



12. COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES

12.1 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

12.1.5 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Background & Issues

Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care (HACC) is committed to the principles outlined in the Privacy Act (Amendment 2001) and has in place procedures that ensure compliance with the legislation.

Objectives

The dignity and privacy of service users is respected and service providers demonstrated their awareness of their obligations relating to the protection of, and right of access to personal information.

Area of Application

HACC clients and/or their carer regarding privacy, dignity, confidentiality and access to personal information.

Policy Measures

The key guidelines for respecting client privacy in Shire Home and Community Care are:

- Client files are kept in a secure place;
- All information relating to clients is confidential and will not be disclosed to any other person or organisation without the permission of the client;
- Permission to share information will be sought only when sharing information is necessary to ensure appropriate services are delivered or in an emergency situation;
- The client consents to the collection of personal information, prior to the release of personal information by signing the information statement or verbally agreeing by allowing an authorised representative to sign on their behalf.

12. COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES

12.1 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

12.1.5 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

- The HACC Needs Instrument (HNI) includes a statement regarding information sharing that needs to be read to the client and/or their carer during the assessment process. The statement complies with the Department of Health Policy Information Management Policy number P08/0703: Sharing Information for Continuity of Health Care Policy and the HACC National Guidelines;
- The information sharing statement allows the client to vary the information relating to the sharing of information. The details of the variations requested by the client should be documented on the Information Sharing and Client/Carer Consent and Signature Form.
- Only information necessary for delivering effective services is collected. That is, only the information required on the assessment form is obtained;
- Information is collected in a way that makes it clear who it is collected for and what it is used for;
- The sharing information statement includes a statement explaining the clients' right to withdraw consent to the release of personal information;
- Staff receive ongoing training that they are not to discuss clients outside of the service;
- The assessment and reviews of clients are always conducted in private with assessment officer and the client, and, with the client's consent, his/her carer or advocate only;
- During assessments and reviews the assessment officer notes any particular privacy requirements of the client, e.g. The preference for a male or female carer on the assessment document and the care plan and, if possible, we will try to meet these requirements;
- The provision of information to people outside the service must be authorised by the Manager and client;
- Any discussions between staff about clients are held in a closed office;
- The only information held by Shire of Manjimup HACC will be information necessary to assess the need for a service and the information required to provide the service. Information should be as non-obstructive and objective as possible, yet relevant and up-to-date. The client has the right to withhold information for privacy reasons;

12. COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES

12.1 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

12.1.5 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

- If a service to a client has stopped being provided, but may need to be resumed at a later date, information relating to the client will be kept for a period of 5 years before being archived. If the service is not to be resumed, the client records will be archived at the end of the financial year. All information regarding clients will be destroyed seven years after they cease to receive services;
- Clients have the right to read any personal information kept about them by the Manjimup Home and Community Care. Requests from clients to access files should be referred to the Manager who will ensure that assistance is provided for the client to access information on file within two weeks;
- Written information regarding clients will be stored in a locked filing cabinet when the office is unattended. Computer records are encoded and accessed with a password. This information is only accessible to the Manager, Coordinator and Assessment officer and may not be scrutinised by any other Shire employee.

Identification

All Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care staff and volunteers are required to wear a badge to identify them as Shire of Manjimup HACC representatives.

Clients right to access information

Clients of Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care have a right to read any personal information kept about them.

Request from clients (or authorised client representatives) will be processed as per Shire of Manjimup Council Freedom of Information Policy 4.2.6.

Clients will be made aware of this right through the Client Handbook.

Administration

All staff members and volunteers are instructed regarding the policy on Privacy and Confidentiality, and when commencing work with the Shire of Manjimup HACC, read and sign a Confidentiality of Information form.

Adoption and Date Due for Revision

**ADOPTED 12 JUNE 2003
REVIEWED 4 MARCH 2010**

NEXT DUE FOR REVIEW MARCH 2014

The Administration of this Policy is by Community Services.