



MERTON LIVING

CONSUMER HANDBOOK

Merton Living

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1. WELCOME TO MERTON LIVING

The staff and management of Merton Living welcome you as a consumer of our services and look forward to working with and supporting you to continue to live the best life you can.

1.1 CONTACTING US

Key contacts in Merton Living are:

Contact Person	Phone Number	Email
Administration	02 6547 2684	admin@mertonliving.org.au
Care Supervisors Merton Court	02 6547 1012	Joanne.chapman@mertonliving.org.au Meg.feringa@mertonliving.org.au
Home Care coordinator	02 6547 2684	Renaewatson@mertonliving.org.au
Finance/Village Manager	02 6547 2684	Linda.curry@mertonliving.org.au
General Manager	02 6547 2684	Shani.mitchell@mertonliving.org.au

If you have concerns about our service please feel free to talk to any of our staff or to ring any of the people listed above. We value your input and encourage your feedback.

1.2 OUR VISION

That Merton Living is the first choice for seniors care in the Upper Hunter through its dedication to meeting the needs of the community.

1.3 OUR MISSION

To provide a complete range of quality services through the provision of independent living units, home care and residential care.

1.4 OUR VALUES

- Dignity
- Respect
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Equality
- Professionalism

1.5 OUR OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are:

- To support frail, older people to stay living in their own homes for as long as they can and wish to do so
- To support family or other primary care givers in their role and

- To operate Merton Living in an effective, efficient and accountable manner in partnership with our consumers and staff.

1.6 OUR PHILOSOPHY

Merton Living believe in:

- The right of people to make informed choices and maintain their independence in their own lives
- The right of people to dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality
- The right of people to be valued as individuals
- The right of people to access services on a non-discriminatory basis, and
- The right of the community to receive accountable and responsive services.

2. OUR SERVICES

We provide support under the home care packages and residential care programs funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. These are:

- Merton Home Care - The Home Care Packages Program (HCP) which provides a package of care to support people with higher needs to stay living in their own home in the community.
- We provide permanent residential care services at Merton Court Hostel.

***You will have been assessed for one of these services.
If you are not sure of your service please ask us.***

3. CARE AND SUPPORT WE OFFER

The services we offer under these programs can include:

- **Personal services:** assistance with personal activities such as bathing, showering, toileting, dressing and undressing, mobility and communication
- **Social Support:** Assists people to participate in community life and develop social connections through group-based activities
- **Nutrition, hydration, meal preparation and diet:** assistance with preparing meals, including special diets for health, religious, cultural or other reasons; assistance with using eating utensils and assistance with feeding.
- **Continence management:** assistance in using continence aids and appliances such as disposable pads and absorbent aids, commode chairs, bedpans and urinals, catheter and urinary drainage appliances, and enemas.
- **Mobility and dexterity:** providing crutches, quadruped walkers, walking frames, walking sticks, mechanical devices for lifting, bed rails, slide sheets, sheepskins, tri-pillows, pressure-relieving mattresses and assistance with the use of these aids.
- **Nursing, allied health and other clinical services:** speech therapy, dietitian, podiatry, occupational or physiotherapy services, support to hearing and vision services and access to other specialist health and wellbeing services as required (fees may apply).
- **Transport and personal assistance:** assistance with shopping, visiting health practitioners and attending social activities.
- **Management of skin integrity:** assistance with bandages, dressings and skin emollients.

Services are generally provided Monday to Friday from 8am to 7.00pm for home care and 24 hours a day for residential services. Weekend support is provided for specific home care consumers.

4. ASSESSMENT AND REVIEWS

To receive services from Merton Living you will have been assessed by someone organised through My Aged Care. Our staff reviewed the information from My Aged Care at your Service Commencement Meeting and obtained more information from you in order to develop a support plan for you. We will review or re-assess your support whenever you or our staff feel it is necessary or required, and at least once every 12 months.

Reviews and re-assessments allow us to understand your needs, work with you to identify your goals of care and to make sure you are receiving the support you need and want. In home care, if your needs change significantly, we may refer you back to My Aged Care for a new assessment.

We are very aware that every person is different and we encourage you and/or your representatives to tell us about your particular needs, goals and preferences for care and services. Our staff will discuss these with you at re-assessments and whenever it appears necessary.

