CARER INDUCTION MANUAL
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Welcome to the team!

Firstly we would like to welcome you to the Accommodation & Care Solutions team and hope that your time with our organisation is fulfilling and a positive contribution to your career within the disability sector.

Our aim is to make your employment with Accommodation & Care Solutions as enjoyable as possible, and at the same time providing the best level of support for our clients to meet their goals.

Introduction to Accommodation & Care Solutions (ACARES)

Accommodation and Care Solutions (ACARES) was established in 2003. Operating throughout Victoria and NSW, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year – our philosophy of care provision is based on providing opportunities to enhance the lives of individuals and delivering a seamless level of care.

We provide services in 4 core areas:

- Accommodation
- Care
- Respite
- Planning

Of these 4 core areas you may be involved in one or all and it is important that you use this manual as a tool to help you through your initial stages of employment.

It is every employee’s responsibility to maintain a person-centred approach, where the needs and wants of the person with the disability determine the agenda, the process and the goals of service providers and support staff in all they do in their day to day activities as a carer.

Like all organisations, ACARES has an employee code of conduct which we are all expected to follow. These standards are based on the premise that all ACARES customers whether individuals or organisations, can expect to be provided with professional service by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

All Accommodation & Care Solutions staff are expected to:

- Demonstrate current knowledge, skill, care and courtesy at all times
- Adhere to policies and procedures as specified by the contracting organisation
- Attend allocated work at the specified time or as determined by Accommodation & Care Solutions consultants.
- Approach clients, staff and members of the public with courtesy at all times
- Work within occupational health and safety standards, ensuring clients and staff are not endangered in any manner
- Be appropriately dressed at all times taking into consideration the worksite attended
• Respect the rights of the clients and organisation to confidentiality

• Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, as they are representing Accommodation & Care Solutions.

• Ensure they have appropriate information at the commencement of each shift to ensure all duties can be completed efficiently and effectively

• Be aware of the duty of care responsibilities and to work in a safe and professional manner at all times

• Approach all individuals with respect, dignity and as valued customers of Accommodation & Care Solutions.
Disability Awareness

With the focus on the person as a whole, the defining of disability is more about individual differences as part of the diversity of a community that is similar to cultural backgrounds and abilities. The focus is on an individual’s strengths and abilities rather than their disability or difference.

You may work with people with a range of disabilities during your employment with ACARES. Some examples are:

- **Learning disability**: When an individual is learning fewer skills and reaching fewer learning objectives than is usual for their age and culture.

- **Intellectual disability**: Low IQ and significant limited problem-solving and social function that has occurred or shown itself between birth and 18 years of age. For example, Down Syndrome.

- **Communication disorder**: A disorder which affects a person’s ability to understand communication, such as autism. (This does not refer to a person who may have a speech disability and therefore uses a communication aid.)

- **Sensory disabilities**: This includes vision and hearing impairments, and deafblindness. The deaf community views itself as a language group. The environment rather than their impairment is seen as the disabling element.

- **Speech disability**: Caused by impairment to the individual's ability to produce one or more of the following: language, speech, fluency or voice.

- **Psychiatric disability**: Where mental illness causes a disability for the individual. Includes psychosis and depressive disorders.

- **Neurological disability**: Problems with the central nervous system that includes the brain or spinal cord. Examples include epilepsy, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson’s disease.

- **Acquired brain injury (ABI)**: Disability usually caused by head injury, disease or stroke.

- **A range of physical conditions**: A physical disability might be due to chronic ill health, an orthopaedic condition or neurological damage or disease. Examples include arthritis, cerebral palsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, spina bifida.
Aged Care Awareness

In addition to providing disability support, here at ACARES we provide support to elderly clients in the community. We follow a consumer directed care (CDC) model when delivering aged care support thus ensuring that clients are given more choice and flexibility when making decisions about the type of care and services they will receive.

When providing care to elderly clients, they may require your support for varying reasons such as:

- **Ageing In-Home**: When an individual and or their family want the care recipient to stay in their own home, however they require assistance with things like showering, grooming, preparing meals and cleaning, or with transport so that they can go shopping or attend appointments.

- **After Hospital care**: When an individual has been in hospital, and needs extra support around the house whilst they recover.
Understanding ACARES operations

As an employee of ACARES, it is important that you understand and adhere to all company policies and procedures.

Throughout the remaining sections of this manual you will cover a range of policies and procedures. All of them are collated and held at each of our residential facilities and at our office locations. You may request to see a full version of any policy and or procedure at all time by speaking with our National HR & Training Manager.

