

Policy and Procedure Guideline

Purpose

To outline the minimum safety requirements for safe and effective service delivery for our staff and our clients.

Scope

Clients receiving home care services from Life Without Barriers which are funded under the following programs:

- Home Care Packages (HCP) Program
- Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)
- Veterans Home Care Services (VHC)
- Transition Care Programme (TACP)

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To ensure the safety of clients and staff, the following service delivery requirements should be met.

Client Present during the Service

For the effective delivery of services aligned with the client's needs and preferences, as well as the safety of our staff, it is imperative that the client is present during the service. There may be exceptional circumstances where the client may be absent (only when previously agreed prior to the service) such as:

- Home Modifications
- Home and Garden Maintenance.
- Domestic Assistance in certain situations (e.g., prior to client coming home from hospital)

In the event of exceptional circumstances such as the client being taken to the hospital, discharged from the hospital, or facing a family emergency, and requiring services during their absence, the client must complete a [Service Delivery During the Client's Absence Form](#) and provide consent for two Life Without Barriers staff members to be present. They may nominate an Alternate Person to be present if they choose.

Approval from the Care Manager is mandatory before implementing such requests. The Care Coordinator must then request the attendance of two staff members from the Rostering Team to ensure their safety.

For in home brokered services, the client must provide consent for the contractor to attend the home when the client isn't home.

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Home and Community Assistants are required to immediately inform their Local Care Coordination Team if the client isn't home (known as [No Response](#)) or leaves during service delivery, to seek guidance on the next steps. Care Coordinators must promptly follow up with the client to ensure their well-being. If the departure was not an emergency, Care Coordinators should remind the client of the service requirements.

Additional Resources:

- [Aged Care - Client Leaving During a Service Factsheet for Home and Community Assistants.pdf](#)
- [Aged Care - Service Delivery During the Client's Absence Form](#)

Suitably Qualified Staff

All services must be provided by suitably qualified staff. Below is a table of the minimum requirements for each service type.

Service Type	Minimum Qualification	Comments
Domestic Assistance	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	For VHC services, Manual Handling Competency is also required
Social Support Individual	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	For VHC services, the following are also required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing, Home, and Community) or equivalent • Manual Handling Competency
Social Support Group	Police Check	

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Service Type	Minimum Qualification	Comments
	First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	
Personal Care	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	For personal or respite care under VHC and TACP services, Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) or Certificate III in Aged Care. For VHC services, Manual Handling Competency is also required.
Direct Transport	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1) A valid Driver's Licence	If staff are using their personal vehicle, it must be approved as a grey fleet vehicle by Life Without Barriers.
Respite	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	For personal or respite care under VHC and TACP services, Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) or Certificate III in Aged Care For VHC services, Manual Handling Competency is also required
Nursing Support	Enrolled Nurse (EN)	With the supervision of a Registered Nurse (RN)

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Specialised Supports	Minimum Qualification	Comment
Mealtimes management support	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	Trained in the specific client's Mealtimes Management Plan
Medication Prompting	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	
Medication Support	Home and Community Assistant with Medication Skill Set Enrolled Nurse (EN)	With the supervision of a Registered Nurse (RN)
Mobility Support	Police Check First Aid Certificate HLTAID011 Provide First Aid (Release 1)	Trained in the client's specific Mobility Support Plan

Additional Resource: [HS 702.3 First Aid Kit Checklist - Small.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Footwear and Attire

When delivering services in the client's home or in the community, it is essential that footwear adheres to minimum requirements. Footwear should be enclosed, have a slip-resistant sole, and feature a rounded heel that ensures good contact with the ground.

Proper footwear serves to prevent discomfort and plays a crucial role in maintaining the safety of both staff and clients. Staff members are encouraged to choose footwear that facilitates walking and standing for extended periods while ensuring comfort.

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Additionally, clothing choices are important:

- Clothes should be comfortable, allowing staff to move easily during various tasks such as squatting, reaching, sitting, and moving about.
- Considering the dynamic nature of service delivery, staff may find it beneficial to wear layers. This is especially pertinent as temperatures may vary throughout the day and across different settings.

Adhering to these guidelines not only ensures the safety and well-being of staff and clients but also contributes to the overall professionalism of service delivery.

Additional Resources: [HS 407 Clothing and Footwear Procedure](#)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is a critical part of infection prevention and control and must be worn for the relevant tasks. Below is the table of PPE recommendations. This is not an exclusive list and precaution must be always taken.

