



# Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) Information Sheet

Do you need homelessness or social housing service support? If you have a problem with a homelessness assistance or social housing service - such as the transitional housing management (THM) program, a support service or a rooming house - Council to Homeless Persons' (CHP) Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) can help.

## What is HAS?

HAS is the key advocacy service for consumers who are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

The goal of HAS is to achieve mutually beneficial resolutions for consumers and service providers.

Some examples of problems you might want help with include:

- your rights not being respected
- breach of privacy and confidentiality
- not understanding information you have been given
- not knowing the best way to resolve an issue
- not receiving the service you believe you have a right to
- discrimination
- not being treated with dignity and respect
- being excluded from a service
- feeling unsafe in accommodation

## How do we help?

CHP believes consumers should be aware of their rights and empowered to meaningfully participate in the homelessness system.

Each request for support is different, however the focus is always on trying to resolve the problem.

HAS will be guided by you about how to respond; because each person has different needs and is looking for a different outcome, the support varies from case to case.

HAS will advocate on your behalf, provide you with accurate information and advise you about your rights.

As a guide to what you can expect from HAS, responses might include:

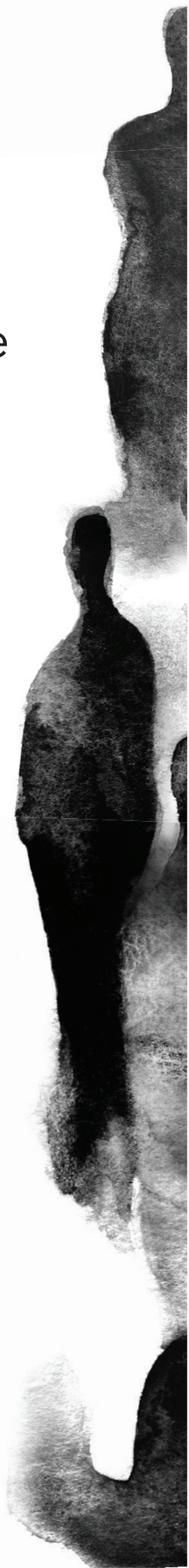
- clarifying what is happening and trying to sort out any confusion or misunderstanding
- contacting the relevant service, discussing the problem and how best to resolve it
- support to negotiate complaint processes
- supporting consumers at a meeting with a service
- referral to a range of services such as material aid, support and external complaint bodies
- writing support letters
- mediation
- problem-solving

## Contact us

Angela Kyriakopoulos is the HAS Advocate.

You can contact Angela via email at [angela@chp.org.au](mailto:angela@chp.org.au) or by phone on 1800 066 256 or 9415 6200; please ask for HAS.

Alternatively you can drop in to 2 Stanley Street Collingwood or HAS can come to you.



#### Our approach

HAS recognises your right to live with dignity and bases its support activities on this rights-based approach - its work is underpinned by the principles, rights and responsibilities outlined in the Consumer Charter for Homelessness Assistance and the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards.

These documents can be found at:

- [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/561853/consumer\\_charter\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/561853/consumer_charter_guidelines.pdf)
- [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/583673/Homelessness-Assistance-Program-Guidelines-06-09-revised.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/583673/Homelessness-Assistance-Program-Guidelines-06-09-revised.pdf)

#### Useful complaint-related links

- Commonwealth of Australia Ombudsman: A good practice guide to effective complaint handling  
[www.comb.gov.au/publications](http://www.comb.gov.au/publications)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Advice Line:  
1300 292 153
- Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria:  
(03) 9603 8370 or 1800 658 528 (free call for rural areas)
- Tenants Union of Victoria Advice Line:  
(03) 9416 2577 (Tenants, residents and organisations) [www.tuv.org.au](http://www.tuv.org.au)
- Disability - Office of the Public Advocate  
(03) 9603 9500 1300 309 337  
[www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)
- Public Interest Law Clearing House  
(for legal help): 03 8636 4444  
<http://www.pilch.org.au/contact>

#### More information

For more information about CHP or the HAS, visit our website at [www.chp.org.au](http://www.chp.org.au)

