



Visitor Access Policy

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Approval

Policy owner	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Business Unit	Specialist Community Services		
Approved by	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Date approved	21/01/2025	Review date	21/01/2027

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Specialist Community Services (SCS) is committed to facilitating and supporting meaningful social connections and engagement for service users while, also ensuring the safety of *all* service users, staff and visitors within the service environment.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This is a divisional SCS policy, applicable to all staff, service users and visitors in the following service sites:
 - Mental Health Service Village (MHS)
 - Housing Plus (HGP)
 - Tom Fisher House (TFH)
 - Passages Youth Engagement Hubs (PYEH)
 - Wandjoo Bidi (WB)

3 Policy principles

- 3.1 SCS adopts a trauma informed approach and as such understands the importance of supporting social connections for the service users accessing their services. SCS recognises that people do better when they feel related and connected to others around them and as such welcomes visitors into the service, subject to site/service specific Visiting Requirements, so that relationships can be encouraged and maintained.
- 3.2 SCS accommodation services often operate in communal living environments so there is recognition that at times having privacy, space to relax and be comfortable, is crucial for service users to feel safe and mentally well. This is particularly important for individuals who have a history of trauma, and those who may find communal settings over stimulating. To help manage this, each SCS service has their own Visiting Requirements which reflect the unique nature and needs of the service. All visitors must respect and abide by these requirements while visiting on site.
- 3.3 Visitors on site should be there to visit a particular service user, rather than just 'generally visiting'. The service user must be home/on site with the visitor whilst they are there. (ex HGP)
- 3.4 Staff will *wherever necessary or requested* assist service users to make their own choices and exercise personal boundaries when receiving visits from family, friends and external supports. (ex HGP)
- 3.5 Service users are expected to participate in ensuring that safety and comfort levels within the service environment are maintained by taking responsibility for ensuring that their personal visitors are aware of the behaviour expected from them while on site at all times. (ex HLS)
- 3.6 If a service user feels unsafe or unable to address their visitor regarding their behaviour while on site, staff will assist if notified. This may include asking the visitor to leave. (ex HGP)
- 3.7 All visitors must be respectful of other service users' space, comfort and privacy while on site, recognising that the service site is their home and/or safe space.

This includes but is not limited to; noise levels, intrusive behaviour, illegal activities, use of communal spaces and resources.

- 3.8 Staff may intervene and potentially ask a visitor to leave, if they observe or become aware of behaviour that compromises the safety and/or comfort of other service users and staff.
- 3.9 All visitors acting in an aggressive, intimidating or disrespectful manner may be asked to leave the premises. Depending on the severity of the behaviour and the impact on other service users and staff, the Service Manager, at their discretion may implement a stand down period before visiting can recommence.
- 3.10 Any visitor who frequently overlooks the Visiting Requirements may have their visitation reviewed by the relevant Service Manager.
- 3.11 Service users must not provide keys, swipes, pin codes or any other security means/measures to visitors under any circumstances.
- 3.12 Service users who have transitioned between services within SCS are considered visitors once they leave the service site. They are still able to and encouraged to visit friends they have made, however also need to be aware that they must now observe Visiting Requirements.
- 3.13 Professional visitors (e.g. Case Managers, external Support Workers) must make their presence on site known to Reception or staff on duty upon arrival.
- 3.14 SCS recognises that at Mental Health service sites, the Mental Health Advocacy Service has the right to visit at any time to carry out their role and responsibilities in relation to advocating for consumers residing in Psychiatric Hostels.
- 3.15 At service sites with identified higher risks, external supports or visitors there for a service related purpose, are inducted to the site and advised that they may need to leave the site if an incident occurs.
- 3.16 If an incident occurs on site that visitors are witness to, staff will ensure that they are advised and they will be directed to a safe space or advised to leave the premises. Staff will follow up with visitors following the incident to assess any impact it may have had on them and any support required.
- 3.17 To ensure safety and avoid incidents, where possible, if a service user is not travelling well and potential risk has been identified, expected visitors (Case Managers, external Support Workers etc) for the service user is advised of this prior to arrival. (ex HGP)
- 3.18 Swipe card access to any premises will only be supplied to professional visitors under specific circumstances and as outlined in the relevant service's Visitors Procedures.

4 Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 The Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services is responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy.
- 4.2 Society representatives are required to adhere to this policy. Failure to comply may be considered a breach of our policies and may result in disciplinary action.

5 Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to

legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the SCS Management Team or the Executive Manager SCS.

6 Further assistance

- 6.1 Society personnel should speak with their Manager regarding any questions about the implementation of this policy.

7 References

References made in this policy are:

- 7.1 Visiting Requirements – MHS/TFH/PYEH

8 Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

- 8.1 National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010, *Government of Australia*
- 8.2 Specialist Homelessness Service Standards 2016, *Department of Communities, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.3 Youth Work Code of Ethics. *The Association for Youth Work Western Australia*
- 8.4 The Mental Health Act 2014, *Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.5 Standard 1 Governance: Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit, *Department of Health, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.6 Residential Tenancies Act 1987, *Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia*

9 Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	30/11/2015	Initial version
2.0	EM, SCS	31/05/2021	Scheduled review
2.1	EM, SCS	01/12//2021	Conversion to the new template
3.0	EM, SCS	08/02/2023	Scheduled review
4.0	EM, SC	21/01/2025	Scheduled review

10 Definitions

Term	Definition
Service user	Is an umbrella terms used to refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumers – individuals who access Mental Health Services

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients – individuals who access Passages Youth Engagement Hubs and Tom Fisher House • Residents – individuals residing at Wandjoo Bidi under a License to Occupy Agreement • Tenant – tenants residing in Housing Plus properties
Trauma	Is defined as an event, series of events, circumstance or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and, that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional or spiritual wellbeing. (SAMHSA Administration)
Trauma Informed Practice	Is an approach to delivery of health and human services directed by a thorough understanding of the neurological, biological, psychological and social effects of trauma and its prevalence in society. It is a strengths-based framework that emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for people who have experienced trauma. (Commonwealth of Australia: The Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia)
Visitor	Any person not residing or working within the stated SCS service site, whose purpose for being on site is to visit, support or socialise with, a service user. This may include but is not limited to family members, carers, friends, external professionals