

# 4. Day-to-day service operation

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# Acknowledgments

The Day-to-day service operation section has been written using a number of manuals as source material. We gratefully acknowledge this input. The resources used include:

Albury Wodonga Women's Refuge Inc 2002, *Policy and Procedure Manual*

Amberlys Single Women's Refuge 1999, *Policy and Procedure Manual*

Dawn House Inc 2002, *Policy and Procedure Manual*, Northern Territory

Upper Hunter Community Services Policy Group 1999, *Policy and Procedure Register*, Muswellbrook Shire Council

## 4.1 Rosters and on-call staffing

### Primary responsibility

Manager/collective

### Policy

- All staff working times are allocated according to rosters developed by the manager/collective on a *(insert time frame, for example weekly, monthly etc basis)*.
- Rosters will be planned with the client's needs in mind at all times (*A&E Resolution 9*). At least one staff member will be available to clients and/or external agencies at all times during office hours (*A&E Resolution 7*).
- Rosters will be planned so that at least one staff member who can assess and accept intake referrals will be available at all times (*A&E Resolution 19*).
- Rosters will include allocating on-call work to appropriate staff.
- Staff are responsible for checking the roster and knowing when they are expected at work.
- If staff want to change their roster, they can swap with another worker or discuss the change required with the manager or within the service.
- If a resident has to call a staff member who is on call, *(Insert name)* Refuge will cover the cost of this call. (*A&E Resolution 8*)

### Procedure

- Every *(insert time frame, for example week, month etc)*, develop a staff roster that allocates who will be on and when.
- When developing the roster, take account of staff leave, training, off-site commitments etc. Try to ensure that at least one staff member is on the premises at all times during the times when the refuge is staffed.

- When developing the roster, also consider access to staff during the times when all staff members are involved in staff, or other, meetings. Consider whether casual staff are necessary during these times.
- Staff who are on-call are to take the refuge mobile. This mobile is to be left on at all times while the staff member is on-call. It is only to be used to accept incoming calls or for emergency outgoing calls.
- When the refuge is not staffed, office phones are to be diverted to the refuge mobile phone.

## 4.2 Internal communication

### Primary responsibility

All staff and management

Forms and Refuge record keeping books referred to:

- Telephone log book
- Day book
- Refuge diary

### Policy

- Internal communication at (*Insert name*) Refuge will be open and thorough and follow the procedures outlined below.

### Procedure

#### Phone log

- Whenever a phone call is taken, record the following details in the phone log:
  - who rang
  - who for
  - what was the purpose of the call
  - what have you done
  - any message.
- Staff are to check the phone log for messages.

#### Day book

- Use the day book to communicate with other staff about the day-to-day operation of the service. Record the following information:
  - what work has been done
  - what work needs to be done

- how urgent is this work
- who needs to do this work
- issues or information that might impact on other workers or clients
- arrival of new clients
- departure of clients.
- Only record non-identifying, factual information in the day book (*A&E Resolution 40*). Do not record confidential information about clients in the day book. This should only be recorded in client files.
- Whenever staff or clients leave the refuge, they should record their intended whereabouts, and expected time of return, in the day book.

### Diary

- Use the central diary to record all appointments for clients and any meetings, workshops or appointments for staff.
- Also use the central diary to record when forms or submissions are due.

### Staff meetings

- Staff meetings are held every (insert time frame, for example every week or fortnight, or every second Tuesday etc). (*See staff meetings policy in the Staff matters section.*)
- All staff rostered on at that time are required to attend staff meetings unless there is an emergency requiring a staff member's attention.
- Staff meetings provide a forum for staff to communicate with each other about day-to-day operation of the refuge, issues and concerns. Encourage staff to add items they would like to discuss onto the agenda.
- Encourage staff to speak openly at staff meetings but request that they always remain respectful of other staff members.
- Take minutes at the meeting and distribute these to all staff, including any staff members who did not attend the meeting.
- File minutes and keep for (*insert time period, for example one year etc*).

## House meetings with residents

- House meetings with residents and staff representatives are held every (*insert time frame, for example every week or fortnight, or every second Tuesday etc*). (See house meetings policy in the Working with clients section).
- House meetings provide a forum for staff to communicate with clients and vice versa, passing on information and raising issues as required.
- Take notes of any decisions made at the meeting and distribute these to all residents and staff, including anyone who did not attend the meeting.
- File minutes and keep for (*insert time period, for example one year etc*).

