



Gender and Sexuality Policy

Document number: SCS-PP-4023 Version 4.0

Approval

Policy owner	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Business Unit	Specialist Community Services		
Approved by	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Date approved	29/08/2024	Review date	29/08/2026

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This purpose of this policy is to acknowledge that there is diversity in relation to gender and sexuality and communicate Specialist Community Services (SCS) commitment to providing a safe environment in all SCS services to service users, staff and volunteers in this context.
- 1.2 This policy is intended to:
 - Promote inclusive, respectful and safe environments within SCS services;
 - Promote equality and non-discrimination amongst all stakeholder groups;
 - Communicate SCS' commitment to ensuring that services are welcoming and accessible to all;
 - Reflect the organisational values including respect, compassion and empathy;
 - Ensure all staff and volunteers understand SCS' position in relation to gender and sexuality and, demonstrate attitudes and behaviours that promote diversity and equality.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers who work in the following SCS sites:
 - Mental Health Service
 - Homelessness Services
 - Housing Plus
- 2.2 It also applies to all service users, family members and visitors who may access any of the abovenamed services.
- 2.3 'Service users' an umbrella term to refer to the consumers, clients, tenants and residents who access the abovenamed SCS services. The latter terms are the preferred ways of representing the cohort of individuals relevant to each particular service. See definitions below for further explanation. For the purpose of ensuring the readability of this procedure, the term 'service user' is utilised.
- 2.4 This policy must be read in conjunction with other SCS and St Vincent de Paul Society WA (SVdPWA) policies and procedures that articulate and support the commitment to value diversity and promote inclusion for service users. These include;
 - HR-PP-2100 Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy
 - SCS-PP-4148 Diversity and Inclusion - Clients, Consumers and Tenants Policy
 - HR-PP-2099 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
 - SCS-PP-4020 Sexual Health and Safety Policy
 - SCS-PP-4024 Consumer/ Client/Tenant Participation Policy

3 Policy principles

- 3.1 SCS recognises that exclusion and inequality based on gender and sexuality has the potential to impact on an individual's sense of safety and limit their participation in the service and the communities of their choice.
- 3.2 SCS further acknowledges that gender and sexuality are significant aspects of a

person that effect self-esteem, social relationships as well as individual identity.

- 3.3 SCS believes that all people have the right to feel safe and accepted, regardless of their gender, sex, sexuality, age, impairment, different abilities, culture, language, religion, socio-economic or other status and, that neither of these take precedence over another.

Policy Commitments

- 3.4 SCS welcomes and supports all individuals including those who identify as binary, non-binary, transgender and those who are gender diverse.
- 3.5 SCS is committed to creating a culture within all its services that is safe for individuals to feel safe in being authentically who they are, whilst respecting the others world views, lifestyles, beliefs and identities.
- 3.6 SCS recognises and respects the right that each individual has to self-identify in relation to gender and sexuality.
- 3.7 SCS works toward ensuring that all service user forms, processes and documentation reflect this and provide opportunity for self-identification.
- 3.8 Through intakes processes, staff will seek to recognise how service users identify themselves. This will begin at intake however SCS recognises that this may be shared over time as trust is built.
- 3.9 As part of continuous improvement practices, the internal culture is regularly monitored for safe and mutually respectful attitudes in relation to diversity.
- 3.10 As language and terminology used to describe the communities of diverse identities changes over time and culture, SCS endeavours to ensuring that awareness and knowledge in relation to this, is kept up to date and respects the language an individual chooses to identify themselves with.
- 3.11 SCS recognises that change occurs at both a systemic and individual level and as such, seeks to address inequality and promote positive attitudes and actions at both of these levels.
- 3.12 SCS will support staff to act as role models and agents of change in pursuit of equality and, inclusive environments.
- 3.13 Any form of abuse, discrimination or harassment, including disrespectful attitudes in relation to gender and sexuality and, differing world views in relation to this, will not be tolerated from whichever perspective.
- 3.14 Staff have a responsibility for monitoring service user interactions to ensure service users are not being subjected to harassment.
- 3.15 SCS will take all concerns of exclusion or breach of human rights in this context seriously and, will investigate and address complaints received.
- 3.16 Service users, staff and volunteers are able to raise concerns directly with Service Managers or Coordinators or, use the Complaints, Compliments and Feedback process where feedback and complaints may also be reviewed by the Clinical Governance Committee.
- 3.17 SCS will utilise tangible mediums to communicate and make visible its commitment to gender and sexual diversity via such things as; language used in publications, diversity represented in visual mediums and, support of public awareness days promoting diversity.
- 3.18 SCS recognises that some individuals may still be questioning their identity in

relation to gender and sexuality and may require support with this. SCS staff will provide support by providing information and linking service users to appropriate external support services to assist.

3.19 SCS commits to providing service users with support and information to assist them with issues, concerns or questions they have in relation to their gender and sexuality health and wellbeing.

3.20 SCS is committed to ensuring that staff and service users have access to information and awareness raising opportunities, including relevant and appropriate training, around diversity and inclusivity relevant to scope of role.

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 HR-PP-2100 Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy

7.2 HR-PP-2099 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

7.3 SCS-PP-4148 Diversity and Inclusion – Clients, Consumers and Tenants Policy

7.4 SCS-PP-4020 Sexual Health and Safety Policy

7.5 SCS-PP-4024 Consumer//Client/Tenant Participation Policy

8 Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

8.1 National Standards for Mental Health Services, *Mental Health Commission, Australian Government*

8.2 Homelessness Service Standards, *Department of Communities/Child Protection and Family Support, Government of Western Australia.*

8.3 Youth Work Code of Ethics, *The Association for Youth Work Western Australia*

- 8.4 The Equal Opportunity Act 1984, *Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia*
- 8.5 Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Attorney General's Department, Australian Government
- 8.6 SCS-PP-4020 Sexual Health and Safety Policy
- 8.7 SCS-PP-4001 Continuous Improvement Policy
- 8.8 Sexual Health and Safety Guidelines – *Mental Health Services, SVDPWA SCS*
- 8.9 Sexual Health and Relationships Strategy – *Mental Health Services, SVDPWA SCS*

9 Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	30/09/2019	Initial version
1.1	EM, SCS	01/12/2021	Conversion to new template
2.0	EM, SCS	30/03/2022	Content reviewed
3.0	EM, SCS	25/05/2022	Content updated
4.0	EM, SCS	29/08/2024	Scheduled review

10 Definitions

Term	Definition
Gender	<p>Gender is a socially constructed concept to define roles and behaviour of an identified sex.</p> <p>For the purpose of this policy, gender is defined as; <i>a deeply felt internal and individual identity in relation to how an individual understands who they are</i> and how they interact with people. While many may identify as either male or female, some individuals understand their gender as a combination of these or neither. Gender can be expressed in different ways, such as behaviour, clothing or physical appearance.</p> <p>An individual's gender does not necessarily imply that they have specific biological sex features or are of a particular sexuality, and vice versa.</p>
Service users	<p>Is an umbrella terms used to refer to:</p> <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"><li data-bbox="533 232 1436 300">• Residents – individuals residing at Wandjoo Bidi under a License to Occupy Agreement<li data-bbox="533 313 1331 349">• Tenant – tenants residing in Housing Plus properties
Sexuality	For the purpose of this policy, sexuality or sexual orientation refers to the romantic or sexual attraction an individual has for another person.