

Policy

Community Options Client Contribution

Version 1

Adopted by Council at its meeting on XXX

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Community Options Client Contribution

Introduction:

This policy aims to ensure that the principles of equity and access and that the established mechanisms of Tweed Shire Council underpin collection and payment of client contributions.

Tweed Community Options (TCOPS) endorses the principle that clients make a financial contribution to the provision of services in line with the Home and Community Care (HACC) National Program Guidelines, Guidelines for the operation of HACC Funded Case Management Projects August 2006, the Good Practice Guide for HACC Funded Case Management Projects August 2006, and the NSW Health ComPacks guidelines April 2010. This policy has been developed in line with the Common Community Care Standards released by the Department of Health and Ageing (October 2010) which will guide future approaches to HACC services as the national HACC reforms are introduced.

Rationale for Client Contributions:

Where a client is being assessed for services provided by Tweed Community Options, the case manager will explain that all services are partly funded by the government and that client contributions will be used to expand the services.

Tweed Community Options recognises that many clients have a reduced or limited capacity to contribute to the cost of services, and criteria for reducing or waiving client contributions will be explained to clients. No one will be refused service due to their inability or refusal to contribute.

This policy will not be applied retrospectively or to current clients on the date that the policy is implemented, however, it will apply to all new clients from the date of implementation.

Procedure

For projects like Podiatry, Older Parent Carer and ComPacks, a contribution for a one off amount of \$60 per client will be negotiated at the initial assessment. The client contribution policy and procedure will be included in the information packs and brochures provided to potential clients.

For Community Option Project (COPs) clients, a weekly contribution will be negotiated based on the contribution schedule, taking into account a range of considerations as outlined below.

Where COPs services are being provided to clients who are on the waiting list for package services such as Community Aged Care Package (CACP), Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH), Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACH D) packages

and the like, the Government set cost currently 17.5% of the aged pension will be negotiated at the initial assessment.

Client contribution considerations:

- Where the client is already paying “one off” client contributions for other community care services (e.g. other HACC services), the one off contribution made to TCOPS services can be reduced by 25%.
- For those clients making weekly payments for other community care services while waiting for package services, the weekly contribution overall will not exceed 17.5% of the aged care pension. If the client is unable to pay this contribution after essential living expenses are accounted for, the client may be regarded as disadvantaged, the contribution may be reduced.
- The client contribution assessment will be based on the client’s own statement of their income. It is not necessary to ask to see bank statements or details of expenditure. All information about a client’s income will be kept confidential.
- The case manager will ascertain that access to financial assistance is supported for their clients including carer allowances, emergency assistance from social workers, and the like so that client contributions (even at a minimal \$5 per week) is supported. In addition, strategies to access interest free loans for whitegoods etc will be explored.
- Clients will be asked to notify Tweed Community Options within 30 days if there are any significant changes in their circumstances that could affect their arrangements to pay a contribution; for example, receiving a compensation payment or a full Department of Veterans Affairs Pension entitlement.
- If clients, potential clients, or advocates are unhappy with the level or extent of the contributions they have agreed to pay, they may contact the Coordinator and ask for a review of their contributions. This may be done in writing or by telephone.

Collection of Contributions:

The discretionary contribution schedule of TCOPS will be published in the Service Agreement made between the client and case manager. Agreement about contribution will be linked to the client care plan and included in the service agreement which is signed by the client.

TCOPS will send out client invoices/statements on a monthly basis.

Contributions will be collected by direct debit where possible. Alternately, clients can make payments to the Council cashier in any of the usual payment methods for payments of fees to Council for services.

TCOPS staff will contact the client and/or carer about any unpaid invoices.

Discretionary Contribution Schedule:

Service Provided	Contribution
For up to two hours care per week	\$5.00 per week
Between two and four hours care per week	\$10.00 per week
Between four and six hours care per week	\$15.00 per week
More than six hours care per week	\$20.00 per week
For services and care coordination with CACP approval	\$55 per week
For Podiatry services (six appointments)	\$60 as a one off payment
For supply of equipment, furniture and whitegoods	TCOPS provides a 25% subsidy towards the purchase.

Related Standards

- Human Services Ageing, Disability & Home Care (ADHC) Integrated Monitoring Framework
2.1 Access
2.1.2 Clients have fair and equitable access to services and resources
- HACC Standards
- NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care NSW service type guidelines for HACC Case Management (April 2008)
- NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care Good Practice Guide for HACC Funded Case Management Projects (2006)
Information and Consultation, 2.3
Disability Service Standards Service Access, 1.0, 1.1