



ST JOHN OF GOD

Geelong Hospital

A starter guide for Consumer Representatives

St John of God Geelong Hospital acknowledges that the information contained in this resource was developed drawing upon resources from the Consumer Health Forum of Australia.

Introduction

Welcome, we are delighted that you are interested in becoming a Consumer Representative as part of our St John of God Geelong Hospital (SJGGH) Consumer Advisory Group (CAG). It is widely recognised that consumers can bring unique insights, expertise and knowledge together with a consumer/community perspective. SJGGH considers this input to be invaluable in determining consumer's expectations about healthcare.

The Consumer Representative role is highly regarded and we look forward to your participation.

Purpose of this information

This guide has been developed to support you in your role as consumer representative on the CAG at our Hospital. This guide provides some general information/access to relevant links about SJGGH organisational structure, the organisational processes, its policy, planning and resources. This guide also provides some useful tips to assist you in developing your skills and knowledge in contributing the consumer perspective to the Group.

We welcome your comments/feedback /suggestions to improve and ensure this guide is a relevant and useful resource. We will also endeavor to support you in this role in any way we can. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information or support:

Executive Administration
Tel: (03) 5226 8888
Email: info@sjog.org.au

Important Reading

We invite you to read more about our hospital on our website. Please advise if you cannot access this information online and we can arrange a time to view onsite or provide you with hardcopy documentation.

Consumer Advisory Group Terms of Reference

The SJGGH Consumer Advisory Group has a clear Terms of Reference (TOR) which outlines why the Group was established and its role purpose, function and accountability. It defines your role as a consumer representative along with other roles in the committee. It also includes information on membership and a framework for meetings.

It is important that you read the TOR to enable you to effectively participate in the Group within its parameters.

What does CAG involve?

In addition to the CAG meetings outlined in the TOR, you may also be invited to participate in tasks/assignments outside of the scheduled meetings. These may include:

- Taking part in walk around audits
- Completing surveys
- Participation in focus groups
- Participation in the development, review including providing feedback on publications, brochures, forms, information and documents used by consumers

Your role as a SJGGH Consumer Representative

The role of Consumer Representative is defined in the TOR. To further expand on the TOR definition, your role is to provide a consumer perspective and balance the views of health professionals and other stakeholders so that these are reflected in SJGGH service delivery of health care services.

The role of the consumer representative may also include the following as part of the meeting agenda:

- Review trends in compliments and complaints and where appropriate make suggestions to improve the partnering with consumers.
- Monitoring of patient satisfaction reports and patient feedback.
- Review SJGGH performance reports related to patient safety and quality.

SJGGH values the role of Consumer Representatives and is committed to further development of individuals and the group.

How can I be an effective Consumer Representative?

As a health consumer, you bring your unique specialist knowledge and expertise from your life experiences which may have included:

- A health condition you are affected by
- Experience in using a health service (s)
- Experience as a carer, patient, family member or friend of a health consumer
- Being an active member of your local community

Being a member of a committee and the process may seem unfamiliar to some representatives whilst others may be comfortable with the format. Here are some tips to consider:

Before Meetings

- Planning and preparation before the meeting will help you to be more at ease and enable you to effectively present the consumer perspective.
- Submit agenda items within the required timeframe.
- Gather information about the meeting venue, time and place – note security and parking requirements.
- Review the minutes from the last meeting.
- Review agenda and read everything carefully to inform yourself and gather views on issues.
- Note down any areas that you wish to clarify or discuss at the meeting.
- Seek a briefing or further information if you consider it necessary.

Give yourself time to adjust to the consumer representative role and new environment, it may take several meetings before you feel comfortable and familiar with the meeting procedures and issues

General Tips at meetings and other forums

- Recognise your own expertise and remember that you are the one with the skills and knowledge when it comes to understanding the consumer perspective.
- Be assured you are in a safe, respectful environment and therefore you can speak up, ask questions, provide input or seek clarification without judgement.
- Try to also think about issues/situations with a broader consumer experience or view, rather than just your own personal story.
- Remember to always think about the effect on consumers when analysing an issue.
- Be logical, reasoned and respectful when challenging or presenting a view or issue.
- Remember each change you contribute as a consumer representative no matter how small is valuable and will provide benefit to consumers in the long-term.

Question Bank - Key questions to consider in reviewing, analysing & questioning

- Is a new proposal safe and fair?
- Are the choices for consumers clear and well defined?
- What evidence is this based on?
- Does it meet all the relevant consumer's needs?
- Do we know the needs of all affected consumers?
- Are decisions followed up by action? If not, why might this be?
- What are the implications of the new initiative/program/service?
- What has worked in the past?
- What didn't work and why?
- What barriers were/may be encountered?
- Is there potential for damage to the trust relationship, how can this be mitigated?
- What action needs to be taken?
- What can be learned from this experience?
- What can be used in the future?
- How will we measure that a change has been effective?

Definitions

Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Consumer		As referenced in this guide, a consumer in this context is defined as a user or a potential user of SJGGH health services. This includes patients as well as their carers, families and friends.
Consumer Advisory Group	CAG	
Consumer Representative		As referred to in this guide, a consumer representative is a consumer as outlined above that is appointed as a member of the Consumer Advisory Group.
St John of God Geelong Hospital	SJGGH	
Terms of Reference	TOR	As referred to in this guide, the terms of reference describe the purpose, structure, membership and function of the SJGGH Consumer Advisory Group.

Checklist before getting started

Name: _____

Paperwork/Documents	Completed date	Signed
Voluntary services agreement form		
Privacy, Confidentiality and Security Agreement		
Fit 2 Work Police check		
Original documentation to be submitted for 100 point check e.g. passport, drivers licence		
Consumer Representative volunteer ID card/badge		
Orientation		
Meeting with relevant SJGGH Director/s		
SJGGH Orientation for Consumer Representatives		

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