CASE MANAGEMENT POLICY

ENTRY/SCREENING PROCEDURE

The entry/screening process for our agency is to make sure that the service is able to provide the service/s requested. This requires checking that the client and the service requested matches the target group, and the capacity of the service. It may also entail consideration of the needs of the current clients to ensure compatibility.

Policy
Lions Emergency Accommodation Centre Inc. (LEAC) provides supported crisis accommodation for families and single people who are homeless or having to leave an unsafe situation.

Procedure
The entry or screening process is as follows:

- Worker is to assess whether an interpreter service is required and if so, arrange one.

- When the accommodation is full:
  1. If the presenting issue is domestic or family violence provide the client with the 1800 number and emergency police number. If client is able and willing to engage, develop a **safety plan** over the telephone if necessary and provide the client with relevant information in relation to services she can access and the legal protection that is available. Refer to an appropriate specialist legal service if necessary.

  2. If the presenting issue is not domestic or family violence clients are to be referred to other services that may be able to assist them with accommodation and/or other needs.

  NB. Further procedures are outlined in the ***Information, Advocacy and Referral Policy*** and ***Use of Professional Interpreters Policy.***

- Refusals are to be noted on a Refusals record and given to the Co-ordinator at the end of each month.

- If there is a vacancy, worker is to take down client's details and the details of the referring agency on the **LEAC Intake Form**. The worker will provide the client with information about the eligibility criteria for LEAC. The worker may also utilise the **Entry/Screening Checklists for Shelter and Houses.** The LEAC Intake Form contains a safety plan for workers to assess current risk of harm to client, children and associates. This can be used in conjunction with the **Safety Risk Assessment Tool and LEAC Safety Planning Information.**

- Check the client index cards to see if the person has used the service before, and if so, check previous records for useful information. If there are important issues arising from a previous stay in LEAC accommodation, worker is to discuss this with at least one other staff member. Further procedures are outlined in the ***Exclusion Policy.***

- Determine whether the client fits the eligibility criteria and can be accommodated in the service. Consideration should be given to the current client mix.

- The worker should assess if the client is presenting with a disability (for example, mental health issues, physical or intellectual disability) or drug and/or alcohol issues. If the client is currently being case managed by another service, the worker should seek the client's consent to contact the relevant agency to gain their co-operation in working with LEAC for the purpose of Case Management.

- Inform the client as soon as possible whether their request for service can be met and if not, the reason/s why not and refer to other services as appropriate.

- If the client is not satisfied that the request for service is unable to be met, provide them with verbal and/or written information about the **Complaints Procedure**.

INTAKE PROCEDURE

Policy
Workers are to ensure that a thorough intake procedure is carried out with all clients requesting crisis accommodation.

Procedure
If request for service is able to be met:

- Attend to urgent needs for assistance immediately. When appropriate, develop a **safety plan** with the client that will assist her to escape the violent situation and to travel safely to LEAC. If it is not appropriate to come directly to the agency, recommended pick-up points are: Nambour Police Station and Nambour General Hospital (DEM).

- Make appropriate transport arrangements for the client.

- Carry out the intake procedure. The steps to follow for intake are:

    1. Every new admission is allocated an intake number. Intake numbers are taken in order and this number follows on from previous numbers on the Master Cards.

2. On arrival, the worker will ask the adult client/s to complete the forms in the **Admission Kit**. There are separate Admission Kits for the Houses and Shelter. If the client has a disability or is from a culturallyor linguistically diverse background, the worker will engage the use of the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), face to face and AUSLAN sign interpreters, or will assist the client as necessary.

3. There may be circumstances when it is not appropriate to fill out the forms contained in the **Admission Kit** on arrival. However, some essential information must be collected including the names and ages of the adult/s and children and an emergency contact number.

4. The client/s are provided with information about the service/s available and relevant policies and procedures.

5. The client/s are provided with a copy of the **Complaints Procedure** and the **Client Rights and Responsibilities Statement**.

6. Clients are informed of the Service's ***Confidentiality Policy*** and the worker seeks verbal feedback from the client regarding their understanding of this policy.

