

Adelaide Quality Care

Policy 1

Communication Policy

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Communication Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Adelaide Quality Care is committed to effective dissemination and receipt of information and communication within the organisation and with consumers, stakeholders, and the media (where required).

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Adelaide Quality Care in developing and implementing communication strategies. This policy applies to all Managers and staff and encompasses –

- Purpose of communications
- Communication tools and mechanisms
- Liaison with the media.

This policy does not provide detailed guidance on –

- Feedback and complaints from clients, stakeholders or employees – refer to the Feedback and Complaints Policy and Grievance and Dispute Handling Policy
- Privacy and confidentiality – refer to the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Partnerships and relationships with external parties.
- Management of organisation information - refer to the Information Management Policy.

DEFINITION

Communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

POSITION STATEMENT

Community Care Options communicates for several purposes, to –

- Increase awareness of the organisation, its goals, its work, and its needs

- Enhance community understanding of its client target group and broader sector issues
- Share knowledge with its stakeholders
- Share knowledge internally for effective organisational management
- Increase the profile of the community care sector.

Communications are undertaken not for the sole purpose of information distribution and receipt, but to be used to assist and support the achievement of AQC's strategic objectives.

Adelaide Quality Care (AQC) is obliged to communicate clearly and accurately to the public, its consumers and funding bodies at all times. AQC will manage a level of confidentiality and accuracy in records and communications that inspires the confidence of clients and networking partnerships.

All employees are obliged to undertake communications internally and externally strictly in accordance with AQC policy and procedures.

AQC strives to support employees through communication and recordkeeping strategies that are as modern, effective and cost efficient as possible.

Recordkeeping will be kept current, accurate, and secure and will be compliant with legislation and funding requirements. The design of recordkeeping strategies will link to reporting requirements and incorporate the most efficient pathways for evaluation of data.

When

archived, records will be easily accessible and secure for the required period of storage. When no longer required, electronic and archived records will be disposed of confidentially.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

- Privacy Act 1988, Privacy Amendment 2001
- Australian Privacy Principles
- Home Care Standards
- Disability Service Standards

PRINCIPLES

- Communication systems and equipment will be used only for the purpose of achieving the organisation's objectives.
- Clear, consistent and equitable communication within the organisation is essential for effective operations.
- All communications are presented in plain English language.
- External communication, including with the media, aligns with the organisation's strategic objectives.

OUTCOMES

Clients and stakeholders are informed of, and consulted on, activities and operations.

External communication increases awareness and understanding of issues relevant to Community Care Options, its clients and the community care sector.

Internal communication supports good knowledge management and operations within the organisation.

FUNCTIONS AND DELEGATIONS

POSITION	DELEGATION/TASK
Managing Director	Endorse Communications Policy. Compliance with Communications Policy. Contribute to internal and external communication strategies and activities. Liaise with media, including developing and responding to media releases. Oversee production of external communications. Maintain operations of the website, social media (Facebook) and other promotional materials.
Office Manager	Compliance with Communications Policy. Contribute to internal and external communication strategies and activities. Actively contribute/write articles and collate items of interest for AQC communications.
Coordinators	Compliance with Communications Policy.

	Contribute to internal and external communication strategies and activities
Staff	Compliance with Communications Policy Contribute to internal and external communication strategies and activities.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS

1. Outgoing Communication

Outgoing communication is information and knowledge that is initiated, developed and distributed by the organisation for an external audience.

AQC provides outgoing communications to the following audience -

- Clients and potential clients
- Members and potential members
- Funding bodies
- Engaged and potential consultants
- Partner organisations for project, policy, client support and other activities
- Peak bodies – state and national
- Community care and broader community services sector organisations
- Government departments and branches
- Research and academic institutes
- Media

2. Developing Outgoing Communications

AQC conceptualises and develops effective communications structured around the following;

COMPONENT	EXAMPLE
What – identify broadly what it is to be communicated	The value of our services to individuals in the community
Message – use a message (s) to communicate	Improve health Choice Maintain independence Relieve stress

Audience – identify who the audience is, adapt the message accordingly,	Clients, potential clients/carers, referrers
Messenger – identify who will do the communicating and why	Staff Member - has content knowledge & writing skills
Mechanism – how will the message be communicated?	Advertising - TV commercials, radio commercials, brochure, website, Facebook, local print media Community forums
Review – was the message received, understood, did it create interest, was there any feedback?	Increased referrals received Interest & enquiries Seek feedback

Mechanisms and Tools used for Outgoing Communication

A range of mechanisms and tools are used to distribute outgoing communication.

