

Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS)

Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) is a free, confidential and statewide service which has been operating since 1990. ARAS supports older people and their legal representatives who are:

- living in residential aged care, at home or in a retirement village
- at risk of, or experiencing abuse from family, friends, carers or service providers
- receiving or seeking to receive Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) or Home Care Package (HCP) services.

Self Advocacy

Some people may feel confident in raising their concerns with a service provider without the support of a formal advocacy service; this is called self-advocacy. You have a right to ask questions, and to be consulted about your services. Your feedback and communication assists service providers to improve the quality of their service, and may assist other people who may have similar issues.

Although ARAS encourages people to self-advocate where they feel comfortable to do so, please feel free to call ARAS if you need further information or support to uphold your rights to:

- obtain accurate information
- maintain your independence
- express your concerns
- access or change services

Preparation

Obtain accurate information about your rights and entitlements, including any agency contracts, agreements, service standards and complaints procedures. Writing things down can assist in clarifying exactly what you want and how you would like the matter resolved, and we suggest that you:

- decide if you wish to deal with the matter by phone or in person
- find out who to speak to, and arrange an appointment at a place and time that suits you
- prepare and rehearse what you want to say. Write it down, leaving space for notes and answers.

- write down what has occurred and clearly identify:
 - what is the issue?
 - when did it occur?
 - who was involved?
 - how does it affect you?
 - how do you feel about the matter?
 - what changes are you seeking?
 - what outcome do you want?

The meeting

Communication style during the meeting is important. You are more likely to receive a positive response if you are calm, clear and respectful, and if you:

- acknowledge what the service is doing well
- be specific about your concerns
- support your argument with accurate information, such as: “It is my understanding from reading my contract...” or “This brochure states...”
- ask questions to seek clarification if needed
- clarify what actions will occur as a result of this meeting. Agree a time frame of action that includes who is doing what and by when.

The outcome

Ask for a copy of the meeting notes that outline the agreed actions. If you are not satisfied with the outcome:

- ask if there is anybody else you can speak to
- provide them your case in writing
- indicate that you may take the matter further
- consider seeking advocacy support from ARAS.

Contact us

For more information or support, please contact ARAS:

Office hours Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm

Tel (08) 8232 5377 | Aged Care Advocacy Line 1800 700 600 (toll free)

Email: aras@agedrights.asn.au | www.sa.agedrights.asn.au

TTY 13 36 77 | SSR 1300 555 727

Independent interpreters may be available by appointment free of charge.

This fact sheet provides general information only and is not intended to substitute for legal advice. Whilst care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the material, no responsibility can be taken for any errors or omissions.

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