8.
Example Policy and Procedures File

Maya Staff Recruitment Policy 8.2
- Recruitment Process 8.2
- Advertising Positions 8.3
- Shortlisting 8.3
- Interviewing 8.3
- Staff Orientation 8.4

Equal Employment Opportunity and Affinnative Action Policy 8.5
- Equal Employment Opportunity 8.5
- Affinnative Action 8.6

Position Descriptions 8.7
- *Position Description for Coordinator* 8.9
- *Position Description for Accommodation Worker* 8.13
- Staff Development 8.15

Supervision of Case Management 8.17
- Function of Supervision 8.17
- Regular Supervision 8.17
- Supervision Responsibilities 8.18
- Debriefmg for Critical Incidents 8.19

Duty of Care to Clients 8.21
- Practicing Duty of Care 8.21
- *Employee Code of Behaviour* 8.22

Client Rights and Responsibilities 8.23
- Client Rights 8.23
- Client Responsibilities 8.23

Client Complaints 8.24
- Complaints Policy 8.24
- Complaints Procedure 8.24
- *Complaints Record Form* 8.27

Promotion of Services 8.31
- *Maya Women's Refuge Brochure* 8.33

Client Handbook 8.35
- *Maya Women's Refuge Clients Handbook* 8.37

Client Records 8.43
- Privacy and Confidentiality of Information 8.43
- Records 8.43

Working with Special Needs Groups 8.45
- Making the Service Accessible to People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Backgrounds 8.45
- Making the Service Accessible to People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds 8.46
- Making the Service Accessible to People with a Mental Health Problem 8.47

8.
Example Policy and Procedures File

For SAAP services to be able to practice effective case management, the service needs to have an established infrastructure, which supports the client focus of the service.

This includes making sure that the right staff is employed and they have the resources and training they need to carry out their work.

It also means making sure that the service has good quality information available for clients, and that the office procedures are efficient and effective.

This section provides an example of the policy and practices, which will support case management in a SAAP service. The examples have been developed for a fictitious service, Maya Refuge.

Maya Refuge has multiple outlets including an outreach service, a women's refuge, a youth refuge, medium term family accommodation and a day center for single adults.

Maya has a community based management committee and employs a Coordinator who has day-to-day responsibility for the service. These examples will need to be adapted to the needs of services with differing management structures.

The material in this section is an example only and can be used by services to develop their own case management policies and procedures. The information is included on the floppy disk which accompanies the Resource Kit and services are free to copy and adapt the information for their own use.

Detailed examples of case management policies relating to each of the elements of case management can be found in the examples of case management in Sections 3 to 7.

STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY

All staff are recruited according to Maya's Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy (see below).

All permanent vacancies will be advertised externally.

The Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment of Maya staff (paid and unpaid).

The management committee is responsible for the recruitment of the Coordinator.

Selection panels for the Coordinator will comprise three people, including the Chairperson and at least one other committee member.

Selection panels for other staff will comprise two people -the Coordinator and a committee member or other staff person.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

1. Clarify the need for and role of the worker, and develop or review the job description.
2. Develop selection criteria against which applications will be assessed.
3. Work out who will be involved in the shortlisting and interviewing.
4. Advertise the position.
5. Send applicants a copy of the job description.
6. Shortlist applicants on the basis of their relevant skills and experience.
7. Interview
8. Select the most suitable applicant.
9. Advise the successful applicant in writing.
10. Sign an Agreement of Employment.
11. Write letters to unsuccessful applicants.
12. Provide orientation for the new worker.

ADVERTISING POSITIONS

Positions must be advertised in the Saturday edition of a newspaper with Statewide circulation. The Coordinator position should be advertised in a two column wide by three-inch format. Other positions should be advertised in single column format.

SHORTLISTING

Shortlisting of all applicants should be carried out by the interview panel.

The panel should decide on the basis of the job description, what skills and experiences are essential in order to do the job, and which skills and experiences are desirable.

Applicants who, on the basis of their written application, appear to have the essential skills and experiences should be shortlisted for an interview.

(In line with the affirmative action policy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants who have most of the essential skills and experience may be shortlisted if the selection panel consider that the other skills/experiences can be developed through training and on-the-job support.)

The Shortlisting and Interview Panel

For the employment of the Coordinator, the shortlisting and interview panel will comprise of:

- the Chairperson;
- one other management committee member;
- one other person preferably a worker with another community group, local government authority or government department;
- For the employment of other staff, the shortlisting and interview panel will comprise of the Coordinator;
- one other member of staff or member of the management committee.

