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Service Stream	Families and Young People Services	Category	Residential Care and Transition Services
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Purpose

- People we support need to be cared for within a healthy environment that is characterised by 'positive-parenting practices', including: structure and routine, reasonable rules, expectations, and age-appropriate limits; guidance, support, and encouragement; positive reinforcement; fair, consistent, and reasonable discipline and tolerance of normal and symptomatic behaviour.
- People we support should be provided with age and developmentally appropriate opportunities to grow in identity, intimacy, and independence. They should have the opportunity to engage in the full range of acceptable activities available to their peers in the general community.
- People we support should be provided the opportunity to develop independent living skills that will support greater opportunities into the future and better outcome with their transition out of care.
- Money management is an important life skill and people we support should be provided opportunities to learn about their needs, wants, budgeting, savings, and value of money.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors engaged within Residential Care and Transition Services (RCaTS) programs across Mercy Community (MC) – Families and Young People Services (FYPS).

Procedure

1. Costs to be met by RCaTS

- 1.1 MC's RCaTS programs are funded to meet the daily care needs of people we support in placements to the level of the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Service's (the Department's) Complex Support Needs Allowance. Daily care needs include:
- Food;
 - Clothing;
 - Shelter;
 - Personal care consumables including toiletries, haircuts, hygiene items, pads and tampons and nappies.
 - Recreational activities such as social events, hobbies, sporting and leisure activities including fees, uniforms and resources for extra-curricular activities, youth group, and activities within the program (a mixture of low cost and free);
 - Pocket money, phone credit and go-card for transportation;
 - Safety equipment including baby capsules, child seats, bicycle helmets and knee and elbow protectors
 - Education needs, including uniforms, books, school levies, excursions and school/educational camps and transport;
 - Therapeutic appointments;
 - Medical related expenses including costs incurred for consulting a general practitioner and basic medical, one-off and initial specialist costs and all one-off prescribed and non-prescribed pharmaceuticals (such as antibiotics to

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treat tonsillitis and lice treatment). Workers will seek out bulk-billing or public medical support where possible; and

- Special occasions, including birthdays, Christmas, Easter, other significant cultural events and graduations. This may also include gifts for family members or contributions to family events.

- 1.2 Workers will take the opportunity to role model responsible use of finances to develop the person we support's living skills. This includes looking for sale items, guiding appropriate expenditure on clothes and budgeting for groceries.
- 1.3 If workers are unclear about whether the service is responsible for covering a cost, they will check with the Care Team Leader (CTL)/Team Manager (TM)/Program Coordinator (PC) or Senior Program Manager (SPM) to ensure appropriate expenditure.

2. SILP-Specific Arrangements

- 2.1 In Supported Independent Living Programs (SILP), people we support will have access to the same funding as per 1.1 of procedure.
- 2.2 In SILP MC will provide people we support with staple groceries, toiletries, and cleaning items (refer to *FS IP RCaTS SILP Staple Groceries List*).
- 2.3 People we support in SILP will also be provided a \$100 voucher per week to purchase groceries and personalised toiletry items of their choice. The Care Team should support the person to complete a meal planner that will assist them to shop for items within a budget.
- 2.4 Store options for \$100 grocery vouchers/credit are to be discussed with the people we support to encourage development of critical thinking and budgeting skills. Permissible options include Woolworths, Coles, Aldi, and local arrangements, such as local green grocers, butchers, and regional food banks/pantries. Options must not include the purchase of tobacco products, vapes, or alcohol.
- 2.5 People we support will be provided with a bi-annual clothing allowance to support choice and development of independent living skills. These purchases will be facilitated by SILP Caseworkers and Transition Support Workers to ensure the allowance is expended on clothing and footwear.
- 2.6 MC will top up as required to always ensure adequate supply of groceries and clothing.
- 2.7 When people we support transition from a SILP to an independent living arrangement, MC will fund a Transition from Care Pack up to the maximum cost of \$1,000. This pack consists of basic items required for home set up, inclusive of kitchen items, linen, towels, and essential electrical appliances, such as fridge, kettle, and microwave.

