



Your rights and responsibilities

A guide to help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a Queensland Community Care client

What are Queensland Community Care services?

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services funds organisations to provide basic maintenance and support services for people with a disability or chronic (ongoing) condition who are aged under 65, live at home and whose capacity for independent living is at risk.

Queensland Community Care service providers are required to promote and protect your safety, well-being and human and legal rights.

Your rights

As a person using Queensland Community Care services, you have a number of rights. Your service provider 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 service provider

- 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 organisation if I have any queries or problems?
- Who could I speak to outside of the organisation if I don't feel comfortable about speaking to an employee?
- How familiar is your organisation with my cultural background/religious beliefs?
- Will staff respect my cultural and religious beliefs?

The right to be informed and consulted

As a client you have the right to be informed about the services 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 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, or get access to an interpreter?

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 the planning and decision making 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 service provider to find out if I am satisfied with the service I am getting?

- Will I receive 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 service provider 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 service provider 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 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 Queensland Community Care service, you have the right to involve an advocate of your choice to represent you at any time. The service provider must accept the advocate you choose. Your advocate can be anyone you wish - a spouse, partner, relative, neighbour, friend or someone from an advocacy agency.

There are independent agencies such as the 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 agency 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 Queensland Community Care service user?

The right to make a complaint

As someone using Queensland Community Care 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. Queensland Community Care service providers are required to have clear, written policies for handling complaints from service users. Service providers 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 I have about the service I am getting?
- Is there a particular person in the organisation 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 organisation?
- Who can I go to outside of the organisation?
- Can I have a copy of your organisation's policy and procedures for handling complaints?

Your responsibilities

While you have a number of rights as a Queensland Community Care service user, you also have some responsibilities to the people providing care to you.

People using Queensland Community Care services are asked 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 (e.g. 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 that you make with staff and volunteers about your care.

How do I get information about services in my area?

You, your doctor, your hospital discharge nurse, a family member or friend can:

- phone the Queensland Community Care Services Access Point on 1800 600 300
- visit www.qld.gov.au/communitycare
- visit www.serviceavailabilityregister.com.au
- contact your local Queensland Community Care service provider:



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