INTERVIEWING

The selection panel should draw up a list of interview questions prior to the interviews. All applicants should be asked the same questions. The questions will aim to explore the applicant's relevant skills and experience to perform the duties.

STAFF ORIENTATION

A staff orientation kit will be maintained by the Coordinator and given to all new staff members on recruitment. The orientation kit will include:

- agency name, address, phone numbers and fax numbers;
- agency philosophy and objectives;
- management model;
- organisation chart;
- staff roles, rights and responsibilities;
- pay day and method of payment;
- staff meetings;
- Agreement of Employment;
- code of behaviour;
- occupational health and safety information;
- other useful services within the region;
- dates to remember;
- client rights;
- information on the function of and location of the Policy and Practice Manual;
- Maya Refuge's Case Management Policy and Procedures.

In addition, all new staff will be shown around the service and introduced to other staff. They will also be given an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the information included in the orientation kit and other relevant information.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Maya Refuge aims to choose the best person for the job regardless of:

- race, colour or national origin;
- physical, intellectual or psychological impairment including HIV and AIDS;
- gender;
- marital status (including de facto);
- parental status (including pregnancy);
- religious or political beliefs, activities or practices.

Maya will establish and monitor all employment policies, practices and procedures to ensure that equal opportunity principles are followed in all areas of staff management including:

- advertising for positions;
- job descriptions and selection criteria;
- interview questions and processes;
- selection panel composition and practices;
- appointment procedures;
- staff training and development;
- transfer, promotion and higher duties;
- discipline and dismissals.

To find the best applicants for the position, Maya will focus on the requirements of the job rather than questions or assumptions about the applicant's circumstances or background.

Maya will provide information and training to all staff and management group members involved in the staff advertising, selection and appointment process.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In view of the high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of this service, Maya Refuge has adopted an affirmative action policy to promote equal employment opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants for positions will not need to meet all of the essential skills and experience requirements.

Appropriate training will be provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff where necessary, to ensure they have the skills required for their position.

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

- All staff should have a job description which specifies their roles and responsibilities.
- Position descriptions should be reviewed and updated when a staff member leaves and/or every two years to ensure that they are appropriate. Updated copies of position descriptions must be included in this Manual. Current position descriptions are shown below.
- Each staff person should be given a copy of their position description, prior to their commencing employment and whenever their position description is changed.

An example of a position description for a Coordinator and an Accommodation Worker are included.

MAYA REFUGE

POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR COORDINATOR

(April 1997)

PURPOSE OF POSITION

The Coordinator will work with the management committee to coordinate the delivery of services, to ensure people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are supported to move to or maintain independent accommodation.

RESPONSIBLE TO

The Coordinator is directly responsible to the management committee.

POSITIONS UNDER DIRECT SUPERVISION

4.5 F/T Accommodation Workers
1 P/T Bookkeeper

DUTIES General:

- Ensure the management committee are provided with the support, information and expertise required to effectively meet their responsibilities;
- Ensure the service runs effectively and efficiently on a day-to-day basis;
- Be responsible for the development and implementation of administrative and information systems, and the development, maintenance and implementation of the Maya Policy and Practice Manual, including case management policy and practice;
- In conjunction with the Treasurer, be responsible for the financial management of the organisation including the presentation of a budget and financial reports to the management committee and to funding bodies;
- Assist in the development of an Annual Plan and coordinate the activities of the service, ensuring they are in accordance with the philosophy, objectives and agreed upon plans;

- Ensure that appropriate client records and data on services is maintained, and that regular evaluations of client need and service delivery occur.

Service Delivery:

- Develop for consideration by the management committee, appropriate programs and policies for meeting the needs of clients;
- Coordinate the delivery of all services;
- Directly assess people seeking assistance from the service;
- Ensure that all services are in line with Maya's case management approach.

Staff Management:

- Advise the management committee on matters of employment of staff;
- Ensure that staff fulfil the requirements of their position descriptions;
- Ensure appropriate written procedures are in place and maintained including contracts of employment, job descriptions, selection criteria and staff records;
- Ensure staff entitlements including superannuation, and other contractual and legal obligations are met;
- Ensure adequate and appropriate orientation, supervision, training, support, debriefing and performance appraisals are provided to staff;
- Ensure the provision and maintenance of safe working conditions for all staff.

Public Relations and Coordination:

- Represent the service to government, other community agencies and the wider community;
- Coordinate the development of appropriate promotional material;
- Develop links with relevant organisations to promote greater and more effective coordination of services for the community;
- Maintain and regularly update the Directory of Community Resources;

- Prepare submissions for funding and policy submissions to Government and other bodies, and coordinate fund-raising activities in consultation with the management committee.

