



Linked to Life

Helping you live life your way

Commonwealth Home Support Program
(CHSP)

Service User Handbook

Our Vision

“Empowering all individuals to achieve their full potential through connections with others, fostering true community spirit”

Table of Contents

What is Linked to Life	2
Mission Statement	2
Where are we located and how can you contact us?	2
What is our Aim?	3-4
Am I eligible to receive assistance?	4
How can I be referred for assistance?	4
How can we help you?	5-6
What is an assessment?	6
What happens after the assessment?	6-7
How is priority of access determined?	8-9
What is a Support Plan?	9-10
What if I am not happy with my service?	10
Service Reviews and Service Evaluations	10-11
What will the service cost?	11-12
How are contributions paid?	13-14
What if I can't afford to pay?	15
What if I have special needs?	15-16-17
What if I am unwell when my service is due?	17
What happens if my worker or volunteer is ill or away?	17-18
Professional Boundaries	18-19
Privacy and Confidentiality	19-20-21
Can I have an advocate?	21-22
No response to a scheduled visit	23
How do I make a complaint?	22-23
What are my rights?	24-25
Code of Behaviour	25-26
Service user data collection	26
Cancelling services	27

What is Linked to Life?

Linked to Life is a community based organisation funded under the Commonwealth Home Support Program. The service is governed by a community based management committee consisting of 7 members and supported by Advisory groups. Linked to Life employs 6 staff members, including Project Manager, 3 Service Coordinators and 2 Support Workers (including 2 Punjabi specific workers).

Mission Statement

"Linked to Life, servicing the Coffs Harbour local government area, aims to further enable the independence, security and social well-being of older people and their carers, by providing a range of services which respond to their individual needs, including companionship, practical support and information".

Where are we located?

220 Pacific Highway North Coffs Harbour 2450
(Cnr Pacific Highway & Argyll Street)

How can you contact us?

BY PHONE: 6651 7365
Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm

IN PERSON: Call in to our office

EMAIL: admin@linkedtolife.org.au

What is our Aim?

Our overall aim is to provide you with the assistance and support you require to enable you to continue to live more independently in your own home.

Linked to Life is committed to operating from a philosophy that is focused on building on the individual's existing strengths as a means to respectful and empowering practice. We believe that:

- All people have strengths and capacities
- The individual's capacity to learn and grow can be harnessed and mobilised
- People are their own experts on their own situation
- The problem is the problem, the person is not the problem
- People are doing the best they can

Linked to Life places a strong emphasis on 'person-centered' care – promoting the service user's 'wellness' and active participation in decisions about their care, with a specific aim toward providing timely, flexible and targeted services that maximise independence.

Am I eligible to receive assistance?

Linked to Life operates in accordance with the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). You may be eligible for Linked to Life services if you're an older person (usually 65+ or 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). You will need to have a face-to-face assessment through My Aged Care to find out if you are eligible.

How can I be referred for assistance?

From 1 July 2015, you must first be registered with My Aged Care and referred to Linked to Life for services. To receive services with Linked to Life you will need to contact the My Aged Care contact centre on 1800 200 422 who will organise a face to face home support assessment (conducted by the Regional Assessment Service). Once we receive a referral, one of our Coordinators will contact you and organise to visit you and discuss the service that best suits you and your lifestyle.

If you require assistance with the My Aged Care process please contact Linked to Life and staff will be happy to help.

How can we help you?

Linked to Life is funded to provide social support and domestic assistance services: Services we provide include:

- **Companionship**

We can link you up with a volunteer who will visit you in

your home for a friendly chat, share an interest or hobby, or take you on an outing on a regular, temporary or occasional basis.

- **Practical Support**

We can arrange for a volunteer to accompany you and assist with shopping, banking, paying bills, getting to and from medical and other appointments, reading, writing letters, errands and other general activities on a regular, temporary, occasional or one-off basis.

- **Social Group Activities and Outings**

Linked to Life runs social group activities and outings that are held on a regular basis. You will meet new people and develop new friendships, remain active in the community and visit various places of interest in the local and outlying communities.

- **Information/Education Workshops:**

Linked to Life holds regular monthly information/education and practical workshops. The workshops provide a unique opportunity to learn new information and get advice on a range of health, lifestyle and general wellbeing issues.

- **Domestic Assistance**

Linked to Life can assist you with domestic cleaning and household tasks on a regular, short-term, occasional or one-off basis

- **Information/Referrals**

Linked to Life has close links with other local and regional services. Our friendly staff can provide you with

information about services available in the community and assist you with referrals.

