Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Client

Your Rights

Carers ACT is committed to ensuring under Standard 3 of the Community Care Common Standards that each service user or prospective service user, is provided with information (initially and on an ongoing basis) in a format appropriate to their needs to assist them to make service choices and gain an understanding of the services available to them and their rights and responsibilities.

When in contact with Carers ACT, you should expect that you will:

- Be treated with respect and dignity, irrespective of culture, language, age, disability and/or lifestyle.
- Be consulted about your needs and preferences, and be able to refuse or accept assistance.
- Be involved in decisions about your assessment for services and agree with the services to be provided.
- Be provided with a clear explanation of the service/s you will receive.
- Have access to and receive professional, competent services that match your needs and are provided by appropriately qualified workers – within the scope of Carers ACT’s contracted program guidelines.
- Have access to information about any other services that may be of assistance and be free to choose services from available alternatives to enable you to make informed choices.
- Have access to information about Carers ACT, including services offered, policies and procedures, user rights and grievance procedures.
- Be advised of any changes to services or supports.
- Be able to involve an advocate or interpreter at any time.
- Have your privacy and confidentiality respected regarding client records or any personal information held by Carers ACT.
- Have, subject to the rights of others, access to any personal records held by Carers ACT within the guidelines of the National Privacy Principles.
- Be able to discontinue the service or refuse to have a particular staff member of Carers ACT or a brokered service provider without recrimination or jeopardising future access to Carers ACT’s services.
- Be free to complain or express grievances about any aspect of Carers ACT’s services or operation, and to appeal decisions about service provision and expect to be treated fairly, promptly and without retribution.
Your Responsibilities

- To provide Carers ACT with all the necessary information to achieve a suitable service for you and your dependents.
- To ensure you advise us of any changes to your contact details.
- Respect the rights, privacy and dignity of Carers ACT staff.
- Respect the rights of other Carers or clients of Carers ACT.
- Honour agreements made with Carers ACT staff about service provision and support and advise us of changes in support requirements.
- Adhere to the confidentiality of other Carers or clients, where applicable.
- Take responsibility for yourself and results of any decisions you make.
- To ensure your home is a safe and healthy place for staff or brokered services’ staff when they visit your home for the purpose of providing assessments or services.

Access to Services and Equity

Carers ACT is committed to ensuring that all Carers of the ACT have fair and equal access to the programs, services and planning processes without discrimination of any kind. This incorporates identifying and eliminating any barriers, which may prevent or limit access for a Carer or group of Carers.

In accordance with the principles of access and equity, services are provided on the basis of relative need with priority given to those deemed most at risk. Eligible Carers and clients are informed about services, the assessment process and how they can obtain their entitlements. Carers ACT ensures that available resources are optimised through a Carer-focused approach to quality service delivery.

Carers ACT actively seeks to make information about its programs and services easily accessible to all Carers of the ACT including people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, who may have difficulties finding out about services available to them. To minimise discrimination to these communities, Carers ACT can arrange for an interpreter and information in other languages if required.

- Carers ACT operates in accordance with Standard 3 of the Community Care Common Standards.
- Carers ACT operates in accordance with the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Community Care.
- Carers ACT operates in accordance with the Carer Recognition Act 2010.

Contributions Policy

Carers ACT provides support and services to Carers through funding from both the Australian and ACT Governments. Our funders recognise that client contributions play an important role in allowing Carers ACT to respond to the needs of all clients.

Accordingly, Carers ACT has adopted a contributions policy which is underpinned by the principles of access, equity, affordability, user rights and privacy. Any funds generated through contributions will be reinvested in each program area to provide additional services for Carers. No Carer will be denied access to services due to their inability to contribute.
Confidentiality of Client Information

Carers ACT has a legal obligation to ensure the protection and proper use and handling of personal information. We place a high value on the rights of individuals to have their personal privacy protected. We have policies and procedures in place that comply with the National Privacy Principles that regulates the collection, storage, security, use and disclosure of personal information.

