



On Track Community Programs
Connecting people to their communities

Mental Health Service Information Kit

On Track Community Programs Inc.

All people who are involved with our service have the right to:

- **respectful language**
- **courtesy**
- **honesty**
- **trust**
- **participation**

Consumers of our services will not be discriminated against on the basis of gender, culture, religion, disability or sexuality.

Who we are

On Track Community Programs Inc. (On Track) is a non-profit community organisation. On Track provides a range of housing and rehabilitation for people living with a mental illness across the North Coast Area Health Service (NCAHS) region. The organisation also provides accommodation for:

- people with physical and intellectual disabilities;
- homeless people who are in crisis;
- employment support services for people living with a disability.

These services are self-sustaining or funded by various government departments.

Our Vision

Connecting people to their communities.

Our Mission

To provide responsive and flexible support to people experiencing mental illness, disability or accommodation difficulties. Our aim is to improve an individual's quality of life by encouraging active participation, social inclusion and promoting independence.

Values

Fairness, Inclusion, Respect, Equity, Empathy, Individuality, Professionalism, Understanding and Encouragement.

Staffing

On Track management values a multi-skilled team experienced in mental health, nursing, social welfare, psychology and disability services. On Track is committed to the ongoing training and welfare of its staff and this includes a large team of dedicated and experienced volunteers.

Service Structure

On Track is a diverse and active service that strives to be consumer driven. The mental health service is based on a recovery and rehabilitation model. This model encourages people to move through to independent living. As such, it incorporates supported accommodation, employment and rehabilitation activities.

On Track Mental Health Service

People who are living with mental illness are able to access supported accommodation and rehabilitation services through On Track in Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Tweed Heads, Ballina, Evans Head and Mullumbimby.

Referral Procedure

In order to access these services, consumers need to be assessed by the staff of On Track after obtaining a written referral from Community Mental Health or an inpatient unit of the NSW Health department. The crisis refuge in Lismore does accept referrals from other community services, GP's, psychiatrists and other health professionals. However, the consumer must undergo an assessment from Community Mental Health or ACS Team within 24 hours of entering the refuge.

Assessments can be organised by contacting your local Community Mental Health Service. Once On Track receives the referral, staff will arrange to meet or speak with the consumer to discuss the appropriate support required.

Self referrals can only be made by a consumer to the Refuge in Lismore. The consumer must undergo an assessment from Community Mental Health or ACS team within 24 hours of entering the service.

Eligibility Criteria

Consumers who access supported accommodation must agree to:

- Participate in daily household activities by sharing the duties and responsibilities of the household and attending residential meetings and rehabilitation programs;
- Maintain regular appointments with their General Practitioner and Psychiatrist or the medical staff who visit On Track;
- Share household expenses by way of direct debit from Centrelink payments;
- Accept and abide by household rules;
- Sign a Tenancy Agreement when entering supported accommodation.
- Apply to the Department of Housing for accommodation with a view to eventual independent living;
- Participate in preparation of a needs assessment and Individual Service Plan (ISP) to identify individual needs and goals.

Exclusions

- History of excessive violence or risk to property and others;
- Primary diagnosis of drug/alcohol addiction;
- Serious suicidal tendencies;
- Residents requiring 24-hour acute psychiatric nursing care;
- Current acute psychosis.

Residential Service

On Track provides a variety of accommodation settings including 24-hour staffed residential facilities at Tweed Heads and Lismore which provide living skills training and assessment to assist in the transition of consumers into more permanent accommodation within the broader community.

On Track accommodation comprises a range of bed-sits, units, duplexes and houses. This accommodation is an affordable and secure medium- to long-term option for people who have an enduring mental illness. Support is provided on a needs basis to individuals and this consists of assistance with practical support such as shopping, budgeting, liaising with doctors and medication regimes.

Housing and Accommodation Initiative (HASI)

HASI is an innovative partnership program between NSW Health, the Department of Housing and On Track. HASI provides housing linked to clinical and psychosocial rehabilitation services for people with a range of levels of psychiatric disability. On Track has been funded to provide support to people in the Tweed/ Byron and Richmond areas that require a high level of support.

Support for Day to Day Living in the Community Program

This program provides support to improve the quality of life for individuals in the Tweed area with severe and persistent mental illness who experience social isolation. The aim is to assist people to:

- Participate in social recreational and educational activities;
- Live at an optimum level of independence within the community.

