

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

Section 4

Financial Management

Service User Financial Management Policy and Procedures

Policy:	Service User Financial Management
Section:	Financial Management
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Policy

All Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC) Board members, staff, volunteers or students on placement should not take responsibility for managing service users' money, bank accounts, ATM cards or credit cards. In circumstances where a service user is unable to take personal responsibility for managing such things, or their finances generally, then it becomes the responsibility of:

1. The legally appointed guardian of the service user;
2. The primary Carer/next of kin of the service user; or
3. Where a Carer is not available, the Guardianship Tribunal may appoint a guardian or refer the service user's affairs to the Office of the Protective Commissioner.

Only after all of the above three options have been exhausted, and signed consent has been given by the service user directly, or via one of the above, should responsibility be taken for managing a service user's money, bank accounts, ATM cards or credit cards. This must be adhered to in accordance with the procedures outlined below and recorded as an **individual planning need** in the service user's file.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to:

- Minimise the risk to service users of NNC of either real or perceived financial abuse, and
- Provide clear guidelines of the professional behaviour expected from Board members, staff, volunteers or students on placement in relation to the financial interests of service users.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all NNC Board members, staff, volunteers and students on placement to adhere to the *Service User Financial Management Policy and Procedures*.

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Financial Management Procedures

It is recognized that occasionally a service user of NNC services will require staff or volunteers to handle money, bank accounts, ATM cards and credit cards belonging to them.

In such circumstances one of the following two procedures must be followed:

1. Procedure for Collection of Money from Service Users

If it is identified that a service user is unable to manage their own money written consent must be obtained from the service user, their primary Carer/next of kin or legal Guardian in accordance with the following procedure:

- The Project Coordinator visits the service user at home, including service users of the List Shopping Service, and conducts an assessment with the service user and/or their next of kin/legal guardian regarding the needs of the service user in relation to the management of their money.
- If the need is identified at assessment a NNC *Money Handling Consent* form must be signed by the service user or next of kin/guardian.
- A letter stating confirmation of consent for NNC staff /volunteers to handle the service user's money is sent to the service user and/or next of kin/guardian, with a copy of the *Consent* form, within 7 days of the assessment.
- The signed *Consent* form, confirmation letter and summary of the conversations with the service user and/or next of kin/guardian are to be recorded in the service user file by the Project Coordinator.
- The consent is to be reviewed and a new *Consent* form signed every three (3) months with the service user and/or next of kin/guardian.
- Each NNC service with a service user/s with an identified Individual Planning Need around money or their financial affairs must administer a *Service Users Money Handling Book*, with a separate page for each service user.
- The *Service Users Money Handling Book* is to be presented to the service user for signing every time cash is exchanged between a service user and an NNC staff member/volunteer.
- The *Service Users Money Handling Book* will record:
 - ✓ Date and time
 - ✓ Total amount of cash received/returned
 - ✓ Purpose or reason
 - ✓ Signature of service user/next of kin or guardian
 - ✓ Signature of Staff/Volunteer
- For the Shopping Service the docket for the purchased groceries is to be returned to the service user who is to sign the shopping docket, and keep it for his or her own records.

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2. Procedure for Bank Accounts, ATM Cards and Credit Cards

- At no time are bank account details, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cards or credit cards to be taken from a service user, or financial information such as Personal Identification Numbers (PIN) recorded by staff or volunteers.
- Staff and volunteers may escort a service user to the ATM to withdraw cash, however unless previously determined to be an **individual planning need** with the service user's and/or next of kin/guardian signed consent being provided, staff and volunteers are not to operate the ATM for any service user.
- If it is identified that a service user is unable to manage using the ATM to withdraw cash, then written consent must be obtained by NNC to use the ATM card on behalf of a service user. This is recorded in the service user's file as an Individual Planning Need (refer to the above *Procedure for Collection of Money from Service Users*)
- Only after written consent has been granted should a staff member or volunteer assist a service user with using their ATM card to withdraw cash.

Financial Abuse

- It is the responsibility of all Board members, staff, volunteers and students on placement to report, on the same day, to the Executive Officer and subsequently to the Board, any suspicion or witnessed financial abuse of a service user.
- All suspected or witnessed incidents of financial abuse are to be documented in writing as soon as possible, but within two (2) days.
- It is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator and the Executive Officer to conduct a thorough investigation of the reported incident.
- Incidents of theft will be reported to the NSW Police.
- All Board members, staff, volunteers and students on placement will maintain the confidentiality of all concerned parties during any investigation of theft or financial abuse.

Executive Officer

- NNC Staff, volunteers and students on placement are to report immediately to an Executive Committee member of the Board if there is any suspicion or witnessed financial abuse of a service user by the Executive Officer.

All communication with the service user and/or next of kin/guardian is to be respectful, understanding, informing of NNC policy and procedures whilst maintaining confidentiality of information and service provision.

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Documents Relating to the Policy and Procedures

1. *Service Users Money Handling Book*
2. *Confirmation of Consent Letter Template*
3. *Money Handling Consent Form (to be developed)*
4. *Individual Planning Process Policy and Procedure*
5. *Hazard/Incident or Accident Form*
6. *Risk Assessment Form*
7. *NNC Code of Conduct*
8. *CIARR*
9. *DADHC Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedures, May 2007*
10. *DADHC Social Support Guidelines, May 2007*

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