

**Our Aim:** We are committed to protecting and upholding the rights of individuals to privacy and confidentiality. This means we make sure no personal information is shared with anyone, on purpose or by omission, unless the individual has given their informed consent or in special circumstances where the law allows an “exception”.

## What is United Synergies?

United Synergies is a not-for-profit organisation providing direct services and support to individuals (in particular young people), families and communities, to assist them to achieve their full potential, along with stability and security in their lives.

Our vision for our clients is that they find a *sense of self, sense of place, sense of purpose and sense of belonging*. Our values were formed in the founding of our organisation in 1989, through the dedication and determination of a local community committed to providing better support to young people who were homeless.

The organisation operates within a ‘strengths based’ model to deliver client centred services in child protection foster and kinship care, emergency relief, supported accommodation, targeted suicide bereavement (National StandBy Response Service), social and vocational engagement, and early intervention mental health support.

We provide services to more than 4,000 people annually through an integrated suite of human services. Based on the Sunshine Coast, we deliver services across the Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Wide Bay Region, as well as in partnership with 15 other communities around Australia.

## What does United Synergies do?

We work with clients to help them achieve stability and security in their lives, along with a sense of wellbeing and happiness.

Our services to clients (primarily youth aged 12-25 years) includes assisting them with finding a safe place to live, completing or returning to education, training and employment support, support for young parents and parents facing challenges, support for young people experiencing mental health issues, mentoring within schools and community, support and respite for carers (all ages) and suicide bereavement support (all ages).

## Do I have to share my information with you?

You or your advocate do not have to provide information to United Synergies workers and you can advise the workers anytime that you don’t wish to share information. We only collect enough information for workers to support you in our services.

## What is meant by special circumstances?

In some special circumstances we have to report as part of our **Duty of Care** to protect the community. These circumstances are;

- If you report that you are going to Hurt Yourself or
- You report that you are going to Hurt someone else, or
- If you report someone else has hurt you, or
- Where United Synergies client files are subpoenaed for court,

## Why does United Synergies need to collect my information?

United Synergies services are provided by a variety of funding sources. The funders of our services may request United Synergies to provide information about how we provided services to individuals and what we do in our service. Generally the information provided to our funders is not able to identify you.

## Where would my information be stored?

Your information could be stored in secure electronic overseas storage sites and United Synergies workers monitor the storage. Any paperwork is stored in secured offices and only authorised workers of United Synergies can access the files.

## Will you use my information to market products to me?

United Synergies collects information for the purpose of supporting people and community with our services. Your worker may contact you to advise of new support services or new programs available to you. We may from time to time seek your feedback or comment on the service provided to help improve our programs.

## Who will use the information I supply?

United Synergies workers will use the information provided by you in a consultative process to determine the best support to assist you.

We will only request formal identification to support applications and once the information has been used we will return all copies to you unless they are required to be retained for legal reasons.

Some information may be used to support new application for programs or for improving existing programs.

We will attempt to make the information anonymous, however sometimes this is not possible and you can chose to not provide the information at anytime.

## Who will have access to the information?

United Synergies workers will have access to the information in the course of their duties supporting you. The worker may request you to confirm the current information is correct or you will need to advise the worker of any changes to your information during your time with our service. There may be times where the information is required to be released for legal reasons without your consent.

## Can I see what United Synergies say about me?

You may be able to access records stored by United Synergies by speaking with your worker. The worker will put a request to the appropriate Manager to provide you with the information stored.

Sometimes we are not able to provide you with information if it may breach the privacy of others or if the information is retained by another support agency. We will advise you of how to access the information from the other agency.

## Can I change the information in my record?

You can request a change to the information stored by United Synergies by speaking with your worker.

## If my information is shared without my permission who do I talk to?

You can contact your support worker and discuss the disclosure or you can contact United Synergies directly on 07 5442 4277. If you are not comfortable speaking directly. You could email us at [privacy@unitedsynergies.com.au](mailto:privacy@unitedsynergies.com.au) or write to us at the postal address at the base of this statement. Please include contact information about yourself so we provide you with the outcome of the process or if you are an advocate for an individual we will need to ensure you have authority to act on behalf of the individual.

You could also contact the Australian Information Commissioner 1300 363 992 for advice and information.

## We value your feedback of our services and would like to hear from you. How can you feedback?

### How you can assist us?

Help us to understand what is needed so we can give you the best possible service. Talk with our workers and participate in the consultation activities we conduct, we will listen.

### Tell us if things change for you

Please tell us if there are changes we should know about, for example, changes to your contact details.

### Tell us how we are doing

If something happens that you like or do not like about our service, please let us know. We want to ensure your issues are heard.

You can tell us in a way that suits you:

- Talk to a worker
- Contact us by email: [feedback@unitedsynergies.com.au](mailto:feedback@unitedsynergies.com.au)
- Phone (07) 5442 4277 from 08:30 – 16:30, Monday to Friday
- Write to us at 'United Synergies Ltd, PO Box 365, Tewantin, QLD 4565'