3. Seeking costs from the Department

- 3.1 Seeking costs from the Department should only occur as a last resort, where costs are significant, where no internal funding is available and where the person we support would be at a significant disadvantage without the need being fulfilled.
- 3.2 Where an expenditure requirement is outside the funding limits of the RCaTS program, this may be raised with the Department so that the Child Safety Service Centre's (CSSC) Child Related Costs funds can be considered. Items that may qualify as Child Related Costs expenses to be met by the CSSC include:
 - Braces or other significant dental work;
 - High medical expenses, inclusive of specialist aids and equipment;
 - Specialist fees;

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- Person we support being accepted into representative sports team;
 - School camps; and
 - Significant educational costs.
- 3.3 Where a child related cost expense is identified, the CTL/TM/PC will first raise this with the SPM. If the SPM agrees that the expenditure exceeds usual funding arrangements, the CTL/TM will liaise with the Child Safety Officer (CSO) regarding the expenditure to determine if this will be met by the CSSC.
- 3.4 CSSC Managers are the only officers within CSSCs who can approve Child Related Costs, therefore any requests should be submitted with ample time and only progressed when the CSSC Manager's approval has been confirmed. Where the funds are required within a certain timeframe, the CTL/TM/PC will advise the CSO of the timeframe.
- 3.5 Where upcoming extra-ordinary costs are expected, they should be raised with the CSO with as much notice as possible for inclusion in the person we support's Departmental Case Plan.
- 3.6 All Child Related Costs requests are to be documented in the person we support's CTARS Documents tab by attaching the correspondence (refer to *FS IP RCaTS CTARS Folder Structure*, if required).
- 3.7 If the Department does not approve the payment of Child Related Costs, the person we support will be notified of this and will be encouraged to speak to their CSO if they have any further queries. People we support may also be advised of their right to provide feedback or make a complaint if they choose to do so.
- 3.8 Where Child Related Costs are approved by the Department, the Business Support Team (in consultation with the MC Finance and Property team) will liaise with the Department regarding the transfer of funds or payment processes (where the Department is not paying directly).
- 3.9 Refer to *FS IP RCaTS Child Related Costs* for further information.

4. People we support's finances

- 4.1 All people we support not in receipt of an income can receive financial support within the placement to support "normalised" childhood experiences and capacity building through provision of pocket money. Regarding chore money:
- 4.1.1 Each house operates a chore scheme, in which people we support can earn cash or items of equivalent value. These schemes differ from house-to-house; expectations regarding earning pocket money are explained to the person we support by the CTL at the time of induction and ongoing thereafter.
- 4.1.2 Chore charts will be visually available within the program and will be reviewed/updated daily to reflect the participation of the people we support.
- 4.1.3 On a weekly basis, the Senior Residential Care Worker (SRCW), will determine the amount of money the person we support has earned, in accordance with the chore scheme. Where possible, this amount will be calculated with the person we support present.
- 4.1.4 When the amount has been calculated, the person we support is provided the money from the house petty cash fund. A receipt is provided to the person we support (signed by the SRCW and, preferably, the person we support), with a copy of this receipt retained for the petty cash reconciliation. A note is also made in the person we support's *CTARS Shift Log*.
- 4.1.5 If the person we support wishes to save their monies, CTL is to liaise with the department to set up a bank account for them. In doing so, assessment of