Other Duties:

- Provide a written monthly report to the management committee on the operations of the service;
- Carry out other duties in line with the philosophy and objectives of the organisation, and as directed by the management committee.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Essential

- A demonstrated ability to manage a human service organisation including staff management, administration and financial management skills;
- Ability to work with a management committee;
- Demonstrated knowledge of relevant community resources;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- An understanding of the factors which can lead to homelessness and the effect on clients, particularly children;
- A strong motivation and commitment to the principles of SAAP Case Management;
- Motor vehicle driving license.

Desirable:

- Tertiary qualifications in a social or behavioral science;
- Experience in direct service delivery work with the SAAP client group;
- Experience in public relations work.

MAYA REFUGE

POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR ACCOMMODATION WORKER

(April 1997)

PURPOSE OF POSITION

Accommodation Workers will work with the Coordinator of the service to ensure that the most appropriate and effective services are provided to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and to assist them to move to or maintain independent accommodation.

RESPONSIBLE TO

The Accommodation Worker will be responsible to the Coordinator.

DUTIES

1. Provide practical and emotional support to clients.

2. Supervise the activities of clients.

3. Ensure that information on relevant community resources is available to clients.

4. Assist clients (and their children) to identify their needs and goals, and to develop a support plan to achieve those goals.

6. Provide an information and referral service to non-government and statutory organisations, community organisations and individuals when requested.

7. Adhere to procedures relating to client services, data collection and financial management.

8. Attend meetings as requested by the Coordinator.

9. Maintain records of the activities undertaken in this position and provide a monthly report to the Coordinator.

10. Undertake tasks as directed by the Coordinator or the management committee of the service.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Essential

All positions:

- good interpersonal skills, including ability to engage clients and show empathy;
- an awareness of cross-cultural issues and an understanding of how these relate to the work of the refuge;
- excellent communication skills including ability to communicate effectively with clients and other service providers, and document case work;
- skills in negotiation and advocacy;
- an awareness of the main symptoms of mental health problems.

Women's refuge and family service:

- An ability to communicate effectively with children;
- An understanding of family dynamics and family violence issues. .

Outreach and youth refuge:

- An understanding of the needs of young adults and ability to effectively communicate with them.

Day Centre:

- An understanding of the issues for single homeless adults;
- An ability to work with people who may be drug/alcohol affected or have a mental health problem.

Desirable

- tertiary qualifications in social or behavioral sciences or appropriate experience;
- experience in non-government agencies;
- knowledge and understanding of homelessness.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Motor vehicle drivers license.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

All Maya Refuge staff will be provided with opportunities to participate in training appropriate to their position. By providing opportunities for staff development and encouraging staff to expand their knowledge and skills, Maya Refuge believes that the improved abilities of its staff will be reflected in continuing improvements to services.

Staff are encouraged to further develop their skills and abilities through further training, and through case discussion and supervision.

The service will aim to make a minimum of four days training available to staff per year (in addition to basic training). Staff training needs and wishes will be identified through supervision.

Full time staff are entitled to up to eight hours per week unpaid study leave to complete an approved course of study.

Basic Training Requirements

The training needs of staff should be discussed with the Coordinator on recruitment, at the annual staff performance appraisal and at supervision sessions.

The Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the basic training needs of staff/volunteers are met. This may be through:

- the provision of a staff orientation kit and/or procedures manual;
- the provision of a Case Management Manual;
- referral to an external training course;
- the provision of 'in-house' training sessions or on the job training.

Basic training will ensure that:

- staff have adequate baseline skills or competencies for this work;
- all new staff have induction training through an orientation session. This will cover the staff orientation kit and the content and use of the Case Management Manual;
- relevant staff are aware of the issues involved in case management;
- staff are aware of occupational health and safety issues, including the use of equipment;

- staff are aware of the demography of the area, and the services and resources available;
- staff are aware of legal responsibilities associated with their work;
- staff are aware of specific needs of the client group;
- staff are aware of interagency protocols.

Training in Mental Health Issues

Staff need to be aware of the symptoms of mental illness -what to look out for and how to respond. Training should assist staff to describe behaviours that cause concern, rather than attempting to make a diagnosis. Mental health professionals will assist to train staff in these areas.

Training in Cross-Cultural Issues

Staff need to have an awareness and understanding of cross-cultural issues and skills in cross-cultural communication. This includes working with people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, as well as people from non-indigenous cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

People from relevant cultural backgrounds will be asked to assist with this training. Training will also include skills in effectively using interpreters and the Telephone Interpreter Service.