It is important to remember that policies and procedures may be revised at any time. When this occurs, we will communicate such changes to you in a timely manner to ensure you are always kept up to date.

- Confidentiality & Disclosure of Information

All staff members have access to clients’ confidential information while on duty. Current legislation demands all staff abide by these policies and procedures. Breaches of the confidentiality policies and procedures will result in disciplinary action.

As a Community Support Worker you have access to considerable amounts of confidential information and you must safeguard the privacy of the service user at all times. You may not disclose any information regarding a user to any unauthorised person without consent of the user or a person authorised to act on their behalf. This is especially the case when you provide care to a number of users.

As part of your employment conditions you have signed a confidentiality contract at the commencement of your employment, so please be aware of the consequences of breaching this contract. It is important to note that this also stems to your work colleagues, therefore you are not to discuss other worksites or your rates of pay.

With the introduction of portable technology and the internet it is also important that all ACARES staff under no circumstances use worksite computer software or take personal software to use at a client’s premises. Staff must be aware that participation in this activity will result in disciplinary action and that they will be liable for any damages caused to the organisation’s software.

- Office Hours

Our office hours of operation are 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. We ask that all calls be restricted to these hours, unless an emergency arises- in this scenario ACARES operates an after-hours service.
• **After-hours service**

Outside of office hours the phones are diverted to an after-hours number however please note that **THIS IS AN EMERGENCY SERVICE ONLY**. Please note that the after-hours number is the same as the office number: 1300 675 893. We request that you enter this number into your mobile so that you have access to it at all times.

After hours is not a time to be discussing shifts and pay rates, therefore please take this into considering before calling. Please refrain from calling the on-call number between 10pm to 6am, unless it is an emergency situation, whereby you have to speak to someone immediately.

• **Standards of Dress**

ACARES does not have a standard uniform for care staff. It is your responsibility to ensure you attend the worksite in comfortable clothing appropriate to meet worksite requirements. **Clothing must be neat, casual and of a tidy appearance.** Offensive slogans must not be worn and no tracksuits are to be worn.

In accordance with occupational Health and Safety regulations closed toe shoes must be worn at all times. **No thongs, open toed sandals or high heel shoes are permitted at any worksite.**

As a Support Worker, personal jewellery must not place either yourself or the person you are caring for in danger. Therefore we stipulate that studs and sleepers are the only acceptable earrings to be worn whilst on duty. Facial piercings, necklaces, bracelets etc must not be worn on shift due to OH&S requirements. Please ensure that nails are kept short and clean for hygiene purposes.

• **Go Care**

Upon commencement of employment, you will be provided a username and password to access your fortnightly rostered shifts on Go Care (an online rostering management system utilised by ACARES).

As well as accessing rosters for the current and upcoming fortnights, you can also confirm completion of your shifts on the system. It is your responsibility to ensure that once you have finished a shift, it is ticked off as being completed so that you can be paid on time.

Go Care can be accessed via the ACARES home page (www.acares.com.au).

Look for the **GoCare Login** button in the top right hand corner of the screen.

• **Arriving on shift**

ACARES expects all staff to arrive at their destination at least 10 minutes prior to the commencement of their shift, to allow for any unexpected delays.
If you arrive on shift and there is no response, please contact the ACARES office immediately. We request that you do not leave the premises until you have received permission from the office. Should you leave the premises without permission from the office, you risk not being compensated for your time.

- **Shift Cancellations**

In situations whereby you have to cancel a shift, we request that you provide as much notice as possible, so that we are able to find a suitable alternative for your client.

We also request that in the event that you have to cancel a shift, that you contact the ACARES office directly via telephone. **Please do not send emails or SMS to cancel shifts**, as these methods of communication are not always reliable.

- **Change of shift times**

It is essential to contact ACARES in the event of a change to shift times with a client whilst you are on shift, to ensure that this can be authorised by the office. Please ensure that you make contact with the office prior to working any extra hours. Failure to seek formal authorisation for any additional time worked may result in you not being compensated for these hours.

- **Mileage**

Mileage can only be claimed if you are transporting a client in your own vehicle as part of a shift, and where this has been authorised by a coordinator as part of the shift requirements. When mileage is authorised by a coordinator, a mileage limit may also be stipulated. Please ensure that you adhere to any mileage limits. If you are in a situation whereby you have to exceed your mileage limits, please contact the coordinator ASAP.

Please note that you cannot claim mileage under the following circumstances:

- From your house to the client’s residence, and from the client’s residence back to your house.
- Between client’s residences.
- When mileage has not been authorised.