This program is funded through the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

Resource and Recovery Centres

On Track provides Resource and Recovery Centres at Tweed Heads, Mullumbimby and Coffs Harbour. The centres are staffed to provide a secure meeting place to help people develop life and social skills to improve their quality of life. All consumers are encouraged to help with the day-to-day running of the centre (where required). People who access these centres do not necessarily reside in On Track accommodation.

On Track Resource and Recovery Centres offer social, pre-vocational and recreational programs that are designed to meet consumer needs for companionship and social activity. Some of the activities include volunteer work, art groups, self awareness groups, music group and outings to local places of interest.

Respite Service

On Track Respite Service is committed to assisting carers of people living with a mental illness to enhance their quality of life. The program provides centre-based respite, respite in the home, activity-based respite, respite cottage, livings skills training and group activities.

For referral to On Track's Respite Service contact the Commonwealth Carer Respite on 1800 059 059 or On Track on (07) 5524 9732.

Northern Kids Care Program

Northern Kids Care is an early intervention and prevention program.

To be eligible the child or young person needs to be 0-18 years and have a parent with a mental illness.

The program addresses the needs of these children by providing support around:

- Understanding mental illness
- School and homework
- Friends and relationships
- Basic needs and domestic burdens
- Conflict and anger
- Depression and self-esteem and
- Financial and housing stability

Carers' Support Group

On Track facilitates a Carers' Support Group in the Tweed area that is open to all carers of people living with a mental illness. This group is facilitated by On Track staff and provides education, support and an opportunity to debrief for people caring for a person with a mental illness.

Consumer Meetings

All of On Track's Mental Health Service programs hold regular meetings with consumers. This is to allow two-way information and gain feedback on mental health programs provided by On Track and ensure continuous quality improvement. In addition, On Track conducts monthly Consumer and Carer Advisory Groups (CAG) to ensure consumers and carers have a direct say in the way services are delivered. Minutes from monthly meetings are forwarded to the Board of Management and relevant managers.

Commitment of On Track

On Track is committed to delivering the highest quality service to consumers, carers and advocates by:

- Observing the expectations of the Mental Health Act and standards and the Disability Act and standards (copies available on request);
- Informing and involving consumers, carers and advocates in decision making that is relevant to their need;
- Observing privacy, confidentiality, duty of care and anti-discrimination laws;
- Providing staff with adequate training and supervision and ensuring their knowledge base is in line with current trends in care;
- Encouraging complaints and compliments in order to improve our service;
- Keeping an adequate data base and monitor outcomes for consumers;
- Continually educating the community to enhance public awareness of mental illness and disability as per the principles of social justice.

Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

Objective

To ensure consumers of On Track services are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Policy Statement

On Track supports the recognition of consumer's personal worth and individuality and assists consumers to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Therefore, On Track will:

- Provide all consumers with a copy of the On Track "Consumer Rights and Responsibilities" policy, and explain what it means at the first visit;
- Display the Consumer Rights Statement at each On Track location;
- Ensure all staff receive orientation and training in Consumer Rights and Responsibilities;
- Be responsive to individual diversity and receive orientation and training relating to the differences in gender, culture, age, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, disability and lifestyle;
- Assume consumer rights and responsibilities under-pin all On Track policies and procedures.

Statement of Consumer Rights

All consumers of On Track services have the right to:

- High quality, timely and respectful service;
- Non-discriminatory service;
- Confidentiality and privacy; except in circumstances where there is a risk of serious harm to self or others;
- Be informed and to make decisions about their mental health issues;
- Consent to or refuse any service (except where legislation prevents this);
- Choose who will and will not be present at a consultation to the extent that it does not impose serious risk to the consumer or other person/s;
- Request transfer of care to another staff member;
- Have an advocate and access to family and friends;
- Remain anonymous;
- Fair and timely investigation of complaint;
- Continued access to services in a non-discriminatory manner after making a complaint;
- Refuse to take part in research and experiments;
- Refuse services from students;
- Read their own records;
- Receive written information about their rights at the time of first contact;
- Participate in On Track planning days;
- Be consulted in the development of On Track policies that will impact upon them;
- Have their culture, gender, sexuality and religious/spiritual beliefs respected and taken into consideration when receiving services.

Statement of Consumer Responsibilities

Similarly, consumers have responsibilities in using services which include:

- Advising if unable to keep an appointment;
- Participating in planning, policy development and decision making regarding their issues;
- Following the Individual Service Plan developed with the worker if necessary;
- Informing the worker of significant changes in their lifestyle;
- To deal fairly with other consumers and staff and respecting the work and dignity of others;
- To attempt to minimise conflict with co-residents and people attending the Resource and Recovery Centres;
- Adherence to “House Rules”;
- Participate in reasonable treatment and rehabilitation processes.