We welcome and encourage you to tell us, at any time, about anything you are not happy with or changes you would like.

5. MAINTAINING YOUR INDEPENDENCE

5.1 WE WORK WITH YOU

As part of our approach to the provision of support, we work in partnership with you to meet your changing needs and to maintain your independence. Sometimes this may mean providing more support at times that you need it and at other times reducing support to ensure that you do not lose your independence. Any changes are fully discussed with you before they occur.

Sometimes a person's support needs are greater than we can provide. If this occurs, we will discuss it with you and will arrange a referral to My Aged Care who will organise another service provider who can meet your needs.

5.2 HOW YOU CAN HELP - KEEPING WELL

The most important thing you can do to work with us in maintaining your independence, is keeping well. This can include:

- Make sure you get adequate fluids
- Eat adequate amounts of healthy and nourishing food
- Take your medications as per your doctor's instructions
- Speaking to your doctor or health professional about continence if needed
- Get your vision, hearing and teeth checked regularly
- Avoid infection with good hand hygiene practices, speaking to your doctor about relevant vaccinations and staying away from others with infections
- Learn fall prevention strategies: adequate lighting and footwear, non-slip flooring, use your walking aid and seek support from others for maintenance tasks
- Consider a personal alarm to notify others if you fall or are concerned

- Protect your skin by washing and drying skin thoroughly, moisturising your skin twice a day and seeking advice when you have a skin tear
- Keep as mobile as you can through regular activity
- Do the things you like to do
- Keep alert through learning and doing new things
- Maintain your social connections and make new ones
- Pamper yourself
- Get good sleep and
- Relax.

We can give you information and ideas on how to do these things and more. Just ask any staff person.

5.3 CHOICE AND RISK

Merton Living will support you to live the life you choose and recognises that an important part of this is for you to 'do the things you want to do'. If you want to make choices that may involve a risk to your health and/or safety we will discuss with you, the risks and potential consequences to yourself and others, and ways in which the risks can be managed to support your choice.

If your choice presents an unacceptable risk to others, including our staff, and you do not want to modify your choice to manage the risk we may modify or decline to provide any related services until the risk is managed.

Where you choose to take the risk, we will ask you to sign a letter acknowledging that we discussed the risk and potential consequences with you, and that you choose to accept the risk and potential consequences.

5.4 ABUSE AND NEGLECT

You have a right to feel safe, and to live in an environment where you are protected from abuse or neglect. Abuse can be in the form of:

- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Social abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse.

People can be at risk of abuse from family, friends, our staff, other consumers or other people. Whilst we are aware that we cannot control all risks to you we are committed to making sure you are safe in our service and with our staff. We may also be able to assist if you experience abuse or neglect outside of our service.

5.5 ADVANCE HEALTH DIRECTIVE/PLANNING

We encourage you to speak with your medical practitioner or health professional to develop an Advance Health Directive/Plan to ensure your wishes regarding health care and treatment are followed.

If you have any concerns about your safety in Merton Living or outside, please talk to us as soon as possible. We guarantee your confidentiality as far as possible and we will only provide assistance or take action that you are happy with.

6. SUPPORT PLAN

When you commence services with us we develop a Support Plan with you based on the assessment and support needs identified by My Aged Care and with input from you on your needs and preferences. The Support Plan clearly shows:

- The services you will receive
- The days and times services will be delivered
- Your preferences for how services will be delivered
- Your goals for each service and
- Any special requirements.

The Support Plan is important for ensuring you know what is going on and for staff to know what support to provide to you. The support plan is updated whenever your needs or preferences change. You will always be provided with a copy/access to your up to date support plan.

If you feel your needs have changed, please advise a staff member or contact your Care Coordinator.

7. HOME CARE PACKAGES PROGRAM

7.1 CONSUMER DIRECTED CARE

Consumers who are provided support through a Home Care Package (HCP) are supported to receive their package on a Consumer Directed Care (CDC) basis:

"This is a way of delivering services that allows consumers to have greater control over their own lives by allowing them to make choices about the types of care and services they access and the delivery of those services, including who will deliver the services and when. Under a CDC approach, consumers are encouraged to identify goals, which could include independence, wellness and re-ablement. These form the basis of the Home Care Agreement and care plan." ¹

7.2 MANAGING YOUR CARE

With a Consumer Directed Care Home Care Package you decide the level of involvement you wish to have in managing your package. This can range from coordinating the care and services, to a less active role where you are not involved in management but remain involved all decision making about the care you receive.

