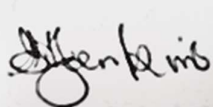


AGED SERVICES: SOCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

Date approved	27/6/22
Previous titles	Service Delivery Policy and Procedures 2010 Access to Services 21/9/18
Previous versions	2018

Signature by Management representative	
	Chairperson, Suzanne Jenkins



AGED SERVICES: SOCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

Internal ECS References	
<i>In S:\0 CURRENT POLICY & PROCEDURES:</i>	<i>In S:\1 CURRENT FORMS:</i>
<i>Aged Services: CHSP Compliances Policy</i>	<i>Fit to Attend Social Groups questionnaire</i>
<i>Aged Services: Access to Services Policy</i>	<i>Fit to Attend Exercise questionnaire</i>
<i>Planning & Evaluation Policy</i>	<i>Letter to Medical Practitioner</i>
<i>Aged Services: Support Planning Policy</i>	<i>Aged Services Client Information Form</i>
<i>WHS Policy</i>	<i>Incident Report</i>
<i>COVID Management Plan</i>	<i>Schedule of Fees</i>
<i>Financial Management Policy</i>	<i>various in S:\2 BROCHURES & FLYERS</i>
<i>Workforce Policy</i>	<i>Information About ECS Activities in S:\2 OFFICE SYSTEMS</i>
<i>Aged Services: Risk Governance Policy</i> <i>Duty Of Care Policy</i>	<i>Client Notes, Wellness and Reablement Support Plan, Volunteer Worksheet, Venue Checklist, Group Feedback Template, Group Registrations Templates in S:\2 current AGED SERVICES TEAM</i>
<i>Aged Services: Communicating With Clients Policy</i>	<i>individual client information in S:\0 current data base, H:\</i>
<i>ECS Structure</i>	<i>individual job descriptions in H:\, M:\</i>

External References	
https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/common-wealth-home-support-programme-chsp-manual	<i>Aged Care Quality Standards at</i> https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/standards
https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/common-wealth-home-support-programme-guidelines	
https://www.myagedcare.gov.au	

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

ECS is committed to the delivery of quality Social Support Services to assist older people to maintain connections to their community and to live the life they choose.

1.1 Definitions

client = term used across ECS programs and policy documents instead of “consumer”, which is specific to Aged Care

COVID = COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic [2019-current]

My Aged Care = gateway to Australian Government Aged Care services, comprising of a call centre, website and assessors, using standardised tools and client records and linked to providers through an online Service Provider Portal

1.2 Acronyms

CHSP = Commonwealth Home Support Programme [Australian Government Aged Care funding received by ECS]

ECS = Engadine Community Services

2. GENERAL POLICY

ECS is a provider of social support services in individual and group settings to enable older people to participate in community life and interact socially with others. All staff, including volunteers, must adhere to the processes and procedures outlined in this Policy in delivering social support to clients. ECS social support models will be known about by the community, accessible, clearly communicated and reviewed to ensure ongoing relevance and quality.

They include services funded through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), so this policy has been designed for that context, and any funding used must meet the purpose of supporting older people to participate in community life.

3. THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

3.1 Types of Social Support

The *Commonwealth Home Support Programme Manual* defines two service types funded in the Community and Home Support stream of CHSP to provide entry-level support services to frail older people to assist them to live independently at home and in the community:

Social support - Individual is assistance provided by a companion (paid worker or volunteer) to an individual, either within the home environment or while accessing community services, where the support’s primary purpose is to help meet client need for social contact and/or company to participate in community life. Example supports include:

- Visiting services
- Telephone and web-based monitoring services (including other technologies that help connect older people to their community eg. to assist people with sensory impairments or those living in geographically isolated areas)
- Accompanied activities (such as assisting the person through accompanied shopping, bill-paying, attendance at appointments and other related activities)

Individual social support is usually provided one-on-one, but may also be provided to more than one person; for example, to an aged couple. Except when the CHSP funder allows specified changes [such as during a pandemic], activities where the client does not attend with the staff member [eg. shopping] are not Social Support.