Task	Type of PPE
Domestic Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrile Gloves • Surgical Masks
Personal Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrile Gloves • Surgical Masks • Disposable gown • Disposable shoe covers • Safety goggles (to prevent splashes)
Meal Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrile Gloves (Blue Gloves) • Surgical Masks
Medication Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrile Gloves • Surgical Masks

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Task	Type of PPE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety goggles (to prevent splashes)
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nitrile Gloves Surgical Masks
Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nitrile Gloves Surgical Masks

Special Circumstances	Type of PPE
<u>COVID-19</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nitrile Gloves worn when directed by the <u>Safety Snapshot</u>, in high-risk or positive environments. Surgical Masks worn when there is a low risk of COVID-19 transmission. N95 Mask worn when directed by the <u>Safety Snapshot</u>, in high-risk or positive environments. Disposable gown to be worn when directed by the <u>Safety Snapshot</u>, in high-risk or positive environments. Safety goggles or face shield worn when directed by the <u>Safety Snapshot</u>, in high-risk or positive environments.
Infectious Diseases (includes households where there is a MRSA positive wound)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nitrile Gloves worn when high-risk of transmission. Surgical Masks worn when there is a low risk of transmission. N95 Mask worn when high-risk of transmission. Disposable gown to be worn when high-risk of transmission. Safety goggles or face shield worn when high-risk of transmission

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Special Circumstances	Type of PPE
Cytotoxic Exposure (Chemotherapy) Chemotherapy and Cytotoxic Exposure SharePoint	Cytotoxic spill kit should be used that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purple gloves • N95 Mask • Disposable chemotherapy gown • Disposable shoe covers. • Safety goggles or face shield (to prevent splashes). Face shields are not a replacement for wearing a mask. Chemotherapy and Cytotoxic Exposure for Care Coordinator - Factsheet Chemotherapy and Cytotoxic Exposure for Home and Community Assistants - Factsheet

Safety Assessment and Hazard Reporting Protocol

Prior to and during the first visit to the client's home, staff members are required to conduct a comprehensive safety assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to identify any potential hazards that may pose a risk to either the client or staff during the delivery of services within the home.

If any hazards are identified during the assessment, our commitment is to collaborate with the client to eliminate these hazards. In cases where removal is not feasible, mitigation strategies must be implemented to ensure a safe environment for both the client and attending staff.

It is imperative that Care Coordinators review and approve any mitigation strategies proposed, particularly for hazards categorized as high to extreme risk.

Clients also play a vital role in maintaining a safe environment. Therefore, clients are encouraged to promptly report any new hazards that may pose a risk to themselves or staff. They can do so by contacting the Care Coordinator, who will then take the necessary steps to address and mitigate the reported hazards. This collaborative effort ensures the ongoing safety and well-being of both clients and staff members.

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Prior to commencing each shift, Home and Community Assistants are required to conduct a thorough hazard check. In the event of identifying any new hazards that may pose a risk to themselves or the client, it is imperative that Home and Community Assistants promptly contact their Local Care Coordination Team by phone.

Additionally, Home and Community Assistants must complete a Shift Report - Staff Hazard & Incident Report. This documentation ensures comprehensive reporting and tracking of any issues identified during the shift.

To ensure the ongoing safety of both clients and staff, the safety assessment in AlayaCare must be routinely reviewed and updated. This process is triggered by the identification of a new hazard or, at a minimum, on a 12-month basis. Regular reviews guarantee that the safety measures in place remain current and effective, contributing to a secure environment for all involved parties.

Additional Resources: [HS 402.1 Toolbox Talk - Risk Management for Frontline Staff](#)

Smoking Policies:

Staff members are strictly prohibited from smoking in or near the client's home or during transport services. Clients and others who smoke are kindly requested to refrain from smoking prior to staff arrival and throughout the service delivery, both in the client's home and during transport services.

Pets:

For the safety of our staff, pets must be appropriately restrained in an area away from the workspace. Staff members are not responsible for cleaning up after pets; this responsibility lies with the client. If the presence of pets renders the working environment unsafe, staff will be unable to provide the service and will promptly contact their Local Care Coordination Team. Care Coordinators will collaborate with the client to address any issues or concerns.

Approved Cleaning Products for Domestic Assistance:

To safeguard the health and safety of our staff, all cleaning products provided by the client must meet the following criteria: *as per LWB Client Handbook*

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- Non-hazardous according to Worksafe Australia criteria.
- Household products, purchased in household quantities, and used consistent with household use (excluding trigger sprays).