- **Staff Meals**

Staff members are responsible for supplying or purchasing their own meals when on duty including tea or coffee. If staff members accompany clients to a restaurant/cafe as part of their shift, they must pay for their own meals.
• **Use of the Telephone**

Whilst on duty it is important to have mobile phone switched off or on silent. Staff may check mobile phones for messages from time to time and if there is an emergency whereby you are required to make a private call, please go outside the client’s residence to make the call.

Staff should be aware that they are not to make private calls from the client’s personal phone, or they may be required to pay for these charges. Staff should refrain from making private telephone calls from ACARES telephones except in an urgent situation.

• **Handling Service Users Money**

All staff will be expected to act with probity and efficiency in handling service user’s finances and assets. Where a client requires assistance with financial management, such tasks must be identified on a Care Plan/Client Profile.

Upon accessing stored cash belonging to a client to assist with budget management, shopping, payment or bills and other financial matters, all staff are obliged to:

- Count the cash and check that it matches the recorded current balance in the cashbook every time cash storage is accessed.
- Make complete and accurate entries into the cashbook
- Report to another carer on duty immediately if a discrepancy is found, or if no other person is on duty, report at the next shift change/to the allocated Care Coordinator.
- If there is a discrepancy, write the event into the daily log book.

Staff must obtain a receipt for every transaction. When a receipt is not given details of the purchase must be written on paper and filed as a receipt.

Staff are responsible for the security of cash and items of a personal nature taken on outings with a service user. Staff may be required to replace cash or items lost whilst on outings with service users if it is established that the loss was contributed to by act or omission of the staff member on duty.

• **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited within all ACARES buildings, as well as in client’s homes. Staff are only permitted to smoke in designated smoking areas or outside of client’s homes when on a designated break. Please be aware that some client’s/colleagues may find the smell of smoke offensive and therefore is it strongly recommended that you carry refreshments/perfume/deodorant with you.
• **Drugs & Alcohol**

ACARES has a zero-tolerance policy with relation to the consumption of drugs and/or alcohol whilst on duty. Drugs and/or alcohol shall not be brought onto or used in any ACARES premises or at a client’s residence.

These rules are relevant to all staff, visitors and service users. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in instant dismissal.

• **Social Media**

All staff are responsible for any content that is posted on social media from a personal and/or professional perspective. When engaging in social media all staff need to be mindful of whom they are representing and that everything should be treated as being public. Staff must bear in mind that even if a comment is deleted or retracted, someone may still have seen it so it is important to show respect for the individuals and communities with whom you interact.

If making any reference to ACARES, staff must take responsibility for ensuring that information is professional, factually correct and does not breach any confidentiality requirements or privacy laws.

Social media tools include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn;
- Video and photo sharing websites e.g. YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Snapchat;
- Micro-blogging sites e.g. Twitter;
- Weblogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications;
- Forums and discussion boards such as Blackboard, Chatter Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups;
- Online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia; and
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools.

When engaging with social media, it is important to:

- Ensure that you don’t post about ACARES on a personal platform in a way that may damage the company’s reputation;
- Ensure that you do not imply ACARES endorsement of your personal views;
- Ensure that you don’t post any confidential information, such as client information that has been obtained through work;
- Ensure that you respect other’s opinions and are considerate of others when engaging in social media;
- Ensure that you are cautious if making recommendations or providing references for individuals on media platforms such as LinkedIn; and
- Ensure that you do not post material or make comments that are in breach of ACARES policies and/or procedures.

If you become aware of content on any social media platform that causes you concern or offense, please bring this to the attention of ACARES Strategy and Communications Manager. **Any content that breaches client/company confidentiality or brings the company into disrepute, may lead to disciplinary action.**

- **Change of name or personal details**

During the course of your employment with ACARES, should your personal details change please notify the HR department in writing (hr@acares.com.au). This relates to changes to any of the following:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone number
  - Email address

- **Payroll/Wage Information**

Individual rates of pay are provided to staff at the commencement of employment through a contract of employment. ACARES pays staff in accordance with the rostered fortnightly cycles on Go Care. To ensure that you are paid on time, please remember that once you have finished a shift, it is your responsibility to log into GoCare and tick off the shift as being completed. At the conclusion of each pay cycle you will be sent an electronic pay slip.

Any questions about your pay should be directed to the payroll department (accounts@acares.com.au).

- **Feedback & Complaints**

ACARES prides itself of a culture of continuous improvement and therefore welcomes all forms of feedback/complaints. Irrespective of the age of the individual providing the feedback or making the complaint ACARES undertakes to:
  - listen
  - give information and advice
  - try to resolve the issue/complaint and deal with issues in a timely manner
  - keep all parties briefed about the progress of the matter/complaint, and
- provide advice about other internal and external options for recourse that may be appropriate.