Social support – Group is defined as assistance for clients to attend and participate in structured activities in a group-based environment, whether in a centre or a community setting. The support’s primary purpose is to develop, maintain and support social interaction and independent living. Example supports include:

- Group-based activities held in or from a facility/centre (eg. pre-set or individually tailored activities promoting physical activity, cognitive stimulation and emotional wellbeing)
- Group excursions conducted by centre staff but held away from the centre. Services may include light refreshments and associated transport and personal assistance

Activities such as social gatherings that do not specifically aim to support older people’s social inclusion and independence are not considered to be Social Support – Group.

3.2 Principles of Social Support at ECS

ECS promotes its individual social support services through its staff, the website, brochures (online and in print) and word of mouth marketing [see *Aged Services: Communicating With Clients Policy*].

It is the responsibility of the ECS Manager and Aged Services Coordinator to induct new staff in the CHSP supports that ECS provides. All new staff should be given copies of current brochures and shown the ECS website, including where to find relevant information about what ECS does in the aged care space. ECS staff should feel confident to explain ECS CHSP supports to prospective clients and to other community members.

All ECS Team members must act professionally and safely as agents of ECS [see policies listed above]. The following are additional requirements when providing social support:

- ECS workers are friendly, but not friends with clients. The relationship is between ECS and the client; parties do not exchange phone numbers or meet outside rostered times.
- All bookings and cancellations occur only via the office and changes will also be updated in the client file. If either volunteer and/or client is not feeling well or showing any symptoms of illness, they must cancel.
- All laws must be followed, including road rules and any specific Health Orders in place at the time of service delivery [eg. masks and other restrictions during a pandemic].
- During face-to-face service, all parties should follow basic hygiene rules, such as coughing or sneezing into their arm or a tissue, dispose of tissues into a bin and washing or sanitising hands. [During a pandemic, additional ground rules may be required eg. social distancing; sanitising hands frequently, particularly after touching any hard or foreign surfaces; avoid touching your face; at clients' homes, use a wipe on their front door if possible before going in, and wash hands or use sanitiser again.]
- Safety comes first at all times, and in the event of an incident or near miss, parties follow ECS' *WHS Policy*. If the client starts to feel unwell while out, an ambulance is called and/or the client returned home immediately.
- ECS workers act with courtesy at all times, and show respect for clients' choice, privacy, possessions and autonomy. The volunteer will only ask open questions [eg. 'how are you?'] and not promote particular topics or ECS services unless the client file contains specific notes/instructions from the Aged Services Coordinator.
- If the client wants to register for a group or bus outing, ECS workers must follow that procedure [ie. email the Aged Services Coordinator, do not alter lists on S:].
- ECS workers follow the *Duty Of Care Policy* and observe clients for signs of abuse.
- Additional rules should be observed when using others' equipment or premises [see 2.3].

3.3 Use of non-ECS Premises

To ensure bus outings are planned to minimise risk to safety and maximise client enjoyment, the Aged Services Coordinator and/or the Lead Volunteer will complete a *Venue Checklist*, ideally before the visit. As well as for future planning, it may be used for actions such as service improvements, volunteer education or newsletter articles. Venue requirements include:

- clean and presentable
- front door bus bay for drop-off and pick-up of clients
- flat entrance with cover from weather
- short distance from entrance to destinations, including lunch
- price range and portion choices for lunch
- parking spot for bus
- accessible, clean toilet facilities.

As ECS does not own a bus, group outings are generally provided in partnership with CHSP-funded community transport services to ensure buses are appropriate to meet the safety and comfort needs of frail, aged clients and allow cost-efficient use by ECS.

