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<b>Service Stream</b>	Families and Young People Services	<b>Category</b>	Supported Independent Living Program
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## Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors engaged within the following programs within Supported Independent Living Programs (SILP) across Mercy Community (MC) Families and Young People Services (FYPS) including:

- Tenancy support; and
- Outreach.

The processes outlined in this procedure relate to all models of service unless otherwise specified.

## Procedure

### 1. Contact with people we support

- 1.1 The amount of casework support each person in SILP receives will be dependent on funding arrangements and the individual needs of the people we support. Support needs will differ in intensity depending on several factors, including:

- Independent living skills;
- The time the person we support has spent in the program;
- The extent of the person we support's support network;
- The amount of time the person we support has been living independently;
- The number of structured activities in the person we support's life (e.g., school);
- The location of the person we support; and
- Other complexities, such as mental health status, friends and associates and substance misuse.

These factors will be considered when determining how best to provide support to the people we support. The safety of the people we support and community members is paramount when determining contact frequency.

- 1.2 For many people we support in the program, SILP Caseworkers and Transition Support Workers are their primary means of support. For this reason, SILP Caseworkers or Transition Support Workers must maintain regular face-to-face contact with people we support in the program. This is not just about observing the physical living environment of the person we support, but also to assess wellbeing, check in about progress towards SILP Plans and to provide emotional and practical support as needed.
- 1.3 The regularity of face-to-face contact between Transition Support Workers and people we support will differ according to the assessment of support needs for each person we are supporting. Face-to-face contact will occur, at a minimum, once per week for placement support and fortnightly for outreach support; however, may be more frequent.
- 1.4 Frequency of contact will be jointly assessed and agreed upon by MC, the Child Safety Officer (CSO), and Senior Team Leader (STL) for the person we support.
- 1.5 Expectations of face-to-face and phone contact with workers should be clearly articulated in the person we support's Placement Agreement, *FS FORM RCaTS Positive Behaviour Support Plan* and *FS FORM RCaTS Safety Plan* (if required) at entry and reviewed regularly.
- 1.6 For the people we support in a placement capacity:

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- 1.6.1 Home visits will occur at least once per week. As this service provides a placement, MC workers have a responsibility to ensure that the person we support is safe and well and their home is being maintained in line with the Statement of Standards.
- 1.6.2 SILP workers will educate people we support about their tenancy responsibilities in accordance with Residential Tenancies Agency (RTA) standards (refer to *FS PROC RCaTS SILP Tenancy Support* for further information).
- 1.6.3 SILP workers will ensure that the placement has staple groceries and general household items, as outlined in the *FS IP RCaTS SILP Staple Groceries List*.
- 1.7 For full tenancy people we support who are co-tenanting with another person we support in the program:
  - 1.7.1 Weekly house meetings will be conducted in addition to individual weekly contact (outlined in section 1.6.1.). This house meeting will include the Transition Support Worker or SILP Caseworker and the people we support in the tenancy. The house meeting will support discussion, plans, and goals for the household, and to support the overall wellbeing of all household members. House meetings will be recorded in *CTARS House Meeting Minutes*.
- 1.8 For the people we support in an outreach capacity:
  - 1.8.1 Home visits will occur, at minimum, fortnightly as this provides an opportunity to assess the person we support's home environment.
- 1.9 Where people we support are in a foster or kinship care placement, SILP workers should take the opportunity to ensure that their home is being maintained in line with the Statement of Standards. If there are concerns about the standard of the physical environment or care being provided to a person we support, this requires immediate reporting to the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department) via a high-level Incident Report (refer to *FS PROC RCaTS Incident Reporting* for further information).
- 1.10 If a person we support is not home when a home visit is scheduled, SILP workers will attempt to sight the property and will arrange to revisit the property as soon as practicable. If there are safety concerns to visit alone, the worker should be accompanied by another worker (refer to *WHS SOP Personal Safety in the Community*).
- 1.11 Telephone contact between SILP workers and people we support will also occur, however will not take the place of face-to-face contact.
- 1.12 Where SILP workers are aware that people we support will be spending planned time away from their property, they will arrange a home visit the day before the scheduled departure and ensure that the property is in a reasonable state prior to them leaving.
- 1.13 Contact during closure periods, such as weekends and public holidays, will occur as per the assessed frequency of contact required for each person we support, inclusive of face-to-face and telephone, where service delivery models permit. For services not funded for scheduled support on weekends and public holidays, MC will discuss support options with the person we support, the Department, and other stakeholders, and document this decision-making. Support options may include use of afterhours on-call, use of available resources (such as being invited to a meal with another program), or use of formal and/or informal support networks of the person we support.

