

Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places



Plain English Guide

The Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places helps workers and police officers engage and support people who are experiencing homelessness.

Your rights when experiencing homelessness

You have the same rights as any person to:

- be in public places
- participate in public activities or events
- carry and manage your own belongings
- ask for help, or say no to help.

When should workers come and talk to you?

A worker/police officer may approach you if:

- you ask for help
- you look upset or like you need help
- your behaviour makes you unsafe, or people around you unsafe
- you might, or have, damaged property, the environment or places of cultural value
- you are staying in a place that is unhealthy or unsafe for you, or people around you. For example being out in times of very bad weather, or if you are staying in unsafe buildings
- you are a child or young person under the age of 18 at risk of harm; or you are under the age of 16 and homeless
- you are a child or young person up to age of 18 and known to be a 'child in care'
- the worker/police officer wants to give you information.

Agencies and organisations have policies and procedures that tell them how they must work. Workers/police officers must be careful and thoughtful about how they use these policies.

You do not have to speak to a worker, but workers/police officers need to make sure you and other people are safe. Police officers also need to enforce laws and regulations.

What should the worker/police officer do?

If the worker/police officer approaches you in these situations, they must:

- be understanding
- respect you and your culture
- get you an interpreter if you need or ask for one (including Auslan)
- get a culturally appropriate support worker for you (where possible) if you would like one
- help you to feel safe
- help you to understand any information they give you.

How can a worker/police officer help you?

The worker/police officer can help you if you want help. The worker/police officer may give you:

- advice and information
- help to contact local services
- a phone number or place you can go to get more help.

Unless you are at risk, the worker/police officer cannot share your information without your permission.

Feedback and complaints

If the worker/police officer does not follow the Protocol or you are not happy with the worker/police officer's behaviour, you can make a complaint or provide feedback.

You can do this by contacting the agency or service where the worker/police officer works.

For more information

Visit dcj.nsw.info/engagewell

Email homelessness.strategy@dcj.nsw.gov.au