What is an assessment?

The primary aim of the initial assessment is to meet with you to discuss your needs and preferences. Linked to Life encourages inclusion of families in consultations about service delivery wherever appropriate. The service Coordinator will work with you and your representative/s to:

- Identify your limitations, strengths and goals;
- Identify your existing informal social, family and friendship networks;
- Gather information about any formal services you may currently access;
- Determine your individual needs and preferences for tailored services;
- Conduct an initial risk/hazard assessment of the home to ensure safety and access for volunteers and staff;

What happens after the assessment?

Further to the initial assessment, there are 4 possible outcomes:

1. Refusal/Decline of Service:

- You decide that you do not want to receive services. (You

have the right to decline or refuse services and your decision will not prejudice future access to the service at any time)

- Your care needs and level of assistance and support you need exceeds the capabilities of volunteer staff.
- The home environment is determined to be unsafe or inaccessible for workers and volunteers

Staff will inform you if Linked to Life is unable to provide you with a service, based on one of the above reasons, and will provide you with information about alternative services.

NOTE: You have the right to lodge a formal complaint or appeal the decision (*see complaints section in this handbook*). Should your circumstances change, we are happy for you to make further contact with our service.

2. Referral to another agency:

If we are unable to assist you, we can make referrals on your behalf to the most appropriate service with your prior consent.

3. Placed on a Wait List:

- You may be placed on a waiting list if the service is already operating at full capacity;
- If we do not have access to a suitable volunteer at the time.

When a vacancy becomes available, waiting lists are reviewed with access determined by order of priority (*see priority of*

access). Staff will contact you to review your circumstances and, if appropriate, make further arrangements for services to commence. **NOTE:** If you are placed on the waiting list and your circumstances change, you should contact our staff who will review your situation.

4. Services will be provided:

- We have the financial resources and capacity to assist you and;
- We have access to a suitable volunteer who can provide the assistance and support you require.

How is priority of access determined?

In accordance with funding guidelines, the following factors will be used as a tool to determine priority of access to services:

- You live alone or with a carer who is also aged and/or has a disability
- You live in a home that is physically unsafe;
- You have little or no family support or the family support structure is at risk of breaking down;
- You require medical or nursing help;
- You have difficulty with a range of the tasks of daily living;
- You have little or non-existent social contacts;

- You are socially or geographically isolated;
- You are financially disadvantaged;
- You are Aboriginal or from a Non-English speaking background.

Priority of access is given to those whose circumstances meet one or more of the above factors. The difference the service will make to the person's circumstances will also be taken into consideration.

What is a Support Plan?

At the commencement of services, we will work with you to develop a formal Support Plan. The Support Plan clearly sets out:

- The type, day, time and frequency of your service;
- The agreed fee for service and method of payment;
- The scheduled date for service review;
- Service specifications in accordance with your identified limitations, strengths and goals (ie, what specific help you require, what you can continue to perform yourself, and the expected benefits you hope to gain by having the service in place).

Once you agree and sign the Support Plan a copy will be provided to you for your records. You will be linked with a volunteer/worker who will provide the support and assistance you require in accordance with the specifications set out in the

Support Plan.

What if I am not happy with my service?

Linked to Life staff will contact you to follow-up with you after two weeks of commencing services to ensure that you are satisfied with the current arrangements. We encourage you to phone us any time prior to the two weeks or at any time should you be unsatisfied or wish to make any changes to your existing Support Plan arrangements.

Service Reviews

Your service will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that we continue to meet your individual needs.

Linked to Life staff will phone you or, if required, visit you in your home to discuss and review the following:

- Your current Support Plan and any changes required
- Your level of satisfaction with existing services
- Any changes to your circumstances, health or mobility
- Other formal and informal support networks you may have in place
- Change to or nomination of advocate or representative
- Changes to your personal contacts, emergency contacts and Doctor (GP)
- Any information, further actions or referrals you may require

Should any of the above occur prior to the annual review, we encourage you to contact us to arrange an unscheduled review.

Service Evaluation

Linked to Life carries out formal service evaluations on an annual basis as a means of receiving feedback from Service Users about the service they receive and gather any ideas for improving the service. Survey forms, which remain anonymous, will be mailed to you to complete and return to our office in a stamped addressed envelope. While the evaluation is not compulsory, we do appreciate your feedback.

What will the service cost?