7. Clients are informed of the Service's policy on record keeping.

8. The client/s are provided with a SAAP NDCA form for their completion during their stay and are asked for their consent to give this data to the NDCA. The name coding used by the NDCA to protect the client's identity is to be explained to them. Further procedures are outlined in the ***NDCA Policy.***

9. The client/s are informed of LEAC's ***Fee Policy***.

10. Ensure client/s have an opportunity to ask questions.

11. Introduce the client/s and children to staff members who are present.

12. Inform the client/s who the Family/Child Support Worker will be, or explain when the worker/s will be allocated.

13. Orient the client to the LEAC public office and to the accommodation where they will be residing. If residing in the houses, the worker will show client/s the plaque listing contact numbers. If residing at the Shelter, introduce the woman and children to other residents. It is important that the security requirements be clearly explained and the woman is aware of how to use the telephone system, including how to contact the on-call worker. Go through the **Welcome to Shelter**

booklet contained in each unit. The Family Support Worker will follow up with the woman, or make arrangements with other staff members to do so within 24 hours of entry to the service.

14. Ensure that the green **Client Intake Card** with the client information is completed. The staff member will also complete details of the admission on the appropriate cards for "**Shelter Only " or "All Houses Including Shelter"** for the month.

ASSESSMENT

There are two forms of assessment at LEAC: an initial crisis assessment and an Assessment of Individual Needs.

A crisis assessment takes place as soon as possible after clients enter the accommodation and is to assess immediate needs. This includes the need for safety and security, food, clothing, medical attention and financial assistance. The crisis assessment is located on the back of the LEAC Intake Form.

A more detailed assessment, required for case management planning, is onging and commences as soon as a client feels stable enough to begin planning. This assessment should be holistic and take into account the wide range of factors which affect the client's situation. This assessment should involve the client at all stages.

Policy
All workers carrying out assessments will be trained in the process of developing assessments.

Procedure
The worker doing the intake should carry out assessment of crisis needs. Crisis assessments will take into account each member of the client family.

Part of undertaking crisis assessments with clients in undertaking a safety risk assessment. Workers should utilise the **Safety Risk Assessment Tool and LEAC Safety Planning Information.**

Previous client records should be used when undertaking assessments.

Assessments will take into account client's needs and strengths, including cultural and linguistic needs. The worker will ask the client if they wish to involve a person from their cultural group to be involved in the case management process. Workers will access information on cultural practices from key persons in different cultural groups to assist with work undertaken with clients from diverse backgrounds. Further procedures are outlined in the ***Access and Equity Policy.***

The allocated Family Support Worker and Child Support Worker will carry out a full assessment.

Assessments should commence as soon as possible after a client enters the service.

Assessments should be written down on the assessment form in easy to read language.

Family Support Workers undertaking assessments are supervised by the Co-ordinator.

A Family Support Worker is allocated to undertake the assessment. The assessment should be kept as informal as possible and take place in a private place where the client feels comfortable. The assessment process carried out by the Family Support Worker is as follows:

- Make an appointment to meet with the client to begin needs assessment. This should be when the client feels settled enough to begin making future plans.
- Explain the service's case management approach to the client and gain their agreement to participate.
- If clients do not wish to participate in the case management process, clients will be advised that the worker will be the first point of contact in relation to their tenancy obligations. Clients in the shelter will still be required to attend house meetings. Clients will be informed that the condition of their staying in the accommodation is acceptance of visits from their worker to facilitate their transition into independent accommodation.
- Read any previous client records, and discuss previous assessments and goals with the clients. Build on previous plans and discuss what different steps can be taken to make progress toward achieving goals. Emphasise past achievements.
- Record information about client goals/needs on the **Assessment of Needs and Support Plan** and the **Lions Emergency Accommodation Centre Inc Steps: A Plan for Support** document. Make sure that the assessment recorded reflects the client's assessment of their needs. These documents are to be held on the Client File.
- A Child Support Worker will meet with the client to assess the needs of children. Individual child's needs are to be recorded on separate **Children's Case Management Plan** forms**.** The client may have children who are not in the accommodation with him/her, and they need to be considered in the assessment process.
- The Child Support Worker should discuss their assessments with the parent/guardian.
- Older children are encouraged by the Child Support Worker to participate in the identification of their needs.