We view all feedback & complaints as opportunities to improve our service and encourage you to raise concerns without fear of retribution.
Role of the Care Worker

Your role is to assist in the day to day routine of the worksite and where possible maintain consistency in the program goals. You will assist and address the varying needs of each individual client, become familiar with each client’s Care Plan and assist in keeping them current and relevant by maintaining good documentation; regarding the care provided and any changes or important information which needs to be noted. You will further assist clients with their daily living activities, development of their skills, and in the provision of personal and self-care activities such as toileting, food preparation and eating dressing and maintenance of personal hygiene.

It is essential to be familiar with the client’s support needs by reading their care plan thoroughly.

We expect that as an ACARES staff member, you will have:

- A positive attitude towards all clients/colleagues.
- An ability to assist all clients.
- A demonstrated understanding of the rights of clients receiving support.
- An aim to advance the dignity, worth rights and full potential of all care recipients.
- A commitment to people in receipt of care.
- The ability to work within a multi-disciplinary team.

Client Activities

Part of your role as a care worker is to ensure that out clients have the right to share the same quality of life as the general community and to enjoy facilities, services and activities which meet their peers’ standards. Staff can assist clients to participate in community activities and so enhance the client’s enjoyment of life as well as their integration into society. To ensure that you help clients fulfil this right:

- Where possible, clients should choose and plan activities/outings that suit their wishes
- Clarification on reimbursement of funds must be sought before commencing the outing if the outing will involve a cost to the staff
- Permission must first be sought from management of the individual worksite, as well as information on reimbursement of mileage if staff members are required to use their own vehicles
- All activities must be safe for all clients and staff involved, bearing in mind the client’s dignity of risk.
Health & Safety

Health & Safety of the workplace is of great importance to not only yourself but also our clients and anyone else involved in care provision. The Occupational Health & Safety Act of 2004 specifies that under legislation all government and non-government organisations are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to maintain the safety and well being of all workers on their premises.

All ACARES staff are required uphold OH&S standards at all times and report hazards identified as a point of priority. It is the duty of care of staff members to ensure a safe environment for themselves, other staff, clients and other individuals in the surrounding environment.

- **Workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying**

  ACARES has a zero tolerance policy towards workplace discrimination, harassment or bullying.
  - Discrimination occurs when a person, or group of people, are treated less favourably than other due to their background or other characteristics.
  - Harassment includes, but is not limited to, verbal or non-verbal gestures of an intimidating or sexual nature, posters, joking, inappropriate touching, staring.
  - Bullying includes repeated unreasonable behaviour which threatens the health and safety of a worker. Bullying can range from verbal or physical assault to psychological abuse.

ACARES treats all staff fairly and equitably, and expects that staff treat all clients and colleagues in the same manner ensure that people are not discriminated against based on their:

- Race, national or ethnic origin
- Gender
- Sex, pregnancy or marital status and breastfeeding
- Family or carer responsibilities
- Age
- Disability
- Political or religious conviction
- Sexual orientation and gender identity

Any complaint by a staff member, client or stakeholder related to discrimination, harassment or bullying will be investigated immediately by a member of the Senior Management team and reported to the Directors. Complaints will be dealt with as per the ACARES Feedback and Complaints Policy.
• **Incident Management**

In the event of an incident or a near miss occurring, it is essential that you contact the office to report the event. It is best to contact the Care Coordinator or Team Leader that looks after that particular program, as they would be most familiar with that client.

It would then be determined as to whether an incident report would need to be completed to document what occurred, if any injuries were sustained, and what your response was to the event.

Incident report forms are sent out via email and need to be sent back to the office ASAP.

Reporting obligations relate to the severity of the incident. Please ensure that incident reports are sent back to the office within the timeframes from when the incident occurred:

- Category 1: 24 hours
- Category 2: 48 hours

• **Staff injury**

If you injure yourself whilst on shift, it is a requirement that you contact ACARES head office as soon as possible. If requested, you will be required to complete an injury report form, which needs to be sent back to the office within 24 hours of the injury taking place.

You may also be requested to provide a medical clearance from your treating health professional, to provide clearance to return back to your regular duties.

• **Infection Control**

Infection control measures minimize the transmission of infections such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis. Staff members have a personal and professional responsibility to practice infection control procedures at all times. Under OH&S guidelines staff also have a legal responsibility to work safely including adhering to infection control guidelines.