## Management meetings

*Refuges need to insert their method of staff/management communication. For example,*

- If staff want to raise issues with management, they can take their concerns to the manager and discuss them with her first. If the manager agrees with the issue or concern, they can raise it at the next management meeting and provide feedback.

Or

- Staff are encouraged to attend management meetings, so they can raise any issues or concerns directly. If staff want to attend a meeting to raise an issue or concern, they need to ensure their item is registered on the meeting's agenda and that any background material supporting their concern is provided to the committee members prior to the meeting.

## Supervision

- All staff are required to attend monthly organisation and casework supervision sessions with, or organised by, the manager. (See Supervision policy in *Staff matters* section.)

## 4.3 Office administration

### Primary responsibility

All staff and management

Forms and Refuge record keeping books referred to

- Correspondence register

### Policy

- All staff responsible for the administration of (*Insert name*) Refuge will follow the procedures set out below.

### Procedure

#### Correspondence

- Keep a correspondence register.
- Record all correspondence received and dispatched in the correspondence register, daily if possible. Record the date the correspondence was received or sent, who sent it, brief description of contents, action taken and where correspondence is filed.
- Correspondence includes:
  - mail
  - faxes
  - emails
  - hand deliveries.
- Pass any correspondence marked 'Personal' or 'Confidential' unopened to the addressee. The addressee is to register work-related correspondence.
- Send all official correspondence (sent on behalf of the refuge) on letterhead.

#### Telecommunications

- Answer all phones in a courteous manner.
- Record all phone calls in the phone log. (See *Internal communications* procedure in this section.)
- Encourage staff to adopt a polite and helpful attitude whenever talking on the telephone.
- Take messages accurately, record them in the phone log and deliver them as soon as possible.
- Staff should also check the phone log to retrieve any messages.
- Process faxes as correspondence and in a timely manner.
- Process emails as correspondence and in a timely manner.
- Ensure the refuge mobile phones are operational at all times, ie either on or with message services on.
- Restrict calls to refuge mobile phones to on-call use and urgent matters only.
- Only use answering machines when diversion to another phone or mobile phone is not possible. They should not be used during office hours wherever possible (*A&E resolution 10*).

### Filing

- Keep client files as per the *Client records and information* policy.
- File all correspondence and organisation generated documents.
- Keep files in a lockable filing cabinet.
- Keep all financial, legal and client files for seven years.
- Keep funding submissions and agreements, annual reports, reports to Annual General Meetings and minutes for management meetings, on file indefinitely, for both legal reasons and to ensure a record of the organisation is kept.
- Inform clients at intake that their files will be kept for seven years.

### Stationery

- All correspondence generated by the organisation is to be on the refuge letterhead.

- The office administrator is responsible for ensuring an adequate supply of letterhead is kept on the premises and for arranging to print more when supplies run low.

## 4.4 Running the Refuge

### Primary responsibility

All staff and residents

### Policy

- Staff and clients are responsible for the day-to-day running of the house, including buying food, cleaning and maintenance.

### Procedure

#### Buying food

- The refuge provides food. (*Or, insert Refuge policy here.*)
- Buy groceries from (*insert store*) every (*insert day*).
- Do an extensive shop every four weeks.
- Encourage clients to contribute to the shopping list.
- Encourage one or two clients at a time to accompany the staff member when they go shopping.
- Ask clients to help the staff member unload and unpack the shopping.

#### Cleaning

- Staff are responsible for keeping the house clean, hygienic and safe.
- Keep work areas clean and tidy at all times.
- Ask clients to clean up after themselves at all times and keep their bedrooms clean.
- Put clients on a cleaning roster to help clean the common areas of lounge room, kitchen, bathrooms etc.
- Staff are to contribute to cleaning of all common areas and make sure cleaning standards are maintained.

- Client's bedrooms are to be cleaned before they depart. If this is not organised, then the case manager will be responsible for completing the task.
- Staff or clients are to clean outdoor areas after use.
- Clean vehicles regularly and remove rubbish after each trip.

