

## Emergency Relief

### Policy

Emergency relief (ER) must be responsive to the needs of the person and be provided in a manner which ensures the confidentiality and dignity of the person requesting assistance. ER is distributed during the hours agreed upon by Lions Emergency Accommodation Centre Inc. (LEAC) and other providers in the Nambour area.

### Procedure

All people requesting emergency relief must reside in the Nambour Centrelink area and be referred by another agency. Unless a person is homeless, a post box is not sufficient and a street address is required. Current clients of LEAC do not require a referral. Exceptions to these provisions may be made in consultation with the Co-ordinator but in all cases, identification is required.

Current clients who request ER should be referred to their caseworker. If the worker is not available and ER is provided, the worker should be informed as soon as possible. If a client requests ER on more than one occasion, the caseworker will offer assistance with budgeting. Where necessary, LEAC clients may be assisted with gift vouchers and scripts in addition to cheques.

An area is to be set aside during ER provision to ensure the confidentiality of both the ER client and current clients of the service.

Two (2) workers must be on site when ER is being distributed and the second worker must be in close enough vicinity to be aware of any potential threats. All worker office doors are kept closed and the reception areas clear of any confidential information.

The ER worker will ensure that the collection of personal information is restricted to that which is necessary for the provision of the emergency relief. The information will be collected only by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive way. The client must be informed that the information provided may be used by LEAC to collate data about payments, however the data will not allow individual people to be identified.

If a client is assisted at Peggy's, ensure the original of the receipt comes across to the office to be put on the database and filed for the auditor. The ER receipt book at Peggy's **MUST NOT** be used for receipting anything other than ER.

Clients must sign the receipts wherever possible. If the client is not able to sign the receipt then **two** workers must sign. **ALWAYS** complete the ER weekly statistics form on the Day Book. If this is the first time a client has been assisted, write that on the stats form.

The ER worker may:

- Provide financial aid to address the most pressing financial problem and/or explore other ways of resolving the problem. This may, with the client's written permission, include negotiating with the creditor/landlord.
- Ensure the client is receiving all the benefits and concessions to which they are entitled.
- Provide information on issues such as budgeting and housing.
- Advocate for, and provide referrals to other agencies as appropriate.

## Client Services

Emergency Relief provision is as follows:

- Before interviewing the person, ask if they have been to LEAC before for ER and check the ER database.
- Guidelines for the amount of assistance provided are listed in the ER bag. Individual worker discretion may be used if larger amounts are required.
- Cheques are made out to creditors and crossed "not negotiable". The recipient signs the cheque receipt book and a remittance advice form if the worker does not retain the primary account.
- If a cash cheque is required, ensure the person goes to the Bank of Queensland in Anne Street, Nambour.
- Two (2) signatures are required on each cheque - one Management Committee signature and the other the Co-ordinator.
- Cheque butts require the date, person's name, who the cheque is made out to and the receipt number entered to complete the transaction.
- Petrol vouchers are given for the current ER petrol provider and the person signs the gift voucher receipt book.
- Chemist vouchers are given for the current chemist provider and the chemist is phoned, with the written permission of the client, to check the cost of the scripts. The gift voucher receipt book is signed by the client.
- All ER to people must be recorded on the data base. If a person has requested assistance a number of times it is important to ensure they understand that ER is emergency, one-off payments and not a supplement to benefits/income. The worker may assess that the person will not be assisted for a set amount of time, in which case the person is informed and the information recorded on the database.
- Centrelink referral forms are filed in the back of the ER drawer. Remittance advice forms are filed in the front of the drawer.
- The worker must ensure all the required statistics are completed.

The ER bag and contents must not be left in the ER room whilst the worker is absent. At all other times the ER bag is kept in the Co-ordinator's room.