Client Information Pack

UnitingCare lifeAssist

Proud member of UnitingCare Australia

www.lifeassist.org.au

Commonwealth and/or Victoria has new legislation that recognises, promotes and values the role of carers. The Carer Recognition Act 2010 or 2012 formally acknowledges the important contribution that people in care relationships make to our community and the unique knowledge that carers hold of the person in their care. For more information on this legislation please go to:

- https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2010A00123
- http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/

About us

UnitingCare lifeAssist provides community support services in the eastern and northern metropolitan region of Melbourne. This area includes the municipalities of Boroondara, Knox, Maroondah, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges, Whittlesea, Hume, Darebin, Moreland, Nillumbik, Banyule and Yarra.

We also provide support in the Southern Metro Regions of Greater Dandenong, Cardinia and Casey.

We work with older people, people with disabilities and carers and enable them to remain living in their own homes.

We are part of the wider UnitingCare Australia network, which consists of more than 400 organisations, providing over 25,000 residential and community care places and services to more than 800,000 Australians each year throughout rural and urban Australia.

UnitingCare lifeAssist began in 1987 as Community Options Victoria, providing support to older people with dementia wishing to remain living at home. In July 2014 UnitingCare Community Options became UnitingCare lifeAssist. Today we support more than 3000 older people, people with disabilities and carers each year.

We are committed to meeting the spiritual needs of our clients through our Pastoral Care service.

Our Vision

A Good Life for All

Our Mission

To work with vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and their families so they can live a valued and meaningful life and remain connected to their community.

Our Values

- The uniqueness and value of every individual
- Right relationships that enable people to be influential in their own support arrangements and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect
- The strengths and abilities of all
- Creativity and innovation
- Transparency and accountability

Our ethos and culture

Our approach to service is based on:

• A belief that clients know what they need to achieve a good life and should be at the centre of the planning process. We work in partnership with clients to develop a plan of support.

• A belief that clients can be empowered to take responsibility for their own situation in order to develop independence and a belief in themselves.

• A belief that clients can help us provide even better support and services through their participation and involvement with the organisation.

• An understanding that, in partnership with clients, we need to be able to develop flexible packages of support based on responding to individual needs.

• A commitment to providing and developing both formal and informal networks of support for our clients.

• A drive to help our clients and carers not just be in the community, but also be an active member of the community they live in.

• A belief in the importance of personal contact with consultants to ensure the support provided to each participant is regularly reviewed and reassessed where necessary to respond to changes and crises.

• A belief in the importance of positive partnerships.

Our staff have professional training in a range of fields including community development, nursing, social work, disability studies, occupational therapy and psychology. Our knowledge and experience enables us to help clients access the services they need by actively promoting their strengths and interests.

By working in partnership with every client and carer, we can:

• emphasise and build on their strengths

• identify strategies and supports required that meet their needs

• advocate and negotiate access to other services when required

• involving them in the local community in a meaningful manner

• strengthen their informal supports.

We are committed to finding innovative ways to develop the support people need in their lives and, where necessary, develop new and better ways to achieve our vision.

Connecting with us

One of our major aims is to ensure that the process of contacting the organisation and being matched up with appropriate staff and support is as simple and effective as possible.

Our intake system ensures that reaching an appropriate staff member or service is simply a matter of calling one central number, a single point of contact for all services

Let's talk

The first step is getting to know one another. By talking honestly and openly about your likes and dislikes, your interests and abilities, your family, your friends, and other similar topics, we try to build a dialogue with you.

The bigger picture

By spending time with you discussing these sorts of things, we can build a picture of who you are, what you like to do, what your aspirations are and what needs you have, not just now but also in the future.

Formulating a plan

Based on the picture you and your consultant develop, a care plan is formulated that narrows down what is needed to help you achieve your goals, what options need to be explored, what formal and informal resources you currently have and what other resources you may need.

Action

With a plan in place, you and your consultant can work towards achieving your aims and completing the goals set out in your plan.

Reviewing the plan

Once you've started working on fulfilling the various aspects of your plan,we will regularly review your progress. Together we ask what aspects of the plan have worked well and which aspects of the plan haven't been as effective. We determine whether the actions set out in the plan are the right ones to help you achieve your goals or whether a different course of action may better help you achieve your aims. Based on this review process, we decide where to go from there and whether changes to your supports are needed.