#### Maintenance

- Bring any repairs necessary to the attention of the manager/collective.
- Arrange for repairs to be done immediately by a contracted professional, preferably known to the refuge.
- Get a quote for repairs prior to commencing the job where possible.
- Maintain gardens and lawns in a neat and tidy manner by *(Refuges are to insert who should maintain gardens — is this a gardener person or staff and clients? Are staff and clients expected to do it or only if they like gardening?)*

## 4.5 Handling money

### Primary responsibility

Manager and bookkeeper *or* all staff for collective

Forms and Refuge record keeping books referred to

Purchase Requisition form

Assets Register

Petty cash vouchers

Receipt book for monies received

### Policy

- The manager is responsible for overseeing the day to day financial matters of the refuge.
- (*Insert staff positions*) are also authorised to handle money.

*Or, for collective*

- All staff are responsible for overseeing the day-to-day financial matters of the refuge.

### Cheques

- All cheques written by (*Insert name*) Refuge must be signed by at least two signatories. Signatories usually include the manager or bookkeeper and a member of the management committee, usually the treasurer.
- Cheques are only to be written if a Purchase Requisition form or an invoice or a staff expenses claim form is sighted first.
- Cheques are only to be written to the name or company on the Purchase Requisition form, invoice or staff expense claim and only for the amount specified on these documents.
- Blank cheques must never be signed.



## Purchases

- Purchases up to an amount of (*insert amount*) can be approved by the manager/collective.
- Purchases above this amount must be approved by the management committee/broader collective.
- If the amount of a purchase exceeds the amount the authorised persons can spend, but the purchase is deemed urgent and must be made before the next management/broader collective meeting, approval may be given by two members of the management/broader collective by phone.
- To make a purchase, the relevant staff member must complete a Purchase Requisition form, detailing what the purchase is, what it is for, who payment is to be made to and for how much. (See Resources in this section for a copy of Purchase Requisition form.)
- Cheques are only to be written to the name on the Purchase Requisition form and only for the amount specified.
- Any equipment or furniture purchased which costs more than (*insert amount*) must be recorded in the Asset Register. (See Asset Register in the resources section of this chapter.)

## Petty cash

- (*Insert name*) Refuge will maintain a petty cash float of (*insert amount*).
- The manager/bookkeeper is responsible for overseeing petty cash and reimbursing petty cash expenditures.
- Individual petty cash expenditures (without prior approval) are limited to (*insert amount*).
- To claim petty cash reimbursement, receipts must be provided and petty cash voucher completed.

## Paying invoices

- The bookkeeper is responsible for paying invoices for day-to-day refuge operation.
- Invoices are to be paid by the due date.
- The bookkeeper is to sight invoices and check they are for the expected amount. Any discrepancies, unusual amounts, or unexpected invoices are to be queried and explained.
- Once the bookkeeper is satisfied the invoice is justified, they are to draw up the cheque, attach it to the invoice and present it to the manager/management committee for signatures.
- The bookkeeper must record details of the invoice on the cheque butt and enter the payment into the accounting system as soon as possible.
- Details of the cheque number, the date and the Refuge accounting system account the invoice has been posted to, are also to be recorded on the invoice.
- Once cheques are signed, the bookkeeper is responsible for mailing the cheque and the remittance advice to the relevant suppliers.
- All invoices are to be filed, with those paid most recently at the front.

#### Receiving payments from clients

- The manager/bookkeeper is responsible for receiving any monies paid to the refuge by clients.
- When clients pay their fee/rent, they must be issued with a written receipt containing all relevant details of the payment (including the Refuge name, the client's name, the amount paid, the purpose of the payment and the period or tenancy/stay the payment covers).
- All money is to be locked in rent tin.

#### Banking

- The refuge is to keep the cash on the premises at any time to a minimum. Therefore banking is to be done as often as is necessary to clear the rent tin regularly.

- When banking of clients fees/rent is done, the person doing the banking must record in the receipt book that the money has been banked, the date and the account it has been banked to.

## Filing

- The manager is responsible for overseeing the filing of financial records.
- The bookkeeper is to keep files of:
  - payments made, ie file the invoice or staff expenses claim form in cheque number order. Also, keep a record of any direct debit authorities in date order. (*Note to refuges, this is just an example of a way to file. Insert your own system of filing here.*)
  - income received, ie copies of receipts and any other relevant information
  - bank statements and reconciliation records
  - petty cash expenditure and receipts.