Vehicle requirements include:

- clean and presentable
- prominent handrails for entry/exit and extension step
- comfortable seats with low backs to allow vision down bus
- leg room
- aisle room
- pick up/drop off near Engadine

4. INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL SUPPORT

Through its volunteer workforce, and based on client need and volunteer availability, ECS provides social supports on a one-to-one basis, including:

1. **Friendly phone calls:** to a client when they are housebound or unwell, phone calls will be arranged to occur at an agreed time, on a short-term or regular basis
2. **Home visits:** to a client’s home when they cannot get out and about
3. **Community Access, including One-on-one assisted shopping:** when an ECS volunteer escorts the client into the community to complete errands such as shopping, banking etc

Each worker at ECS has a job description outlining their role [see **Workforce Policy**] and other ECS procedures they must follow as a member of the ECS Team. Individual social supports also require specific procedures to ensure consistency and that ECS meets its funding agreement [see also **Aged Services: CHSP Compliances Policy**].

4.1	Procedures For Friendly Phone Calls
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Individual social support friendly phone calls are open to all eligible clients who have been assessed as being able to accept calls safely, but dependent on the availability of an appropriate ECS volunteer. From time-to-time, a client may be deemed ineligible due to circumstances that create risks that ECS cannot control, such as:

- the client’s emotional state presents WHS risks to ECS workers
- the client has bullying and abusive behaviours that are unpredictable

Specific procedures:

1. The Aged Services Coordinator will create and manage a central list of clients
2. The central list will capture the client’s name, how often they are to be called and the commencement date of service
3. The volunteer will use this list only, checking individual client files for specific notes/instructions from the Aged Services Coordinator.
4. If a client does not answer when expected, the volunteer will email the Aged Services Coordinator at the end of the day [see **RISK GOVERNANCE POLICY**].
5. The volunteer will report to the Aged Services Coordinator, or ECS Manager, immediately if the client seems unusually confused, slurring speech or exhibiting other signs of illness or distress.
6. The volunteer will make notes in the client file (see template provided at back of this Policy): facts only, no opinions, do not write an Action [this box is for Coordinator and Manager use only].
7. The volunteer will email the Aged Services Coordinator when notes in the client file indicate a change in circumstance requiring Coordinator follow up [eg. illness, fall, hospitalisation, client requests more services].

4.2	Procedures For Home Visits
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Individual social support home visits are open to all eligible clients who have been assessed as being able to accept a visitor safely, but dependent on the availability of an appropriate ECS volunteer. From time-to-time, a client may be deemed ineligible due to circumstances that create risks that ECS cannot control, such as:

- the client’s emotional state presents WHS risks to ECS workers; or
- the client has bullying and abusive behaviours that are unpredictable and can’t be controlled; or
- the client’s home presents WHS risks to ECS workers; or
- the client is experiencing a health condition which is contagious or unpredictable and can’t be controlled.

Specific procedures:

1. The Aged Services Coordinator will match each volunteer to a client and manage all appointments, which are recorded on the ECS roster [see **WORKFORCE POLICY**].
2. The volunteer will conduct visits according to specific notes/instructions from the Aged Services Coordinator, including access to the property [see **WHS POLICY**].
3. Upon arrival, the volunteer should greet the client and confirm the 2 hour visit limit. If first visit, confirm your name, ID and that appointment had been made.
4. The volunteer should endeavour to enjoy the conversation and morning/afternoon tea, as arranged.
5. The volunteer will immediately notify the Aged Services Coordinator of any change in circumstance requiring Coordinator follow up eg. Obvious illness, sudden loss of weight, client requests more services or shows signs of abuse [see [see **RISK GOVERNANCE POLICY**].].

6. The volunteer will complete a *Volunteer Worksheet* and ask the client to sign. Include personal details later [ie. kilometres and total time and nominate reimbursement, if required; add bank account details if requesting a reimbursement for the first time]
7. No fee is exchanged during the visit. The client will be invoiced on receipt of monthly worksheet at the office per *ECS Schedule of Fees*.