PLANNING

Planning follows on from assessment of needs. It involves setting goals and priorities, and identifying the steps necessary to achieve these. Goals may be small and specific, as well as broad and long term. The planning should be client driven and empowering.

Policy
The Family Support Worker carrying out the assessment will take responsibility for assisting the client to develop and implement a support plan. If the client is being case managed by another service, wherever possible the support plan is developed in consultation with the relevant professional who is supporting the client.

Procedure
If necessary, a case conference is arranged by the Family Support Worker to decide on issues of case management responsibility and to co-ordinate the response.

LEAC uses the "**Steps: A Plan for Support**" and the "**Assessment of Needs and Support Plan**" forms to record the support plan, to note Appointment times, and important telephone numbers and addresses.

The Support Plan should reflect the needs and wishes of the client, as far as possible. Where this is incompatible with the resources of LEAC, this should be negotiated.

The client should own the Support Plan, and should have a copy in their own words.

Family Support Workers undertaking support plans are supervised by the Co-ordinator.

ACCOMPANYING CHILDREN

Policy
At LEAC, the child support role includes providing support to the family by assessing children's needs, working with children to develop skills, and providing emotional support and quality time for children.

Procedure
Children will be referred to appropriate services to match specific needs.

The family will be referred to CYMHS, North Coast Family Counselling, MYCP or another appropriate service where children are displaying extreme behavioural/emotional problems.

The parent/guardian's permission will be sought before children are referred to another agency.

Referral to Department of Communities without the parent/guardian's permission should only be made when the child is considered to be at risk. This proposed action should always be discussed with at least one other staff member and approved by the Co-ordinator is possible. Further procedures are outlined in the ***Policies Relating Specifically to Children.***

Plans for the children should focus on strengthening the family and supporting the parent/guardians to care for their children.

Process
In developing the Support Plan, workers will do the following:

- Discuss the needs that were identified during the assessment, and assist the client to develop priorities and set goals. Goals can include a mixture of short term specific goals and long term broader goals.
- If the client has used LEAC before, go back to the support plan that was previously developed and build upon that, taking into account any achievements or barriers that have occurred.
- Explain to the client approximately how long he/she can expect to stay in the accommodation and the process for exit planning.
- Assist the client to identify and discuss options, taking into account services available in the community and the resources of LEAC.
- Identify who is going to be responsible for the actions. Encourage the client to take as much responsibility as they can. Write this down in the Support Plan.
- Identify which goals require referral to another agency.
- Obtain the client's written and informed consent to make referral to another agency on the **Release of Information** form, and to pass on any relevant information to the referral agency.
- Assist the parent/guardian/s to develop goals for each child. These will include services that can be arranged for the child, and services that can be arranged for the parent to assist with parenting eg Triple P Parenting Program. Older children should participate in this and also have the opportunity to set some goals of their own.
- The goals that the parent/guardian/s set for the children may be long term. Assist to develop short-term steps or actions that will lead towards meeting these goals.
- Write up the Support Plan to include the services being provided by all providers.
- If financial savings is a goal identified by clients, money given to workers for this purpose is to be recorded on a **Savings Plan** form which is to identify the name and address of the client, date, receipt number, amount deposited/returned and balance. All entries are to be signed by clients. Individual forms are to be stored in the **Savings Plan Folder.** Clients also sign the receipt to be written by the worker in the **Savings Receipt Book.**
- Write down the support plan using language familiar to the client, read it out to make sure that he/she agrees with it, using an interpreter if needed.
- Make a copy of the Support Plan, give one copy to the client and place the other on the **Client File**. Alternatively, client/s can be encouraged to write out their

own copy of the Support Plan in their own words, using an interpreter if necessary.

- Make a time to meet regularly with client/s to review the plan.

DIRECT SERVICE

Direct service involves work undertaken with service users.

Policy
Direct service provision is undertaken by workers in accordance with the **LEAC Code of Conduct** and the Service's framework for practice, which incorporates the Strengths Based, Human Rights and Community Development perspectives.

