



ACT  
Mental Health  
Consumer Network

28 April 2026

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Dear Anna

### **Review of Canberra Health Services Procedure: Consumer Mobile and Recording Devices Management**

This letter has been prepared by the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (the Network) in response to the invitation from Canberra Health Services (CHS). It incorporates verbal feedback received from consumers in relation to the Canberra Health Services Procedure: Consumer Mobile and Recording Devices Management (the Procedure). The Network welcomes the invitation to provide feedback on the Procedure.

Consumers<sup>1</sup> highlighted the following issues for consideration and review:

1. Consumers expressed that the distinction between authorised and unauthorised use of mobile and recording devices would benefit from additional explanation and practical examples. Without sufficient detail, there

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<sup>1</sup> *The Network uses the term 'consumer' because it is the established and widely understood descriptor across ACT legislation, policy frameworks and advisory structures, ensuring clarity and consistency in our systemic advocacy. At the same time, we recognise that people with lived experience do not all identify with the same language, and that terms such as 'people with lived experience' and 'peer' are increasingly used in contemporary contexts were relevant. Our approach is to retain 'consumer' where required for system engagement, while respecting individuals' right to self-identify in the way that best reflects their experience. This supports inclusion, aligns with national lived experience guidance, and maintains the Network's authority and effectiveness within the mental health system.*

is a risk of inconsistent interpretation by staff and uncertainty for consumers. Providing clearer guidance in this area would improve transparency and support more consistent practice. Consumers also identified a lack of clarity regarding access to documentation related to unauthorised recordings (p. 6). Clarifying who can access this information and how it is managed in the DHR would help address concerns about transparency and information handling.

2. Feedback further highlighted the importance of improving communication and prevention strategies. Consumers suggested that visible posters or handouts outlining appropriate use of mobile and recording devices be made available. This would help ensure expectations are clearly communicated in advance, reduce misunderstandings, and support a more preventative approach to managing unauthorised use.
3. Consumers noted that the definition of “consumer” in the Scope section (p. 3) could be further refined to reduce potential confusion in practice. While this term is likely to be well understood by staff, the concern appears to relate more to how it may be interpreted by consumers in real-world situations. As this procedure is primarily staff-facing, revision of the definition may not be necessary unless it is shown to affect staff understanding or application. However, this feedback highlights the importance of ensuring that terminology and expectations are clearly communicated to consumers through appropriate channels, to support understanding of their responsibilities within the service environment.
4. Consumers also noted that the Procedure does not sufficiently address how to manage situations involving individuals experiencing mental health conditions. In particular, some consumers may use recording devices as a strategy to manage anxiety or enhance feelings of safety. While the current approach focuses on requesting that recording cease and that material be deleted (p. 5), consumers suggested that additional guidance is needed to ensure responses do not inadvertently escalate distress. Incorporating trauma-informed communication strategies and clearer guidance on providing appropriate mental health support would support a more sensitive and person-centred response.

Consumer feedback suggests that the Procedure is currently more focused on risk management and staff response, with less emphasis on consumer understanding, communication, and support needs. While this reflects the importance of maintaining safety and privacy within the service environment, there is an opportunity to achieve a better balance by more explicitly incorporating consumer-centred and trauma-informed approaches. Strengthening clarity, transparency, and guidance in these areas would support more consistent implementation and contribute to a more respectful and supportive experience for consumers.

If you have any questions or require further clarification regarding this feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us on (02) 6230 5796 or [executive@actmhc.org.au](mailto:executive@actmhc.org.au).

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Procedure. We look forward to receiving further consultation requests in future.

Yours sincerely



Dalane Drexler  
Chief Executive Officer