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- capacity to manage money should be considered as well as access to a bank card.
- 4.1.6 deposit the money to a savings fund, an entry is recorded via the *CTARS Savings Ledger*. A new form is completed for every deposit to, or withdrawal from, the savings fund.
 - 4.1.7 Where the CTL has assessed that it is not in the best interests of the person we support to receive this money in cash, alternate arrangements will be made and documented within the person we support's *CTARS My Goals*.
 - 4.1.8 Refer to the *FS PP RCaTS Proactive Strategies* for further guidance regarding chores and pocket money earnings for people we support.
- 4.2 Regarding savings money:
- 4.2.1 MC will provide the opportunity to practice financial management through savings programs within RCaTS programs. These will be devised on an individual basis with the CTL/TM through the assessment and goal planning process.
 - 4.2.2 As part of Reference Person Meetings, the CTL/SILP Caseworker will engage in discussion with the person we support about their goals. Where the goal contains a financial component, the CTL/TM will discuss an appropriate savings program with the person we support. If this sits outside of a reasonable Goal Based Incentive (GBI), the CTL/TM will consult with the SPM to seek financial approval. This will be documented within the person we support's *CTARS My Goals* and monetary progress recorded through completion of the *CTARS Savings Ledger*.
 - 4.2.3 Other deposits (e.g., the person we support receiving birthday money, choosing to deposit their chore money) may also be made and recorded via the *CTARS Savings Ledger*.
 - 4.2.4 To track the savings made by the person we support, a *CTARS Adhoc Report* can be exported to display the total amount of deposits and/or withdrawal, the dates of the deposits, and which worker signed off on these entries.
- 4.3 Other expenses:
- 4.3.1 Where a person we support is required to have a personal mobile telephone (i.e., as assessed by the CTL/TM and outlined in the person we support's Care Plans), they will receive phone credit. This will be contingent on their ability to negotiate and adhere to a safe usage plan for the phone. In purchasing phone credit, the CTL/SILP Caseworker will attempt to secure the most cost efficient pre-paid option available. The provision of phone credit will be recorded within the person we support's *CTARS Shift Log*.
 - 4.3.2 People we support with approved independent time/travel will have access to registered Go Cards. Credit will be provided directly onto the Go Card in alignment with scheduled activities outlined in their individual planners.

5. Bank accounts and tax file numbers

- 5.1 Where age appropriate, workers will assist people we support to open personal bank accounts. To do this:
 - 5.1.1 Workers will ensure that the person we support has sufficient personal identification, including a birth certificate, a letter of identification from their CSO, an identity card or learner license, Medicare card, etc.
 - 5.1.2 Workers will assist people we support to attend a bank and open the account. Workers will ensure that the bank account is opened under the

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person we support's name, and not linked to a MC worker or to the organisation.

- 5.1.3 Workers will ensure that any information from the bank is forwarded to the person we support. Copies of any correspondence should be placed on the person we support's CTARS Documents tab for safe keeping.
- 5.1.4 The CTL/TM will provide details of the account and/or actions taken to the person we support's CSO.
- 5.2 If age appropriate, workers will assist people we support to obtain a Tax File Number. The application is available on the Australian Taxation Office's website or hard copies may be kept at the residential house.
- 5.3 All information regarding identification (such as Tax File Number, Bank Account Numbers, etc.) will be recorded within the person we support's CTARS Client Profile.

6. Transition from care

- 6.1 People we support who are fifteen (15) years and over should have a Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Plan. This T2A Plan will include practical skill building and the development of budgeting skills.
- 6.2 There may also be a financial element to this, including:
 - The purchasing of furniture or appliances; or
 - Payment of tertiary courses for job preparation.
- 6.3 T2A plans will be documented in the Departmental Case Plan and any financial elements will be met by the Department. MC workers may assist the person we support to work towards this plan by helping them obtain quotes for items and supporting them to liaise with the Department around the fulfillment of goals.
- 6.4 People we support may also be eligible for a Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA). The CTL/TM will liaise with the Department regarding this allowance.
- 6.5 All T2A funds will be recorded in the person we support's *RCATS FORM Short Term Goals*.
- 6.6 For people we support in SILP placements, refer to section 2.6 of this Procedure regarding transition to independent placement.