Procedure
Staff meetings are held every Wednesday morning to discuss staff and client issues and to conduct case reviews.

Compulsory house meetings are held twice a week at the shelter on a Monday morning and Friday morning at 9.30am. An interpreter is arranged when required, to ensure that all women have the opportunity to participate in this meeting.

Workers should note any relevant client information in the **Day Book**.

When workers are unsure how to respond to a situation, they should discuss this with other staff members and with the Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity.

At LEAC, the support person works with clients as follows:

- Provide the service/s that have been negotiated and carry out the tasks within the agreed time frame.
- Provide encouragement and where appropriate, assistance to the client to carry out the tasks they have responsibility for.
- Note the outcomes of actions on the support plan for discussion at the next planning meeting.
- Discuss tasks relating to accompanying children with the parent, and decide who will take responsibility for the follow-up.
- If the case management is being provided by another service, work closely with the case manager to facilitate the support plan.

CO-ORDINATION

Co-ordination in relation to case management involves having an understanding of the role of other services and developing co-operative working relationships with relevant services. It requires a collaborative approach, subject to client consent, to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Policy
LEAC policy regarding case management co-ordination is:

- The service encourages clients to use mainstream services and/or specialist services that work with clients from diverse backgrounds including referral to key persons or elders. The worker does not assume that clients from diverse cultural communities will want to speak to a worker from the same cultural backgound.

- Workers will be aware of the specific issues around Indigenous family violence and where necessary offer support or referral to extended family or other services/people who may be supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

- The worker is aware of issues relating to domestic and family violence in the lesbian, bisexual and transgender community and refers the client to appropriate local services as necessary.

- LEAC will send a representative to local network meetings and key peak bodies in relation to Domestic and Family Violence and Homelessness.

- LEAC will be involved in a co-ordinated community response (CCR) to domestic and family violence and homelessness in the local area and will regularly attend meetings with key stakeholders.

- LEAC will contribute to the development and maintenance of referral protocols negotiated with key services. Protocols are to be monitored and reviewed regularly.

- The LEAC ***Conflict Resolution Policy*** will be followed for issues of grievances that arise between LEAC and other agencies.

- LEAC will participate in joint training initiatives and community education activities with other stakeholders.

Procedure

- Workers will assist clients to make contact and negotiate with relevant agencies and people to advocate for her own and/or her children's needs.

- The client must give informed written consent on the **Release of Information** form for any referral by a worker to other services for them or their children.

- Referral is to be made to the services listed on the support plan. When making a referral to another agency a letter of support may be written by the worker if appropriate.

- When referring to another service, the worker will act as an advocate and present information that is relevant to achieve the client's desired outcome.

- The worker must check that the client understands why the referral is being made and the service they should receive.

- If necessary, the worker will accompany the client to another service, or ask the client if they would like a friend or family member to accompany them.

- Where a number of services are to be involved, negotiate with other services how the services will be co-ordinated and who will take the lead role in co-ordination. The client must be involved in the negotiations.

- In complex cases, case conferences will be will be held to co-ordinate services.

- Workers will regularly liaise with key stakeholders in a professional manner to develop positive working relationships, address issues or negotiate to resolve problems.

- The worker will write the **Support Plan** to include all service provision.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring is the process of reassessing needs and revising the plan, to keep it up to date with the current needs of the client and accompanying children. The plan is regularly reviewed to celebrate achievements and explore ways of overcoming barriers.

Policy
Assessments and support plans will be reviewed regularly as required.

Procedure
Wherever possible plans are to reviewed by the worker who developed the plan with the client.

Reviews should take place in a private place where the client feels comfortable.

Parent/guardian/s should be involved in reviews of the children's needs and support plans.

The monitoring/review process is as follows:

- Meet with the client on a regular basis to reassess the client's needs and the needs of accompanying children;

- Regularly review the support plan to identify achievements, set new priorities, identify barriers and ways to overcome them, and make new goals to meet additional needs. A **LEAC Case Plan Review** form can be used by workers to undertake reviews with clients.

- Assessments from other services, or feedback from other services should be taken into account.