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- 1.14 If people we support do not make themselves available to meet with SILP workers, attempts to arrange contact must be documented and a stakeholder meeting must be arranged by the person with case management responsibility (i.e., SILP Caseworker or Team Manager (TM)/Program Coordinator (PC)/Senior Program Manager (SPM)) to revisit the person we support's commitment to the program.
- 1.15 People we support must be seen regularly and this frequency should be outlined in the Positive Behavior Support Plan and Placement Agreement. If a person we support has not been sighted in person as planned, a dynamic risk assessment is to occur to support understanding the person we support's safety and wellbeing needs. Police contact or a Missing Person's Report may also be required (refer to *FS PROC RCaTS Incident Reporting* and *FS IP RCaTS Incident Category Definitions*). If a person we support is not seen face-to-face as planned, this must be escalated to the TM/PC/SPM or Manager On-Call.
- 1.16 Refer to Section 4. of this Procedure regarding response when a person we support refuses to engage with MC at the assessed required frequency of contact.
- 1.17 All stakeholder meetings are recorded in *CTARS Stakeholder Meeting Minutes*.

## 2. Contact recording

- 2.1 All contact with the people we support will be documented in a *CTARS Activity Log*. The *CTARS Activity Log* is used to record the 'event' of the contact, such as the main overarching purpose of the contact. This may be to support a person we support with a medical appointment, a legal appointment, or a scheduled in-person contact session. SILP workers must complete this log within 24 hours of contact with a person we support.
- 2.2 All contact with people we support will be documented in a *CTARS SILP Contact Log*. The *CTARS SILP Contact Log* is used to record behavioural presentation of the person we support, allowing changes and trends to be observed over time, as well as a support tool for the SILP Caseworker to ensure all critical aspects are reviewed. The SILP worker must complete this log within 24 hours of contact with a person we support.

## 3. Vehicle safety and assessment

- 3.1 It is acknowledged that measures are required to proactively ensure the safety of people we support in SILP in relation to vehicles.
- 3.2 When visiting the program, SILP workers will ensure that vehicles are kept locked, and any valuable possessions are not in sight within the program vehicle (whilst vehicle is not in use).
- 3.3 Secure carriage of vehicle keys is required at all times by Mercy staff. Secure carriage may mean keys are secured out of sight in a pocket (preferably buttoned/zipped), secured in a pouch belt/waist bag or securely attached to a belt via key clip or key carabiner. Vehicle keys are not to be carried on lanyards or other mechanisms that can easily break or detach. For vehicles with a keyless start feature, keys must be carried in a faraday pouch to block the electromagnetic signal.
- 3.4 If a person we support obtains their own vehicle on their journey to independence, they will be requested to keep the vehicle locked when not in use and keys locked in the safe that they have been provided in their bedroom. A risk assessment, using a collaborative consultation with Department, of having a vehicle at the placement will occur in the context of current co-tenants and reviewed if new placement referrals are being considered.

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- 3.5 There may be circumstances where, through the entry process, a person we support is assessed as having high-risk behaviour in relation to vehicles. Should a person we support be assessed as high-risk in this regard, a *FS FORM RCaTS Safety Plan* will be developed to increase interventions in place to manage the security of vehicle keys within the placement (e.g., a lock box for SILP workers to place keys when not in use and visiting programs).

## 4. People we support refusing services

- 4.1 If a person we support refuses the services of MC, they may be exited from the program. This is a significant decision and should not be made lightly. Where a person we support continually states that they do not wish to receive services, this should be responded to as follows:
- 4.1.1 If the service is staffed with a SILP Caseworker, the SILP Caseworker (or, if delegated, Transition Support Worker) must attempt to meet with the person we support to discuss any concerns and the person we support's reasons for refusing services.
  - 4.1.2 If the person we support refuses to meet with the SILP Caseworker, or if the person we support continues to refuse services, the TM/PC/SPM will meet with the person we support to discuss any concerns and the person we support's reasons for refusing services to attempt to address barriers to engagement.
  - 4.1.3 If the person we support continues to refuse services, this will be immediately internally communicated to the TM/PC and SPM, the TM/PC or SPM will then communicate this information to the CSO, STL, and relevant stakeholders, and will request an urgent stakeholder meeting to discuss these concerns. The person we support must be invited to attend, however, if they continue to refuse involvement, this must go ahead without them.
  - 4.1.4 During the stakeholder meeting, the TM/PC or SPM will lead discussion about the suitability of the service, inclusive of identified risks for the person we support and others. If the Department and/or key stakeholders are not responsive to the request for an urgent stakeholder meeting, this must be escalated to Operational Lead (OL) in the first instance and then the Regional Director (RD), as required (with the exception of Toowoomba, which must be escalated to the RD in the first instance).
  - 4.1.5 Any determination to close a SILP placement must be endorsed by the OL or RD.