Adelaide Quality Care Website – www.aqc.com.au

The website is a primary tool for distributing outgoing information to a broad audience.

Information about AQC's goal, governance, membership, activities, current projects and news items is maintained by the Marketing and Engagement Manager & the Manager Support & Coordination.

Social Media

- Facebook

Adelaide Quality Care Newsletter

Organisational Documents

AQC produces a number of organisation and project specific documents that provide information about its plans, achievements, and activities. Documents such as annual reports, strategic plans, consumer brochures, and project background and implementation plans may be provided to consumers, stakeholders and staff with current information about Adelaide Quality

Care activities, performance, and plans. Organisational documents for outgoing communication are also to be distributed internally to all staff.

Media Communication

AQC may produce or respond to media releases on behalf of the organisation.

Media releases may be developed to promote an event or project achievement, advocacy on behalf of clients, or to counter any negative media coverage relating to the sector.

AQC may partner with other organisations in producing or responding to a media release. Adelaide Quality Care Managing Director hold responsibility for liaison with the media.

Any communication with a media organisation, eg, newspaper, magazine, journal, radio, television or electronic communications company, must be approved in advance by the Managing Director. No employee other than the Managing Director may represent the opinions of AQC in response to any media inquiry, whether in writing or by interview, without the express advance approval of the Managing Director.

All employees should reflect a positive image to the public concerning AQC, and at all times communicate according to the values of the organisation.

Public reference to funding bodies and community health and welfare support organisations should always reflect AQC's desire for strong and positive networking partnerships.

Conference, Forum and Meeting Representation

Managing Director participates in numerous conferences, forums, and advisory groups representing Adelaide Quality Care. It is important to be clear that representation is for the organisation and not personal opinion, unless clearly stated.

Authority must be gained in advance of communicating any opinion, advice or organisational position on behalf of AQC, in any public forum. Employees must not represent personal opinions as those of the organisation. Any AQC employee attending a partnership networking function, conference or other external meeting, will do so professionally and their behaviour will reflect positively on AQC's corporate image at all times.

Participation also allows for information gathering so that AQC is better informed and better able to provide services for clients

Branding and Corporate Image

All outgoing communications must carry the AQC name and/or logo, including letters, reports, project materials, emails, and policy and advocacy submissions.

The organisation name and logo are copyright and must not be used for communications that are not directly related to the organisation.

Use of Letterhead and AQC Logo

Use of the AQC letterhead or Logo requires delegated authority and/or specific task approval. The CEO and Managers have delegated authority for use of letterhead and logo. Staff should check what outgoing communications they have delegation for with their Manager.

Letterhead communication will utilise Arial 12 font, be neatly presented, error free and will reflect positively upon the image of AQC. Only a Manager has delegated authority to sign letterhead, all other employees must receive specific approval for each letterhead that is to be signed.

Letterhead may not be used for any personal reference or expression of opinion unless the Managing Director has read and approved of the communication.

The AQC logo is a registered trademark and as such may not be used on any material that does not officially represent AQC.

The Associations Incorporation Act 2009, Section 41, quotes –

“An association must not issue any letter, statement, invoice, notice, publication, order for goods or services or receipt in connection with its activities unless the association’s name appears in legible characters on the document.”

Incoming Communication

Incoming communication is information and knowledge that is sought and/or received from an external source to the organisation. Incoming communication supports AQC in achieving its goal, strategic plan and provision of services to clients.

AQC receives communications from the following sources –

- Clients and potential clients
- Members and potential members
- Funding bodies
- Engaged and potential consultants
- Partner organisations for project, policy, client support and other activities
- Peak bodies – state and national
- Community care and broader community services sector organisations
- Government departments and branches
- Research and academic institutes
- Media
- Associations and professional organisations.

