

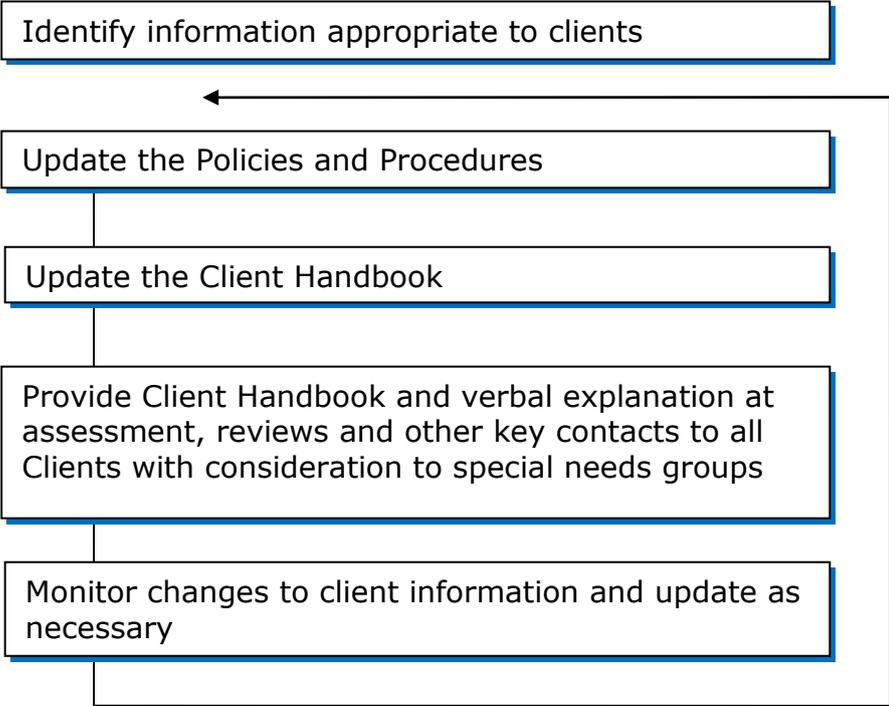


CHARLESTOWN CARING GROUP

14. Information Provision

Reviewed 2nd April 2017

Charlestown Caring Group Inc. ensures that each client, or prospective client, is provided with information (initially and on an ongoing basis) in a format appropriate to their needs to assist them to make support choices and gain an understanding of the support available to them and their rights and responsibilities.



Section 3: Information Management Systems

FORMS AND RECORDS

Client Handbook	Shared Drive
Client Consent	Client records

All Policies and Procedures with Section 14 have been approved by General Manager and Management Committee.

Signed
General Manager

Signed
Executive Member on behalf

14.1 Client Handbook

The General Manager is responsible for producing and maintaining the Client Handbook and the Operations Manager/ Assessment Coordinator ensures that any Clients or carers/family are given a copy at their initial assessment, review and when information changes. In addition, the Operations Manager/ Assessment Coordinator ensures that the information in the Handbook is reviewed with Clients at their review.

Where a Client is not able to understand and/or read English; a family member, staff person or the Telephone Interpreter Service is used to ensure that they understand the information contained in the Client Handbook, and in particular, information about Client advocates and complaints.

A copy of the Client Handbook is also provided to all staff to ensure they are familiar with the information.

14.1.1 CHANGING THE CLIENT HANDBOOK

When information in the Client Handbook changes the General Manager:

- Updates the Client Handbook
- Decides if it is necessary to advise existing Clients of the changes and how to do so. Options include providing a copy of the updated Handbook, verbal advice or a letter advising of changes
- Advises staff of the changes through meetings.

