

Life's for Living Inc. Family Information Booklet



FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
LIFE'S FOR LIVING INC.

Visit our website - www.lifesforliving.com.au

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BACKGROUND

Over the years many clients and families have told us how overwhelming it was when they first became involved with Life's for Living.

There were many questions they wanted to ask, but were unsure if they should, if they could, and sometimes the questions only became obvious once they were part of the organisation for a number of months.

We hope that this booklet will answer the common concerns and questions that you may have. It is only a starting point and you may have other things you want to know about. Our hope is that you will ask and, hopefully, we will be able to answer. If not, we will point you in the right direction to find the answer.

WELCOME

All of us, the board of management, staff, our clients and their families would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your family and friends to Life's for Living.

Life's for Living believes that good things happen when people work together and therefore we are committed to working with you and informing you about what we do, how we do it, and who is involved.

We believe that each and every person we support has the ability to keep on learning and reaching their full potential and we will strive to ensure that they are given every opportunity to reach this goal.

'when people who are not used to speaking are heard by people who are used to listening, then real change can take place'

Lis Burtnik
Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE OF THE BOOKLET

This booklet contains some introductory Information about Life's for Living and about how we support individuals. We hope this will help reduce some of your anxieties and make the move to our service as smooth and trouble free as possible.

OUR VALUES

- For people with disabilities life is for living
- The pursuit of excellence
- Respect for every client, employee and volunteer
- Openness to change
- Accountability

OUR VISION

People with disabilities are valued and contributing members of the community

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a quality service for people with disabilities to suit their individual needs

CRITICAL PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE DELIVERY

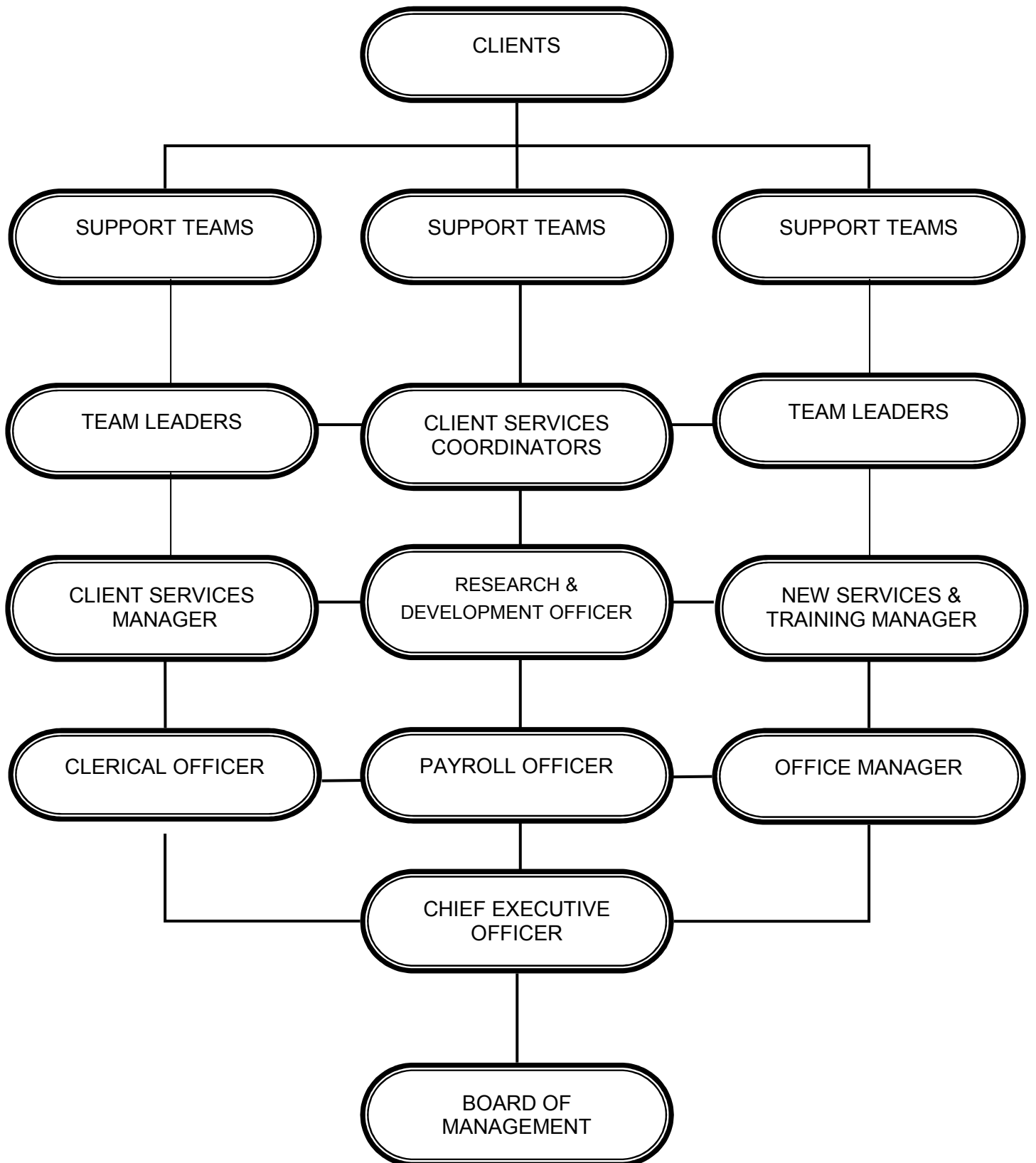
- Each person will have a service planned around their individual needs as determined by the person concerned, their advocate, their family, Life's for Living and their cultural background. **
- Freely given relationships are of critical importance in each person's life. They are valued, supported and actively encouraged.
- Family relationships are sustained and nurtured.
- This service integrates people into their community.
- Each person is supported in gaining advocacy as necessary.