Mechanisms and Tools used to Receive Incoming Communication

A range of mechanisms and tools are used to receive incoming communication.

Mechanisms described above in 'outgoing communication' also provide opportunities for AQC to receive information. Other incoming communication mechanisms include

Member, Client and Stakeholder Consultation

In recognition of the role members, clients and stakeholders play in assisting in strategic endeavours regular consultation with clients, members and stakeholders is undertaken.

Consultation may be informal or through formal means such as surveys, research, contracting consultants, etc. Clients may also participate in advisory/steering groups as a mechanism for providing expert input into activities and services. Quality Committee, WH&S Committee and Friends of AQC Meetings.

Subscriptions

Board Members and staff actively source information through numerous email and hard copy subscriptions to inform activities and services at the organisation. A list of current subscriptions both hard and email are detailed in the Memberships File.

Internal Communication

Internal communication is information and knowledge that is shared within Adelaide Quality Care. Effective internal communication is essential for good organisational management. All Board, Managers and staff are responsible for actively contributing to communication strategies and activities.

Mechanisms and Tools used for Internal Communication

A range of mechanisms and tools are used for internal communication.

Staff, Team and Project Meetings

Staff, team and project meetings provide opportunity for information sharing and decision making on a range of project and operational issues for the organisation. All staff are required to attend the CCO All Staff meetings and relevant staff attend team and project meetings. Quality Committee and WH&S Committee Meetings.

Work Plan and Review Meetings

Work plan and review meetings between staff and supervisors allow communication on specific project and activity planning, achievements and challenges.

Email and Electronic Calendars

The use of email and electronic calendars is essential for effective communication amongst staff. These tools are a simple and effective way to share information about projects, meetings, internal business/operations, external sector news and activity.

These tools also provide a record and may be considered formal documentation.

All staff are expected to use email and share electronic calendars.

Information is also shared internally through other communication mechanisms such as –

- Noticeboards and whiteboards
- staff newsletters
- minutes of meetings - WH&S and Quality Committee

- SMS/text
- Staff Intranet
- Emails
- Staff paper memo's and forms

Use of Internet, Email and Phone

All employees will use communication systems and equipment for CCO purposes only. Employees will comply with all laws when using CCO communication systems.

Using CCO's computer resources to seek out, access, store or send any material of an offensive, obscene or defamatory nature is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. All emails and internet use, including specific websites visited may be monitored.

The Staff Email, Internet and Phone Use Guidelines provide details for staff on the appropriate use of telecommunications at the organisation.

RECORD KEEPING

All documents bearing the CCO name and/or logo, including digital and electronic materials, must be saved in the electronic and hard copy filing systems, as per the Information Management Policy.

Electronic Client Record Keeping

All AQC owned or leased computer facilities and software will be kept licensed, updated and easily accessible for convenient employee access. Employees will be trained in relevant use of software programs, data records and reporting requirements.

All client and administrative organisational records are confidential to AQC and will be kept securely and maintained accurately by employees responsible for administration of client services. The coordinators is responsible for the accurate maintenance and confidentiality of all AQC client data records.

Acquisition, disposal and leasing of communication facilities will comply with the AQC Finance Policy. All facilities will remain the property of AQC and/or the leasing agency and usage will be according to employee need as perceived by the AQC

Managing Director

Guidelines have been established for employees concerning usage of all forms of communication and recordkeeping undertaken when carrying out position duties on behalf of AQC. Employee use of AQC's communication facilities, including computer hardware, printers, fax machines, telephone and voice-mail, software, e-mail, and Internet and intranet access, will be carried out according to this communications policy and the Information Management policy.

The use of computers, software and all computer-linked electronic communications by staff will be in accordance with the legislation. In addition, employees will be familiar and compliant with AQC policies concerning confidentiality, bullying & harassment, and Work Health and Safety.

The Managing Director is responsible for all aspects of computer facilities and software, acquisition and disposal, licensing, maintenance and usage procedures within the organisation, including the daily back-up of data.