You will be asked to make a contribution toward the overall cost of providing the service to you. All monies received from Service Users are used to enhance and expand the provision of Linked to Life services in the community. ***As at 1 September 2017, the following rates apply:***

Practical Assistance in the Home:

Where a volunteer visits in the home for companionship or assisting you with activities such as reading, writing letters or any other practical task, you will be asked to make a minimum cash contribution of \$5.00 toward the cost of providing the service to you.

Practical Support involving transport:

Service Users who are provided with services that may involve transport and assistance for shopping, outings, medical appointments etc, will be asked to contribute toward the cost of travel, with the fee determined by the overall distance travelled.

- For services provided in your local area, you will be asked to pay a minimum contribution of \$15.00;
- For services provided outside your local area, you will be asked to pay a minimum contribution of \$20 or more, depending on the overall distance travelled.

Domestic Assistance:

Those who receive assistance with housekeeping will be asked to pay an hourly fee for service that is an affordable proportion of the overall costs of providing the service, currently \$15 per hour.

How are contributions paid?

Linked to Life has several methods for making payment for the service you receive and this will be discussed with you at the time of initial assessment:

Payment for Social Support:

You can choose to make a cash payment to your volunteer worker at the time of each service you receive. The volunteer will submit your contributions to the office each month for processing. Alternatively, you can choose to make your payment by invoice, which will be sent on a monthly basis.

Payment for Domestic Assistance:

To save on the overall costs of administration, we prefer the following method for payment of your cleaning service:

- Arrange with your bank to set up a regular fortnightly periodic payment to our bank account (details below). Eg: if you have cleaning each fortnight for 1.5 hours, you would arrange a fortnightly payment of \$22.50. If you have a weekly service for 1 hour you would arrange a fortnightly payment of \$30.
- If you are unable to set up a periodical payment, due to bank fees charged, you can make a monthly deposit to our bank for the full amount owing for the month, prior to the end of each month.

BANK: Bananacoast Credit Union
BSB: 533 000
ACCOUNT NO: 166593 s11
A/C NAME: Linked to Life

NOTE: The only way we can send you a monthly invoice, as an alternative to above methods, is by email. If you, or a family member provide us with an email address, we can email your monthly invoice, that can be paid by cash, cheque or bank deposit.

Payment Options:

Payment of invoices can be made:

- **By cash** – you can call into the office that is most convenient for you;
- **By cheque** – you can send your payment through the mail or pay in person;
- **Via electronic transfer** – you can deposit your payment directly into our bank account (our account details are printed on your invoice);

Receipt of Payment:

Receipts are issued monthly for all monies paid. Receipts are kept on file at each office. Clients can request to have receipts posted to them at any time.

What if I can't afford to pay?

The amount you pay will be negotiated at the time of initial assessment. We recognise that the circumstances of some people may make it difficult to pay any, or all of the agreed fee for service. If you are experiencing difficulties you can apply to the Board of Management for a fee review by contacting the Manager.

NOTE: No person will be denied access to receive Linked to Life services because of an inability to pay

What if I have special needs?

We are aware that some service users may have special needs or requirements to enable them to access Linked to Life, and we will make every attempt to assist you in the most appropriate manner:

- **Service Users from Non-English speaking background:**

We will conduct home visits and/or assessments in a manner that is culturally appropriate. If you do not speak English, we will endeavour to use an Interpreter service to ensure that you understand the assessment and review process, the services being offered and other general information contained in the Service User Handbook.

- **Service Users who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:**

We will Endeavour to provide you with culturally appropriate

services as per your personal needs and preferences. On request, we can arrange for an Aboriginal Assessor, or a person known and trusted by you to accompany our staff to the initial assessment. Alternatively, staff can provide you with information about Aboriginal- specific services you may be able to access if preferred.

- **Service Users who cannot read or write:**

We will ensure that the information in the Service User Handbook and information regarding the assessment, review, care plan and services is clearly understood by you using a range of methods to suit your needs.

- **Service Users with Dementia and other special needs:**

Our staff participate in ongoing training to develop skills in working with people with dementia and other specific disabilities, and every effort will be made to ensure that services are delivered in a sensitive way. We will make every effort to ensure that carers or advocates are involved in the development of a care plan are fully aware of information contained in the Service User Handbook. However, to whatever extent possible, the consumer will be given the same information and their questions answered.

- **Consumers living in rural and isolated areas:**

You have the right to be assessed and receive services regardless of where you reside in the Coffs Harbour Local Government area. We will endeavour to collaborate with other services you may already be in contact with for collecting information and providing you with a service.

● **Consumers who are financially disadvantaged:**

You have a right to be assessed and received services regardless of your ability to pay.