14.2 Content of the Client Handbook

The Client Handbook includes the following information:

- Overview of Charlestown Caring Group Inc. (see 1.1 About Charlestown Caring Group Inc.)
- Available support (see 3.4 Recording Service Delivery Information)
- Who is eligible? (see 9.2.1 Eligibility and Access to Services)
- How to access support and the intake process (see 9.1 Accessing Services)
- Assessment including promoting independence (see Section 10: Assessment)
- Support planning (see Section 11: Support Planning and Delivery)
- Reviews (see Section 12: Client Reviews)
- Changes to support (see 9.5.3 Change in Client Circumstances)
- Fees, financial hardship and options for paying (see 14.4 Client Fees)
- Keeping appointments (see 14.3.1 Appointments)
- Privacy of information including rights and requirements of the Privacy Act (see Section 15: Privacy and Confidentiality)

- Making a complaint or providing feedback (see Section 16: Complaints and Client Feedback)
- Right to an advocate (see Section 17: Advocacy)
- Rights and responsibilities of Clients (see 14.5 Rights and Responsibilities of Clients).

14.3 Range of Support Services

Details of the support services provided by Charlestown Caring Group Inc.

14.3.1 KEEPING APPOINTMENTS

Volunteers provide the direct care for many of the services provided and some are on a tight schedule which makes it difficult to accommodate short notice changes to appointments. The Client is informed that they may have to wait for the next scheduled visit if appointments are cancelled (as appropriate to need and services delivered).

Clients are advised to ring the office if they are not able to keep an appointment, a late cancellation fee may be required for short notice or changing mind without letting office know

Clients are advised that whilst every effort is made to deliver services to the timeframes provided, volunteers may arrive after the scheduled time due to factors beyond their control.

14.4 Client Fees

14.4.1 FEES POLICY

Charlestown Caring Group has sound financial practices in place which include the accountability of fee collection and money handling.

To minimise risks, handling of cash (other than petty cash) is to be minimal.

1. Inability to pay cannot be used as a basis for refusing a service to people who are assessed as requiring a service.
2. All Clients assessed as having the capacity to pay are charged fees.
3. Fees for funded services will not exceed the actual cost of service provision.
4. Fees are not to be charged in respect of services such as information and advocacy
5. The fee charged for a service is all-inclusive.
6. The revenue from fees is used to enhance service provision
7. Procedures for the determination and collection of fees take into account the situation of special needs groups.

8. Assessment of a person's capacity to pay fees is as unobtrusive as possible, with any information obtained treated confidentially.
9. Consumers and their advocates have the right of appeal against a given fee determination.

The General Manager is responsible for monitoring fee and fee policy changes and for revising the information in this section of the Policies and Procedures and advising Clients of the revisions.

14.4.2 FEE SCHEDULE

Fees charged for support services provided by Charlestown Caring Group Inc. are set in accordance with the fees policy and are revised annually. Current fee levels are shown in the Charlestown Caring Group Inc. Fee Schedule.

14.4.3 FEE REDUCTION / FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

Charlestown Caring Group Inc. recognises that some Clients have a limited capacity to pay for support; however, the payment of a fee for service by Clients who have the capacity to pay is endorsed. People who are assessed as being in need of support are eligible to receive support, regardless of their capacity to pay. Clients are informed of fee reductions in the Client Handbook.

In assessing Clients' ability to pay for support the following applies:

- Clients can contact the Operations Manager if they wish to be considered for a fee reduction.
- To assist Clients, their general household circumstances are determined (whether they live alone, are part of a couple or family living together, live in a household of unrelated people or are in some other circumstance)
- The Operations Manager takes into account any exceptional and unavoidable expenses the Client may have, such as high pharmaceutical expenses
- The Client is given clear instructions about whose income is to be assessed (single, or couple).
- The Financial hardship assessment form will be completed at time of assessment
- Information obtained about a Client's income is treated as private and confidential
- Clients are asked to advise Charlestown Caring Group Inc. within 30 days of any significant changes in circumstances which may alter their status in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees
- In cases of hardship or where Clients request assistance, the fee can be reduced or waived. Clients are advised and reassured that support not be refused or withdrawn if they are unable to pay the fee
- Clients are advised of the result of their request for a fee reduction within 5 working days

- The General Manager makes the final decision after consultation with Operations Manager

14.4.4 REFUSAL TO PAY

Clients are sent reminder letters by the Finance officer if they do not pay fees. If a Client is identified as being in arrears, without prior arrangement, the Operations Manager contacts the Client or their representative to discuss the matter further. The Client is advised that they can have an advocate with them for this meeting. A payment plan or other arrangements are made to assist the Client to meet their responsibilities regarding fee payment. Client financial circumstances are reviewed at this time.