Life Without Barriers does not endorse specific brands, but if clients are uncertain about which products to purchase, we offer the following recommendations: White Vinegar, Ajax, Gumption, Shower Power, Earth Choice Products, and Palmolive Dishwashing Liquid.

Cleaning products that are not acceptable include: Methylated Spirits, corrosive acids and alkali products (e.g. Sugar soaps, ammonia & ammonia-producing products), sodium hypochlorite products (e.g. bleaches and Domestos), and kerosene drain cleaners (e.g. Draino).

If staff are asked to use products that do not meet the specified criteria, they must report this to their Local Care Coordination Team. The Care Coordinator will then collaborate with the client to address any resulting issues or concerns.

Additional Resources: [HS 404 Hazardous Substance Management](#)

Restrictions for Domestic Assistance

In adherence to Workplace Health and Safety guidelines, staff members are prohibited from standing on chairs, step ladders, boxes, or any other elevated surfaces during service delivery. Staff are authorised to clean to a height that can be safely reached while remaining on the floor.

Additionally, staff members are not permitted to move heavy pieces of furniture or lift heavy household objects during service delivery. This restriction is in place to mitigate the risk of injury to the staff.

If there are specific needs or concerns related to tasks that involve lifting heavy objects, staff members are encouraged to communicate these to their Local Care Coordination Team for appropriate solutions and assistance.

Additional Resources: [Home care occupational health and safety compliance kit | WorkSafe Victoria.](#)

This kit describes duties under health and safety law and gives an overview of controlling risks. It compiles health and safety solutions for 7 of the most hazardous tasks for workers in home care services:

- vacuuming
- mopping

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- *showering or bathing people in the home*
- *moving and lifting people in the home*
- *cleaning bathrooms*
- *making beds*
- *transporting people and equipment in beds*

Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls contribute to 20% of Life Without Barriers work-related injuries and significant Workers' Compensation costs.

Common causes of slips, trips and falls are:

- Wet and slippery floors.
- Uneven surfaces.
- Stairs.

Life Without Barriers has adopted a simple, three-step process to identify and mitigate slip, trip and fall risks wherever staff are working:

1. **LOOK** for hazards around you.
2. **ACT** on them in the moment.
3. **TELL** others, so they aren't exposed.

Below are some suggested actions to prevent slip, trips and falls:

1. Clear walkways: Remove obstacles from walkways.
2. Clear debris: Mop or sweep debris from floor.
3. Use handrails: When walking up and down stairs, please use handrails and ensure you can see each step you are taking.
4. Keep storage closed: Close any drawers or doors from any storage spaces.
5. Secure flooring: Flooring such as rugs, carpets or other flooring textures should be secured so that surfaces are even.
6. Mopping up spills: Prevent slips by mopping up spills when you see them.
7. Dry mop after a wet mop: This will ensure that the floor is dry and reduce the risk of slips.

Additional Resources : [Falls Management Factsheet for Home and Community Assistants](#)

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Contact with uncontrolled electricity can cause shock, serious injury or death.

Residual Current Devices

Residual Current Devices (RCDs) offer high levels of protection from electric shock and cut off the electricity supply if leaks are detected.

Staff who use electrical equipment at a client's home (or other locations not managed by Life Without Barriers) must use a portable RCD adapter. A portable RCD must be provided to staff prior to commencing service delivery.

Additional Resources: [HS 405 Electrical Safety Procedure](#)

Use of Equipment

Equipment must be used strictly in accordance with any instructions provided by the manufacturer.

Home and Community Assistants must be trained if they are required to use any equipment to support the client (e.g. mobility equipment, mealtime management aids and equipment, etc.)

To ensure the health and safety of staff, staff may refuse to use equipment if they do not deem it safe to do so. This may be due to the equipment being faulty or broken or staff may not have been trained to use the equipment safely.

Any concerns raised by the client or staff must be raised with their Local Care Coordination Team. The Care Coordinator will work with the client and staff to address any issues or concerns.

Driving Safely

Driving is a role requirement for many staff, particularly our frontline staff who are responsible for transporting and/or visiting clients.

When driving, staff are expected to understand and comply with safe driving practices to keep themselves and the client safe. For remote travel, Be fit to drive and not drive when fatigued

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or under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any substance or medication that could impair their ability to safely operate the vehicle.