- It is important to ensure staff and clients are protected against transmission of infection.
- When dealing with personal hygiene of clients, and where there is contact with bodily fluids, protective gloves must be worn to protect clients and staff.
- Hand-washing before and after any procedure using the facilities provided, must be undertaken.
- An effective practice to ensure infection control is to treat all persons as potentially infectious without discrimination.

• **Manual Handling**

Manual handling is any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, push, pull or carry or otherwise move or restrain any animated or inanimate object.
ACARES has a “no lift” policy in relation to manual handling.
It is important to report any hazards or manual handling risks immediately to the office.

- **Behaviours of Concern**

‘Behaviour of concern’ is a term used to describe behaviour that interferes with an individual’s or carer’s daily life. Common examples of these behaviours are aggression, self-injurious behaviour, property destruction, oppositional behaviour, stereotyped behaviours, socially inappropriate behaviour, and withdrawn behaviour.

The points below outline times when behaviours of concern may surface or reasons for these behaviours:

- A previously learned way to communicate
- Psychiatric Disorder
- Need for attention
- Boredom
- Frustration
- Pain
- Communicational issue
- Staff personalities

**Points to remember when working with people with behaviours of concern:**

- Most people who demonstrate challenging behaviours do so because of their learned behaviours
- It is often easier to look at changing something in the client’s environment rather than changing the client
- Consistency and persistence are the keys to effective behaviour management strategies
- When considering the relationship between a client and the client’s world, try to see things from the client’s point of view
- Staff need to be creative in developing strategies to deal with challenging behaviours
- The challenging behaviour needs to be replaced by an alternative behaviour that is equally satisfying
- It is important to use strategies that has worked in the past that been developed by the team. It is important to safeguard the physical safety of the client with challenging behaviours and ensure that other clients are not at risk
- Always consult Behaviour Management Strategies as documented for each individual client.
- **Medication**

Many clients will require assistance with the administration of medication to manage their medical condition and/or disability.

As a direct care worker you are not expected to be an expert on medication, however, it is your responsibility to ensure:

- The most senior person on duty administers the medication (where applicable)
- The medication must be signed by the person assisting with the administration of the medication when the process is complete.
- Ensure that the right person is being given the right medication.
- If in doubt DO NOT GIVE medication before seeking the approved advice

**Medication errors**

In the event of a medication error:

- Call the office or after-hours service on 1300 675 893 immediately
- Monitor the client for any adverse side effects.
- Call residents doctor if directed.
- Call ambulance if directed.
- Seek advice before giving the client any missed medication

- **Safe driving**

ACARES request that staff adhere to the following drive safety requirements when driving their own, or a client’s vehicle:

- Holding a current and valid driver’s licence
- Ensuring that the driver and any passengers wear seatbelts at all times
- Adhering to all road rules within the jurisdiction
- Driving within the speed limit at all times
- Not to use a mobile phone whilst driving.
- Never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including medications that are known to impede alertness or concentration.

- **Sun Safety**

Staff must ensure that clients wear protective clothing such as hats, sunglasses and shirts (preferably long sleeve) when outside in the sun. Clients must have liberal amounts of sunscreen applied at regular intervals as per the product’s recommendations. We also encourage staff to follow these recommendations as well.
Recognise & Respond to Abuse & Neglect

One of the roles of a support worker is to advocate for and support people where there is incidence of abuse, or suspected abuse. People within the aged/disability sectors can be very vulnerable to neglect, violence and abuse by other people, who could include other workers, family members and other members of the community.

Types of abuse include:
- Physical abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological or Emotional Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Systemic Abuse: practices that take away a person's independence and dignity.
- Discriminatory Abuse

Types of neglect include:
- Physical neglect – failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing and protection.
- Passive neglect – withholding or failure to provide the necessities of life.
- Wilful deprivation: exposing that person to the risk of physical, mental or emotional harm.
- Emotional neglect – restricting the social and emotional growth or wellbeing of a person.

If you have any suspicion that a person with a disability is being abused or neglected, discuss it with your supervisor as soon as possible. Even if you are experiencing uncertainty about a situation, the best thing to do is to discuss it with your supervisor. To do nothing because you are unsure is not an appropriate course of action.
Support & Supervision

Supervision by your house manager, coordinator and/or National HR & Training Manager at ACARES enables care workers to improve the quality of service they provide to service users. It also promotes professional and personal development as a care worker.

The aim of a supervision session is to:

- Enable the achievement of high standards in the workplace
- Increase the safety of service users
- Provide learning opportunities so as to enhance the quality of work
- Develop an awareness of the workers roles and responsibilities
- Clarify the aim of the workplace
- Establish clean and unaccountable practice
- Give feedback about performance
- Build professional competence, creativity and new ways of working