

The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA Inc.



Client - Communication Policy

STATEMENT

The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Incorporated (PQA), recognises the importance of ongoing, effective communication between clients, staff members, family and advocate/other key people in the client's life.

The Association is committed to promote, support and maintain effective communication in ways that meet individual client's needs and ensures their services are well planned and delivered to maximise outcomes for individuals.

Approved by: 	Date: February 2013
--	---------------------

The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA Inc. is incorporated under the *Association Incorporation Act 1985 (SA)* and conduct its business through operating Divisions, namely PARAQUAD SA and HOMECARE PLUS.

SCOPE

Compliance with this policy is a condition of appointment for all persons engaged to provide services on behalf of The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA.

DEFINITIONS

Employee - is a person engaged in a paid position under an industrial instrument in either a full-time, part-time or casual basis. Or, in an unpaid position as a member of our volunteer service managed by PARAQUAD SA.

Equitable - open to all without systemic, hidden or apparent bias on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexuality, age, marital status, pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding, religious beliefs, medical record, criminal record or trade union activity.

Must – indicates a mandatory action required by law, industrial instrument, or PARAQUAD SA / HOMECARE PLUS policy or procedure.

Should – indicates a recommended action that should be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

Clients – a person with a disability who receives services from any division of The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA Inc.

Duty of Care - The obligation of a person not to be careless or negligent and to exercise reasonable care in the conduct of an activity.

Manager – A person who is charged with the management or direction of The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA Inc and its Divisions including PARAQUAD SA/HOMECARE PLUS and other divisions as determined from time to time.

Incidents – something that happens; an individual occurrence or event.

Personnel – Are either employed by The Association, or are engaged as a contractor or in an unpaid position, such as volunteer, Board Member or visitor.

Reasonable – The appropriate standard or quality of objective decision-making that must be brought to bear when making an administrative decision.

Reporting – is an account or statement given either verbally or in writing with the specific intention of relaying information or recounting certain events in an objective manner.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of PARAQUAD SA/HOMECARE PLUS to communicate the contents of this policy to all employees and clients on a regular basis.

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to enhance the welfare and independence of clients by ensuring that they are kept informed regarding services provided to them. Also, that key people in the client's life continue to have input in their life and have easy access to the lines of communication which enable this to happen.

A commitment to the promotion and maintenance of open and effective communication is vital to the successful achievement of the organisation's mission, core values and goals:-

"The Association is committed to serving and promoting the best interests of people with disabilities in a manner which recognises their inherent worth and dignity, their right to experience life's events and to develop their own potential"

This policy supports that commitment.

The Association acknowledges that from time to time circumstances may arise where a client may have concerns about their relationships with the organisation, a member or member(s) of its staff or with the services being provided.

Staff will listen to and discuss the concerns of our clients and address these concerns within a reasonable time.

Should a client feel they have a concern that is not being satisfactorily resolved within a reasonable time, the Association provides a formal Complaint Procedure that can be pursued.

However, the Association recognises that with clear, strong communication based upon a commitment to openness, honesty and responsiveness, client concerns will be effectively addressed before they become the basis for a complaint.

PROCEDURES

Essential to effective communication, is the ongoing provision of information regarding the services that are available to all clients, and those services which clients are having provided to them.

All information that is passed on to clients by whatever communication medium, i.e. oral, visual or printed shall be accessible, accurate and consistent.

The Association acknowledges that communication is a two way process and therefore one which needs regular feedback. Clients, their family, advocates and other key people in the client's life, are encouraged to provide feedback that shall be used to build upon and improve existing communication links and to implement new ones as appropriate.

COMMUNICATION BOOKS

- ◆ A Communication Book should be available in the Clients home. All staff must use
- ◆ The Communication Book to document relevant information, which may affect
- ◆ The client's health and wellbeing, or affect the services being provided to the client.
- ◆ Staff will ensure that the language used in the Communication Book respects the client's dignity, privacy and is non-judgemental.
- ◆ Staff will ensure that the Communication Book does not become a communication system between HOMECARE PLUS staff and other service providers to the exclusion of the client.
- ◆ With the client's permission, daily entries in the Communication Book will be shared
- ◆ **In person** with families, advocates or other key people in the client's life. This is particularly important for families, who may not have English as their first language.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- ◆ The points of contact for the Association shall be available to all clients, relevant staff and agencies, family members, advocates and other key people in the client's life. These must include:-
 - ◆ Postal Address
 - ◆ Street Address
 - ◆ Telephone number/s – no direct lines, mobiles or private phone numbers are to be given to out.
 - ◆ E-mail address
 - ◆ Hours of business, in which staff members can be contacted
 - ◆ Persons and agencies associated with PQA

All clients shall be informed of upcoming events, meetings, training sessions, social gatherings and any other matters relating to the Association, which may either affect them or be of interest to them, through general newsletters and those pertaining to specific areas of activity.

The Association acknowledges the multi-cultural nature of the client base and will endeavour to communicate in the client's first language, which may not be

English. Interpretative services are available at:

Interpreting and Translating Centre (ITC)

<http://www.translate.sa.gov.au>

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

<http://www.immi.gov.au/tis>

Auslan Interpreter

www.deafcando.com.au

The Association acknowledges that the nature of the client's disability may preclude them from the usual methods of communication and therefore, will endeavour to communicate taking into consideration the client's individual needs e.g. TTY technology or use of interpreters.

RELATED LEGISLATION

- ◆ Privacy Act, 1988
- ◆ Draft National Standards for Disability Services (6)
- ◆ Equal Opportunity Act (SA) 1993
- ◆ Human Rights Act 2004
- ◆ Discrimination Act 1991
- ◆ Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- ◆ Disability Services Act 1993

SUPPORTING PQA DOCUMENTATION

- ◆ Confidentiality Policy
- ◆ Client Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure
- ◆ Meeting Client Individual Needs
- ◆ Complaint Management System Policy and Procedures
- ◆ Entering a Client's Home Policy and Procedure
- ◆ Code of Ethical Behaviour
- ◆ Client Rights and Responsibilities
- ◆ Managing Diversity in the Workplace Policy and Procedure
- ◆ Client – Use of Interpreters Policy and Procedures

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Ignorance of these procedures will not generally be accepted as an excuse for non-compliance. Only in extreme circumstances and where such ignorance can be demonstrated to have occurred through no fault of the individual concerned will PARAQUAD SA/HOMECARE PLUS accept such an argument.

DISTRIBUTION AND REVIEW

PARAQUAD SA/HOMECARE PLUS will ensure all persons engaged to provide services either paid or unpaid will be aware of this policy and will have easy access to it in an appropriate format. All policies are to be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or when legislation or Government Policy determines.