7.3 SECURITY OF TENURE FOR HOME CARE PACKAGES

Merton Living guarantees security of tenure to people receiving Home Care Packages for as long as it is in the best interest of the person. However; for some people at some time in the future, they may not be able to continue on a Home Care Package.

¹ Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing *Home Care Packages Program Guidelines* August 2013

We will only support discontinuation of your Home Care Package if²:

- You cannot be cared for in the community with the resources available through the HCP
- You tell us, in writing, that you wish to move to a location where home care is not available through Merton Living
- You advise us, in writing, that you no longer wish to receive the care
- Your condition changes so that:
 - you no longer need home care or
 - your needs, as assessed through My Aged Care, can be more appropriately met by other types of services or care
- You do not meet your responsibilities, as described in the Charter of Aged Care Rights, for a reason within your control.

If support is discontinued, the reasons will be explained to you and assistance provided to access other services if appropriate.

If you need to transfer to another type of care we ensure a smooth transition by assisting you to contact My Aged Care.

If you are changing location, we will if you like, assist you to contact My Aged Care and can provide information on available service providers in the new location. We will also coordinate the transfer with the new service provider.

7.4 LEAVE PROVISIONS FOR HOME CARE PACKAGES

You can take leave from your Home Care Package for a holiday, a hospital stay, transition care or respite care. As long as you advise us in writing your Package will continue to be available for you. The following leave arrangements apply for all Home Care Packages:³

Type of leave	Impact on Payment of Subsidy to Approved Provider
Hospital	Home care subsidy is payable (at the full basic subsidy rate) for up to 28 consecutive days in a financial year, for each episode of hospitalisation After 28 consecutive days, the subsidy is payable at 25% of the basic subsidy rate
Transition care	Home care subsidy is payable (at the full basic subsidy rate) for up to 28 <i>consecutive</i> days in a financial year, for each episode of transition care After 28 consecutive days, the subsidy is payable at 25% of the basic subsidy rate.
Residential respite care	Home care subsidy is payable (at the full basic subsidy rate) for up to 28 <i>cumulative</i> days in a financial year After 28 cumulative days, the subsidy is payable at 25% of the basic subsidy rate

² Australian Government ComLaw User Rights Principles 2014 Division 2 – Responsibilities of Approved Providers of Home Care – General 17: Security of Tenure

³ Department of Health and Ageing August 2013 *Home Care Packages Program Guidelines*

Type of leave	Impact on Payment of Subsidy to Approved Provider
Social leave	Home care subsidy is payable (at the full basic subsidy rate) for up to 28 <i>cumulative</i> days in a financial year After 28 cumulative days, the subsidy is payable at 25% of the basic subsidy rate.

You must continue to pay the ongoing care contribution whilst on leave from your package except if you are in transition care or residential respite care.

If you feel that we are not meeting these principles, please let us know so that we can do better.

8. CHANGING HOME CARE PROVIDERS

You are able to choose a home care provider that best meets your goals and needs, and to change your provider if you wish: for example if you move to another area to live.

8.1 CHANGING YOUR HOME CARE PACKAGE PROVIDER

If you want to change provider you need to:

- Notify us that you no longer wish to receive care and services and agree the date when services from us will cease (the cessation date)
- Identify a new provider to avoid any gaps in care
- Contact the new provider to make sure the services they offer will meet your needs, and agree to a date on which services from them will begin. The start date for the new provider must be on or after the cessation or last day with us
- Reactivate your referral code for home care services by contacting My Aged Care on 1800 200 422, or through the consumer portal in the My Aged Care website.
- You must also provide your consent before any of your information can be transferred from us to the new provider
- We will calculate any unspent home care amount that you have built up during your time with us and subtract any agreed exit fee, if applicable, before returning the balance of funds to you (see below).

9. RESIDENTIAL CARE

Residential care provides 24-hour care at a level suitable to your assessed needs. You have security of tenure in the residential care facility, meaning it is your home, and unless we are unable to provide the level of care and support you need, you can stay. All of your rights are outlined in your agreement that is provided to you prior to admission.

