure clients' safety and to meet duty of care responsibilities, Community Options has a standard protocol to follow in a case of client’s non response to a scheduled visit. The protocol below which details steps we will take in case you are not answering the door when your support worker or a service coordinator arrives for a scheduled visit are outlined below. If you wish to give us any specific instructions different from the steps outlined below for us to follow in case of non-response to a scheduled visit or if you do not wish for us to take any action in response to non-response, please discuss this with the Service Coordinator. The Service Coordinator will record your specific instructions in your Community Options client record. Please be advised that in some cases your instruction for us not to take any action in response to you not responding to a scheduled visit may be overridden particularly in emergency cases and where action is required under Community Options’ statutory obligations.

Detailed Protocol:
- Community Options will collect and regularly update information on your nominated contact person or persons who can be contacted in the event that you are not responding to an agreed scheduled visit or in case of an emergency.
- If Community Options suspects the client does not respond to a scheduled visit due to an emergency situation, Community Options will follow the steps outlined below or follow an individualised emergency plan agreed with the client and/or authorised representative.
- Where the client does not respond to a scheduled visit and where no issues of concern are suspected due to client’s individual circumstances, a number of response strategies may be taken:
  - Contacting the client at home and/or mobile, as applicable
  - Calling nominated emergency contact(s)
  - Leaving a note under the door to advise that the support worker or Service Coordinator visited as arranged and requesting for a telephone call back
- If it is suspected that non-response is due to an emergency, the following standard emergency protocol will be applied:
  - Service Coordinator will call emergency contact(s)
  - If there is a key safe in place and you have provided us with your key safe access details for us to gain access in case of an emergency (or suspected emergency), we will use the key safe to gain access to your home
  - Service Coordinator may call hospitals to find out if the client was admitted to hospital
  - Where there are a number of agencies providing services to the client, the Service Coordinator may contact other service providers to find out when the last service occurred
  - The Service Coordinator and/or relevant manager may visit the client’s home to talk to your neighbours to enquire when you have been seen last
  - The Service Coordinator will call the police where all strategies listed above have been exhausted.
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
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 2, 11 Moore Street
Canberra City
Tel: (02) 6205 2222
E-mail: human.rights@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 offers a free service called “The Aged Care Complaints Scheme”. This service is available to anyone receiving aged care services that wishes to make a complaint about

- Residential care
- Home Care Packages
- Home and Community Care Services

Lodging a complaint with The Aged Care Complaints Scheme can be made as follows

Phone: 1800 550 552
Online: www.health.gov.au

The Department of Social Services 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 104, 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**
Room 2.02, Griffin Centre
20 Genge Street, Canberra City
ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6257 4005
E-mail: info@advocacyforinclusion.org
Web: www.advocacyforinclusion.org

**Legal Aid ACT**
2 Allsop Street
Canberra City ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6243 3411
E-mail: legalaid@legalaidact.org.au
Web: www.legalaidact.org.au