

Frequently Asked Questions

Mercy Health's Consumer Advisory Bodies

1. What is the purpose of Mercy Health's Consumer Advisory Bodies?

Consumer Advisory Bodies provide valuable feedback to governing bodies about the quality of care and services they deliver. They help build a person-centred culture committed to quality aged care (© Commonwealth of Australia - the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, 2019).

2. What Mercy Health staff support the Consumer Advisory Body?

Each Consumer Advisory Body will have one staff member present for the whole meeting to take the minutes. The Service Manager (homes) or Regional Manager (home care) will attend to provide updates relating to ideas the group has put forward. The Consumer Advisory Body members can also invite other staff members to provide information or to discuss ideas where relevant.

3. Who can apply?

All residents and clients who receive aged care services and care from Mercy Health and their nominated representatives.

At Mercy Health we send an annual expression of interest out to all residents and representatives at our homes as well as to people who are eligible in our home care services once per year.

4. Who will the members be?

Members will be residents or clients and nominated representatives. The members will vote on who they would like their Consumer Chair to be at their first meeting, this is repeated each year. We aim to have equal numbers of residents/clients and representatives on each group.

5. How are members selected?

After the expression of interest process all applications are considered by the Service Manager (homes) and Regional Managers (home care). Members will be selected based on a number of factors including their background, motivation for applying, their experiences and diversity. All applicants will be advised of the outcome of their expression of interest.

6. What is expected of members?

Members will be appointed for 12 months with the opportunity to reapply for a further 12 months. Members will be expected to attend quarterly meetings and should expect to spend approximately 60 minutes outside of meeting times to review agenda papers and documents.

Members must also:

- Advise the Consumer Chair or staff member if they cannot attend a meeting
- Act in a professional manner and in accordance with Mercy Health's Resident and Representative Code of Conduct (homes)
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of papers, meetings and other members
- Declare any conflicts of interest

7. What does the Consumer Chair do?

The Consumer Chair leads each meeting in line with the agenda. With the support of the Mercy Health staff member present and the Service Manager they act as the main contact for the Consumer Advisory Body. The Consumer Chair may also provide peer support to other members where required.

8. What authority do members have?

The authority of each Consumer Advisory Body is in an advisory capacity, it is not a decision making group.

If an issue or conflict arises between members the Consumer Chair and members do not have the authority to remove someone from the group. Such conflicts and issues should not be dealt with during the meeting and should be referred to the Service Manager for guidance.

9. Who sees the minutes of the Consumer Advisory Bodies?

The minutes of the group are shared with the Service Manager (homes) and Regional Managers (home care) who consider ideas and opportunities for improvement and add these to the quality improvement plan. Where ideas are not able to be actioned the Service Manager (homes) or Regional Manager (home care) must report back to the Consumer Advisory Body with further information.

The Consumer Chair, together with the Service Manager (homes) or Regional Manager (home care) can escalate ideas or issues to senior management for consideration. This can be done via the Service Manager/Regional Manager reporting the feedback to their manager through the appropriate forum.

Once the Service Manager (home) or Regional Manager (home care) have reviewed the minutes these are then shared with the Community Experience team. This team is responsible for collating all minutes twice per year and writing a summary report that is reviewed by our Healthy Ageing leaders, our Community Advisory Committee and our Board Quality Committee.

Twice per year members will receive a letter from the Mercy Health Board Chair regarding plans and actions that will be taken in response to themes arising across the Consumer Advisory Bodies.

10. What is discussed at the meeting?

Each meeting is guided by the Mercy Health Consumer Advisory Body agenda. Each meeting includes (1) a welcome (2) review of the previous minutes and action list (3) update from the manager/delegate (4) reflection on what is working well and what could be improved (5) topics referred by consumer members (6) topics referred by Mercy Health (7) opportunity to raise other topics (8) preparation for the next meeting (9) reflection on the meeting (10) key points to communicate.

Members are encouraged to contribute topics for discussion to include on the agenda, this can be done by speaking with the Consumer Chair or the staff member who takes the minutes for your group.

11. How often do meetings run and how can I attend?

Meetings are scheduled quarterly, and generally run between 60 to 90 minutes depending on the group. We encourage members to attend in person where possible but where required, due to distance or other commitments members may attend remotely e.g. via video conference.

12. How do we ensure all members have an opportunity to contribute?

We have a set agenda that each Consumer Advisory Body must follow. This not only allows us to report on themes from across all Mercy Health groups but is designed to allow each member to contribute. The Consumer Chair and staff member/s present will support the group to ensure that people take turns and act in a respectful manner.

13. How can the group ensure it can represent the broader views and experiences of residents, clients and representatives?

We recognise that each Consumer Advisory Body is a small group of people compared with the overall home or service. We encourage members to consider ideas and topics from a wide range of perspectives and consider who is not represented at the meeting. This may be people with a severe cognitive

impairment or memory issues, people who do not speak English or people who are not confident in raising ideas or issues.

The Service Manager (homes) or Regional Manager (home care) can provide the group with a summary of feedback themes for the home or home care as part of their regular update. Members may also want to seek the viewpoint of other residents or clients before the meeting.

14. Can the Consumer Advisory Body resolve my complaint or grievance?

Consumer Advisory Bodies are not the place to discuss or look to resolve individual complaints or issues. Mercy Health has a complaints management process for individual concerns. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ideas and issues that impact individuals across the home or service.

14. What should I do if I can no longer attend the meetings?

We understand that circumstances can change throughout the year, if you are finding it difficult to participate in the Consumer Advisory Body we encourage you to speak with the Consumer Chair or the Service Manager (for homes) or Regional Manager (for home care) to see how we can assist you. If you no longer want to be involved you can resign your position on the group.

“Based on Commonwealth of Australia (the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission) material”