What if I am unwell when my service is due?

If you are feeling ill or unwell, in particular if you have an infectious viral illness such as cold or flu, on the day your volunteer or worker is due and you are unable to go out, please contact the Linked to Life office as soon as possible so that we can notify the worker and make alternative arrangements with you.

NOTE: *Staff and volunteers have the right to refuse to provide a service in circumstances where they may be at risk of any infection from either a cold/flu or other infectious illness. If this occurs, the staff member will contact the office so that suitable alternative arrangements can be made.*

What happens if my worker or volunteer is ill or away?

Linked to Life makes every effort to ensure that your service remains consistent. If your volunteer or worker is not available on the day he/she is scheduled to assist you, we will organise in advance a replacement worker to fill in during their illness or absence. In circumstances where we are notified of your

worker's inability to attend on short notice, we will contact you to negotiate arrangements to ensure there is minimal disruption to your service.

NOTE: *You are within your rights to refuse entry to any staff member who is ill and likely to put you at risk of any infection. Should this occur, contact our office so that suitable alternative arrangements can be made.*

Professional boundaries

All staff, volunteers and contracted workers of Linked to Life are required to operate in accordance with a strict 'Code of Conduct'. Volunteers and contracted workers are recruited to assist you with specific tasks that are specified in your Support Plan. In an effort to maintain the safety and wellbeing of our staff, and also maintain a duty of care to you, we have policies and procedures that our staff (paid & unpaid) are required to adhere to. In particular, ***at no time*** can our staff:

- **Perform any personal care to you (toileting, dressing wounds etc);**
- **Perform any lifting - you must be able to transfer yourself with minimal assistance from the volunteer;**
- **Provide any advice - legal, medical, personal etc;**
- **Do any banking on your behalf unless formal arrangements have been made;**

- **Change arrangements or provide any additional assistance to you without prior negotiation with Linked to Life staff;**
- **Accept any gifts or money from you (except the contribution you have agreed to pay);**
- **Give out his/her home phone number to you;**
- **Ask you to pay for their costs associated with providing a service (eg. fares, meals, fuel etc). These costs incurred by the volunteer are reimbursed by our service;**
- **Administer or monitor medications or translate medical or medication information provided by a doctor or other health specialist;**

NOTE: Should you have any concerns or queries, we encourage you to contact Linked to Life staff

Privacy and Confidentiality

Linked to Life operates in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles and is committed to protecting your privacy and confidentiality.

To ensure your privacy:

- All initial assessments are held in your own home and will be between a staff member, yourself and your advocate, if requested;
- We only collect information about service users that is

relevant to the provision of service and we explain to service users why we collect the information and what we use it for;

- You have a right to withhold information at your discretion;
- You will have the choice to provide or decline to provide your signed consent at the time of initial assessment. Staff will provide an explanation of the consent to ensure you are fully informed;
- Your consent to share or release all or some personal information can be withdrawn at any time by contacting the Manager;
- Your information held by us is confidential and will not be disclosed to any other person or organisation without your prior permission;
- All files are stored in a secure manner and accessible only to Linked to Life staff;
- You can ask to see the information we keep and you will be assisted to access this information if requested. You can give authority to nominate a representative who can access your information on your behalf;
- We only share information when it is necessary to ensure appropriate service is delivered and only with your prior consent;
- We will not discuss you or your service with any other person not directly involved in supporting you without your authority;

- Any discussions between employees about service users are held in a closed office;
- We seek consent from service users to provide access to your records to government officials (or their delegates) in the conduct of quality reviews or for investigating formal complaints;
- Staff, volunteers and contracted workers receive ongoing training relating to privacy and confidentiality and will be respectful of your need for personal and physical space.

Can I have an advocate?

Linked to Life encourages the inclusion of families in consultations regarding service wherever appropriate. Your advocate or personal representative can be a friend, family member or formal advocate who, with your consent, represents your interests in your dealings with our service and can be used during assessments, service reviews and complaints management processes.

You will be asked at the time of initial assessment if you wish to appoint an advocate, and staff will provide you with an 'Advocate Authority' form that you and your nominated advocate will be required to sign. You can change or nominate additional advocates at any time by contacting our office. Our staff can assist you in making contact with an independent Advocacy service if needed.