*** This will be dependent on the funding received*

CRITICAL OUTCOMES OF SERVICE DELIVERY

- People will live lives that we would gladly aspire to and want to have.
- People will have friends and other enduring relationships.
- People will be included in and contribute to community and will belong in a variety of informal networks.

LIFE'S FOR LIVING ORGANISATIONAL CHART



HISTORY

Life's for Living began its life in 1987 and was known, until 2002, as Housing Connexion. It owes its existence to a group of committed parents who believed that their sons, daughters or family members deserved to live in the community and not in an institution. They also believed that their adult children with disabilities had the right to live a life that was not that much different from their other siblings, regardless of how much support they required.

The organisation from the very beginning has been committed to ensuring that each person being supported will be respected for their uniqueness and that the service offered would be flexible and responsive to their changing needs. Families and their extended networks are acknowledged as storehouses of the history and uniqueness of each person who is to be supported by the organisation. Their knowledge and expertise is accepted and respected by the organisation and its staff.

Initially Life's for Living only provided support to people with an intellectual disability. Over time the organisation recognised that it could provide similar support to other people with disabilities and/or exceptional needs.

In 2004 the organisation began this new initiative in supporting a client with exceptional and complex health needs. In the following year this number increased to three. Our reputation as an ethical and exceptional service provider has grown due to the manner in which we have provided care and support to people within this group. We have developed networks with professionals who can advise and contribute to ensuring positive outcomes for the people we support.

THE PRESENT

Life's for Living operates across Adelaide, and while initially it only provided support to people over the age of 18 years, it now is able to consider offering support to the younger disability population.

The extent and type of support and assistance that Life's for Living is able to provide is dependent on what the person with a disability requires, as well as the level of funding received. This support may be for a few hours daily, or several times a week, or up to 24 hours a day. It may be provided in the family home or if the person's own home. The person may be living alone or with others.

Support is often of a practical nature, such as teaching skills in home maintenance, shopping, money management, meal planning, health and self-care. A number of people will require support in every aspect of their daily lives. Life's for Living is determined in ensuring that, should this level of intensive support be required, the person will be encouraged to contribute and participate to the best of their ability.

The organisation is committed to not only assist people to lead more autonomous lives through the teaching of practical living skills but also to strengthening their natural friendships and creating opportunities to cultivate new ones. Satisfying social activities and relationships are criteria of a well integrated life.

Whether a person makes the choice of living away from home or remaining in the family residence is a decision that can only be made by the people who will be directly affected by such an option. It must be said though, these decisions are also often affected by any funding received from relevant government departments. Without appropriate funds, a person may have to remain at home far longer than they, and their families, may wish.

For those people who have the appropriate funding and choose to move away from the family home, the timelines for such a move will vary from person to person.

The focus is not on how fast such a move can or should occur, but rather on a planned approach to enable the person to adapt successfully to their new environment.

It is recognised the support that is provided in the family home can at times seem intrusive and impact on the natural flow of family life. Working alongside families to minimise this sense of disruption is an important element of the success of the support being provided.

Family participation and support are recognised as essential elements for, either the successful move from home or, when support is provided within the existing family environment. Continuing consultation with family members is deemed important to the success of the person's ongoing development as well as any move to the community.