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What we do

lifeAssist provides a range of services aimed at providing individualised planning and the necessary support to enable people to remain living at home and participating in the community.

Most people contacting lifeAssist require only minimal or short-term assistance. This may include specific, goal-oriented intervention, one-off funding assistance (eg purchasing equipment) or intensive but specific planning to help achieve a particular outcome.

Short-term support services are designed to draw on or develop informal community support networks and deal with specific, time-limited needs. The emphasis is on developing strengths and capacities rather than a need for ongoing services. People who meet the criteria for short-term support may move in and out of the formal service system and staff can apply to access limited, flexible funding to help achieve goals.

Short-term support is generally for periods of up to three months. At this time, the need for ongoing support can be assessed and where long term support is required staff will seek to match clients with consultants.

Help steer, help us improve

At lifeAssist we continue to look for new ways to improve our practice and better help our clients achieve positive outcomes. We are committed to involving our cilents in the work that we do and taking on their advice and constructive feedback to help us steer the organisation.

The lifeAssist Client Committee arose from our commitment to providing our clients a voice so we can better respond to their needs. Consumer participation is increasingly linked with improvements in the quality of outcomes of community care. The Client Committee is composed of up to 12 client members, each with different backgrounds and experiences. The committee meets every month in order to discuss common issues, share knowledge, set priorities for the organisation and advocate internally and externally.

The lifeAssist Board of Governance also has permanent client representatives

We also use other means such as surveys, questionnaires and focus groups to ensure we are aware of the issues that affect our participants.We continue to review our processes regularly and welcome any comments or suggestions you may have.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Client Committee, please contact us on (03) 9239 2500.

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Your rights and responsibilities

Your rights

1. My dignity, values, cultural and religious beliefs are respected regardless of age, gender or sexuality.
2. I tell my story only once and I have a copy of all relevant documentation related to my supports. Communication is tailored to my abilities and needs.
3. I receive quality community care in line with UnitingCare lifeAssist's Client Touch Points Standards.
4. I am actively involved in decisions about my needs and goals.
5. I can choose any person to advocate on my behalf.
6. My grievances are heard and resolved promptly without retribution.
7. I am fully informed of all options relating to my care.
8. My privacy and personal information is respected.
9. I participate in the development of quality service responses, activities and advocacy.

Your responsibilities

1. I contact lifeAssist if I have any concerns regarding the quality of any services I receive.
2. I contact lifeAssist about any changes in my health or circumstances.
3. I keep appointments or I give lifeAssist 24 hours' notice if I need to reschedule services or if services are not needed.
4. I treat workers in a way that respects their dignity and privacy.
5. I take all reasonable steps to ensure a safe environment for people who provide services in my home.
6. I provide accurate and timely information to lifeAssist staff.
7. I am responsible for the outcomes of any decisions I make.

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Complaint contacts

Listed below are the names to use when registering a complaint:
All contacts can be called on (03) 9239 2500
Steven Miller (Customer Service Manager)
Zana Basic (Program Manager - Carers Ageing)
Catherine Rihak (Program Manager -Carers Disability)
Aimi Johnson (Executive Manager - Carer Support)
Gerry Mak (Chief Executive)

Further information

Newsletter

Our quarterly newsletter, The Bugle, provides information about what we as an organisation are currently doing, stories from people in the community, news about upcoming events and feedback from our committees, including the Client Committee Committee. We invite you to contribute stories, opinions or ideas and let others share your experiences.

