



Important information for people registering with Multiple Sclerosis Limited

Client Rights and Responsibilities

As a client of MS, you have the **right** to:

- have access to quality services on the basis of your needs and our available resources
- work in partnership with us to develop, implement and monitor a service tailored to meet your needs
- be treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of service provision
- be protected and live in an environment which is free and safe from abuse, neglect and / or exploitation
- decide whether or not you take part in research or training activities
- have access to a qualified interpreter
- have access to an advocate represent you
- have all information we collect about you stored securely and confidentially
- make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the services you receive without fear of retribution or loss of access to services

As a client of MS you have a **responsibility** to:

- treat staff, volunteers and other clients with respect and dignity
- respect the professional standards our organisation expects of our staff
- be responsible for the decisions you make when working in partnership with us
- provide accurate information about services and treatments you have received from other providers
- notify us of any changes to your situation, including change of contact details
- provide us with 24 hours' notice if you are unable to attend an appointment
- acknowledge that we have a duty of care to all our clients. This may mean we are unable to provide a service if we consider it to be inappropriate or it creates an unacceptable risk to any party



Client Privacy & Confidentiality

MS has legal and ethical responsibilities related to the management of personal, health and sensitive information generated during service delivery and is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988) and by the State Privacy laws.

The organisation has policies and procedures on how information is collected, accessed, used, maintained, disclosed and destroyed and how an individual's privacy may be respected, extending to confidentiality. These policies and procedures help the organisation to satisfy its legal and ethical requirements and also to maintain service quality and consistency and are available on the organisation's website.

This information sheet will explain:

- How personal information is collected
- What is collected
- What it is used for
- How we store your information and for how long
- How we keep your information up to date
- How you can access your information

How do we collect your information?

MS collects personal information in a number of ways, including:

- directly from you, for example, when you provide information by phone, in contact forms or any other agreements, or when you submit your personal details through our website or contact email addresses
- from third parties such as your authorised representatives;
- from publicly available sources of information;
- from our own records of how you use our services;

What information do we collect?

This information could include:

- Name
- Address (postal and email)
- Telephone number
- Date of birth
- Occupation
- Reasons for contacting our service
- Persons to contact in case of an emergency
- Medical diagnoses and medical history
- Other health information e.g. health and disability of an individual
- Other information received for our functions and activities

We may also collect personal and health information from third parties such as:

- the individual's family
- the individual's representative or advocate
- other health services

What do we use your information for?

If a person is to receive or has received a service from MS, we will collect and hold their personal information to gain an understanding of the individuals needs so that we can:

- conduct appropriate assessments
- provide effective treatment plans
- provide appropriate advice and information
- provide a range of services
- improve the quality of our service
- administer billing services
- comply with legal requirements under our service and funding agreements

How do we store your information?

All personal and health information is stored securely at MS offices in paper and/or electronic form. The security of personal and health information is important to us and we take all reasonable steps to protect it from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

This includes:

- Requiring our staff to maintain confidentiality
- Document storage security measures i.e. locked cabinets, key security
- Imposing computer access security measures including password protection.
- Tracking paper health records with 'tracer cards'.
- Secure transportation of files in vehicles, by registered post and secure fax methods.
- Providing discrete environments for confidential discussions
- Only allowing access to the 'health record' where the individual seeking access to their own information has satisfied our identification requirements.

Personal and health information in the Health Record is retained for the period of time determined by law and disposed of in a secure manner.

How do we keep your information accurate?

MS takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the personal and health information we collect, use and disclose is accurate, complete and up to date.

We suggest individuals let us know:

- If there are any errors in the information
- Any changes to personal details e.g. name or address, in writing via mail or email.

Clients can amend any information in their records that they consider to be incorrect, incomplete or misleading. Whilst the information held in the health record cannot be removed or destroyed, a correcting statement can be added.