NOTE: *A contact list of independent Advocacy services is included in your information package.*

No Response to a scheduled visit

In the event of NO RESPONSE, Linked to Life has a Duty of Care to ensure your safety and privacy rights. If staff/volunteers arrive for a planned scheduled visit and receive no response, the procedure below will be followed:

Staff/volunteers will:

- Move around the outside of the home, look, knock and call through windows
- Enquire with neighbours if they know of your whereabouts
- If a door is unlocked, open the door and call out
- If there is still no response, Linked to Life staff will telephone your emergency contacts
- If staff still have concerns about your welfare, they will contact the most appropriate emergency personnel.

How do I make a complaint?

Linked to Life encourages service users to provide feedback on the service we provide. Your feedback assists us to better meet your needs and plan for the future. All complaints are treated in confidence and service users have the right to pursue any complaint about service provision without fear of retribution. ***If at any time you feel that your rights are not being respected***

or if you have concerns about a decision or the services you are receiving you can:

- Discuss the issue with your volunteer/worker if you feel comfortable to do so;
- Discuss your concerns with Linked to Life staff by contacting our office;
- Should you not feel comfortable discussing your concerns with your Coordinator, you can phone 5551 7365 and request to speak with the Manager;
- If the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved you may wish to make a complaint in writing to the Management Committee:

**The Secretary
Volunteering - Coffs Harbour Inc
PO Box 1309
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450**

- If you are unhappy with the Management Committee's decision you may wish to contact Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on 1800 951 822 to assist you in

NOTE: A contact list of external complaint handling agencies is included in your information package

handling your complaint

What are my rights?

As an approved aged care provider, Linked to Life operates in accordance with the Australian Government Aged Care and Safety Commission Charter of Aged Care Rights. You have the right to:

- Safe and high quality care;
- Be treated with dignity and respect;
- Have your identity, culture and diversity valued and supported;
- Live without abuse and neglect;
- Be informed about your care and services in a way you understand;
- Access all information about yourself, including information about your rights, care and services;
- Have control over and make choices about your care, and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk;
- Have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of your daily life, financial affairs and possessions;
- Your independence;
- Be listened to and understood;
- Have a person of your choice, including an aged care advocate, support you or speak on your behalf;
- Complain free from reprisal, and to have your complaints dealt with fairly and promptly;

- Personal privacy and to have your personal information protected;
- Exercise your rights without it adversely affecting the way you are treated;

Code of Behaviour

Your responsibilities are:

GENERAL:

- To respect the human, legal and industrial rights of our staff, volunteers and contracted workers, including the right to work in a safe environment;
- To treat our staff, volunteers and contracted workers with respect and without exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment;

SERVICE:

- To abide by the terms of the written agreement;
- To acknowledge that your needs may change over time and be willing to accept changes to your service plan when necessary;
- To accept responsibility for your own actions and choices, even though some actions and choices may involve some element of risk;

COMMUNICATION:

- To give enough information to assist us in developing, delivering and reviewing your service plan;

- To advise us any problems with the service;

ACCESS:

- To allow safe and reasonable access for staff, volunteers and contracted workers at the times specified in your service plan
- To provide reasonable notice if you need to cancel, postpone or make changes to your service plan arrangements

FEES:

- To pay any fee as agreed to in the service plan or negotiate an alternative arrangement if any changes occur to your financial circumstances;
- To provide enough information for us to determine an appropriate fee;

Service user data collection

Government bodies (both State and Federal) provide funding to a wide variety of community services to both support and strengthen local communities. To ensure that services meet ongoing community need, the funding departments collect Service User data to assist them in developing a community profile. You will be asked to participate in Government data collection. Your name and address and contact details will not be passed on and you have the right to refuse should you prefer.

Cancelling services

Linked to Life will cease to provide you with services when:

- You decide to discontinue – you have the right to cancel your service at any time;
- You move away from our service area;
- You move into a hostel or nursing home;
- You move to a community aged care package provided by an alternate provider
- Your needs increase and we are no longer able to meet your needs for assistance
- Your behavior is inappropriate toward or endangers staff, volunteers and contracted workers;
- Your relationship with the volunteer becomes such that it goes beyond the agreed terms of the Service Agreement and, in consultation with the Coordinator, both you and the volunteer agree to leave the service to continue the relationship;
- You are in hospital awaiting Nursing Home or Hostel placement and you are unlikely to return to your home;

Should any of the above circumstances change, you can contact staff to reapply for assistance



ADDRESS:

220 Pacific Highway North
(corner of Pacific Highway and Argyll Street),
Coffs Harbour

PHONE: 66517 365

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm

WEB: www.linkedtolive.org.au

EMAIL: admin@linkedtolive.org.au