

Meal Costs and Customer Payment Contribution



Purpose

The policy and procedure aims to ensure that that Australian Government subsidies are correctly applied to eligible customers and that customers understand the cost of service provision.

This policy relates to:

Service standards	ACQS 1(3)(e), 8(3)(c)(iii)
Legislation and other requirements	ACNC Std 1
Contractual requirements	

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to the MoWSA Service Operations team.

Policy Statements

- Customers, voluntary and paid workers will be kept informed by central office of any meal price changes.
- The application of Australian Government subsidies will be in accordance with government processes and guidelines.
- Customers not entitled to any government subsidy will be deemed a private customer and will be required to pay full cost recovery.
- MoWSA will seek contributions from relevant service providers with customer permission, to keep meal cost for customers as low as possible.
- Customer inability to afford the cost of meals or inability to make satisfactory payment arrangements will not preclude customers from meal services.
- Wherever possible a part contribution towards the cost of meals is preferable than
- no customer contribution.
- Any fee waivers enacted will be time limited to enable alternate payment methods to be explored by the customer.
- The method of payment for meals will be agreed with customers. Direct debit is the preferred method as it is both safe and practical and relieves both customers and volunteers from carrying money.

Procedures

Australian Government Subsidies (see Work Instruction Customer Assessment and Review)

- Meal subsidy for customers 65 years and over and Aboriginal/Torres Strait
- Islander customers 50 and over is applied through My Aged Care (MAC).
- Customers 65 years and over and Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander customers 50 and over who have Home Care Packages (HCP) may be eligible for contribution for meal preparation and delivery through their package.
- Customers under 65 or under 50 if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander may be eligible for SA Government funding.
- Customers eligible for NDIS funding (Plan or Self managed only) may be able to pay for meal preparation and delivery through their plan.

Service Provider Contributions (see Work Instruction Customer Assessment and Review)

- Customer assessed by MAC may be eligible for a CHSP subsidy.
- A HCP customer may be able to subsidise the cost of meals from their package. Service provider agreement to contribute is required before applying (Home Care Package) HCP rate for customer meals.
- NDIS meal rate can only be applied after appropriate NDIS Plan documentation has been received. The customer is required to sign an agreement with MoWSA, after which meal provision can commence.

Fee Waivers (see Policy Customer Fee Waiver)

- May be considered where customers are unable to afford the full or part cost of meals.
- Are time limited to enable timely review of customer circumstances.
- Where at all possible some customer contribution is encouraged.
- With customer permission, there may be liaison with other relevant service providers for provision of financial support/guidance to customers.
- At branch level, customer confidentiality concerning fee waiver is maintained.

Payment methods (see also Work Instruction Customer Assessment and Review)

- At initial assessment the process of billing is explained to the customer. This includes fortnightly payment in arrears, billing corresponds to the number of meals received, a written payment estimate is provided.
- The customer's ability to pay and any requirement for fee waiver is determined at assessment or review or upon cancellation due to service affordability.
- Every attempt will be made to work with customers and their family to agree on a payment arrangement to suit the customer's financial situation.
- Direct Debit request forms are completed at home assessment and signed off by the customer. For phone assessments the Direct Debit request form may be emailed or posted with reply paid envelope, with consent given over the phone.
- The forms indicate the type of Australian Government subsidy which is applied and any other contributor to the payment e.g. Home Care Package provider; NDIS.
- Payment via direct debit from a debit bank or credit union account is preferable to a credit account because of non-reclaimable fees which apply to the latter.
- Where a customer's financial affairs are conducted through a third party or trustee company, payment is accepted from the trustee or party concerned by direct credit.
- Family members can make payments on behalf of customers.
- Service providers may make meal co-payments for customers on Home Care Packages or NDIS plans. Agreement in writing is required.
- In the event a customer is unable to manage direct debit through difficulty in managing their financial affairs, payment may be offered through Centrepay as a deduction from the customer's pension.

Policy Responsibilities

Support the Board to implement	Senior Managers
Responsible for implementation	GMSO

Policy Delegations

Review of policy and policy compliance	GMSO
Approving policy and policy changes	CEO