## 5. People we support no longer suitable

- 5.1 There may be times when it is assessed that the person we support is no longer considered suitable for SILP due to issues other than non-engagement. This may be due to:
- The person we support's needs have changed since entering the program;
  - The person we support's behaviours/risk areas have escalated since entering the program; or
  - The person we support is refusing to comply with certain program elements (e.g., not allowing SILP workers into the property).
- 5.2 In the first instance, the SILP team must consider what changes can be made to the program delivery to support the changing needs of the person we support. Proposed changes are to be developed in consultation with the CSO, STL, and key stakeholders. Changes to support are to be documented in writing to all parties and

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significant changes will require a review of the Placement Agreement. Updates to the person we support's *FS FORM RCaTS Positive Behaviour Support Plan* and *FS FORM RCaTS Safety Plan* may also be required.

- 5.3 Where it is considered that the person we support is no longer suitable for the program and there is insufficient capacity within the program to respond to the changing needs of the person we support, the SILP Caseworker must discuss this with the TM/PC/SPM who will arrange a Placement Meeting with person we support's CSO and STL soon as practicable. This will also be brought to the attention of the SPM if not already done.
- 5.4 The Placement Meeting should explore the issues that have informed the unsuitability of the person we support and, in the first instance, work to address these issues to preserve the placement. If it is agreed that the issues cannot be addressed by the program the possibility of placement closure will be raised with the OL or RD, as outlined in 4.1.5.
- 5.5 If a decision is made to close the placement, MC will work with the Department to support the transition of the person we support to an alternative arrangement. MC workers will advise the Department that the placement is to close as discussed.

## 6. Records management

- 6.1 All information will be recorded within the person we support's CTARS Client Profile and Documents file.

## Definitions

### Child Safety Officer (CSO)

An employee of the Department and delegate of the Chief Executive tasked with the statutory case management of young people subject to a Child Protection Order.

### Senior Team Leader (STL)

An employee of the Department and delegate of the Chief Executive tasked to manage a team of professional and operational staff to ensure the delivery of high-quality child protection services. This includes assessment, intervention, casework, and case management in accordance with legislation and practice guidelines to children, young people, families, and communities.

### CTARS

CTARS is a cloud-based client management system, designed specifically for disability services, children's services, and aged care. The system will allow MC staff to undertake therapeutic planning and assessment, capture and report on outcomes and ensure practice complies with legislative requirements through industry best practice frameworks.

### Departmental Case Plans

Statutory documents produced by the Department that govern statutory case management by the Department.

### Program Coordinator (PC)

The employee tasked with day-to-day program management responsibilities for the program.

### Regional Director (RD)

The manager with overall finance and program management responsibilities, who is a member of the leadership team.

### Operational Lead (OL)

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This role is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Residential Care and Transition Services across MC FYPS. The role will support the Regional Director to ensure contemporary and outcomes-focussed services are delivered in a manner congruent with Funding Schedules, operational and strategic plans, and regulatory compliance.

## Senior Program Manager (SPM)

Employee tasked with day-to-day oversight of MC programs. The Senior Program Manager reports to the Regional Director.

## SILP Caseworker

Employees allocated case management or responsibility for people we support in the program.

## Transition Support Workers

Employees who have regular contact with people we support in the program but are not necessarily responsible for case management.

## Team Manager (TM)

Employees tasked with client care planning and care management oversight within the program.

## Worker

Refers to the SILP Caseworker and Transition Support Worker.

## References

Department's Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)

## Related Documents

CTARS Activity Log  
CTARS House Meeting Minutes  
CTARS SILP Contact Log  
CTARS Stakeholder Meeting Minutes  
FS FORM RCaTS Positive Behaviour Support Plan  
FS FORM RCaTS Safety Plan  
FS FORM RCaTS SILP Mock Tenancy Agreement  
FS IP RCaTS Incident Category Definitions  
FS IP RCaTS SILP Staple Groceries List  
FS PROC RCaTS Incident Reporting  
FS PROC RCaTS SILP Tenancy Support  
WHS SOP Personal Safety in the Community

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