

## Privacy Statement – Service Users

At Uniting, we recognise your right to privacy and confidentiality and we are committed to protecting these. The Uniting values of 'respect' and 'compassion' underpin our work with you and the handling of the information we collect about you during your time with our service.

We are bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and supporting state legislations in the states we operate. These pieces of legislation are in place to protect your privacy. Uniting abides by these in regard to how your personal information is collected, used, disclosed and stored, as well as how you can access and make corrections to the information we hold about you.

### What is personal information?

Personal information is defined as any information which identifies or potentially identifies an individual, such as name, address, date of birth, health and medical information, or family details.

### What personal information do we collect?

At Uniting, we will only ask for personal information that is necessary for us to carry out and improve our services and programs. Where possible we will collect personal information directly from you, however we may sometimes need to collect information from a third party such as another service provider, a carer or representative.

When collecting information, we will take reasonable steps to let you know why we are collecting it, who we will give it to and how we will use or disclose it. You can withdraw or modify your consent if you change your mind.

### How we collect personal information from you

At Uniting, we collect information directly from you unless it is impracticable to do so. We may collect your personal information in a variety of ways, such as when completing forms to access one of our programs or services, or during conversations you may have with one of our representatives. We try to collect information from you in a private and confidential way and ensure that you feel safe to disclose personal information, including sensitive personal information (if you choose). Your personal information might also be collected via our websites, hard copy forms or correspondence. It may also be received via referring agencies or government bodies such as the Department of Health and Human Services.

### What happens if you don't want your personal information collected?

Where practicable, Uniting will comply with a request for you to access our service on an anonymous basis. However, due to the nature of many of the services provided by Uniting, it may not be possible for us to support you in an anonymous way.

### **Use of your personal information**

Your personal information will only be used for the purpose(s) for which it was collected and will be directly related to the provision of Uniting services and activities, such as assessing your eligibility to access certain programs and services or to modify services to meet your needs. We will obtain your consent if we need to share your personal information with other services or organisations.

### **Disclosure of your personal information**

We do not disclose sensitive information about you unless you agree or would reasonably expect us to disclose it (please refer to our full Privacy Policy for details on what we consider as 'sensitive'). However, there are situations where Uniting **is** required by law to disclose information without your consent. These may include, but is not limited to, when we believe that there is a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare, for family violence protection or assessment purposes or when we are required to report critical incidents to our funding bodies.

### **Protection of your personal information**

Uniting will store your personal information in a safe and secure environment. We will take all reasonable care to ensure the confidentiality of your information and to protect it from misuse, loss, or interference. This includes password protection for electronic systems and lockable cabinets for paper files. We will only keep personal information for as long as it is required, after which time, it will be disposed of securely.

In accordance with the Notifiable Data Breach Scheme, Uniting will notify individuals if their personal information has been involved in a data breach likely to result in serious harm. If we are unable to contact the affected individual, then we will post a notification that an eligible data breach has occurred on our website.

### **Access and correction to personal information**

Uniting strives to ensure that all the personal information we hold is relevant, accurate, complete and up to date. You have the right to access your personal information held by Uniting. You also have the right to correct the information held about you, unless there is a sound reason under privacy legislation for Uniting not to allow this.

Requests for access to information should be made to the Uniting Privacy Officer at:

Privacy Officer  
Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited  
Level 6, 250 Victoria Parade East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Tel: (03) 9192 8100  
Email: [privacyofficer@vt.uniting.org](mailto:privacyofficer@vt.uniting.org)

Depending on the nature of your request, we may ask you to verify your identity. If access is denied, then you will be informed in writing by the Privacy Officer. Uniting

will take all reasonable steps to provide access to the information you request within 10 days and also reserves the right to charge for any reasonable costs incurred by complying with your request.

## Complaints

If you believe your privacy has been breached or you have a complaint about how Uniting has handled your personal information, please contact us in writing. Complaints can be lodged by contacting the Uniting Privacy Officer, details above. Uniting is committed to addressing and responding to all complaints in a timely manner.

You can also contact one of the following for further advice:

- **Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection** Level 6, 121 Exhibition Street Melbourne Vic 3000 **P** 1300 666 444 **E** [privacy@cpdp.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@cpdp.vic.gov.au)
- **Health Complaints Commissioner** Level 26, 570 Bourke Street Melbourne Vic 3000 **P** 8601 5200 1300 582113 **E** [hcc@hcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:hcc@hcc.vic.gov.au)
- **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001  
**P** 1300 363 992 **E** [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)
- **Ombudsman: Tasmania** GPO Box 960 Hobart 7001 **P** 1800 001170 1300 766725  
**E** [ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au)