10. CONSUMER CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHARGES

10.1 HOME CARE PACKAGES⁴

Your contributions

If you are in receipt of the basic pension you will be consulted about your contribution which will not exceed 17.5% of your total pension (for single and married consumers). If

⁴ Australian Government Aged Care Act 1997 and User Rights Principles 2014

your income is more than the basic rate of the single pension, you will be required to pay an Income Tested Fee which is calculated by Centrelink. There are contribution caps that limit the amount you can contribute to care annually. The Consumer Care Coordinator will provide you with information from the Government on these.

Your contribution will be agreed on commencement with Merton Living and before service delivery commences. Your initial contribution is specified in your Home Care Agreement. If you are financially disadvantaged or are experiencing financial hardship, you are still eligible for services and a nominal contribution may be agreed on, so please talk to us about it. No consumer will be denied a service if they are genuinely unable to pay.

Changes to contributions

Our fees are revised twice per year in line with adjustments made by the Government to the Aged Care Pension in March and September and with consideration to your ability to pay. We will advise you of any changes and you are most welcome to discuss these with us.

Budget

You will also receive an individualised budget that details:

- Income (Government subsidy, supplements and fees you pay)
- Expenditure (administration costs, case management services and the cost of services to be delivered)
- Contingency monies (money deducted from your Package income for emergencies or unplanned support). This cannot be more than 10% of your total annual budget for the Package
- The balance of unspent funds.

Unspent funds

Unspent funds are funds accumulated from Home Care Package fees paid by you, contingency payments made by you, unspent top-up payments and any other over-payments as follows:

- If you leave Merton Living to move to another home care provider, the unspent funds (LESS any exit amount – see below) are transferred to your new provider
- If you leave Merton Living to leave home care altogether (e.g. you no longer wish to receive services, you enter residential care or die) the unspent funds (LESS any exit amount) are returned to you or your estate, or to the Australian Government depending on who paid the money in
- Note that unspent home care funds are accumulated from 1 July 2015.

Exit amount

You will be charged an exit amount to cover our administration costs in calculating and paying unspent home care funds if you choose to leave Merton Living or move to another provider.

The amount agreed with you is specified in your Home Care Agreement. This amount will be deducted from any unspent home care funds at the date you leave our service. If there are no unspent funds the exit amount is not charged. If the unspent amount is less than the exit amount we will charge no more than the unspent amount.

10.2 RESIDENTIAL CARE

You will have been assessed by the Department of Human Services to ascertain the fees you will be required to pay, that may include a Refundable Accommodation Deposit on entering the residential care facility. There are a range of ways to pay your residential fees that will be explained to you before you agree to move to the residential care facility.

10.3 PAYING YOUR FEES

Merton Living will provide you with an invoice at the end of each month for Merton Home Care consumers. Merton Court consumers are invoiced fortnightly in advance. You can make payment via direct debit (preferred), or electronic funds transfer. Our staff do not collect money.

11. EQUIPMENT

All equipment purchased by us and provided to support you remains our property and is recorded on an equipment register and maintained as per the maintenance schedule.

Equipment hired or purchased for you as part of a Home Care Package (and paid for by the Package) will remain your property after the Package ceases to be provided. You will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the equipment, unless agreed upon.

If you wish to buy equipment from your home care package, we use the services of an Occupational Therapist to assess your needs and recommend safe and quality equipment.

Any electrical equipment over one year old you bring into the residential aged care facility needs to be checked for electrical safety before use and annually.

12. AGREEMENTS

12.1 HOME CARE PACKAGES

Home Care Package consumers have a Home Care Agreement that outlines the conditions of the package of care that is being provided. You are encouraged to sign it; however, if you choose not to, Merton Living will negotiate the type and frequency of support with you and document in the Agreement and in your record that you have not signed the Agreement.

You will receive a copy of your Home Care Agreement along with a copy of your support plan and an individualised budget.

You will also receive monthly statements detailing income for the month, expenditure for the month and available funds at the end of each month.

12.2 RESIDENTIAL CARE

Residential care consumers have a Consumer Agreement that outlines the conditions of care in the residential care facility. You will receive two copies of the agreement and you/your legal representative are encouraged to sign them and return one copy to the facility for filing. You are not required to sign, but care and services will be delivered in line with the information contained in the agreement.