Procedures

- Staff and management will be non-judgemental in their approach;
- They are to develop rapport and empathy with a wide range of individuals and groups;
- Adapt communication styles, manner and conduct but always demonstrate respect and promote empowerment of the individual consumer;
- Recognise and acknowledge differences of values and opinions;
- Avoid offending behaviour;
- Reflect and incorporate significant cultural practices where possible in work practice;
- Identify potentially discriminatory or culturally-based obstacles;
- Develop and implement strategies to remove them;
- Create opportunities to demonstrate the contribution of difference and diversity in the community.

Consumer Code of Conduct

Policy

On Track staff will ensure all consumers understand and adhere to the Consumer Code of Conduct which includes the use of respectful language, courtesy, honesty, trust and participation in order to provide a safe and socially acceptable environment at all On Track services.

Procedure

- On entry to On Track's services, the consumer must agree to abide by the Consumer Code of Conduct, by way of signing the Consumer Code of Conduct form;
- When a consumer's behaviour does not comply with the above code of conduct a private meeting between the consumer and On Track staff should take place to discuss behaviour management strategies. Details of this discussion will be recorded in the consumer's file by attending staff;
- When a consumer displays aggressive behaviour security and/or police may be called to remove the person from the premises;
- If the behaviour continues or happens again each service will respond as follows:
 - The consumer may be referred to the Acute Care Team at Community Mental Health if staff feel the behaviour relates to being unwell;
 - The consumer may be asked to leave the premises;
 - Total exclusion from the service may be considered;
 - The consumer may be denied a privilege;
 - Alternative accommodation may be arranged if 'time out' is necessary;
 - The consumer may be found alternative accommodation and or evicted from On Track's residential service.

Prohibited Actions

- Physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse;
- Imposing religious beliefs or political persuasion;
- Any racist, sexist or other discriminatory remarks or actions;
- Using any communication system (e-mail, telephone, computers) in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others or harmful to morale;
- Involvement in any illegal operations from any On Track site;
- Being in an intoxicated or drug-induced state that may offend other stakeholders.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Objective

To ensure On Track keeps information confidential and maintains consumer privacy.

Policy Statement

- On Track will respect all consumers' rights to privacy, dignity and confidentiality.
- On Track Mental Health Service policies and procedures will at all times observe and uphold all consumers' rights as may be required by NSW Health Guidelines, NSW Department of Housing community housing guidelines and any other relevant privacy legislation.
- Information on consumers will only be collected that is directly relevant, including such information that is normal in obtaining accommodation.
- No information will be given to or sought from another party without the written consent of the particular consumer.
- On Track will endeavour to have consumer consent forms to exchange information with other agencies updated on an annual basis.
- Consumers will be informed when students will be working on placement at On Track and written consent will be requested from consumers for the student to work with them.
- Consumers will be informed if students or other researchers will use information gathered from consumers for research purposes. Written consent by the consumers will be gained before information gathering commences.
- Consumers have the right to refuse to participate in student placements or research without loss of services.
- On Track and consumers will formally review policies and procedures on protecting consumers' privacy, dignity and confidentiality every 12 months.
- Residential consumers shall have the right to reasonable access to a telephone and the opportunity to receive and make confidential calls, with assistance if necessary and requested by the resident.
- Residents have the right to privacy in their own rooms if available.
- All On Track staff will observe and uphold the consumers' rights in all dealings with any consumer.

Procedures

- Residents' personal files will be kept in locked filing cabinets when not being used.
- Personal discussions with residents will be held in such a manner that they cannot be overheard and will only include people directly involved.
- All On Track staff will respect the privacy of all On Track consumers and households at all times.
- On Track staff will not raise their voice within any On Track residence, and generally will avoid causing any distress to the resident during any home visit.
- All On Track staff will conduct themselves during any visit to any On Track residence with courtesy and discretion as they would during a visit to any residence and as they would expect from any official visitor to their own home.
- On Track staff will not enter the private quarters of any On Track resident without the express invitation of the resident, except in a genuine emergency.
- Matters concerning the private affairs of any On Track resident will not be raised by any On Track staff in the presence of other consumers or visitors. Where necessary, a suitable private location (other than the consumer's private quarters) will be arranged in consultation with the consumers.

Complaints and Grievances

Objective

It is the policy of On Track to have a clear complaint procedure and to make all service users, families and others in contact with the organisation, aware of the procedure. On Track has a commitment to ensuring that all complaints are taken seriously and followed up quickly. Complaints will be seen as a way of encouraging the organisation to improve the service it offers.

