

Privacy Policy

The standards of service

You can expect DCO staff to:

- Be courteous and honest in our dealings with you
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality, meeting our obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988*
- Provide accurate information
- Be sensitive to issues of cultural diversity, disability and other special needs
- Act on your request in a professional and courteous manner
- Respond to phone calls, faxes or emails within 24 hours or the next working day
- Reply to correspondence within 15 working days

We support your right to:

- Bring a friend or advocate with you to your appointments
- Discuss with the Area Manager if, for any reason, you want to change your Social Worker or Military Support Officer
- Ask to access information held by the Defence Community Organisation about you in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

You can help us by:

- Treating our staff with courtesy.
- Giving us sufficient and accurate information to enable us to assist you properly
- Providing feedback and comments on our performance

If you are satisfied

We would like to hear from you if you are happy with the service you have received. This allows recognition of good service by our staff.

If you are dissatisfied

You have a right to raise concerns at any time if you are dissatisfied with our performance or our services. We take complaints very seriously and have a formal complaints process so we can respond quickly. This also allows us to identify areas where we can improve our services.

If you are dissatisfied with our performance please raise the issue with the case manager involved. We will immediately begin investigating the matter and inform you of the outcome.

If you are still not satisfied, you can follow a number of steps:

- Speak with the Area Manager
- If you are still not satisfied, you can speak or write to the Regional Director
- If you are still not satisfied, you can write to the Director General
- You have the option to write to the Minister for Defence or your local Member of Parliament or Senator

You also have the right to contact the Commonwealth and Defence Force Ombudsman on 1300 362 072.

Contact the DCO

The DCO consists of DCO Offices across Australia. Their telephone numbers are on the DCO website at http://www.defence.gov.au/DCO/contact_us.htm

Your local DCO Office can be contacted on:

Families thriving in the Defence Community

What is Personal Information

Personal information means information about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can be ascertained, from the information.

Defence Community Organisation (DCO) collects personal information in order to provide quality services, on behalf of Command, to Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families.

DCO, in collecting personal information of current ADF members and/or their family circumstances, is required to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* which regulates the manner in which the organisation collects, handles, stores, secures, maintains, provides access to, alters, uses and discloses personal information.



What information is recorded and from whom

The type of information collected depends on the circumstances, nature of request and the service being delivered.

DCO may request information on:

- Family circumstances
- Relationships
- Health
- Supports

Information recorded is gathered through:

- Written reports or letters
- Specialist reports
- Interviews
- Consultations
- Defence forms

DCO may request information from:

- ADF member
- Family of ADF member
- Medical practitioners
- Allied health workers
- Command and military agencies
- Community services or agencies
- Teachers or educators

This information may be recorded as a social work report, case notes, DCO case plan, DCO Intake or Client Contact Form and filed in a DCO client file.

How we use your information

Your information is collected so that we can provide you with appropriate professional assistance, prepare reports to Command in relation to member circumstances and for planning and evaluation of our services.

Who has access to the information and under what circumstances depends on your circumstances and the nature of the request for DCO services. Information may be used by the ADF member's Commanding Officer or another relevant Defence authority such as a Service Career Manager.

Disclosure of your information

DCO may sometimes need to disclose personal information about your personal and/or family circumstances to other agencies or organisations in the health, community, medical, educational or legal areas.

This may be in circumstances where:

- Disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of yourself or another person;
- You have been told in a valid Privacy Statement, or you are reasonably likely to know, that information of that kind is usually passed to that person, body or agency;
- You have consented to the disclosure;
- The disclosure is required or authorised by or under law (such as a court subpoena or authority under child protection legislation); or
- The disclosure is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the protection of the public revenue.

Accuracy of your information

DCO endeavours to ensure the information we collect, use and disclose is accurate and correct. Clients are informed of information in relation to them provided in reports prepared for an ADF member's Commanding Officer or relevant Defence authority. At this time the client can correct any inaccuracies or note differences. Where information cannot be provided due to limits of the organisation this is explained to the client.

Client Consent

Clients are asked to provide written consent:

- When their information is being disclosed to other organisations/agencies or persons outside Defence; or
- Where they have not been made aware in the Privacy Statement that the information they have provided may be disclosed, unless such disclosure is authorised by the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Access to your information

The right to access documents is given under section 11 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. Further guidance is provided in DI(G) ADMIN 27-1 *Freedom of Information Act Implementation in the Department of Defence*.

All client requests to access their records or DCO file must in the first instance be forwarded in writing to the relevant DCO area office.

Privacy Statement

Providing a Privacy Statement is a legal obligation under the *Privacy Act 1988*. A Privacy Statement is a means by which Defence ensures that an individual, from whom it is collecting personal information, is generally aware of:

- The purpose for which the information is being sought;
- Whether the collection is required or authorised by or under law, and if so the appropriate references; and
- To whom Defence would normally provide the information, both within, and external to, Defence.

Clients should receive a Privacy Statement prior to any personal information being requested.