With your permission, Carers ACT stores personal information to enable us to provide appropriate services to you and to maintain contact with you. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure your information is accurate and up to date and is kept secure and confidential. You have the right to access and correct your information held by us and to assist us in keeping your information current, we ask you to notify us promptly of any change of address or circumstances.

We will seek your consent before we provide your information to another organisation where it will assist the provision of services to you. If your information needs to be transferred to another organisation, this will be done securely and confidentially. Where we need to use information for reporting and planning, we will ensure that you cannot be identified from this information.

Personal information

All personal information gathered by staff will remain confidential and secure except when:
- It is subpoenaed by a court;
- Failure to disclose the information would place you and/or another person at risk;
- Your consent has been obtained to provide the information to another agency or person.

Access to personal information

You may access the material recorded in your file upon written or verbal request, subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act. If you make a verbal request, Carers ACT may seek written confirmation and a proof of identity.

You will be able to view your file within 25 working days following your request. Should you disagree with information kept on your file, you have the right to submit a disclaimer or counter document which would be kept on your file.

Confidentiality with group setting

All support and education groups facilitated by Carers ACT require participants to respect and maintain the confidentiality of all group members. Therefore, it would constitute a breach of confidentiality should participants discuss other participants outside of the group environment.

Grievances and Complaints

At Carers ACT, we aim to resolve all issues as informally and promptly as possible. Grievances should always be made known in writing or verbally as soon as practicable after any problem arises. Equally, if you wish to appeal a service provision decision made by Carers ACT, you can contact the relevant Manager or the Chief Executive Officer by telephone (6296 9900) or in writing to the address on our website (www.carersact.org.au).

The process for grievances or appeals is as follows:
- Contact a member of staff, or a manager in writing, in person or over the phone.
- Carers ACT will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days.
- Investigation and response should take no longer than 21 working days.
- Carers ACT will encourage feedback on the resolution of the grievance or complaint.
If an issue remains unresolved after approaching a Carers ACT representative, or the action taken by Carers ACT has been unsatisfactory, the matter can be taken to the CEO. Alternatively, you may contact the ACT Human Rights Commission or another advocacy service to represent your interests. (See contact details under Advocacy for Carers below).

**Advocacy for Carers**

An advocate is a person who, with the authority of the Carer, represents the Carer’s interests. They may be a relative, friend or someone from an advocacy service.

Carers may use an advocate to support and assist them at any time with their contact with organisations, including Carers ACT. You may request an advocate to negotiate or communicate on your behalf, or just to be present with you for support. Carers ACT can provide you with an advocate or assist you in accessing one through another agency if required.

You have the right to change your advocate at any time.

**Advocacy Organisations in the ACT include:**

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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carers ACT</td>
<td>02 6296 9900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community and Health Services Complaints Commissioner</td>
<td>02 6205 2222</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>02 6207 0576</td>
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<td>Public Advocate of the ACT</td>
<td>02 6207 0707</td>
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<td>ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)</td>
<td>02 6242 5060</td>
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<td>ACT Mental Health Consumer Network</td>
<td>02 6230 5796</td>
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<td>Advocacy for Inclusion</td>
<td>02 6286 4489</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Ageing, Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme</td>
<td>1800 550 552</td>
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**Feedback and Evaluation**

Carers ACT recognises the value of feedback from clients which enables services to be continually reviewed and improved. If a Carer has any comments regarding any programs or services offered by Carers ACT they are encouraged to notify a staff member either verbally or in writing or contact the CEO:

CEO  
Carers ACT  
2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent  
HOLT ACT 2615

Carers ACT evaluates the effectiveness and quality of our services and our performance as the ACT’s peak Carer organisation in achieving positive outcomes for caring families in the ACT.

**Right to Refuse Service**

If at any stage the Carer wishes to refuse services/programs from Carers ACT they should speak with a Carers ACT staff member. A manager may suggest another service/program within Carers ACT that may better suit the Carer’s individual needs, or offer to make a guided referral to an external agency. Carers are welcome to re-enter the service/program at any time (dependent on continued eligibility).