



Community Options

Serving the Canberra region

Client Information Handbook

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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 that provides support to people in the Canberra region, their families and friends. Our mission is to provide excellence in 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 all the people we serve, 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 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. The wording of your rights vary based on age and funding source (e.g. National Disability Insurance Scheme, or Commonwealth Home Support Program) Regardless, you can expect Community Options to at a minimum recognise and respect the below Charter or Rights.

Rights

Charter of Rights

I have the right to:

- 1. Safe and high quality care and services*
- 2. Be treated with dignity and respect*
- 3. Have my identity, culture and diversity valued and supported*
- 4. Live without abuse and neglect*
- 5. Be informed about my care and services in a way I understand*
- 6. Access all information about myself, including information about my rights, care and services*
- 7. Have control over and make choices about my care, personal and social life, including where choices involve personal risk*
- 8. Have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of my daily life, financial affairs and possessions*
- 9. My independence*
- 10. Be listened to and understood*
- 11. Have a person of my choice, an advocate, support me or speak on my behalf*
- 12. Complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly*
- 13. Personal privacy and to have my personal information protected*
- 14. Exercise my rights without it adversely affecting the way I am treated*



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, 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.

ACT Human Rights Commission

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/.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

You may also make a complaint directly to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissions. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissions' role is to protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being and quality of life of people receiving aged care. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission provides oversight of;

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

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission can be contacted by:

Phone: 1800 951 822

or

Online: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/>



NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

You may also make a complaint directly to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is an independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services. The NDIS Commission responds to concerns, complaints and reportable incidents, including abuse and neglect of NDIS participants.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission can be contacted by:

Phone: 1800 035 544

Or

Online: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/>

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

Our Commitment to you

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all people we work with. Community Options has a zero tolerance policy to the abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination of the people we support. In an instance in which an allegation of abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination is made through the provision of your services Community Options will;

- Contact the appropriate authority (Police, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Aged Care Quality Commission, ACT Community Services etc.)



- Encourage, support and facilitate your access to an advocacy service or regulatory body as outlined above. This could include but is not limited to;
 - Contacting them on your behalf.
 - Arranging transport, support, or attendance at meetings or interviews.
 - Collecting and providing information in relation to your supports to an advocacy service.
 - Attending and participating in any meetings as requested.
 - Supporting you to transition between advocacy services.

Specialised Advocacy Services in the ACT

ACT Disability, Aged and Carer

Advocacy Service (ADACAS)

Unit 14 - Weston Community Hub

Corner of Gritten St and Hilder St

Weston ACT 2611

Tel: (02) 6242 5060

adacas@adacas.org.au

www.adacas.org.au

ACT Public Advocate

Level 3, 12 Moore Street

Canberra City ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6207 0707

pa@act.gov.au

www.publicadvocate.act.gov.au

Advocacy for Inclusion

Room 2.02, Griffin Centre

20 Genge Street, Canberra City ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6257 4005

info@advocacyforinclusion.org

www.advocacyforinclusion.org

Legal Aid ACT

2 Allsop Street

Canberra City ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6243 3411

legalaid@legalaidact.org.au

www.legalaidact.org.au