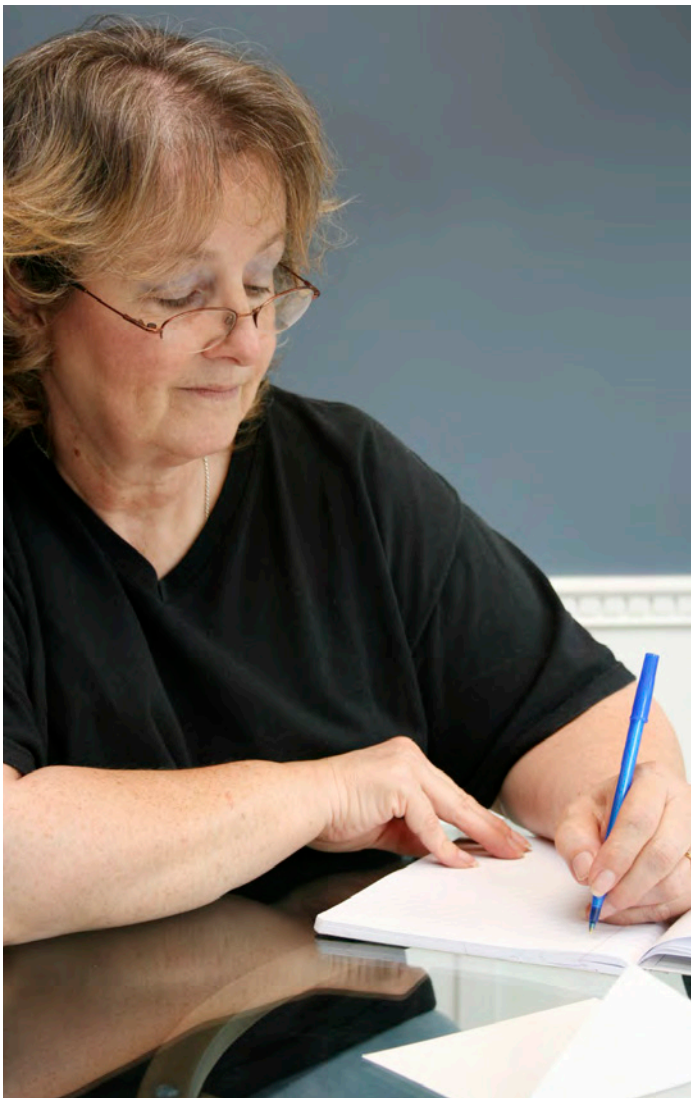
Outreach work

Achieving strong outcomes for our participants is not just about responding to the physical needs people have, but also their spiritual needs. lifeAssist has an agency-wide commitment to pastoral care. Our Pastoral Care and Culture Worker is available for support, conversation, and counselling. Consultants are encouraged to refer clients to the Pastoral Support and Culture worker when issues of spirituality arise and work together with both the participant and the Pastoral Care worker to develop appropriate plans and support solutions.

Privacy and confidentiality

We are committed to respecting the privacy of your personal information.

The National Privacy Principles and Victorian Health Privacy Principles establish how personal information should be handled. All personal information is dealt with in a uniform manner with the highest regard given to maintaining its security. We will maintain a record about you including your date of birth, next of kin information and contact details of the significant people in your life.



We also maintain limited social, health and financial information to assess the support you need. We may, from time to time, disclose some of this information to the Commonwealth or Victorian governments or their agencies. We do this in accordance with the provisions of the Information Privacy Act 2000, Children, Youth & Families Act 2005, Disability Act (2006), Aged Care Act (1997) or other relevant law. The Commonwealth and Victorian governments are also subject to privacy laws and have policies designed to safeguard your personal information.

Consent

You have a say in what happens to your information. It is your right to decide not to share some of your information or to restrict access to your records. However, this may affect our ability to provide you with the best support. You may change or cancel your consent at any time by contacting your Partnership Worker