If, after consultation the Client refuses to pay, they are provided with a letter outlining the action that will be taken by Charlestown Caring Group Inc. The General Managers decision is final.

14.4.5 APPEALS ON FEES

Clients can advise the General Manager that they wish to appeal a fee determination. The General Manager explores and documents the reasons for the appeal. Clients are also encouraged to provide written information to support their appeal. The General Manager reviews the documentation and may meet with the Client and/or their representative to discuss the appeal.

The Operations Manager discusses the appeal with the General Manager. The decision of the General Manager is final and is communicated to the Client in writing within 30 days of the date of appeal. If the Client or representative wishes to further appeal the decision, they may refer to the matter to an Independent Appeals Tribunal for decision.

No Client will be disadvantaged or penalised as a result of lodging an appeal and if appropriate, fees will be reduced while the appeal is being considered.

14.4.6 PAYING FEES

Fee Payments

Clients are issued with monthly invoices, detailing the services they have received and the detailed costs for each service provided.

After receiving the invoice, fee contributions can be paid by cheque, cash, at a Newcastle Permanent Branch or by EFT

Clients who are provided with one on one transport and/or shopping delivered by a volunteer can pay their fee contribution for services by cheque, cash or EFT payment on the day of services provided. Another option is a monthly account if it is a regular service.

Clients can pay their fees:

1. To staff in the Charlestown Caring Group Inc. office
2. At any branch of Newcastle Permanent Building Society
3. By cheque made out to Charlestown Caring Group
4. By EFT (Internet banking)
5. To volunteer delivering the service if it is a one on one transport only

Fees processing

Fees are processed as follows:

6. Payment off fees are recorded on the relevant form eg attendance form, shopping form or transport reimbursement form dependent of services delivered, the form is signed by the person collecting the fees as well as the Finance Officer
7. Forms are returned to the office where the Finance Officer checks the collected fees against the completed forms and signs the relevant section
8. After payment of monthly accounts, a receipt will be issued
9. All fees are entered into MYOB and banked each Thursday (or more often if needed)

14.4.7 Cancellation Fee

A minimal administration fee (\$5) may be charged for a short notice or no notice where the Client has booked a service and changed their mind without notifying office

14.4.8 FEE FOR SERVICE

Charlestown Caring Group is commonwealth funded by (DoH) to provide outputs for service types (Social Support Groups and Social Support individual) When the funded outputs have been met, it is an expectation for people to be referred to another service or if the potential Client chooses that they only want to come to CCG, then they are put on a waiting list until a vacancy exists. Service can only be provided if they have the capacity to pay a full costs recovery fee for the services required.

14.5 Rights and Responsibilities of Clients

Clients are the focus of Charlestown Caring Group Inc. operations and it is important that their rights are acknowledged and promoted at every opportunity and that they are aware of their responsibilities as Clients. Information on rights and responsibilities is included in the Client Handbook. Clients are also provided

with a copy of the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Community Aged Care.

All staff involved in the delivery of services receive training in client rights and the necessity of respecting their rights (see 7.12.1 Mandatory Training).

14.5.1 CLIENT RIGHTS

Clients have the following rights:

General

- To be treated and accepted as an individual, and to have their individual preferences respected
- To be accorded the same rights and freedoms as all other people and have their best interests taken into account in the provisions of support regardless of age, disability or other factors
- To be treated with dignity, with their privacy respected
- To receive support that is respectful of me, their family and home
- To receive support without being obliged to feel grateful to those providing their support
- To full and effective use of all their human, legal and consumer rights, including the right to freedom of speech regarding their support
- To be treated without exploitation, abuse, discrimination, harassment or neglect, or financial, sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

Participation

- To be involved in identifying the support most appropriate for their needs
- To choose the support and services that best meet their assessed needs, from the support able to be provided and within the limits of the resources available
- To participate in making decisions that affect me
- To have their representative participate in decisions relating to their support if they do not have capacity.

