

Your rights and responsibilities as a HACC service user

The HACC Program is funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments

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The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program provides a range of basic support services to frail older people and people with disabilities who are experiencing difficulties in managing daily tasks but who wish to continue living at home. The Program also supports their carers and families.

The HACC Program targets its services to those who have the greatest need for them and/or the greatest capacity to benefit from them. Agencies providing services will assess your needs and provide you with information about your choices. After assessment, agencies decide what services can be allocated to you. It is important to understand that in many places there are more people wanting services than there are services available. It is agencies' responsibility to make sure services are allocated fairly and on the basis of need. For good quality care in the HACC Program it is important that all services have certain standards. This means that if you use HACC services, you have a number of rights and responsibilities.

Your rights as a HACC user:

As a person using HACC services, you have a number of rights. Agencies that provide HACC services should recognise your right to:

- be treated with respect and courtesy
- have your needs assessed
- be informed and part of the decisions made about your care
- receive quality services
- have the right to make a complaint
- have someone represent you (an advocate)
- have your privacy and confidentiality respected and to access all personal information kept about you by the service.

The right to be treated with respect and courtesy:

Agencies that provide these services must respect your ideas and the decisions you make about your life. They should listen to what you have to say, and should show courtesy in their behaviour to you. When you talk to the staff of these agencies you could ask them some of these questions:

- Will your staff seek my consent if they want to access my personal belongings?
- Will your staff listen to what I have to say about my care?
- Will your staff understand and respect my cultural and religious beliefs?
- Will your staff talk to me in a respectful way?
- If I think that your staff are not treating me with respect, what can I do?

The right to have your needs assessed:

If you want HACC services, you have a right to be assessed, which involves being asked questions about your needs. Here are some questions you might ask about assessment:

- How long will I have to wait for an assessment?
- Who will conduct the assessment and what happens at the assessment?
- How will I know if I am eligible to receive services?
- If I am eligible, how will I know whether the agency can supply me with services?
- If I can be supplied with services, how long will I wait for a service?

The right to be informed and part of the decisions about your care:

As a client, you have the right to be informed about the service(s) available to you, and your right to be part of decisions about your care. These are questions that help you get the most from a service:

- How will I take part in organising the plan for my care? Can I have someone with me during any discussions about my care?
- How often and for how long will I receive the service?
- What will it cost me? What happens if I can't afford it?
- Can I get the service after hours or on weekends?
- Can I stop the service at any time? How would I do this?
- If my English is not good, can I have an interpreter?
- Can I ask for a male or female worker?
- If my needs change, will you review my care plan with me? How does this happen?

The right to receive quality services:

An agency needs to inform you about what services it can and cannot provide. You have the right to receive a planned and reliable service.

You also have the right to give honest feedback about the service, without fear of losing the service, or having it reduced. Agencies that offer HACC services have written guidelines on how to deal with complaints and they will inform you about what to do if you need to make a complaint. These are some questions you can ask the agency:

- Do I get a regular visit or phone call from the agency to find out if I am happy with the service I am receiving?
- Do I receive a copy of my plan of care?
- Is the agency flexible about adapting services to meet my needs?
- Can I discuss any concerns that I have about the service I am receiving? How can I do this?

The right to make a complaint:

- Who can I complain to about changes made to my service? How would I do that?
- If I am not happy with the result of my complaint, who else can I talk to within the agency?
- Who can I talk to outside the agency?
- Will I risk losing my service if I complain?
- Will my complaint be kept confidential?

The right to have someone represent you (an advocate):

It can be helpful to have family or friends, or organisations that can advise people about your rights and responsibilities when receiving services and act on your behalf.

As someone using HACC services, you have the right to choose an advocate to represent you, such as your spouse, partner, relative, neighbour, friend or someone you know from an organisation.

These are some questions you can ask organisations that provide services about your right to advocacy:

- Can I have a friend, family member or person I know from an organisation represent me at any time?

The right to have your privacy and confidentiality respected and to access all personal information kept about you by the service:

You have the right to have your privacy and confidentiality respected, and to obtain information held about you on the agency's files. These are examples of questions you might ask about this right:

- Do you have any written information about my rights regarding privacy and confidentiality?
- What sort of personal details do you keep about your clients?
- Where do you keep this information?
- Who has access to my file and the information in it? Can I have access to my file?
- Who would I talk to if I felt that my privacy or confidentiality was breached?

Your responsibilities as a HACC user:

While you have a number of rights as a HACC user, you also have some responsibilities to the people providing care to you. HACC services ask their clients to:

- treat staff 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 help them to provide you with services safely – for example by not smoking while staff are present
- take responsibility for the results of any decisions which you make.

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