

What Happens to Information About Me?

General information about how your personal information will be handled while you are accessing a service at Mallee Family Care.

WHAT HAPPENS TO INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

When you access a service from Mallee Family Care a file is created. This includes your name, address, contact details and relevant information that you provided to your worker. Every time you attend, or have contact with us, new information is added to your file. This allows all workers involved with your care to access your information easily and quickly when it is needed.

Your file is stored securely. We will keep your file for a minimum of 7 years after your last visit (the length of time that information is kept will depend on the service that you are accessing). The record will then be returned to you or disposed of securely, as required by law.

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION NECESSARY?

Initially, we need to collect and keep this information to provide you with appropriate services. Your file can help us to quickly identify which course of action is likely to be effective for you. It will also lessen the need to collect the same information repeatedly

Some information or data may also be used for research and planning, to help us provide better outcomes and improve service delivery. In this case, any identifying information, such as your name and contact details, will be removed before the information is used.

There is also some non identifying information that we need to provide to the departments that fund the service. This information maybe used for statistical and service evaluation purposes.

WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE TO ACCESS MY INFORMATION?

You can ask to see any information held on your client file. This may include viewing the information, getting a summary or in some cases a fuller copy of your record, or having information explained to you if you wish. Some limits may apply where particular circumstances prevent us from releasing information. If any limits apply to your records, this will be explained to you.

You also have the right to correct any information in your file that you believe is

incorrect, incomplete, out of date or misleading. Information held on your file cannot be removed, though you may ask that a correcting statement be added to it. For information on how you may request access and/or correction, please speak to your worker who will inform you of the process.

HOW WILL MY INFORMATION REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL?

We have strict policies about who can see and use your personal information. Your privacy is also protected by law. All our staff members must treat your information confidentially. Generally, we only share personal information about you with people who are directly involved in your care and for the purpose of a particular service. If we need to share your information for this purpose or any other purpose we will ask for your written or verbal agreement before doing so (unless otherwise required by law).

WHAT IF I AM UNABLE TO GIVE CONSENT?

In some cases, people may not be able to give consent because they are legally unable to make a decision about the release of their information for example, young people or children, people with a severe physical or mental illness or major injury, or other impairment. In such cases, a decision will be sought from the person's authorised representative. People who can act as authorised representatives in these circumstances are specified by law. Your worker can give you more details about this.

WHO MAY HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

Together we may agree that other services outside this agency become involved in your care. In these situations, you will be asked to give consent for us to disclose any necessary information to other services, to help them assess your needs and provide you with relevant care. Your consent must be sought prior to any information being shared.

Sharing information in this way helps us to provide you with effective services, and lessens the need for you to repeat your personal information to each new service provider. Please note that you do have the right to refuse or withdraw consent if you wish. If you have any concerns or questions about sharing of information, please speak to one of our staff.

WHEN CAN INFORMATION BE DISCLOSED TO OTHER PEOPLE WITHOUT MY CONSENT?

There are some situations when your information may be shared without your consent. For example, in an emergency situation, we would have to release medical information about you to aid emergency treatment if we are unable to contact your next of kin/guardian or carer.

Also in certain circumstances, this service may be required by law to release personal information about you. Examples include:

Suspected child abuse – Child at risk.

Providing information to a court when required in relation to legal proceedings, for example file is subpoenaed.

Providing personal records to a law enforcement agency (e.g. police) in response to a search warrant, or

If staff believe you are at risk of harming yourself or others.

If any of these circumstances apply, we will advise you as close as we can to the time when the information is released, if it is appropriate to do so.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS?

If at any time, you have a question about the way your personal information is being managed, or you have a complaint in relation to privacy or confidentiality of your information, please contact us. You may also request to see our privacy policy. If you are not satisfied with the way which we handle your information, or deal with your concerns you can make a formal complaint.

WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Mallee Family Care
122 Ninth Street, Mildura
PO Box 1870, Mildura VIC 3502
Telephone: (03) 5023 5966

Mallee Family Care
369 Campbell Street, Swan Hill
PO Box 1049, Swan Hill VIC 3585
Telephone: (03) 5032 4479