



Service Access

AGED CARE POLICY

Policy Version 2.1

Category: Administrative *(Required by Legislation)*

Adopted: December 2024



Service Access Aged Care Policy

Purpose

Winton Shire Council has a culture of inclusion and respect for consumers, supports consumers to exercise choice and independence and respects consumer privacy.

This policy describes the practices utilised by our organisation to ensure the services and programs it provides are inclusive and accessible to all consumers.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All Community Care Services team members,
- Their volunteers,
- Students on placement,
- Contractors and consultants, whether or not they are employees,
- Any other brokered service providers and
- Winton Shire Council Councillors,

Definitions

Term	What it means / refers to
Aged Care Quality Standards	According to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission: Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect in aged care. The Aged Care Quality Standards define what good care looks like.
Community Care services	A broad term to describe a collection of services and health care that are packaged up to meet the unique needs of each individual in their own home, rather than in a hospital or care home.
Consumer	A person who receives approved services from a service provider.
Equitable	Fair and impartial. Treating everyone fairly in the same way.
Inclusive	Including all the services or items normally expected or required. Not excluding any parties or groups.
Sensitive to the needs	Being kind, caring, able to pick up on the feelings of others, aware of their needs, and behaving in a way that makes them feel good.

Policy statement

Winton Shire Council is committed to providing services in an equitable, inclusive, appropriate manner that are sensitive to the needs of the consumer. This is achieved through:

- Providing services from an accessible premises.



- Taking reasonable steps to develop a workforce that reflects the diversity of the wider community.
- Providing cultural awareness, disability and anti-discrimination training for appropriate employees, volunteers, and contractors.
- Engaging with peak ethno-specific and multicultural agencies where relevant to ensure diversity is considered in service planning processes.
- Promoting services using a range of formats and methods including:
 - developing brochures, fliers, posters, and consumer information packs and distributing these in ways that will reach those most in need of the service such as the Winton Shire Council website, building signage and through My Aged Care
 - participating in networking activities with aligned local service providers to exchange information about the services and facilitate referrals and
 - maintaining contact with local referral agencies, industry, and other bodies to ensure they have up-to-date information for referral pathways and on service availability.
- Providing information about services in an appropriate format the consumer can understand including:
 - eligibility criteria in line with the funding guidelines
 - services and supports available
 - fees and charges
 - referral criteria and process
 - contact details and hours of operation
 - feedback and complaints processes
 - their rights and responsibilities including to privacy, access an interpreter and/or advocate etc.
- Undertaking a fair and consistent intake and assessment process to identify appropriate services or if these are not able to be provided by our organisation, offering an alternative strategy that addresses their individual needs, goals, and preferences. Services may be declined if:
 - providing them requires specialised skills / staff and / or facilities which are not available or accessible
 - there are insufficient funds in the consumer's package budget (noting this may require reassessment by the Aged Care Assessment Team) or
 - there is a foreseeable danger to the service users, employees, volunteers and contractors or others. (Note: withdrawal of services is subject to security of tenure rights, refer to Service Cessation and Suspension Policy).
- Advising consumers about their right to appeal if they are refused a service, which decisions can be appealed and how to lodge an appeal.
- Facilitating access to services that support access including advocates, qualified interpreters, hearing services etc. with the consumer's consent if required and appropriate.



Operational need

To ensure Winton Shire Council has a culture of inclusion and respect for consumers, supports consumers to exercise choice and independence and respects consumer privacy.

To deliver on the consumer outcome of:

"I am treated with dignity and respect, and can maintain my identity. I can make informed choices about my care and services, and live the life I choose"

in accordance with the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Roles and responsibilities

Winton Shire Council

Winton Shire Council is responsible for providing leadership and fostering a culture of respect for each individual consumer, their privacy, and their choices. This includes ensuring the organisation's mission and strategy demonstrates access to services is equitable.

Winton Shire Council will identify appropriate systems and processes to monitor, review and continuously improve compliance with this policy.

Management

Management is responsible for ensuring this policy and associated processes are implemented and that all staff, contractors, students, and volunteers demonstrate respect for consumers and their choices. This includes providing sufficient resources, guidance, and support to enable consumer dignity and choice and ensuring all staff, contractors, students and volunteers follow this policy and related processes.

Management will provide reports to the Council to monitor implementation and compliance with this policy.

Staff, Contractors, Students and Volunteers

All staff, contractors, students, and volunteers are responsible for treating consumers fairly and equitably. They must complete all required education and training and follow all policies, processes, and directions to partner with consumers in a manner that maintains dignity and supports choice.

Communication

This document will be published on the Winton Shire Council website and will be made available to all employees involved in the delivery of Aged Care services provided by Winton Shire Council.

Related Council documentation

Aged care records including:

- Promotional material
- Application/on-boarding forms and materials
- Assessments
- Advocate/interpreter information
- Consumer feedback

Legislation, recognised Authorities, and other sources

- *Aged Care Act 1997*



- Aged Care Standards
 - Standard 1 (3)(a) Dignity and respect
 - Standard 1 (3)(b) Care and services are culturally safe
 - Standard 1 (3)(c) Choice and independence
 - Standard 1 (3)(e) Information provided to each consumer
- *User Rights Principles 2014*
- Home Care Package Program Information – Australian Government Department of Health [Link](#)
- CHSP Manual – Australian Government Department of Health [Link](#)
- Home Care Package Program Operational Manual – Australian Government Department of Health [Link](#)
- Home Care Package Program Consumer Manual – Australian Government Department of Health [Link](#)
- Your Aged Care Rights – Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) [Link](#).

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years or when legislation or standards change and remains in force until amended or repealed by resolution of Council.

Record of amendments and adoptions

Date	Version	Reason for amendment	Date adopted by Council
December 2021	1.0	Initial policy	16 December 2021
November 2024	2.0	SDAP update	19 December 2024
February 2025	2.1	Update to Operational need	19 December 2024