Accessing your own Personal Information – Freedom of Information

The client record is the property of MS; however individuals have a right to access their own records subject to some exceptions allowed by law.

Clients or their authorised representative can make a written request with as much detail as possible, to access personal and health information in the client record to the MS Privacy Officer. The client will be required to complete a 'Request to Access Information' form available on our webpage. The client will be advised that viewing of client records will occur under the supervision of the MS Privacy officer.

When a client or authorised representative seeks copies of information or information to be sent, the written request will be placed in file and information will be sent by registered mail and may incur a fee.

An authorised representative is defined under the Health Record Act as:

- Guardian
- Attorneys under Enduring Power of Attorney
- Agents under the Medical Treatment Act 1988
- Administrators under the Guardianship and Administrator Act 1986
- Parents (in the case of a child without capacity)
- A person otherwise empowered to act or make decisions in the best interest of the person

Disclosing Personal Information

In order to provide clients with a comprehensive and effective service it may be helpful to share their information with other service providers e.g. a doctor or health centre. In this situation, prior to taking any action, clients are asked to give consent for MS to disclose any necessary or requested information from their client record to the other party.

MS will only provide personal and health information to a third party with the individual's consent, however there are occasions where MS must provide information (without individual consent) if bound by legislation or regulatory compliance to do so.

If a person is unable to give consent about the release of their information due to age, physical or cognitive limitations, a decision will be sought from that person's authorised representative.

Signed consent will be required on a 'Consent to Release Confidential information' form. Copies of all paperwork related to the release of the information will be placed in the client's file (paper and electronic version).

Clients are able to request at any stage that they wish to withdraw their consent to release information and hence prevent MSL from disclosing information. This withdrawal of consent needs to be in writing in the client's record with reasons explained. In some cases this may jeopardise the right of the client to receive continued services from MS.



Feedback, Complaints and Compliments

MS is committed to providing high quality services to people with MS and other progressive neurological conditions and to their families and carers.

MS has a commitment to seek and use all feedback to improve service delivery. MS believes that feedback, compliments and complaints can be used to improve what we do for the benefit of all of our clients and customers.

There are 7 core principles of feedback management at MS:

1. Provision of feedback to MS is encouraged
2. Respect, privacy and confidentiality is maintained
3. A timely response is provided
4. Complaints are adequately resolved, serious or unresolved complaints are escalated
5. Documentation of complaints and their resolution is maintained
6. Trends in feedback are monitored and reviewed
7. Staff skills and knowledge in management of feedback is maintained

Compliments, complaints and feedback can be made in any format that meets your needs, such as in writing, telephone, email, fax or face to face, and can be directed to an individual staff member or to management using the contact details below.

MS CONNECT: 1800 042 138

Email: feedback@msaustralia.org.au

Victoria

Multiple Sclerosis Ltd
The Nerve Centre
54 Railway Road
Blackburn Vic 3130

New South Wales

Multiple Sclerosis Ltd
Studdy MS Centre
80 Betty Cuthbert Dr
Lidcombe, NSW 2141

ACT

Multiple Sclerosis Ltd
Gloria McKerrow House
117 Denison Street
Deakin, ACT 2600

If you are not satisfied with the way your concern has been managed efficiently and effectively you have the right to request that the complaint be escalated and at any stage you may make a complaint through an external mechanism for resolving complaints. Below are the details for state and national based ombudsman services.

Victoria

Disability Services Commissioner

Level 30, 570 Bourke Street
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 1800 677 342
Fax: 03 8608 5765
Email:
complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au
Web: www.odsc.vic.gov.au

NSW

NSW Ombudsman

HSBC Centre,
Level 24, 580 George Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 1800 451 524
Fax: 02 9283 2911
Email:
nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

ACT

ACT Ombudsman

Level 5, Childers Square,
14 Childers Street
Canberra City ACT 2601
Phone: 1300 362 072
Fax: 02 6276 0123
Email:
ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Web: www.ombudsman.act.gov.au