SUPERVISION OF CASE MANAGEMENT

Maya Workers undertaking case management will be provided with adequate support and supervision.

FUNCTION OF SUPERVISION

The function of case management supervision is to:

- monitor the case load of the worker;
- ensure the quality of the service provided by the worker;
- provide personal support and guidance to the worker in working through the case management tasks.

Supervision sessions will cover the following points:

1. Review of case management tasks and caseload.

2. Discussion of current client needs and support plans.

3. Discussion of cases closed since the last supervision session, and the client and worker's evaluation of the case management plan.

4. Feedback on performance including identification of strengths and weaknesses.

5. Identification of strategies for staff development, especially in addressing staff weaknesses.

REGULAR SUPERVISION

All staff will be provided with regular supervision at least once per month. This will include an annual performance appraisal.

Debriefing should be an integral part of supervision sessions, and should provide staff with an opportunity to talk about individual cases and problems which occur, and their feelings.

Staff should contact their supervisor if issues arise between supervision sessions which need to be dealt with urgently

SUPERVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chairperson of Maya Refuge management committee (or other nominated committee member) is responsible for providing supervision and support to the Coordinator. The committee member responsible will have relevant skills and experience.

The Coordinator is responsible for providing supervision and support to all other staff.

Remember this is the example policy for Maya Refuge. If your service does not have a Coordinator you may need a different process for supervision and debriefing.

This could include peer supervision on a one-to-one basis, or in a staff meeting.

An external supervisor could be used for supervision of case management and professional development.

DEBRIEFING FOR CRITICAL INCIDENTS[1]

Workers and residents can be involved, or present in situations that cause distress. These situations can include:

- abusive behaviour;
- violent behaviour/assault;
- revealing information, or viewing an event that is disturbing, i.e. suicide, attempted murder;
- eviction.

In these cases, it is important that the workers involved in or present during a critical incident receive debriefing.

Maya Refuge has the following policy regarding critical incident debriefing for staff members:

Function

The function of critical incident debriefing is to provide:

- an analysis of the incident;
- a decision about how to respond to the clients involved;
- an awareness of any legal issues;
- support for affected workers:
- a decision about debriefing for clients who may have been involved in or witnessed the incident.

Timing

The debriefing should be carried out as soon as possible after the event. The staff member should be encouraged to retell the incident and express their associated feelings in a confidential setting, so that they can acknowledge and discharge feelings and re- establish perspective and attitudes.

Who conducts the debriefing?

The debriefing should be carried out by the Coordinator, a member of the management committee or a colleague. At times it may be necessary to access external debriefing and this will be negotiated with the Coordinator.

[1] Adapted from Hanover Welfare Services Policy.

Who attends the debriefing?

All those involved with a critical incident directly or indirectly should attend. Workers are strongly urged to attend debriefing after a critical incident.

Staff are encouraged to feel free to ask for debriefing when required. It is the responsibility of the Coordinator to ensure that this occurs.

Clients who are present or involved in critical incidents should be offered debriefing. This should be carried out by the client's support worker. If an incident occurs with a group of clients, debriefing can be carried out with the group.

Site of debriefing

The location should be comfortable, safe and central. The setting should ensure confidentiality.

Various forms of debriefing

-Major critical incidents will often require an ongoing professional response. However, there are smaller incidents that happen in day-to-day work that require a brief debriefing response. ,

This may involve a colleague or the Coordinator taking ten minutes with the worker . Discussion may take place around what happened. The worker should be asked what would assist them to deal with the incident or to feel free from the distress it caused them. It is important for the staff member to initiate this if they require it.

It is also important that staff are responsive to the needs of their colleagues. Informal debriefing or discussion between staff assists workers to deal with minor everyday incidents.

After hours debriefing requirements

When a staff member is involved in a critical incident after hours, it is recommended that they call the Coordinator or another staff member .

Training

All staff should be trained in the principles of basic debriefing.

The person doing the debriefing must not downplay the significance of the event and should validate the staff member's feelings. Statements such as 'cheer up' or 'it could have been worse' are usually damaging and not helpful in the counseling process.

DUTY OF CARE TO CLIENTS[2]

Every person owes a duty of care to every other person who is reasonably likely to be injured by the first person's actions or failure to act.

The law requires professionals to take all reasonable care in carrying out their work and ensure that appropriate standards of care are met.

The appropriate standard of care is assessed on what action a reasonable person would take in a particular situation.

A client's right to confidentiality may need to be breached by the service if duty of care Issues arise.