Policy Statement

- All complaints will be accepted and considered without prejudice;
- Complainants will be treated respectfully, fully informed and supported in exercising their right to complain, without fear of discrimination;
- Decisions following complaints requiring investigation will be based on the facts presented and will maintain the rights and safety of the individuals as paramount considerations;
- All complaints will be resolved in the shortest time possible;
- On Track recognises the right of service users to raise issues of concern about other service users;
- The data from complaints will be recorded in a Register of Complaints and included in the strategic planning process;
- Highly sensitive and confidential information will not be included in the Register.
- If the complainant requests and the grievance is of a serious nature, an independent mediator will be appointed;
- Information about how to make a complaint will be provided to each consumer at the first interview and displayed at services locations.

Definitions

Complainant: Person or organisation making a complaint.

Complaint: Any expression of dissatisfaction with a service or product offered or provided. A grievance is the underlying cause of a complaint.

Service Users: Service users refers to service users, past and current; families and advocates.

Who Can Make a Complaint

Anybody who uses an On Track service or has a right to expect a service from us may comment or make a complaint. Service users can either make the complaint themselves or have someone else speak up for them.

Procedures

Many complaints will have simple and obvious causes. Where these can be quickly resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, On Track would not consider that a formal grievance has been stated. That is, a formal grievance exists only when a reasonably prompt and satisfactory solution cannot be offered when a person first makes a complaint.

Persons to whom a complaint is made can offer any solutions consistent with their normal level of authority. Where the likely solutions appear to require approval from a higher authority, the complaint must be referred to that person. Wherever possible the person to whom the complaint is referred should be seen as 'joining the discussion' rather than the complainant being 'sent' to talk to someone else.

The person with a complaint should always be reminded that:

- They can have a person of their own choosing to support or represent them;
- They can appeal against any decision made if they are not satisfied.

In addition to providing these reminders, staff should also remember:

- To ask the person whether they are satisfied with the solution arrived at following discussion;
- To follow up with the person within 14 days to see if the person is still satisfied.

Recording the Complaint

Not all complaints must be recorded. However, complaints should be recorded when:

- The person is not satisfied with the outcome; and/or
- The complaint is referred to a higher authority by the person who first receives the complaint; and/or
- The complaint is such that the normal grievance resolution procedures have to be suspended or modified to safeguard individual rights in Law.

The normal form of recording a grievance will include:

- The names of the persons making and receiving the complaint;
- The time and place at which the complaint was made;
- A brief description of the complaint;
- A brief description of the actions taken following the complaint, including the solutions offered;
- A clear statement indicating whether the complainant was satisfied by the action taken, both at the time and 14 days later;
- Confirmation that the complainant was advised of the opportunity to be supported or represented by a person of their own choosing and of the opportunity to appeal against a decision.

This record should be directed to the Mental Health Service Manager and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for inclusion in the annual record of grievances received.

How to make a comment or complaint

First Step

- If you have any complaint about the service, please let us know.
- Many problems can be sorted out through explanation, discussion and action.
- You do not have to put it in writing unless you wish to.
- You can talk to your support worker, coordinator or advocate by phone or she/he can come to your home to talk things through.

Second Step

- If however, after talking your complaint through, you are not satisfied, you can put your complaint in writing.
- If you need help, this will be offered by someone not directly associated with your complaint.
- Give as much detail as you can about the complaint and if you can, try to tell us what you would like us to do about your complaint.
- You should address your complaint to the Mental Health Manager, On Track.
- We guarantee to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three days to ensure that it is investigated.
- You will be told about the outcome by phone and also in writing not more than two weeks after you made the complaint.

Third Step

- If you are still dissatisfied with the reply from the Manager, you will be able to ask for a review by the On Track Board of Management (BoM).
- You will also be able to get help to write a letter to the BoM as in Step Two.
- The BoM will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and take appropriate action to ensure that the complaint is reviewed no later than 28 days after the complaint was received.

Training

A program of training for staff involved in the complaints handling processes will be undertaken on an annual basis, or as necessary.

Confidentiality

- Details of the complainant will be kept in confidence and only staff, consumers and BoM members who need to know will be informed.
- “Need to know” is based on those staff, consumers and BoM members who are either involved in the grievance procedure or require the information as part of a duty of care.
- The Complaints Register is confidential and kept in the CEO’s office.
- A summary of the register indicating the nature of complaints can be used for planning processes and accountability purposes.