

Policy Title	Client Assessment & Fees
Policy Category	Operational
Number & Version	SVC – MSO – PO - 094
Policy Owner	Community Services
Approval by	CEO
Effective date	
Date for review	September 2021

1. STRATEGIC PURPOSE

Snowy Valleys Council (Council) is committed to ensuring that fair and equitable processes are followed in the provision of community services in the Local Government Area (LGA).

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Council's Multi Service Outlet (MSO) places a high importance on the quality of the client assessment to ensure that:

- Eligibility criteria for the service are met - clients are within the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) target group.
- Needs of clients are heard, understood and met in an acceptable and appropriate manner that protects the client's privacy and right to self-determination.
- Where possible and with the client's permission, assessment information obtained by other agencies is used.
- The clients' eligibility to receive services will be assessed by the My Aged Care (MAC) team.

3. DEFINITIONS

Multi Service Outlet (MSO): A council run initiative providing services to the elderly, their carers and people with disabilities in the local government area.

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP): A joint initiative of the State and Commonwealth Governments aimed at preventing premature or inappropriate admission to residential care facilities.

Target Group:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People from a culturally and linguistically diverse background • Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders • People with dementia • Financially disadvantaged people • Frail aged and younger people with disabilities living in remote or isolated areas
Client:	Person receiving the service.
Carer:	A family member or paid helper who regularly looks after the person receiving the service.
My Aged Care (MAC):	My Aged Care is a government-funded aged care service aimed at assisting older Australians, their families and carers to get the help and support they need.
Employee:	A person employed by Council on a permanent, temporary or casual basis, that provides direct or indirect support to a person who is in receipt of services and / or support from Council's community services.

4. CONTENT

Following an initial assessment, the service Coordinator should inform the person being assessed within two working days of his / her decision regarding the request for assistance.

The decision may be:

- Refusal of services.
- Referral to another agency.
- Provision of service.
- Development of a care plan in consultation with other agencies.
- Placing the request on the waiting list.

If services are offered to a client on a temporary basis the client must be clearly informed of the *Complaints Management Policy*.

4.1 If Service Is Refused

The person requesting the service should be advised within two working days. Reasons should be given why the service should not be provided.

Information should be provided on other services that are available and if appropriate a referral should be arranged.

Information should be provided on when, and under what circumstances the person might reapply for an MSO service.

The person should be made aware of the *Complaints Management Policy*.

4.2 If the Client is placed on a Waiting List

The person should be advised that they are on a waiting list for a service, and given an approximate idea of the waiting period.

Information should be provided on alternative services available in the community, and a referral should be made if appropriate.

The client should know that their case will be reviewed every 12 months and that they can ask for reassessment at any time if their circumstances change.

The client should be aware of the Council's *Complaints Management Policy*.

4.3 Clients with Special Needs

People with complex needs

Will be referred to the My Aged Care (MAC) Team for a comprehensive assessment.

Non-English Speaking Clients

In cases where the client does not speak English, an interpreter service will be used to ensure that the client understands the assessment and review process, the services being offered and the general information provided in the client Information brochure.

Aboriginal Clients

The MSO will endeavour to provide Aboriginal clients with culturally appropriate services. Employees should ensure that the information regarding the assessment, review, care plan and services are available in culturally available formats and are clearly explained and understood by the client.

Clients who cannot read or write

In cases where a client cannot read or write, employees should ensure that the information regarding the assessment, review, care plan and services are clearly explained and understood by the client.

Clients with Dementia and other special needs groups

Employees will receive training in how to deal with people with dementia or specific disabilities and every effort will be made to ensure services are delivered in an appropriate and sensitive way. For people with dementia or severe intellectual, psychiatric or brain injury disabilities, the focus will be on ensuring that their carers or advocates are fully aware of the contents of the *Client Information Brochure* and that they are aware of the information regarding the assessment, review, care plans and services. However, to whatever extent possible the client should be given the same information and their questions answered.

4.4 Records

Records should be kept to monitor all requests for services, the outcome of the request and if the service is refused, the reason for refusal. All records will be maintained in accordance with the *Records Management Policy*.

4.5 Fees and Charges

Charging arrangements are based on the State funding body's guidelines and will be reviewed annually.

People who are assessed as being in need of a service are eligible to receive, regardless of their capacity to pay.

In assessing a client's ability to pay for the service the following applies:

- Information will be obtained from each new client as to their level and source of income and any other CHSP services that they are currently receiving and paying for.
- The assessment will be based on the client's own statement of income.
- Information received about a client's income will be treated as private and confidential.
- In cases of hardship where clients request assistance, the fee will be waived.
- Clients will be advised and reassured that services will not be refused if they are unable to pay.
- Clients, potential clients and their advocates may appeal to the Coordinator if they are unhappy with fees. This can be done in writing or by telephone and only requires that the client ask the Coordinator to review their fees.
- Fee structures will be clearly displayed in the *Client Information Handbook*.
- Clients will be informed of fees associated with services at the time of assessment.
- Clients will be advised in writing of any changes in fees which may affect them.
- All clients should be advised of the appeal process.
- If fees are not listed in the *Client Information Handbook* the client can request a copy of the *Fees Manual* which lists all fees for all the services provided within the Council's MSO.

5. ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

Aged Care Charter and Standards (ACCS)

6. ASSOCIATED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Complaints Management Policy - SVC-COR-PO-037-01

Records Management Policy – SVC-GOV-PO-062-01

Client Information Handbook

Fees Manual

7. HISTORY

Date	Action	Name	Policy Number	Resolution Date	Resolution Number
	Superseded	Client Assessment Policy	TSC-MSO-PO-008-0 (Former Tumbarumba Shire Policy)		