13 DELIVERING SUPPORT

13.1 HOME CARE

Keeping appointments

Our Support Workers work to a tight schedule which makes it difficult to accommodate short notice changes to appointments. Except in the case of emergencies, 48 hours' notice is required of a change. If we are unable to schedule a new appointment you may have to wait for your next scheduled visit (except where lack of support may impact directly on your wellbeing, such as nursing services).

If you are not home when the Support Worker arrives or do not provide 48 hours' notice, we may require payment for that visit as we still need to pay the Support Worker for the time. We will talk with you about what you want us to do if you do not respond to a scheduled visit: e.g. contact your next of kin. This will be recorded on your support plan so staff know what action to take.

If you are unable to keep an appointment, please ring the office. The more notice you give us, the better the chance of re-scheduling your appointment.

Rescheduling of support visits

On rare occasions Merton Living may need to reschedule or cancel a support visit due to unforeseen staff shortages. If this happens, we will telephone you as soon as possible to let you know and will endeavour to arrange a new time for the visit.

Smoking

All of our staff and volunteers are not permitted to smoke in people's homes.

We also request that you do not smoke when a staff member or volunteer is in your home and that you do not smoke in the day centre or in staff and volunteer's vehicles.

Dogs

As the behaviour of dogs can be unpredictable, we ask you to make sure that any dog, other than an assistive dog, is restrained while the Support Worker is in your home. Our staff are instructed to leave a home if the dog is not restrained.

Chemicals in the home

Our staff may be exposed to chemicals every day due to their work, so we insist that they do not work with hazardous chemicals in your home. Support workers are not permitted to use products containing bleach or any corrosive chemicals such as oven cleaners. Simple detergents and non-hazardous chemicals can be used by support workers.

All cleaning products have instructions for use on them and advise if the product is hazardous. Purchase non-hazardous chemicals for the support workers to use. Support workers will use the appropriate personal protective equipment, such as gloves when using certain products.

13.2 RESIDENTIAL CARE

When living in the residential care facility, we support and encourage you to live the life you want to with consideration to living communally with others. We encourage you to bring your own belongings and furniture into the facility and welcome your family and visitors. You have the right to make decisions about your care and support and we will always consult with you about your choices.

Smoking

You have the right to smoke outside at least 5m from the building so as to not impact others. If you need support to smoke safely, we will provide this.

Access to your room

Management of the residential facility has a master key to all rooms, but rooms will not be accessed without permission or good reason (to provide care/service or emergency support). Consumers may lock their room if they wish and are provided with a key. Others, such as family and friends will only be granted access to the consumer's room with the consumer's permission (for example, if the consumer is in hospital).

Alcohol

You can consume alcohol to a level that does not impact on others. If you have a medical condition or medication that may be impacted by alcohol consumption, we will consult with you and your medical practitioner as necessary.

Housekeeping services

We provide housekeeping services including cleaning and laundry services. We ask that you mark all clothing; we can provide this service if required. Dry cleaning services are at the consumer's expense. Ironing of selected items can be arranged.

Keeping medications safe

If you self-medicate, we require medications be locked in the drawer in your room at all times to prevent potential access and harm to others.

Leisure interests and activities

We offer a range of leisure interests and activities through the program advertised around the facility. The program is devised through consumer input and with consideration to promoting health and well-being. There are also outings and opportunities to engage with the broader community. Therapeutic activities are also offered if relevant to you; the Occupational Therapist will consult with you about your needs to develop a suitable support plan.

Meals

Mealtimes are encouraged as a time to socialise with others if you wish. Meals are served at the following times, but let us know if you require meals at alternate times and we will do our best to accommodate your needs:

- Breakfast – from 0730 to 0900 am
- Lunch – noon
- Dinner – 5pm.

Morning and afternoon tea and supper are served. Your dietary preferences and needs will be accommodated.

Safety

You have access to a call bell in your room, bathroom and in communal areas. If you cannot access the call bell due to mobility or dexterity issues, we will provide you with an accessible call bell. Staff receive training in the importance of responding promptly to call bells and we monitor our performance in this area through ongoing call bell audits.

CCTV is located in the public areas of Merton Court and monitors all exits for your safety and security.

At Merton Court we promote a restraint free environment and will not support any action or the use of any device that does not have the consent of the resident.