Support

- To make decisions on medical treatments and interventions, and when this is not possible, assisted or substituted (alternative) decision making is in line with the person's expressed wishes, if known and if not, with their best interests
- To be supported to make decisions about how they connect with their chosen community and having their choices and plans including work, learning, leisure and their social lives respected

- To receive support that maximizes their choices for social participation and cultural inclusion
- To ongoing review of the support they receive (both periodic and in response to changes in their personal circumstances), and modification of the support as required.
- To receive reliable, coordinated, safe, quality support which is appropriate to their assessed needs
- To be given before, or within 14 days after they commence receiving support, a written plan of the support that they expect to receive
- To receive support as described in the plan that takes account of their lifestyle, other care arrangements and cultural, linguistic and religious preferences
- To ongoing review of the support they receive (both periodic and in response to changes in their personal circumstances), and modification of the support as required.

Personal information

- To privacy and confidentiality of their personal information (see Section 15: and Confidentiality)
- To access their personal information (see 15.2 Clients right to access information)

Communication

- To be helped to understand any information they are given
- To be given a copy of the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Home Care
- To be offered a written agreement that includes all agreed matters
- To choose a person to speak on their behalf for any purpose (see Section 17: Advocacy).

Comments and complaints

- To be given information on how to make comments and complaints about the support they receive
- To complain about the support they receive, without fear of losing the support or being disadvantaged in any other way
- To have complaints investigated fairly and confidentially, and to have appropriate steps taken to resolve issues of concern.
- To be given information on how to make comments and complaints about the support they receive
- To complain about the support they receive, without fear of losing the support or being disadvantaged in any other way
- To make a complaint to the Ombudsman

- To be supported in making complaints or raising and pursuing allegations of discrimination, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- To have complaints and allegations investigated fairly and confidentially, and to have appropriate steps taken to resolve issues of concern.

(See Section 16: Complaints and Client Feedback.)

Fees

- To have their fees determined in a way that is transparent, accessible and fair
- To receive invoices that are clear and in a format that is understandable
- To have their fees reviewed periodically and on request when there are changes to their financial circumstances
- Not to be denied support because of their inability to pay a fee for reasons beyond their control (see 14.4 Client Fees).

14.5.2 CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Clients also have the following responsibilities that they are made aware of:

General

- To respect the rights of staff to their human, legal and industrial rights including the right to work in a safe environment
- To treat staff without exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment.

Support

- To abide by the terms of the written agreement
- To acknowledge that their needs may change and to negotiate modifications of support when their support needs do change
- To accept responsibility for their own actions and choices even though some actions and choices may involve an element of risk.

Communication

- To give enough information to assist the approved provider to develop, deliver and review a support plan
- To tell the approved provider and their staff about any problems with the support.

Access

- To allow safe and reasonable access for support workers at the times specified in their support plan or otherwise by agreement
- To provide reasonable notice if I do not require a service.

Fees

- To pay any fee as specified in the agreement or negotiate an alternative arrangement with the provider if any changes occur in their financial circumstances
- To provide enough information for the approved provider to determine an appropriate level of fee.

14.5.3 SECURITY OF TENURE

Clients have a right to security of tenure to their support services and can expect to continue to receive support unless their needs change significantly and Charlestown Caring Group Inc. is no longer able to meet their needs or if delivering support puts Charlestown Caring Group Inc. staff at risk (see 9.5 Termination, Withdrawal or Change in Services). NOTE – ALL Clients are reviewed annually to ensure they are still eligible for services.

14.6 Other Requests for Information

If a Client requests support to gain further information regarding service provision, supports available or other related services, Charlestown Caring Group Inc. staff will assist them to access this information.

14.7 Monitoring Information Provision Processes

Information provision processes and systems are regularly audited as part of the Charlestown Caring Group Inc. audit program and staff, Clients and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback on issues and areas where improvements can be made