## 4.6 Asset register

### Primary responsibility

Manager/bookkeeper or collective

Forms and Refuge record keeping books referred to  
Asset Register

### Policy

- (*Insert name*) Refuge will maintain an Assets Register which will be updated regularly as assets change.
- The manager/bookkeeper is responsible for maintaining the Assets Register.
- All equipment or furniture purchased that costs more than (*insert amount*) is to be recorded in the Assets Register.
- In the event of the dissolution of the organisation, assets shall be disposed of in accordance with the Funding Agreement and Constitution.

### Procedure

- Record, badge with ownership and allocate a unique asset number, to items purchased prior to use. (See the Asset Register form in Resources of this section.)
- Do a stock take of all inventories annually, prior to the audit/ Annual General Meeting.

## 4.7 Key register

### Primary responsibility

Manager/collective

Forms and Refuge record keeping books referred to  
Key Register

### Policy

- (*Insert name*) Refuge will keep an up-to-date register of all people (staff and clients) holding keys and which keys they hold.
- The Key Register will keep a record of all keys associated with the refuge including keys to premises, units or rooms, petty cash tin, filing cabinets, PO Box, motor vehicle etc.
- A full list of all keys and the number of each key in existence will be kept at the front of the Register.

### Procedure

- Determine who are the appropriate people to hold specific keys, taking account the smooth functioning of the refuge and security.
- Enter all people who have keys in the Key Register. (See the Sample Key Register form in Resources of this section.)
- Record details in the Key Register, including which key, to whom, date of issue, date of return, signature and witness.

## 4.8 Motor vehicle usage

### Primary responsibility

Management committee/broader collective and manager/collective

### Policy

- *(Insert name)* Refuge provides a motor vehicle to use for refuge business.
- Service vehicles are only to be driven by authorised individuals. Management must approve individuals who are authorised to drive service vehicles.
- The vehicle is to be used in a responsible manner and according to the policies outlined below.

### Insurance

- All service vehicles are to have comprehensive insurance cover and NRMA road service cover.

### Usage

- Staff must have a current and appropriate driver's license. This license must be shown to the manager/collective (or the management committee) and photocopied, prior to driving the vehicle. The photocopy is to be kept in the staff member's personnel file.
- The refuge vehicle is only to be used for work-related activities unless the staff member has prior approval from the management committee.
- All trips are to be recorded in the vehicle log book.
- Vehicles are to be left at the refuge unless authorised by the management committee.
- No smoking is permitted in the service vehicle.

### Seatbelts

- Staff are to ensure that all passengers (and themselves) wear seatbelts unless they are legally exempt.
- If a passenger does not want to wear a seatbelt, they cannot be transported in the vehicle.
- All children must be transported in the appropriate child restraint for their age.

### Maintenance

- Service maintenance is to be carried out when appropriate. Staff using the vehicle are responsible for noting mileage and when services are due.
- Vehicles should always be left with more than half a tank of petrol. Each driver is responsible for checking the petrol level at the end of their journey.
- Whenever the vehicle is filled with petrol, check water, oil and tyre pressure. All staff using the vehicle are to be shown how to do this if they are unsure.
- Petrol will be paid for by the Refuge. If there is not an account, staff should always get a receipt for the cost of petrol and be reimbursed by the refuge.
- The vehicle should always be left in a presentable condition. Vehicle users are responsible for ensuring the vehicle is washed and vacuumed regularly.
- All rubbish is to be removed from vehicles after each journey.

### Breakdown

- Contact NRMA. The membership card is in the glove-box of each vehicle.

### Infringement notices

- The staff member driving the vehicle is responsible for paying any parking or speeding infringement notice incurred while they were using the vehicle.

### Accidents

- If a staff member is involved in a motor vehicle accident whilst driving a service vehicle, the management committee will decide (at their discretion) who will pay the excess on the insurance policy.

- Staff are required to document all relevant details of other vehicle driver's particulars ie, registration, license number, insurance company etc.

### Lending of refuge vehicles to other services

- Lending of vehicles must be approved by the manager or management committee.
- Details of the driver's license are to be photocopied and kept on file at the refuge.

# Resources

4.5.1 Purchase Requisition form

4.6.1 Asset Register

4.7.1 Sample Key Register