Life's for Living does not provide housing to individuals although it does support people to consider housing options. These may be through the government housing authority, Housing SA, through a housing association, the private rental market, or for some people, buying a home of their own.

Some people may move into an existing household, where other people are already supported by the organisation. This occurs when one of the original tenants has left and a vacancy is created.

An admissions criteria is developed for each household whereby the suitability of a new person is considered against the needs of the other person(s) living in the house. While others will be creating a new home either with others or alone. Both activities will be supported by Life's for Living through the planning for and the actual move, though the organisation cannot contribute financially to the move or to any costs associated in the setting up of the household. Life's for Living is only funded to provide the support to people so that they can live in their own home.

The aim of any support provided by the organisation is not to make the person independent of others, rather it is to assist the person to be interconnected with the world around them and therefore raise their status as valued citizens.

Life's for Living receives funding from the Department for Families and Communities (DFC) through the Office for Disability and Client Services (ODACS). The organisation has a funding contract with the ODACS outlining each parties roles and responsibilities regarding the funding and the support provided.

WHO PAYS FOR WHAT?

Generally Life's For Living does not charge any fees to clients. The exceptions are based on individual requirements and some people will choose to pay for all or part of their support when there is no funding allocation or their support needs are not fully funded. Due to the high cost of transport, we are currently considering a transport fee which will come out of people's mobility allowance.

Life's For Living pays wages and other expenses of the support and management staff. Paid activities or social events that a client may attend will be paid by them. If staff support clients to these activities, depending on the cost, and the activity, the costs will be paid by the organisation. In some instances, such as a client holiday where support staff are required, the client may need to pay part or all of the support costs including the associated travel and accommodation costs. These are negotiated with the client and their families well before the event takes place, and all costs are fully explained and documented.

LIFE'S FOR LIVING KEY PEOPLE

Board of Management

Is responsible for the governance of Life's for Living. Governance is the process by which the organisation is directed and controlled. Areas of control include developing the strategic plan, providing leadership to put the plan into action and monitoring the organisation's progress. It is also responsible for policy development, ensuring that the finances of the organisation are responsibly managed and to monitor and support the CEO's performance.

Board members volunteer their time and expertise because they are committed to the mission and objectives of the organisation. Under the constitution there can be up to 12 members.

From time to time the board appoints sub-committees to oversee specific activities within the organisation. People outside of the elected board members may be invited to sit on these committees.

CEO – Lis Burtnik

Is responsible to the board of management for the day to day management of the organisation and ensuring the organisation provides quality support services to its clients.

The CEO advises and informs the board of management on issues including policy development, funding and financial management and legal matters; works with like minded organisations to raise awareness about disability issues and improve services to our clients. The CEO is accountable for the leadership and direction of the organisation in accordance with the aims and objectives of its constitution and its strategic plan.

*** A copy of the constitution and Strategic Plan may be obtained from the Life's for Living office*

Client Services Managers – Karen Tohver and Janet Coster

Are responsible to the CEO for the provision of high quality support services to clients and have delegated responsibility for the effective day to day administration of Life's for Living; assist in the development and implementation of policies and procedures consistent with the objectives of the organisation. Work in cooperation with other service providers to ensure appropriate support for each individual client.

Client Service Managers (CSMs) oversee all support and annual plans for each client and maintain regular contact with families about issues and progress relating to the client and also explain in greater depth how support staff will work with your son, daughter or family member.

Your Client Services Manager is _____

Karen Tohver is also the Quality Assurance Coordinator, is part of the Occupational Health and Safety committee and supports the Client Consultative Committee.

Janet Coster's additional responsibilities include training and new service development.

Client Services Co-ordinators

Are responsible to the Clients Services Managers. They assist the CSM's and provide supervision and guidance to the Team Leaders and support workers.

Team Leaders

Are responsible to the Client Services Co-ordinator or Client Services Managers. They provide leadership for a small team of support staff who work with designated clients. The Team Leaders, together with the support teams, ensure the provision of a range of quality support to people both at home and in the community.

Support Workers

Are responsible to the Team Leaders. They provide support and encourage individuals to live as independently as possible, develop and maintain skills and become valued members of their community.

Office Manager

Lauren Ings

The Office Manager is responsible to the Chief Executive Officer for the day to day management of the office environment and the security of the organisation's records. The Office Manager is also responsible for the information technology systems that support Life's For Living's programmes and services.

Clerical Officer

Kerry Thompson

Is responsible to the Office Manager for the provision of a comprehensive and confidential administrative, reception and clerical service to Life's for Living. The Clerical Officer ensures a high level of support to the CEO and the management team.

