



Your rights and responsibilities



home and community care
A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED

Home & Community (HACC) services – helping you stay at home and in your community

A guide to help you understand your rights & responsibilities as a Home & Community Care (HACC) client

What is the Home & Community Care (HACC) Program?

The HACC Program provides services that support and help frail older people and younger people with disabilities to live independently at home. HACC services provide eligible people with help at home, help with getting out into the community, and a break for carers.

Services may be provided by your local HACC agency, Community Health Centre or your local council.

All HACC agencies are required by the government to meet National Service Standards in order to provide quality care. The Rights and Responsibilities described in this brochure are all related to those Service Standards.

YOUR RIGHTS as a HACC Client

As a person using HACC services, you have a number of rights. HACC service providers should recognise your right to:

- Be treated with respect and courtesy
- Be informed and consulted
- Be part of decisions made about your care
- Receive quality services
- Privacy and confidentiality, and to access all personal information kept about you by the HACC service

- Have another person of your choice support you and advocate (speak) on your behalf
- Have your comments valued and to make a confidential complaint if you are not happy with the services you receive.

The right to be treated with respect and courtesy

Service providers must respect your ideas and the decisions you make about your life. They should listen to what you have to say, and are expected to show courtesy in their behaviour to you. Here are some questions you can ask service providers about this right:

- *Will your staff ask my permission if they want access to my personal belongings, such as my clothes?*
- *Are staff expected to listen to what I have to say about my care?*
- *Are staff expected to talk to me and members of my family in a respectful way?*
- *If I think that staff are not treating me with respect and dignity what can I do?*
- *Who should I speak to in the agency if I have any queries or problems?*
- *Who could I speak to outside of the agency if I don't feel comfortable about speaking to an agency employee?*
- *How familiar is your service with my cultural background / religious beliefs?*
- *Will staff respect my cultural and religious beliefs?*

The right to be informed and to be consulted

As a client you have the right to be informed about the service available to you, and about your rights as a client. These are questions that you can ask to make sure you receive a good service:

- *What services are provided?*
- *How will I be involved in planning the services you provide to meet my needs?*
- *How often will I receive the service, and for how long?*
- *Is there a cost for these services?*
- *If I cannot afford the service can I request a reduction in fees?*
- *Can I get the service after hours or on weekends?*
- *Will I have the same staff each time?*
- *What happens if I don't take up the service now and ask for it again later?*
- *Can I stop the service at any time, and how would I do this?*
- *Can I get a written copy of my rights as a service client?*
- *Can I have the information in a language other than English?*
- *If my English is not good, can I have a family member or friend with me?*

The right to be part of decisions about your care

You have the right to be in control of the care you receive by being part of planning and decisions made about the services provided to you. You can ask these kinds of questions:

- *How will I be involved in developing the plan for my care?*
- *Can I have someone of my choice with me during any discussions about my care?*
- *If my needs change, will you review my care plan with me?*
- *Can I ask for a male or female worker?*
- *Can I choose a time that suits me to receive my service?*
- *Can I ask my worker not to smoke in my home?*
- *Will you advise me if there are any changes to my service?*
- *How can I complain if I am unhappy about changes made to my service?*

The right to receive quality service

A service provider needs to inform you about what services it can and cannot provide. You have the right to receive a planned and reliable service. To find out more about this right you can ask service providers these questions:

- *Will I receive a regular visit or phone call from the agency to find out if I am satisfied with the service I am getting?*
- *Do you give clients a copy of information about the service provider?*
- *Do I get a copy of my care plan?*
- *Am I going to be consulted about any changes made to my service?*
- *Is the service provider flexible about adapting services to meet my needs?*
- *Will I be encouraged to speak up if I have any worries about my service?*

The right to privacy and confidentiality

You have the right to privacy and confidentiality, and to access information about you on agency files. These are examples of questions you might ask service providers about this right:

- *Can I get any written information about my rights regarding privacy and confidentiality?*
- *What sort of personal details do you keep about your clients?*
- *Would you ever give my personal details to another agency or to anyone else without my permission?*
- *Where do you keep my personal information?*
- *Is it secure? How do you make sure it is secure?*
- *Who has permission to access my file?*
- *Can I have access to my file?*
- *Who can I talk to if I feel that my privacy or confidentiality are not being respected?*



The right to an advocate

Everyone has basic rights as Australian citizens and these include expressing your views. It can be helpful to have family or friends to speak on your behalf, or agencies whose role is to advise people about their rights and responsibilities when receiving services. If you wish, one of these agencies can act on your behalf with service providers. Agencies like this are known as 'advocacy' agencies, and people who act on your behalf, with your permission, are known as advocates.

As someone using a HACC service, you have the right to involve an advocate of your choice to represent you at any time. The service must accept the advocate you choose. Your advocate can be anyone you choose - a spouse, partner, relative, neighbour, friend or someone from an advocacy service.

There are independent agencies such as Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy (contact number on last page) that can provide you with an advocate. Service providers should tell you about advocacy services when you receive a service. These are examples of questions you can ask service providers regarding your right to advocacy:

- *Can I have a spouse or partner, family member, friend or person from an advocacy service to represent me at any time?*
- *Can I get written information about my rights as a user of your services?*
- *Can I have my rights explained to me by an interpreter?*
- *Is there an independent advocacy agency that can tell me more about my rights as a HACC service user?*



The right to make a complaint

As someone using HACC services, you have the right to give honest feedback about the service you are getting without fear of losing the service, or having it reduced. HACC National Service Standards require services to have clear, written policies for handling complaints from service users. HACC agencies are required to make sure that their clients understand how those policies work.

You have the right to have an advocate of your choice support you in making a complaint. If you are not comfortable talking to your service provider, you can talk to an advocacy agency.

These are some questions you can ask a service provider:

- *Can I discuss any worries that I have about the service I am getting?*
- *Is there a particular person in the agency who deals with complaints?*
- *Do I have to put my concerns in writing? Or can I talk to someone in person?*
- *Will my complaint be kept confidential?*
- *Will I risk losing my service if I complain?*
- *If I am not satisfied with the result of my complaint, who else can I talk to within the agency?*
- *Who can I go to outside of the agency?*
- *Can I have a copy of your agency's policy and procedures for handling complaints?*



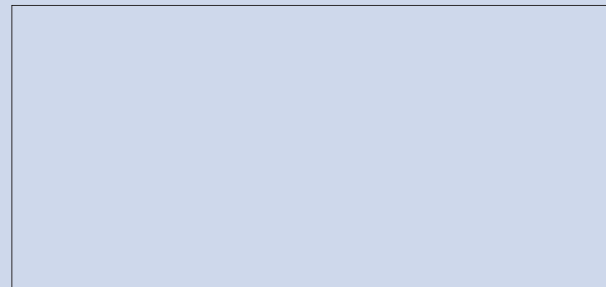
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES as a HACC client

While you have a number of Rights as a service user, you also have some Responsibilities to the people providing care to you.

HACC services ask their clients to:

- Treat staff and volunteers with respect and courtesy – for example, by letting them know as soon as possible if you cannot keep an appointment.
- Provide a safe work environment for staff and volunteers, help them to provide you with services safely (eg by restraining dogs), and inform them if there are any potential hazards (such as spills on the floor).
- Take responsibility for the results of any decisions, which you make with staff and volunteers about your care.

YOUR HACC SERVICE PROVIDER IS:



OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

COMMONWEALTH CARELINK CENTRE*:
1800 052 222** (Freecall™ business hours)

COMMONWEALTH CARER RESOURCE CENTRE:
1800 242 636** (Freecall™ business hours)

**QUEENSLAND AGED & DISABILITY
 ADVOCACY INC. (QADA)**

3637 6000 (Brisbane callers) or
1800 818 338** (Freecall™ business hours
 for country callers)

HACC PROGRAM QUEENSLAND WEBSITE:
www.health.qld.gov.au/hacc

* Provides free information about community aged care, disability and other support services.

** Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.



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