4.3	Procedures For One-To-One Assisted Shopping
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Individual social support outings are open to all eligible clients who have been assessed as being able to attend safely. From time-to-time, an individual may be deemed ineligible due to circumstances that create risks to clients or ECS workers that ECS cannot control, such as:

- the client needs personal care assistance with toileting or eating
- the client is experiencing a health condition which is unpredictable and can't be controlled
- the client is not fit or well enough to sit on a bus and/or enter and exit the vehicle and venue
- the client is unable to manage their own money to pay for drinks, buy their lunch etc
- the client is likely to become confused or disoriented during the outing

Specific procedures:

1. The Aged Services Coordinator will match each volunteer to a client and manage all appointments, which are recorded on the ECS roster [see **Workforce Policy**].
2. The volunteer will conduct visits according to specific notes/instructions from the Aged Services Coordinator, including access to the property [see **WHS Policy**]
3. Upon arrival, the volunteer should greet the client and confirm the 2 hour visit limit; if first visit, confirm name, ID and that appointment had been made
4. If a client does not answer the door when expected, the volunteer will ring the office immediately; next-of-kin will be contacted and Police, if the client absence is not accounted for [see **Aged Services: Risk Governance Policy**]
5. The volunteer will report to the Aged Services Coordinator, or ECS Manager, immediately if the client seems unusually confused, slurring speech or exhibiting other signs of illness or distress [see **Aged Services: Risk Governance Policy**]
6. The volunteer should ensure their car is clean and tidy inside, and the seat belt has been wiped down before the client gets into the car
7. During the service, the volunteer must encourage the client to do for themselves, but assist to ensure safety [ie. seat belt clicked in properly, assist with purchases into the trolley if required and put bags into car for return home]
8. The volunteer will stop for coffee and chat with client, if time permits
9. On returning the client home, transfer groceries to the kitchen, where client is to put away their own groceries where possible
10. The volunteer will immediately notify the Aged Services Coordinator of any change in circumstance requiring Coordinator follow up eg. sudden loss of weight, client requests more services or shows signs of abuse [see **Aged Services: Risk Governance Policy**]
11. The volunteer will complete a *Volunteer Worksheet* and ask the client to sign. Include personal details later [ie. kilometres and total time and nominate reimbursement, if required; add bank account details if requesting a reimbursement for the first time]
12. No fee is exchanged during the visit; the client will be invoiced on receipt of monthly worksheet at the office per *ECS Schedule of Fees*

In specified circumstances [such as during a pandemic], the CHSP funder may allow unaccompanied shopping. Substitute for 3-9 above:

- make appointment with client for volunteer to collect shopping list and money;
- volunteer to collect list and money and take photo of money given;
- volunteer to complete shopping and return to client's home;
- deliver shopping to front door and hand receipt and change to client – again taking photo of both

5. GROUP SOCIAL SUPPORT

As a CHSP social support provider, ECS currently provides a range of group social support models. These are:

1. **Centre-based social groups** – a small group of clients who come together to the ECS centre for morning tea and/or lunch. Sometimes involves guest speakers or specific activities eg. Social Craft group, Men’s Cards, Seniorcise
2. **Social bus outings** – door to door service to help clients shop and carry everything home and/or a day out and lunch for clients

5.1	Procedures for Centre Based Social Groups
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ECS centre based groups are generally open to all eligible clients who have been assessed as being able to attend safely, but groups are often designed to meet the needs or interests of particular groups of clients; some are gender-specific. From time-to-time, an individual may be deemed ineligible due to a mismatch or circumstances that create risks to clients or ECS workers that ECS cannot control [using *Fit to Social Groups questionnaire*], such as:

- the client needs personal care assistance with toileting or eating
- the client is experiencing a health condition which is unpredictable and can’t be controlled
- the client is not fit or well enough to sit in a group
- the client is likely to become confused or disoriented during the outing
- other clients on the outing may be disadvantaged by the behaviour or specific needs of the client
- the client is not a match to the existing group members
- the client is deemed medically unfit [using *Fit to Attend Exercise questionnaire and Letter to Medical Practitioner*]
- the qualified fitness instructor contracted by ECS finds the client inappropriate for a group exercise program to enhance wellness or reablement through improved strength, flexibility, stability, posture and balance

Specific procedures:

1. The Aged Services Coordinator will match each client to a group or groups, based on the referral and assessment [see **Aged Services: Access to Services Policy**]
2. It is the responsibility of the Aged Services Coordinator to create and manage registration lists for social support and manage all ECS worker delegations to organise specific dates and arrangements
3. ECS workers will conduct groups according to specific notes/instructions from the Aged Services Coordinator and ECS Manager, and confirm any safety precautions that need to be observed, including maximum people allowed on the trip [During a pandemic, social distancing may apply]
4. Fees for autonomous, client-coordinated groups per *ECS Schedule of Fees* will be collected on the day by the designated leader, who will submit a cash payment to the ECS office staff for receipting per the **Financial Management Policy**
5. Clients are required to sign in to the exercise classes; apologies are accepted by phone to office, or in person for leave in the future [note: classes are invoiced per month and credit is given only with the ECS Manager’s consent]

5.2	Procedures for Social Bus Outings
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ECS social bus outings are open to all eligible clients who have been assessed as being able to attend safely [using *Fit to Social Groups questionnaire*]. From time-to-time, an individual may be deemed ineligible due to circumstances that create risks to clients or ECS workers that ECS cannot control, such as:

- the client needs personal care assistance with toileting or eating
- the client is experiencing a health condition which is unpredictable and can’t be controlled
- the client is not fit or well enough to sit on a bus and/or enter and exit the vehicle and venue
- the client is unable to manage their own money to pay for drinks, buy their lunch etc
- the client is likely to become confused or disoriented during the outing
- there are not a sufficient number of appropriate volunteers available to support a specific client’s needs in the group context
- other clients on the outing may be disadvantaged by the behaviour or specific needs of the client
- the client is not a match to the existing group members

ECS may negotiate with individuals who are ineligible to attend a bus outing alone, if they are able to bring a personal aid or worker with them to meet their needs [and are willing to purchase places for them both].

Specific procedures before outings:

The PA Officer acts as delegate to confirm attendance and the bus and venue bookings:

1. Confirm safety precautions that need to be observed, including maximum people allowed on the trip [During a pandemic, social distancing may apply]
2. Each bus outing has a pair of booking sheets – one for the external company from which ECS hires the vehicle and the other contains details required for provision of service, as well as the information required for data reporting to ECS funder/s [*Group Registrations [for care]*]
3. To ensure equity of access and respecting client direction of service, attendance by any individual is not assumed and every client must register for every bus outing by phoning or visiting the ECS office; registrations will not be accepted during bus outings
4. Details of clients who have previously attended ECS bus outings may be retained for easy copying into a future booking sheet, but no one will be given automatic registration or priority access
5. If there is spare capacity on any given bus outing at the beginning of the week, the volunteer who makes Friendly Phone Calls may be asked to invite eligible clients to attend
6. The bus booking will be confirmed at least two business days prior to the each outing
7. External providers will be given only the information they need for their own data reporting [in *Group Registrations [for bookings]*]
8. The PA Officer will review the booking sheet for each bus outing and notify each client that has registered of their approximate pick up time [Also check COVID vaccination status and clearance to attend re **COVID Management Plan**]

Specific procedures during outings:

9. The Lead Volunteer will act as navigator and ensure each client is picked up at their approximate pick up time
10. Volunteer to door, but no enter; don't take someone who looks ill
11. If a client does not answer the door when expected, the Lead Volunteer will ring the office immediately; next-of-kin will be contacted and Police, if the client absence is not accounted for
12. The Lead Volunteer will report to the Aged Services Coordinator, or ECS Manager, immediately if the client seems unusually confused, slurring speech or exhibiting other signs of illness or distress
13. The Lead Volunteer will ensure client seating and placement of other volunteers for comfort and safety
14. Volunteer procedures on the bus:
 - Greet client and confirm they are on the day's list [Be aware of social distancing rules when seating in the bus and ensure that each client has a mask to wear in the bus, in shops or enclosed public spaces]
 - Encourage clients to travel in the same seat to and from the venue
 - The driver will have done a complete clean and wipe down of areas that may be touched by new passengers, including seat belts
 - Each client is to ensure their seat belt is secure and clicked in properly

To ensure the Aged Services Coordinator receives status updates on every client, the Lead Volunteer will write a comment about every client attending bus outings [see *Group Feedback template*]. This information will be added to individual client files and may be used for actions such as reassessment.

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