7. People we support receiving income/allowances

- 7.1 When people we support turn sixteen (16) years, they should be supported by workers to seek Centrelink benefits. When a person we support begins receiving this payment, the CTL/TM will advise the Business Support Team, who will organise for a cessation of any Centrelink payments MC is receiving for the person we support.
- 7.2 Where people we support begin receiving an income from work (full-time, part-time, or casual) or allowances from Centrelink, workers should immediately discuss how the person we support intends to budget this money. This might also include the person we support taking on some of the costs for personal items, particularly where these items might be beyond MC's normal scope of provision (e.g., expensive branded clothes, individual social outings with friends; noting that this should not replace the Child Related Cost expenses for the person we support).
- 7.3 The CTL/TM or delegate should record a budget with the person we support. A copy of this will be provided to the person we support, and a copy saved to their CTARS Client Profile.

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- 7.4 MC workers will continually revisit this budget with the person we support and support their commitment to budgeting, focusing on goals, and sustainability.
- 7.5 While people we support will be encouraged to manage their own income savings, they also have the option to save money with MC as part of the Rent Training Program (see section 8 of this procedure).

8. Rent training program

- 8.1 To aid people we support in the development of budgeting skills, MC operates a Rent Training Program. The program encourages people we support receiving an income or Centrelink allowance to pay a simulated rental figure that they would otherwise pay if living independently. The funds contributed by the person we support are paid into their own personal savings account. For people we support in SILP, refer to *FS PROC RCaTS SILP Rent Training Scheme*.
- 8.2 The nominal figure for this amount is 30% of their income, however, the CTL/SILP Caseworker will encourage the young person to maximise the amount they deposit.
- 8.3 When a person we support begins receiving an income or allowance or enters a SILP, the CTL/SILP Caseworker will meet with them and explain the program. Both the person we support and the CTL/TM/PC will sign the *FS FORM RCaTS RES Rent Training Program Agreement*. A copy of the completed form is to be uploaded to the person we support's CTARS Documents tab.
- 8.4
- 8.5 Participation in the program is recorded in the person we support's Form Short Term Goals and the CTL/SILP CW will advise the person we support's CSO.
- 8.6 If the person we support is receiving Centrelink payments:
The CTL/SILP Caseworker, will assist the person we support to establish a direct debit automatic deduction.

9. Record management

- 9.1 Receipts must be obtained for all MC expenses and forwarded to the RCaTS Business Support Team for processing.
- 9.2 Expenses specific to a person we support are documented within their CTARS Client Profile and Goals (where applicable). The Departmental Case Plan will also contain information regarding financial issues and commitments.
- 9.3 Where the Department has approved Child Related Cost expenditure, this approval will be sought in writing and recorded in the person we support's CTARS Client Profile. This correspondence may also need to be forwarded to the RCaTS Business Support Team.
- 9.4 CTL/TM/PC or SPM will liaise with the RCaTS Business Support Team regarding any finance issues. Any receipts, invoices or correspondence specific to the person we support is to be recorded in their CTARS Client Profile.

Definitions

Care Team Leader (CTL)

Employee tasked with client care planning and care management oversight for Residential Care placements.

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 Program Manager (SPM)

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Employee tasked with day-to-day oversight of MC programs. The Senior Program Manager reports to the RCaTS Operational Lead.

Senior Residential Care Worker (SRCW)

Employee tasked with the day-to-day support and coaching of Residential Care Workers and running of a MC Residential Care program.

SILP Caseworker

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

SILP Team Manager (TM)

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

Worker

Employee tasked with providing daily care for people we support.

References

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

Department's Child Safety Practice Manual

(<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/child-safety-practice-manual>)

Department's Complex Support Needs Allowance Policy (Complex Support Needs Allowance 612 cyjma.qld.gov.au)

FS DOC RCaTS Program Overview

Related Documents

CTARS Adhoc Report

CTARS My Goals

CTARS Savings Ledger

CTARS Shift Log

FS FORM RCaTS RES Refund of Monies Paid into the Rent Training Program

FS FORM RCaTS RES Rent Training Program Agreement

FS FORM RCaTS RES Rent Training Program Ledger

FS IP RCaTS Child Related Costs

FS IP RCaTS CTARS Folder Structure

FS IP RCaTS SILP Staple Groceries List

FS PP RCaTS Proactive Strategies

FS PROC RCaTS SILP Rent Training Scheme

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