

PRIVACY POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy ensures that Helping Hands Community Services collects, stores, uses, and discloses personal and sensitive information in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), the NDIS Practice Standards, and other applicable legislation. It safeguards the privacy and dignity of participants, staff, and stakeholders.

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, and service users.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Helping Hands Community Services is committed to protecting personal information and upholding the privacy rights of individuals. We value transparency, accountability, and respect in managing personal data and adhere to the following principles:

- Collect only the information necessary to provide quality services.
- Ensure all information is securely stored and accessible only by authorised personnel.
- Allow individuals to access and correct their information.
- Respond promptly to privacy breaches in accordance with the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) Scheme.
- Avoid unauthorised disclosure of information, including during cross-border data transfers.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Service Manager: Ensures compliance with privacy legislation, monitors privacy practices, and addresses breaches.

Staff and Volunteers: Adhere to the procedures outlined in this policy and report privacy concerns or breaches immediately.

Participants and Stakeholders: Have the right to access, correct, and provide feedback on how their information is handled.

4. DEFINITIONS

Personal Information: Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

Sensitive Information: Includes information about health, disability, ethnicity, and other personal characteristics as defined by the Privacy Act 1988.

Data Breach: An unauthorised access, disclosure, or loss of personal information.

5. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

Personal information is collected directly from participants or their representatives, except where impractical.

Consent is obtained for the collection of sensitive information, and individuals are informed of how their data will be used.

Information is only collected for service delivery, administration, and compliance purposes.

6. WEBSITE DATA PRACTICES

6a. Collection of Website Data

Helping Hands Community Services collects certain information when you visit our website to enhance your experience and provide our services effectively. This information may include:

- Information you provide through forms (e.g., contact forms, subscription forms).
- Technical data, such as your IP address, browser type, and operating system, collected via cookies and similar technologies.
- Interaction data, such as pages visited, links clicked, and time spent on the website.

6b. Use of Cookies and Tracking Technologies

We use cookies and similar technologies to:

- Improve website functionality and user experience.
- Analyse website traffic and usage patterns using tools like Google Analytics.
- Offer relevant content based on your preferences.

You can manage your cookie preferences by adjusting your browser settings. Disabling cookies may limit some of the functionality of our website.

6c. Social Media Interactions

When you engage with our content on social media platforms (e.g., liking, sharing, or commenting), your activity is subject to the privacy policies of those platforms. Helping Hands Community Services does not control the data collected by these third-party platforms but may use publicly visible data to engage with you or respond to queries.

6d. Third-Party Services

We may integrate third-party tools and services into our website, such as:

- Payment gateways for online transactions.
- External forms or surveys for feedback and inquiries.

These third-party providers may collect or process your data in accordance with their privacy policies. We recommend reviewing their privacy statements for more details.

6e. Security of Website Data

All information collected through our website is stored securely using industry-standard encryption and security protocols. Access is restricted to authorised personnel to protect against unauthorised access, loss, or misuse.

6f. Sharing of Website Data

We do not sell or share personal information collected through the website with third parties for marketing purposes. Data may be shared with third parties only:

- With your explicit consent.
- To comply with legal obligations or requests from regulatory authorities.
- To deliver services, such as through integrated third-party tools (e.g., cloud hosting).

6g. Your Rights Regarding Website Data

You have the right to:

- Request details of the information collected via the website.
- Opt out of cookies and tracking technologies.
- Request corrections to your data if you believe it is inaccurate or incomplete.

7. USE AND DISCLOSURE

Personal information is only used for the purpose for which it was collected or as required by law. Information may be shared with third-party providers (e.g., cloud storage services) only where:

- Written consent has been obtained.
- The provider complies with Australian privacy standards.

Helping Hands will ensure equivalent data protections are in place for cross-border disclosures.

8. ACCESS AND CORRECTION

Individuals can request access to their personal information by contacting the Service Manager.

Corrections can be requested to ensure the information held is accurate, up-to-date, and complete. Requests will be actioned within 30 days, as required by APP 13.

9. STORAGE AND SECURITY

Hard copy records are stored in a secure room or in locked cabinets, and electronic records are password-protected with regular backups.

Records are archived and kept for the following periods:

Client and financial records: Retained for 7 years.

Personnel files: Retained for 7 years post-employment.

Sensitive records (e.g., relating to child safety): Retained indefinitely if required by law.

10. DATA BREACH MANAGEMENT

In the event of a suspected data breach, the following steps will be taken:

- a) **Identify and Contain:** The Service Manager will assess and immediately address the breach.
- b) **Evaluate Risk:** Assess whether the breach is likely to result in serious harm to individuals.
- c) **Notify Affected Parties and OAIC:** If serious harm is likely, notify individuals and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).
- d) **Mitigate and Review:** Take steps to prevent future breaches and review the breach management plan.

All breaches are recorded in the Data Breach Register.

11. CLIENT AND STAFF EDUCATION

Participants are educated about their privacy rights during the onboarding process. Staff receive annual training on privacy legislation, data handling, and breach management.

12. REGULAR AUDITS AND REVIEWS

Privacy practices are audited annually to ensure ongoing compliance with legislation and standards.

This policy is reviewed biennially or when legislative changes occur.

13. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

Individuals can provide feedback or lodge complaints about privacy practices via email, phone, or in writing to the Service Manager using the following contact details:

hello@helpinghandsinc.org.au

1300 11 13 11

PO Box 3397

Victoria Point West, QLD, 4165

Australia

Complaints are acknowledged within 5 business days and resolved promptly.