PRACTISING DUTY OF CARE

Maya staff need to use their professional skills and experience to decide on what actions they should take in each situation of potential harm. Where possible, decisions should be discussed with the Coordinator/Manager.

The factors to be considered in situations of potential harm are:

- the risk and likelihood of harm;
- the sorts of injuries that could occur and an assessment of the seriousness of those injuries;
- precautions that could be taken to minimise the risk or harm or seriousness of the injury;
- the usefulness of the activity involving risk;
- current professional standards about the issues.

[2]Adaption from Hanover Welfare Services Casework Manual.

EMPLOYEE CODE OF BEHA VIOUR

Consider developing an Employee Code of Behaviour to ensure that all employees understand what is expected of them. The Code of Behaviour should cover organisation rules which, if breached, may warrant the instant dismissal of an employee. These could include:

The employee agrees to:

- support the aims of the organisation;
- observe all the rules of the organisation including those set out in the constitution, the Associations Incorporation Act and any others set by the Management committee or the membership of the organisation;
- follow any policies and practices set down in the Policy Manual;
- represent the organisation in a positive way;
- follow any grievance procedures set down by the Management committee to try to resolve any conflicts with staff, or members of the organisation;
- not abuse, physically or verbally, consumers, staff or members of the organisation;
- not accept gifts from clients;
- not remove property or funds from the organisation without proper permission;
- not take clients to the worker's home;
- not consume alcohol or other illegal substances whilst at work;
- not have sexual relationships with any client;
- not sexually harass any other employee or consumer;
- not disclose any information concerning the clients of the service without their permission, except where the worker has a duty of care;
- not carry on a private business from the organisation premises or use organisation resources for private business.

If a staff member fails to abide by the above rules they may be liable to dismissal.

CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CLIENT RIGHTS

Clients of Maya Refuge have the following rights:

- the client has access to all information about themselves held by Maya Refuge;
- the client should be involved in discussions about their assessment and support plan. They should be aware of all the options available and any fees to be charged;
- clients should be made aware of the standard of service which they can expect. Services should be provided in a safe manner which respects the dignity and independence of the client, and is responsive to the social, cultural and physical needs of the client;
- clients' access to services should be decided only on the basis of need and the capacity of the service to meet that need. Clients have the right to refuse a service and refusal should not prejudice their future access to services;
- clients have a right to complain about the service they are receiving. Complaints by clients should be dealt with fairly, promptly and without retribution. The client may involve an advocate of their choice to represent his/her interests;
- clients' views should be taken into account in the planning and evaluation of the service;
- clients' rights to privacy and confidentiality should be protected.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Clients of Maya Refuge have the following responsibilities:
- clients should let the service know if they are not available for an appointment; .clients should act in a way which respects the rights of other clients and Maya Refuge staff.
- clients need to take responsibility for the results of any decisions they make;
- clients are to play their part in following through with the tasks they have agreed to do in the support plan.

CLIENT COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Maya Refuge welcomes information and feedback from clients as it enables the quality of the services provided to be improved.

All clients should be made aware of their right to complain and should fully understand the complaints procedure.

Clients have a right to complain about the service they are receiving without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with promptly.

The Coordinator should take steps to ensure that clients feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

Information on the complaints procedure of Maya Refuge is to be included in the Client's Handbook and presented to and explained to clients at the time of assessment.

All complaints are to be recorded on the *Complaints Record Form* which is to be completed by the Coordinator. (A copy of the *Complaints Record Form* is included below).

Person/s affected by the complaint should be fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to put their case.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Clients are encouraged to raise their complaint with the worker concerned in the first instance.

2. If the client is not satisfied with the outcome, or not happy to discuss the issue with the staff member concerned, they should contact the Coordinator, or use an advocate to negotiate on their behalf.

3. If the issue is still not satisfactorily resolved, the client should raise the issue with a member of the management committee.

4. If after approaching the above people, the issue is still not resolved, the client can complain to the SAAP advocacy service.

5. The client should be informed of the outcome of their complaint and asked for their feedback on the complaints procedure.

Confidentiality of complaints

As far as possible, the fact that a client has lodged a complaint and the details of that complaint, should be kept confidential amongst staff directly concerned with its resolution. The client's permission should be obtained prior to any information being given to other parties which it may be desirable to involve in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.

Important!

If clients are not happy to discuss their complaint with staff of the service, or if this is not appropriate, they can take their complaint straight to the management committee or advocacy service.

COMPLAINTS RECORD FORM

(To be completed by the Coordinator)

DATE OF COMPLAINT:.....

COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY:.....

COMPLAINT MADE VIA

- ❑ TELEPHONE
- ❑ LETTER (attached)
- ❑ IN PERSON
- ❑ OTHER.....

SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT: .....

.....

Details of the complaint should be written on the next page. If there is insufficient space, attach extra sheets.

INFORMATION TO BE GIVEN TO THE COMPLAINANT:

- Reassure complainant that all complaints are treated confidentially and that they will suffer no loss of service because they have made a complaint.
- Explain the complaints procedure.
- Remind the complainant that they have the right to use an advocate of their choice and refer them to appropriate client advocacy services.
- Thank the complainant for their complaint, and explain that complaints are valuable in helping to maintain and improve the service.

NAME OF COMPLAINANT: .....

ADDRESS: .....

.....

PHONE NUMBER: .....

DETAIL OF COMPLAINT: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

COMMENTS: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ACTION TO BE TAKEN: .....

.....

.....

.....

OUTCOME: .....

.....

.....

.....

FOLLOW-UP: .....

.....

.....

.....

Complainant's Comment on the Action Taken: .....

.....

.....

.....

Signed:
(Complainant): ..... (Date): .....

(Coordinator) ..... (Date).....

CLIENT'S DETAILS:
(If different from complainant)

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

.....

PHONE NUMBER: .....

PROMOTION OF SERVICES

Maya Refuge has developed a number of brochures to provide information on their services. These are distributed to major health and welfare agencies in the region including government and non-government services, agencies providing services for special needs groups and minority groups, and public places such as shopping centres, libraries, ethnic radio and chemists.

CLIENT HANDBOOK

The handbook provides information to clients regarding the services provided, the service's policies and rules, and what they should do if they are not happy with the service.

A copy of the Maya handbook is given to clients at their initial contact with the service or at their initial assessment. As some clients may not read the handbook, the contents of the handbook should be explained verbally to the client at their initial assessment and at subsequent reviews.

The handbook includes details of the services available, how services are provided, the fees, the complaints procedure and any rules for clients.

The handbook should be translated into the languages of the main groups in the area in which the service is located.

The Telephone Interpreter Service is used with clients who do not speak English, to ensure that they understand all the information contained in the Client's Handbook.
A copy of the handbook is included below.

Maya Women's Refuge
Clients Handbook

WHAT IS MAYA WOMEN'S REFUGE?

Maya Women's Refuge provides crisis and short-teffi1 accommodation and/or support to women and children who are escaping domestic violence to enable them to move towards independence.

The service will accept families coming from any location.

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

- Accommodation
- Crisis support
  - food
  - referral to medical assistance
  - clothing
  - referral to legal advice
  - counselling
- Practical assistance
- Support for children
- Time out and assistance to develop a support plan
- Follow-up after you leave the refuge
- Women's support groups.

HOW DOES THE SERVICE OPERATE?

The service is managed by a community based committee which is elected annually. The day-to-day operations are carried out by paid staff.

<u>Staff</u>

Coordinator
Administrative Worker
Support Workers

Staff are on duty at the refuge during the hours of 8:00am to 8:0Opm, Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours staff can be contacted on a pager.

The staff are available to assist you with practical and emotional support, information and advice. A staff member will be allocated to assist you to develop a support plan.

WHAT IS A SUPPORT PLAN?

When you come into the refuge a refuge worker will be allocated to work with you. The worker will assist you to identify your needs and the needs of your children.

If you wish, the worker will assist you to draw up a support plan. The support plan identifies how your needs can best be met, and the tasks which need to be undertaken by you and the worker. Referrals to other services may also be discussed with you.

WHAT ARE THE REFUGE RULES?

The following are not permitted on the refuge:

- alcohol or drugs;
- adult male visitors;
- violence or aggressive behaviour towards other residents or staff;
- stealing from the refuge or other residents.

Residents who do not abide by these rules may be asked to leave the refuge.

All of our staff and residents are asked not to smoke in the refuge.

A comfortable smoking area is provided under the pergola outside of the laundry area.

WHAT ABOUT MY CHILDREN?

Children aged O -16 years can live with you at the refuge. Refuge staff are available to help meet the needs of the children and to help you develop a support plan for the children.

School aged children are expected to attend school while you live at the refuge and the workers will assist you to arrange this.

WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE SERVICE PROVIDED?