Research and Development Officer

Victoria Wright

Is responsible to the Chief Executive Officer. The role of research and development is to develop resources that not only enhance the lives of the people we support, but those of the wider disability community. Another aim is that any money made from the sale of resources is used to assist with decreasing our total reliance on government funding.

The organisation has developed two videos and a resource kit in a CDROM format – "What I'd Like You To Know About Me" which are widely used in the disability sector and in the TAFE system as a teaching tool.

RESOURCES DEVELOPED BY LIFE'S FOR LIVING

**** “Setting the Standards” Video**

This video explains the National Disability Standards and what each person should expect from the organisation in relation to the service they receive.

**** “Supporting the Standards” Video**

This video is also about the National Disability Standards - but the focus is on the support staff and how, by following the Standards, they can provide support to people with a disability, in an effective and ethical manner.

“What I’d Like You To Know About Me” CDROM

Is a resource kit developed specifically for service providers, families and others working with people with disabilities to develop person-centred profiles that reflect who the person is.

**Copies of these are available at the Life’s for Living office

NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep parents, families, friends, clients and staff informed about what is happening within the organisation.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter. Family events, clients’ achievements and celebrations, any humorous snippets of information, favourite recipes, are all welcomed.

The CEO reports on various organisational achievements, special areas of interest and any significant milestones. “Living Proof” is published four times a year, so there is plenty of time to get your news to the office!

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DISABILITY SERVICES

Standard 1 Service Access

Each person with a disability seeking a service has access to a service on the basis of relative need and available resources.

Standard 2 Individual Needs

Each person with a disability receives a service which is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his or her individual needs and personal goals.

Standard 3 Decision Making and Choice

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his or her daily life in relation to the services he or she receives.

Standard 4 Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality

Each person with a disability has a right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life is recognised and respected.

Standard 5 Participation and Integration

Each person with a disability is supported and encouraged to participate and be involved in the life of the community.

Standard 6 Valued Status

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to develop and maintain skills and to participate in activities that enable him or her to achieve valued roles in the community.

Standard 7 Complaints and Disputes

Each person with a disability is free to raise and have resolved, any complaints or disputes he or she may have regarding the agency or the service.

Standard 8 Service Management

Each agency adopts sound management practices which maximise outcomes for consumers.

Standard 9 Policy and Program Context for Self Employment

Each person with a disability enjoys working conditions comparable to those of the general workforce.

Standard 10 Service Recipient Training and Support

The employment opportunities of each person with a disability are optimised by effective and relevant training and support.

Standard 11 Staff Recruitment, Employment and Training

Each person employed to deliver services to a person with a disability has relevant skills and competencies.

Standard 12 Protection of Human Rights and Freedom From Abuse

The service provider acts to prevent abuse and neglect and to uphold the legal and human rights of service recipients.

CLIENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Life's for Living has developed client policies and procedures in consultation with clients and their advocates. A personalised manual about these policies and the National Disability Standards is developed for each person who receives a service from the organisation. *(Copies of the manual are available from the office.)*

Life's for Living is committed to our clients in ensuring they receive a high quality support service.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Life's for Living is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of clients and their families. Due to the high support needs of many clients, Life's for Living often requires a great deal of information about clients in order to safely meet individual needs.

The information collected will be in a safe place and be separate from information of other clients. Family members are most welcome and are encouraged to look at their family member's file(s), unless the client requests that this does not happen.

Our staff are trained to comply with our obligations under the Privacy Act.

A copy of Life's for Living's Privacy Policy can be obtained from the office.

PLEASE NOTE: All staff are required to read, understand and comply with all organisational policies and procedures. Each new staff member has an extensive orientation program to ensure they know what is expected of them as support staff.

MEETING CLIENT HEALTH CARE NEEDS

A number of Life's for Living clients have significant health care needs. The organisation has established systems and practices to ensure that each person's health care needs are met to ensure their optimum health.

Health care plans are developed for those who require this and are reviewed on annual basis, or sooner, if their health status changes.

All staff are trained to give medication and must follow strict guidelines that are set by qualified nursing staff. Re-training of staff on these medication procedures happens on annual basis or sooner if the client's needs change.

Other training that occurs on a regular basis includes:

- Epilepsy
- Diabetes
- Manual handling
- Behaviour management
- Nutrition and food handling

LIFE'S FOR LIVING ON CALL SYSTEM

Life's for Living has an emergency on-call service staffed by members of the Management Team and Team Leaders.

