



Food and Nutrition 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	18/03/2025	Review date	18/03/2027

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines the approach of Specialist Community Services (SCS) in recognising the importance of good nutrition for promoting the health and wellbeing of service users, staff and volunteers.
- 1.2 SCS recognises that the promotion of healthy eating needs to be viewed from an organisation wide perspective, considering both staff and service users of SCS.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to ensure that SCS promotes healthy food and nutrition options, through a variety of a means relevant to service delivery, such as food provision, education, catering and donations.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This is a SCS policy, applicable to all staff, volunteers and service users residing within or accessing the following SCS services:
 - Mental Health Service
 - Tom Fisher House
 - Passages Youth Engagement Hubs
 - Wandjoo Bidi

3 Policy principles

- 3.1 SCS respects the rights of service users to make informed decisions with regards to their diet and food choices. This includes providing education on nutrition and, where meals are provided seeking feedback via meetings and surveys where possible, so that this can be taken into consideration for menu planning purposes.
- 3.2 SCS recognises that nutritional choices have the impact to either positively or negatively impact physical and mental wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable individuals, those who are on pharmacological drugs and/or dependant on other substances.
- 3.3 SCS is aware that due to the lifestyle factors and medication, that certain food choices can increase the risk of weight gain and lifestyle-related chronic diseases such as Type 2 Diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.
- 3.4 SCS considers the impact of trauma in relation to the eating habits and dietary choices service users make, recognising that this may be an artificial attachment or, an area for reimbursement. To ensure a trauma informed approach, these considerations will be explored as a key step in developing any support plans related to food or nutrition.
- 3.5 SCS acknowledges that people with a history of trauma, housing insecurity and mental health challenges are at increased risk of chronic disease and potential early mortality due to reduced access to healthcare, reduced income and reduced access to regular nutritious food. For this reason, SCS takes special consideration at service sites where food is provided, to provide a range of meals that meet the health and wellbeing needs of service users and that increase nutrition value where possible.
- 3.6 Feedback from service users regarding food and drink services will be collected in accordance with established procedures. Records will be maintained to document the responses and actions taken in relation to the feedback received.

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- 3.7 In Mental Health Services, the Food for Thought initiative was developed in response to increasing physical health concerns for consumers that could be improved through dietary changes. Actions and principles from this initiative will be reflected in menus. Service menus will be displayed in the dining room so that service users know what meals are being served that week and, on that particular day.
 - 3.8 The Food for Thought initiative recognises that there is an important connection between the gut microbiome and a service user's physical and mental health. As a trauma informed and recovery-oriented service, every effort is taken so that foods beneficial to the gut microbes are reflected in the service menus e.g. wholefoods, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, wholegrains, nuts and dairy.
 - 3.9 SCS acknowledges that as an employer, we have a responsibility to keep the workplace safe and at a minimum, minimise risk to the health of all persons visiting or working in the service. This is taken into consideration when catering is offered to staff and volunteers for team meetings and training days etc.
 - 3.10 Where food is prepared on site, SCS adheres to food provision processes that comply with Standard 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements under the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), to avoid and minimise the risk of cross infection and/or food poisoning through food preparation and service.
 - 3.11 All staff who are required to be involved in food preparation at SCS service sites, complete annual Food Safety compliance training.
 - 3.12 SCS ensures when purchasing catering for events, that all foods are provided by companies who are registered businesses with Food Safety Certification and that catering choices reflects recommendations made by in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

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 SCS Management Team and 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 Standard 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements. *Food*

Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

7.2 Food for Thought Initiative

7.3 <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/about-australian-dietary-guidelines>

8 Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

- 8.1 Standard 8: Food Services, Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit. *Department of Health, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.2 National Standards for Mental Health Services, *Government of Australia*
- 8.3 Specialist Homelessness Service Standards 2016, *Department of Communities, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.4 SCS-PP-4029 Infection Control Policy
- 8.5 Safe Food Australia - A guide to the Food Safety Standards 2016
- 8.6 Australian Dietary Guidelines, Department of Health, Government of Australia
- 8.7 The Food Act 2008, *Department of Health, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.8 SCS Compliance Training Schedule
- 8.9 Food for Thought Initiative - MHS

9 Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	30/11/2020	Initial version
1.1	EM, SCS	01/12/2021	Conversion to new template
2.0	EM, SCS	27/02/2026	Scheduled review
3.0	EM, SCS	18/03/2025	Scheduled review

10 Definitions

Term	Definition
Australian Dietary Guidelines	Provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing. The recommendations are based on scientific evidence, developed after looking at good quality research.
Artificial Attachment	Attachments that are sought out to produce dopamine...this occurs in the absence of positive attachment to others.
Catering	Refers to food that has been purchased and is being provided by external food companies for staff or client/ consumer consumption.
Reimbursements	Opportunities for reimbursement are identified where critical experiences vital to development have been missed due to the impact of trauma. Reimbursement provides for strategic repair or replacement of the missed experience
Service users	Is an umbrella terms used to refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumers – individuals who access Mental Health Services• Clients – individuals who access Passages Youth Engagement Hubs and Tom Fisher House

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents – individuals residing at Wandjoo Bidi under a License to Occupy Agreement• Tenant – tenants residing in Housing Plus properties