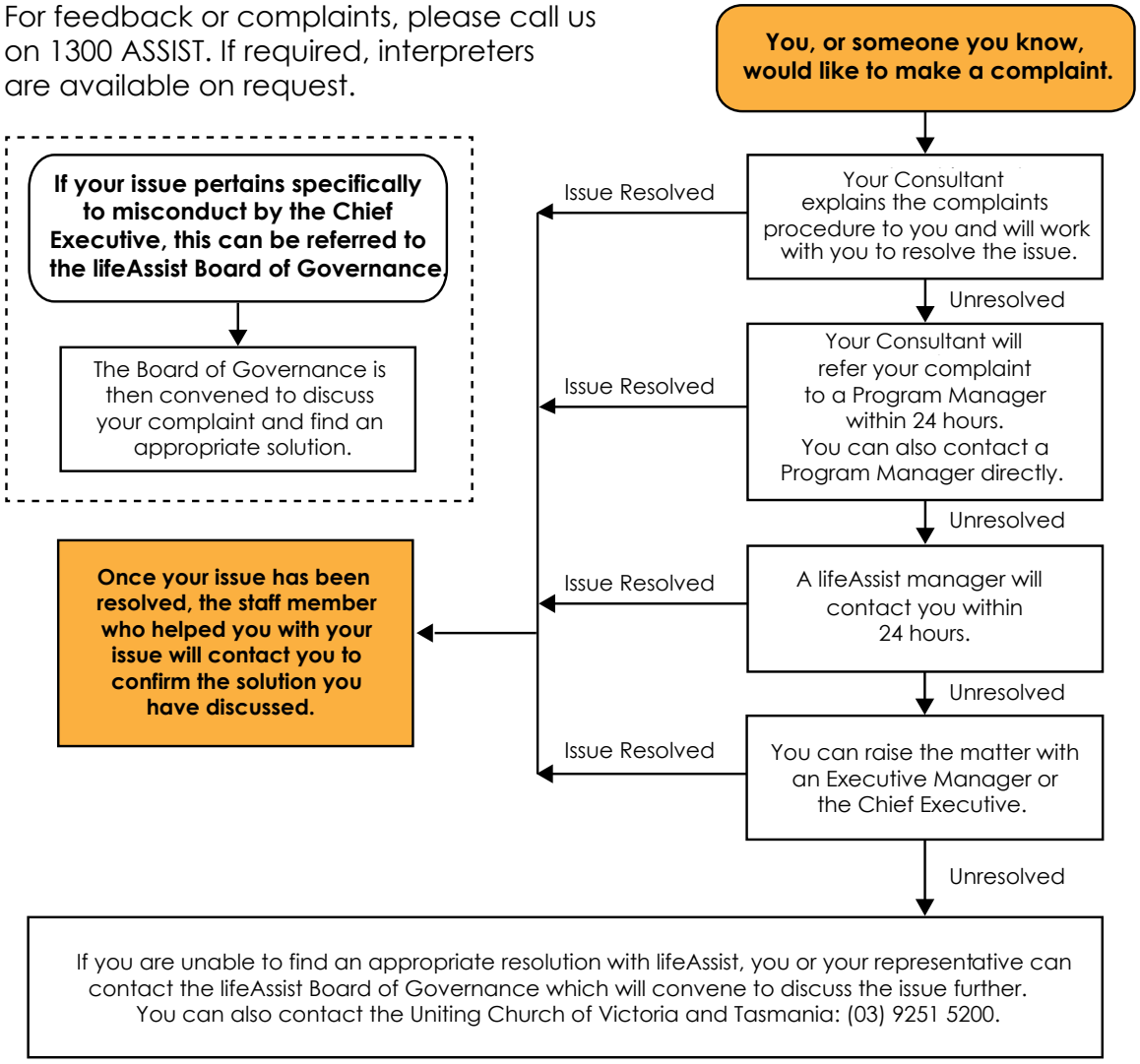
Access to your records

You may access your records for any reason and can ask for them to be corrected if necessary. It is our policy that all requests for access are made in writing. To do so, please contact our Privacy Officer on (03) 9239 2500 and a request form will be sent to you. Our Privacy Officer can also assist you with any enquiries, complaints you may have about the handling of your personal information. All requests for access to records will be responded to within 30 days.

Feedback and complaints resolution

We aim to provide a quality service to everyone we work with. However we understand that we can always improve. We welcome your feedback, whether you want to tell us about a positive experience you've had, provide constructive criticism or make suggestions on how we can improve our working relationship or current processes. Feedback can be provided by speaking to your Consultant, contacting the Client Committee or by writing to us or sending us an email.

For feedback or complaints, please call us on 1300 ASSIST. If required, interpreters are available on request.



You can raise your issue with advocates or the relevant authority at any time.

Disability Services Commissioner: call 1800 677 342 TTY 1300 726 563 www.odsc.vic.gov.au

Aged Care Complaints Scheme: call 1800 550 552 www.agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au

The authority will advise lifeAssist in writing of the outcome and actions required for service improvement in the area.

Contacting us

Telephone
1300 ASSIST (1300 277 478)

Email
info@lifeassist.org.au

lifeAssist
Head office
Ground Floor, Building 5
Brandon Office Park
530-540 Springvale Rd
GLEN WAVERLEY,
VIC 3150

www.lifeassist.org.au

Interpreters available on request via our Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450

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If you have difficulties reading or understanding this booklet please contact us and we will provide you with a format more accessible to you.