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

- you have a right to complain or express your concerns about a service without fear of losing the service, or suffering any other recriminations;
- you have a right to have your complaints dealt with fairly and promptly;
- you have a right to be represented by an advocate of your choice;
- you have a right to be informed about what services are available;
- you have a right to be assessed to receive services without discrimination;
- you have a right to choose what service(s) you will receive;
- you have a right to privacy and confidentiality .You can expect that no information about you will be provided to anyone else outside of Maya Women's Refuge without your permission;
- you have a right to view any information about yourself, held by Maya Women's Refuge.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

- clients should act in a way which respects the rights of other clients and Maya Women's Refuge staff;
- clients need to take responsibility for the results of any decisions they make;
- clients are to play their part following through with the tasks they have agreed to do in the support plan.

We aim to provide a high quality service, so we would like to know if you have any concerns with the service.

Your service will not be stopped if you complain.

If you do not feel comfortable with the Maya Women's Refuge staff member who is working with you, please inform the Coordinator. A change of staff can be arranged if necessary.

- If you feel your rights are not being respected or if you have any other complaint or concern about the services you are receiving, you can try any of the following:
- if you feel comfortable about it, you could discuss the situation with the member of staff concerned -this may lead to a quick resolution of the difficulties;
- if the above is not appropriate or fails to sort out the problem you can contact the Coordinator directly on 9441441;
- if this is unsatisfactory you may wish to speak to a member of the management committee.

  Two people you can try are:

  …….

  ……

  Alternatively you can write to the Chairperson at:

  ……..

  ……..

  ……..

- you can also contact the *(name of advocacy service).*

There are free and confidential services which can assist you in working through any complaints or concerns about the service you are receiving.

It is your right to make a complaint or to voice any concerns you may have with services received from Maya Women's Refuge.

CAN SOMEONE ELSE SPEAK ON MY BEHALF?

Yes! You can ask a family member or friend to advocate on your behalf.

HOW MUCH WILL THE SERVICE COST?

Charges are only made for the accommodation service. The current charge is $ _____ per day.

Please note that if you are experiencing financial hardship or feel you cannot afford the service, please advise the Coordinator. Services will still be available if you are unable to pay.

If you are unhappy about the level of fees charged you can appeal to the Coordinator in the first instance and then to the management committee of Maya Women ' s Refuge.

Funding

Maya Women's Refuge receives most of its funds under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) which is a program funded jointly by both the Commonwealth and State governments. The aim of the program is to provide accommodation and support to people who are homeless. Maya Women's Refuge acknowledges the support it receives from the program.

CLIENT RECORDS

To ensure that Maya's service is of appropriate quality and meets the SAAP standards, the following policy has been developed for client records. The National Guidelines for the Management of Client Information in SAAP services are also followed by Maya Refuge.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

The only information held by Maya Refuge about a client will be information necessary to assess the need for a service and to provide the service. Information should be as non-obtrusive and objective as possible, yet relevant and up-to-date.

The client has the right to withhold information for privacy reasons.

Information about a client will not be shared with another agency without the permission of the client, unless this places the service's duty of care to the client or other clients or staff at risk.

Clients have the right to read any personal information kept about them by Maya Refuge. Requests from clients to access files should be referred to the Coordinator who should ensure that assistance is provided for the client to access information on his/her file. within two days. A staff member should be made available to explain any terminology to the client.

Information regarding clients will be stored in a filing cabinet which is kept locked when the office is unattended. This information is only accessible to the Coordinator and staff working directly with the client.

RECORDS

The procedure for opening files and file movement involves:

- two filing cabinets, one for client records and one for general administration;
- an individual file for each client following intake;
- procedures for the storage, retrieval and re-filing of files, developed by the Coordinator;
- case notes on client contact which involves:

- intake
- assessment
- review

- change in support plan
- change of staff working with the client
- change in circumstances of the client
- complaints
- reports/information from other agencies
- requests from the client for any change in service;

- file transit slips, which are kept in a box on top of the filing cabinet, should be completed for any files removed from the filing cabinet;

- files removed from the office should be placed inside a plain manila folder which does not identify the client;

- files should be stored in the filing cabinet when not in use;

- all incoming correspondence should be signed off by the Coordinator or Accommodation Worker before being filed;

- keys to the filing cabinet holding client records will be held by the Coordinator and by one Accommodation Worker. Keys to the filing cabinet holding general administrative files will be held by the Coordinator and Bookkeeper.

Length of Time Records are Held

If a service to a client has stopped being provided, but may need to be resumed at a future date, information relating to the client will be kept in the filing cabinet for a period of five years before being archived. If the service will not need to be resumed, the file records will be archived at the end of the financial year. All information regarding clients will be destroyed seven years after they cease to receive services.