Evacuation drills are held annually and there are emergency maps around the facility. We engage with you to participate in the drills to support your safety.

Telephones and internet

You can install a telephone in your room or use your mobile phone.

Transport

We do not provide transport other than outings for the activities program. We support you to access transport from family and friends if possible or the taxi service. We suggest you maintain ambulance cover.

Visiting pets

We welcome visiting pets under the control of their owner who is responsible for cleaning up after them and not bringing them into the dining room or kitchen areas.

Voting

We support you to vote during elections once you have changed your address with the electoral commission.

14. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES⁵

As a consumer you have both rights and responsibilities.

14.1 MY RIGHTS UNDER THE AGED CARE ACT⁶

Consumer rights⁷

Consumers have the right to:

1. Safe and high-quality care and services;
2. Be treated with dignity and respect;
3. Have their identity, culture and diversity valued and supported;

⁵ Australian Government Department of Health Charter of Aged Care Rights (Effective 1 July 2019)

⁶ Australian Government Department of Health Charter of Aged Care Rights (Effective 1 July 2019)

⁷ Australian Government Department of Health Charter of Aged Care Rights (Effective 1 July 2019)

4. Live without abuse and neglect;
5. Be informed about their care and services in a way they understand;
6. Access all information about themselves, including information about their rights, care and services;
7. Have control over and make choices about their care, and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk;
8. Have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of their daily life, financial affairs and possessions;
9. Their independence;
10. Be listened to and understood;
11. Have a person of their choice, including an aged care advocate, support them or speak on their behalf;
12. Complain free from reprisal, and to have their complaints dealt with fairly and promptly;
13. Personal privacy and to have their personal information protected;
14. Exercise their rights without it adversely affecting the way they are treated.

Consumer responsibilities⁸

We value consumer input and participation in determining the services provided and how consumers receive them, and we have included the following responsibilities for consumers partnering with us in care and services. The consumer:

1. Respects the rights of staff to work without exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment
2. Respects the rights of other consumers to receive care and support without exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment
3. Accepts responsibility for their actions and choices
4. Participate in and express their needs, preferences and any concerns regarding the care and services they receive.

14.2 YOUR RIGHTS UNDER CONSUMER LAW

In addition to your rights under the Aged Care Act 1997 and other relevant legislation, we ensure the following under Australian Consumer Law⁹:

You have a right to:

- clear, honest and complete information about the services provided to you, including information displayed on the My Aged Care website
- time to make your decisions and ask for help if you need to
- no pressure selling of services
- all the terms in your agreements are fair for all parties
- a clear and easy dispute resolution process.

⁸ Adapted from the Australian Government *Charter of Rights and Responsibilities Home Care 2017*

⁹ Australian Government Competition and Consumer Act 2010

15. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Merton Living is committed to protecting your privacy and confidentiality. We comply with the Privacy Act 1988, Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 and the Australian Privacy Principles.

To ensure your privacy:

- Your files and other information are securely stored
- We only collect information about you that is relevant to the provision of support and we explain to you why we collect the information and what we use it for
- We seek consent from you to, in an emergency, disclose personal information to other health service providers to provide emergency care or services
- We seek consent from you to provide access to your records to government officials (or their delegates) for quality reviews or the investigation of complaints. We advise you that these individuals are required to keep all information accessed through this process confidential
- Information provided to government bodies regarding service provision does not identify you. If any information is provided to outside government agencies for data purposes, we ensure that the information is de-identified and we make a note in your record of what information was shared and to whom
- You can withdraw consent to share personal information at any time
- You can ask to see the information that we keep about you and are supported to access this information if requested, within 30 days of the request. Information is provided in a format accessible by you. You can nominate a representative to access your records held by Merton Living
- All information relating to you is confidential and is not disclosed to any other person or organisation without your permission
- We only share information when it is necessary to ensure appropriate support is delivered and only with your permission/consent beforehand
- The provision of information to people outside the service is authorised by the Team Leader
- We do not discuss you or your support with people not directly involved in supporting you
- We take steps to correct information where appropriate and regularly review your information to ensure it is accurate and up to date
- Reviews are always conducted in private with you and our staff member unless you consent to your carer, advocate or other person being present
- During your reviews our staff member asks you about any particular privacy requirements you have such as a preference for a male or female support worker. These are noted on your assessment form and support plan
- Any discussions between staff about you are held in a closed office
- You are supported by us should you have a complaint or dispute regarding our privacy policy or the management of your personal information
- Any references to you in meeting minutes refer to you by initials only or another unique identifier, such as your consumer number.
- We confidentially destroy any personal information held about you when it is no longer necessary to provide support.

16. COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

Merton Living encourages you to provide feedback on the support we provide. This assists us to better meet your needs and to plan for the future.

If you are unhappy with any of the services you receive, please let us know. If you do not feel comfortable with the Support Worker who visits you, please let management know and a change of staff can be arranged if necessary. We have continuous improvement processes in place that use your feedback to improve our services.

Similarly, we enjoy hearing when we do things well; feel free to provide compliments about our service.

All complaints and feedback are treated in confidence and will not affect the quality of support you receive or any other dealings you have with Merton Living.

16.1 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- You are encouraged to raise your complaint with the staff member concerned if you feel comfortable to do so.
- If you are not happy to discuss the issue with the staff member or are not satisfied with the outcome you can contact the appropriate management representative. If your complaint concerns the Supervisors you can contact the Manager directly. Remember that you can use an advocate to assist you. Key staff phone numbers are listed above in 1.1 Contacting Us. We will always practice open disclosure and be open and transparent in sharing with you any elements of your complaint or care.
- The Co-ordinator and Care Supervisors will liaise with the Manager to work to resolve the complaint.
- If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved you can submit your complaint in writing to the Manager Merton Living 45 Ogilvie Street Denman NSW 2328
- We are happy to assist you with this if you phone the office on 6547 2684.
- If you are unhappy with the Manager's decision you may wish to contact one of the advocacy and external complaints contacts listed over the page. Again, we can help you with this.
- Once your complaint has been finalised someone from Merton Living will be in touch to make sure you still feel comfortable to access support and to ask for your feedback on the complaint process.

Remember that you can use an advocate to assist you with your complaint.

16.2 OPEN DISCLOSURE

Open disclosure is a process that occurs, if when we deliver a service, harm could have or did occur.

It involves an open and honest discussion/s and sharing of information between the consumer and staff, including senior management.

We participate in open disclosure to ensure we improve and prevent any recurrence of future incidents.

17. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We pride ourselves on working with consumers to improve our services. We have a range of mechanisms to foster improvement including welcoming feedback from all stakeholders, reviewing our performance through monitoring and measuring outcomes, conduction audits and surveys, participating in external reviews of our performance against the Aged Care Quality Standards, holding focus groups and fostering input from consumers and staff on our operations and strategic direction and meeting regularly with consumers. Let us know if you would like to be further involved in our continuous improvement.

18. ADVOCACY

18.1 YOUR RIGHT TO AN ADVOCATE

You have a right to use an advocate of your choice to negotiate on your behalf with Merton Living. This may be a family member, friend or advocacy service. A list of advocacy services is provided below. We can help you contact a service if you like.

18.2 WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

An advocate is a person who, with your authority, represents your interests. Advocates may be used during assessments, reviews, and complaints or for any other communication between you and Merton Living.

18.3 APPOINTING AN ADVOCATE

If you wish to appoint an advocate let us know in writing the name of the person you wish to be your advocate. You can use the form - Authority to Act as an Advocate. You can change your advocate at any time using the Authority to Act as an Advocate form.

18.4 GUIDELINES FOR ADVOCATES

Guidelines for advocates are included with the Authority to Act as an Advocate form for you to pass on to your advocate.

18.5 ADVOCACY AND EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS CONTACTS

Advocacy and external complaints contacts available to consumers include:

Agency	Contact details
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission 9.00 am-5.00 pm weekdays	Ph: 1800 951 822 Email: info@agedcarequality.gov.au Address: GPO Box 9819 Sydney NSW 2000 Online complaint form: www.agedcarequality.gov.au
National Aged Care Advocacy Line And Older Person's Advocacy Service	Ph: 1800 700 600 Web: https://opan.com.au

Agency	Contact details
(OPAN)	
Seniors Rights Service	Ph: 1800 424 079 Web: https://seniorsrightsservice.org.au/
Carers NSW	Ph: 1800 242 636 Web: https://www.carersnsw.org.au