- If necessary, change the goals and the actions written on the **Support Plan** or add to them. If appropriate write up a new support plan.

- Put a copy of the revised assessment and plan on the client file, and give a copy to the client.

- Write up case notes as necessary. Further procedures are outlined in the ***Record Keeping Policy.***

- Carry out the tasks identified in the revised plan, and where appropriate assist the clients to carry out the tasks they have agreed to do;

- Check that the client is happy with the process, and make a further time to meet and review their situation.

EXIT PLANNING AND CASE FOLLOW-UP

Exit planning involves planning for when a person might exit our Service for stable long-term accommodation. The ongoing support needs of the client are assessed and a follow-up plan is negotiated, where appropriate.

Policy
When the support plan is developed with the client/s they should be informed about the approximate length of time they can remain in the service, and the process for exit planning.

Procedure
As part of the monitoring and review of the support plan, the Family Support Worker, Child Support Worker and client work towards transition to long term stable accommodation and case closure.

Exit planning needs to be done in consultation with other services. Using the **Exit Plan Form,** workers undertake an assessment of:

- The safety of the client and children
- The required level of ongoing support/follow up to client
- The relevant people are notified of the change in circumstance of the client and children
- Continuing case management (if appropriate) by a relevant community based service

Workers will assist clients as much as possible (keeping in mind the limits to the resources of the agency) to move to new accommodation.

Past clients are free to present to the office in person, or telephone the public office during business hours if they require assistance or support with an issue. Workers will encourage past clients to access community supports.

Past residents are encouraged to attend Kids Club and Interest Group held at the public office of LEAC if they continue to live within easy access.

At the planning phase, the worker will work with the client to identify at what point they will be ready to leave LEAC. For houses exit planning is based on the lease period (up to thirteen weeks). For the shelter**,** exit planning needs to consider the current safety for the family, is a refuge situation still required and if not, would one of our houses be appropriate. If safety is not a factor, then exit planning is based on whether the needs and support identified in the assessment form are being worked on and an agreed time frame set.

When it is approaching time for the client to leave the service, the worker will do the following:

- Make an appointment with the client to identify what they have achieved and what goals are still being worked on.
- Assist the client to identify support services in the community and within their own support network that will assist in maintaining independence. Clients will be encouraged to contact services for themselves.
- Where appropriate, the worker will advocate on behalf of the client with services in the community.
- The Family Support Worker/Child Support Worker will assist the client to identify the ongoing needs of accompanying children and to identify services in the community which can help.
- The client will be informed of the outreach services that can/cannot be provided by the worker on exit from the service. Further procedures are outlined in the ***Outreach Policy.***
- The client will be informed that they can re-enter the service at any time.
- The worker will arrange practical assistance to help the client and children exit the service. (This will be provided by whichever staff member is available at this time)
- A follow up plan is negotiated as necessary with clients and recorded on the **Client Exit Form**.
- If the client is being case managed by another service, liaise with the case manager to ensure that they know when the client will be leaving, and that they have arranged for any necessary follow-ups.
- Workers will complete the necessary paper work:

- Complete case notes
- Complete the Client Exit Form, including
- Enter the NDCA Data on the Smart program
- Complete Exit Dates on green Client Index card and green cards for Shelter/All Houses Including Shelter as appropriate

➢ If follow up is not being provided, close the client file and store in the Closed Files drawer of the filing cabinet.

➢ Worker will provide outreach support as required.

EVALUATION

Evaluation includes feedback from the client on the services provided, and evaluation by the workers of the process of delivering services to a client or group of clients.

Policy

All clients are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the services offered to them by LEAC. Negative feedback will not affect future services to the client.

Procedure

Before the client leaves the service, they are to be given a **LEAC Service Evaluation** form and a stamped envelope addressed to the Co-ordinator and encouraged to complete and return the evaluation.

Focus groups are held by the agency to explore topics around service delivery with different client groups. Focus groups are to be facilitated by workers and a written report delivered to the Co-ordinator.

Workers are encouraged to discuss their assessment of the services provided for clients in supervision.

The Co-ordinator will assess evaluations and take appropriate action as required.