The CEO is also available to the rostered on-call person for advice and assistance. The on-call person may not be able to resolve an issue themselves, however they will ensure the appropriate person addresses the issue and provides support and guidance.

The CEO is available for any family queries/issues which occur outside of normal office hours. Contact numbers will be made available to families at the time your son, daughter or family member becomes a client of the organisation. Clients who live alone are supported to understand how the system works so that they can contact us in an emergency.

ANNUAL PLANS

Life's for Living Inc. develops Annual Plans every 12-18 months for clients. Annual Plans are a way of trying to improve the quality of life for people we support. They involve planning to achieve a person's life goals, dreams and aspirations.

The most important aspect of Annual Planning is that the person should be **central to the planning, and as involved as possible. People who are not able to** take active role in the planning process will need someone to represent them, and to speak up for their interests. Annual Planning is an ongoing process.

The planning process will involve exploring many aspects of a person's life including their involvement in the local community and with other services that they access, or need to use.

Annual Planning looks at a person's life as a whole, and not just the parts that seems easiest to change. It is important to remember that people have a **right** to be involved with the planning of their life.

When a person is able to make an informed choice about their life, and fully understand the consequences of that decision, this must always take priority over the views of others (unless there are very special circumstances).

RESPECT FOR FAMILIES

Families are usually the greatest source of knowledge about their son, daughter or family member. Each family develops an individual and unique way of operating and maintaining their family structure. Life's for Living will endeavour to ensure that staff respect the person and their family values in aspects of their work.

Guidelines for Life's for Living staff

- Accept and value the role of family in a person's life.
- Be cautious not to make judgements about the family's values
- Do not be intrusive or attempt to make changes to the family systems
- Listen to and acknowledge what is being said with respect
- Recognise that within this unique system, families may sometimes determine priorities which conflict with a support worker decision
- Always demonstrate a sensitive and respectful approach to resolving any such differences
- Ask families what is needed and not tell them that is "what they can have"

INVOLVEMENT WITH FAMILIES

Life's for Living believes that families are essential to the continuing well being of the people we support. We encourage this continued involvement with not only the client but also the organisation.

Some of the things families are already involved with include:

- Assisting with handy person chores around the house and gardening
- Annual working bees at the house
- Becoming members of the board of management
- Supporting clients to medical and other appointments
- AGM attendance and other significant events
- Participating in Family Forums
- Being a member of the Fundraising Committee
- Contributing to fundraising events

VISITING CLIENTS

A number of households are shared with two or more people. Visits by families and friends are strongly encouraged and supported. We do request that people remain courteous and respectful of the needs and privacy of all the people in the household.

FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRES

Every 2 years a questionnaire is sent out to families to seek their views about the support provided to their family member. Life's For Living recognises that questionnaires can offer appear daunting. To assist with this process the Chief Executive Officer will contact families soon after the questionnaire is sent out and arrange to meet with them to discuss the questions and to assist them with the process should this be required.

RAISING ISSUES AND/OR MAKING A COMPLAINT

Life's for Living is committed to providing the best possible service it can. In order to maintain this goal we encourage and need to receive feedback from clients, their families and those that are involved with the people we support.

We are committed to the principle of continuous improvement and therefore every time we send something out to families and others, whether that be a newsletter, a roster, or an information flyer we enclose a "Continuous Improvement Feedback" form, to encourage everyone to help us do better.

It is a fact that we will not always get things right in our service delivery. Clients and families and others who care about them need to be able to have their concerns and complaints resolved quickly and fairly without fear or retribution.

CLIENTS AND FAMILIES RIGHTS

Clients and families and advocates have the right to:

- Have their concerns and complaints treated confidentially
- Be treated with courtesy and consideration when making a complaint
- Know their rights will be protected and they will not be punished in any way for raising a concern
- Be told what can and will happen when they raise a concern or complaint including the time when a response will be issued
- Have a friend or advocate to support them
- Know they can always approach senior management
- Have direct access to the CEO if they wish to raise a complaint
- Pursue their complaint through other avenues if they are unhappy with the outcome
- Be informed about the nature of services and support to be provided, including any fees and charges required

CLIENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Clients and families and advocates are encouraged to undertake the following responsibilities. They should –

- If the person making the complaint feels comfortable, address the concern or complaint directly with the individual or their immediate supervisor
- Maintain a consideration of the needs and rights of other clients and their families or advocates
- Respect the right of staff to a safe and courteous work environment, which in most cases is the client's home

NOTES

Hint: As you are reading this booklet, if you have any queries or questions, just jot them down here so you don't forget.