- Ensure staff and all passengers always wear seatbelts whenever a vehicle is in motion.
- Comply with all applicable road rules, including posted speed limits.
- Avoid distractions such as using a mobile phone, eating, or smoking whilst driving.
- Drive to the conditions and take extra precautions when driving in bad weather.
- Conduct a visual check of the vehicle, including windows and tyres, before each journey.
- Plan the journey and review the route for new locations.
- Always maintain a safe distance from the car in front.

Additional Resources: [HS 414 Transporting Clients Safely](#) and [HS 414.2 Remote Travel Risk Assessment](#)

Working Alone/Remotely

In some circumstances it may be beneficial to create a risk management plan for staff members working alone in remote areas to ensure that all reasonably foreseeable workplace risks are identified and controlled when Life Without Barriers (LWB) employees are working alone or in an isolated situation.

The following national resources are available: [HS 411 Working Alone Procedure](#) and [HS 411.2 Working Alone Risk Assessment \(Visiting Clients\)](#).

Moving Clients Safely

Staff are responsible for understanding common manual handling hazards and risks in their work and how to perform workplace tasks safely. They must work with their Local Care Coordination Team to develop strategies to perform these tasks safely.

Moving Together Safely is a program of good safety practice to transfer, reposition and mobilise our clients with reduced risk of injury to staff.

The program is a structured system that includes assessment templates and work instructions to support staff and Local Care Coordination Teams to perform manual handling tasks safely.

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Staff must be trained in the client's individual support plan prior to assisting to ensure the safety of all.

Person to Person Harm

Person-to-person harm is commonly known as workplace or occupational violence.

Person-to-person harm relates to any incident where a staff member is abused, threatened, or assaulted while doing their work.

Some clients may exhibit challenging behaviours that have the potential to be harmful to staff, themselves and/or others.

Behaviours of concern (challenging behaviours) are often displayed when clients have difficulty communicating and expressing their needs or frustrations due to experiences of loss, trauma, abuse, neglect, or physical, intellectual, or cognitive impairment.

Life Without Barriers adopts a positive person-centred approach to behaviour support and management.

If the client has any behaviours of concern, a plan must be put in place and staff delivering services will receive client-specific training to implement positive behaviour support strategies and prevent or reduce the risk of person-to-person harm.

Infectious Communicable Diseases

The health and welfare of all our clients and staff is our highest priority.

Infectious Communicable Disease are defined as diseases that can be transferred through several exposure mechanisms:

- Airborne droplets; coughing, sneezing, and talking.
- Discharges from the throat and noses.
- Faecal, oral or any virus, bacteria or parasite present in faeces can be passed directly to the mouth and hands or indirectly onto other surfaces or food.
- Skin contact.
- Blood or other body fluids.

Infectious diseases cover viruses, bacteria and parasites found within the body.

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If identified that the client or a staff member is suspected of or has been confirmed to have an Infectious Communicable Disease, safety measures must be put in place to ensure the safety of all people involved.

Additional Resources: [HS 412 Infectious Diseases Procedure](#)

COVID-19

There are several measures Life Without Barriers has taken in response to COVID-19 to keep people safe, including increased screening protocols when providing services in the community to safeguard the welfare of our clients and staff.

Your ongoing vigilance and support is critical in safeguarding our Life Without Barriers community.

Below are important resources to assist with any COVID-19 queries:

Resources	How to access the Resource
Life Without Barriers – COVID19	COVID-19 (Coronavirus) - Home
Department of Health National Coronavirus Helpline	1800 020 080 or DOHAC Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Burnout

Community and health workers witness grief and loss more frequently than other professions.

The nature of services and support staff provide can impact their health and wellbeing.

Staff may feel physically and emotionally exhausted, overwhelmed or distressed at times by clients' situations and experiences.

It is essential our staff can acknowledge their feelings and consciously find time for self-care.

Through the [myWellbeing program](#), staff can access support and advice across:

- Emotional
- Social
- Financial
- Career

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- Physical wellbeing

Staff can also access safety and wellbeing self-care plans. These are entirely voluntary, or they can identify and plan self-care strategies with their line manager, a trusted colleague, or a Safety & Wellbeing advisor.

Staff should always be supported and should never feel that they are working in isolation.

If staff are feeling overwhelmed, they should reach out to their line manager, People & Culture (P&C) Advisor, Safety & Wellbeing Advisor, or doctor.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to support staff and their immediate family members in navigating life's many challenges.

Additional Resources: [HS 409 Fatigue Management Procedure](#)

Additional Resources

[Health & Safety Resources](#)

[Safety & Wellbeing Contacts](#)