The National Case Management Working Group have set up a sub-committee of Case Management Advisers to develop National Guidelines for the Management of Client]nformation in SAAP Services.

These guidelines are reprinted in Section 2: *Practising Case Management, Attachment* 5.

WORKING WITH SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

Maya has developed policies to ensure that services are appropriate and relevant to the needs of all clients. These are listed below.

The material in this section is an example only, and can be used by services to develop their own policies and procedures. The information is included on the floppy disk which accompanies the Resource Kit, and services are free to copy and adapt the information for their own use.

MAKING THE SERVICE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE FROM ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BACKGROUNDS

To ensure Maya Refuge is accessible to people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds the following guidelines are to be followed by all staff:

- the service will try to ensure that they employ a minimum of two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff;
- staff should take advice from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff about the best way of working with each client, and the appropriate referrals and supports to link with. These staff can help 9ther staff to understand the situation of the clients and their responses to their situation;
- use language which is appropriate and understood by the client;
- provide a relaxed and comfortable environment for the client. This may mean meeting outside rather than in the office;
- make sure that all staff have appropriate training, including cultural awareness. communication skills and knowledge of kinship systems;
- be aware of the client's position within the family, and the responsibilities and obligations that that entails. The client may need to fulfil their family obligations before attending to their own needs. Support them to do this;
- make contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and key people within the community , let them know what service/s you provide, and find out how they work. Establish a directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services;

- always obtain the client's permission before contacting other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on their behalf. They may not wish to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks, or there may be particular people they do not want to have involved;
- if the client agrees, involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers from other services in the coordination of services;
- do not overload the client with too much information, or do too much talking. Go slowly, giving the client plenty of time to think;
- find out who the support people are within the client's own network. Take these into account when developing a support plan;
- always ensure that the client is involved in support planning and their priorities and needs are being addressed, rather than those of the service;
- do not pressure the client to carry out these tasks. Be patient and/or offer assistance.

MAKING THE SERVICE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

To ensure Maya Refuge is accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the following guidelines are to be followed by all staff:

- Maya Refuge will analyse demographic statistical data to monitor the changing population in the area and be aware of the main cultural/language groups residing in the area;
- when staff/committee vacancies occur, Maya Refuge will try to recruit staff/committee members to ensure that the main cultural and language groups are represented;
- Maya Refuge will actively network with ethno-specific health and welfare services in the area and the migrant resource centre, to develop strong working relationships with those services and workers;
- Maya Refuge ensures that all staff are trained in cross-cultural awareness and communication;
- staff training includes use of interpreters and the Telephone Interpreter Service. Staff should be confident in the use of these services;

- where possible a client will be matched with a worker with the same language, or will co-work with a relevant worker from another service (if the client wishes). If this is not possible, an interpreter service will be used for all client and resident meetings;

- the case management process will identify and respect the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of clients. This includes linking the client with ethno-specific services where this serves the client's interests and meets with their wishes.

MAKING THE SERVICE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

Maya Refuge has developed policies to ensure that services can meet the needs of people with a mental health problem.

Maya Youth Refuge does not have the capacity to work with young people with a mental health problem if special services or resources are required.

In other services, Maya policy is as follows:

- Maya Refuge will accept referrals of people with mental health problems so long as a mental health professional agrees to undertake an assessment, share that assessment with the refuge and assist the refuge with the case management wks.

  The professional assessment must give the refuge reasonable assurance that accommodating the client will not place the staff or other residents at risk;

- the mental health needs of the client must be assessed by an appropriate specialist. This assessment needs to be considered alongside the refuge's assessment for accommodation and support;

- if, at the initial assessment or at a later stage, a worker believes an existing client has a mental health problem, then the extent of the problem must be explored with the client and their permission sought to contact their mental health worker;

- if the client does not acknowledge that they have a mental health problem, then the service should do the following:

  - encourage the client to undertake an assessment by a non-threatening professional known to the refuge;

  - take any necessary steps to ensure the safety of the client, their children and other clients in the refuge and the refuge staff.

- if the client is assessed as having a mental health problem, the support plan is developed in consultation with the health care professional who has agreed to have case management responsibility;
- an emergency procedure should be included in the support plan. The refuge should know who to contact in case of emergency and who will take responsibility for the children. This is especially important with people who are known to self harm. The support plan should include a contingency plan for what would happen if medical treatment is required;
- staff will be trained to have an awareness of the main symptoms of mental illness and how to respond;
- staff will be trained in dealing with aggressive, violent clients, including clients who may self-harm;
- the refuge will not take any responsibility for a client's medication.