

COMMUNITY VISION INC DISABILITY SERVICES

POLICIES & PROCEDURES UNDER REVIEW October 2007 – March 2008

Related Programs

- **Kinship**

- Adult mentorship and Respite
- Child and Youth Respite
- Create

- **My Vision**

- Intensive Family Support Options
- Alternatives to Employment
- Post School Options

Service purchasing

THESE POLICIES WILL BE
ACCESSIBLE FOR COMMENT
UNTIL 7th March 2008

SECTION 8 – SERVICE MANAGEMENT

POLICY: POLICE CLEARANCES

Policy Number: 10
Date Approved: 4th February, 2003
Updated: 11th August, 2006
Review Date: December, 2006

PURPOSE: The policy is in line with Community Vision's Vision, Mission and Values. As part of our commitment to our citizens, whether staff, students volunteers, clients and customers and other stakeholders, Community Vision expects and implements wherever possible and achievable, the highest levels of protection for all our citizens to ensure a safe and caring community. As part of this commitment, Community Vision has implemented a Police Clearance policy aimed at ensuring that the appropriate people work within our communities on behalf of Community Vision.

Police clearances are viewed as one safeguard that Community Vision and its clients can appropriately implement to prevent the appointment of Board Members, the recruitment of staff, volunteers, students and contractors who have been convicted of criminal offences that may present increased risks to the organisation. The risk includes a range of factors including possible fraud or the misappropriation of funds, client abuse or the person's suitability to provide services to people with a range of needs. This policy recognises Community Vision's legal and moral duty of care obligations to its clients and staff. The policy applies to all services and organisational activities. It outlines the requirements for new staff, volunteers and students in relation to police clearances; and outlines the obligations for existing employees.

PHILOSOPHY: This policy outlines the requirements for all employees, volunteers and students working for CVI to have a satisfactory, current Federal Police Clearance as part of our commitment to the provision of safe services. The frequency of the updating of the clearance will vary in detail between section / programme policy requirements and will be in addition to requirements outlined here.

While the principles of natural justice will apply in all decisions, the overriding consideration will always be given to the safety and well being of our clients.

POLICY: All staff, volunteers, students on placement (excluding school children on work experience) who will have direct access to clients and who will not be under direct supervision; contractors working for CVI; private agency staff/consultants who will have direct access to clients and who will not be under direct supervision; and all Board Members, are required to have an up to date **(within the last six months)** and satisfactory criminal record checks including the provision of a national Police Certificate at the point of joining CVI. If the staff, Board Member, volunteer, student or contractor has resided overseas, a criminal records check from the relevant jurisdiction(s) will also be required. This will be stated at the time of recruitment and selection.

PROCEDURES: All:

- I. employees (permanent, full/part time, temporary, casual, sessional, contract);
- II. Board of Management members and members of any Consult group set up to make service specific decisions for programs;
- III. independent contractors (includes all trades people and training consultants and their employees) who will have direct access to clients and who will not be under direct supervision;
- IV. private agency staff/consultants who will have direct access to clients and who will not be under direct supervision;
- V. students on placement (excludes school children on work experience) who will have direct access to clients and who will not be under direct supervision; and
- VI. persons engaged in any other capacity (e.g. adults on work experience, volunteers, and academics) who will have direct access to clients and who will not be under direct supervision that will work for or provide services to the organization;

are required to undergo regular comprehensive criminal record checks.

To this end, a National Police Certificate is to be obtained and updated every three years by all parties outlined above. All new staff when applying for work with Community Vision will be advised of these requirements. Staff joining Community Vision on and following the commencement date on this policy on the 1st January 2006, will need to provide a National Police Certificate at their own expense every three years, after the date of their appointment, depending on their specific programme's requirements. No person in the above categories will be allowed to work or provide services without a criminal record check. Staff employed prior to the implementation date of this policy will need to provide a National Police Certificate, at the expense of Community Vision, initially as outlined in the section Police Certificates for existing employees and subsequently every three years after the date that certificate was provided.

Previous criminal conviction or pending charges will not necessarily preclude appointment or involvement in the provision of services.

If a person refuses to provide a Police Certificate following proper explanation and reassurance, he/she is precluded from appointment.

Type of Police Certificate to be obtained

All people in the category above are required to provide a National Police Certificate prior to commencing employment or appointment with Community Vision and subsequently every three years.

Cost of Police Certificate

The cost of obtaining the initial Police Certificates and subsequent Police Certificates will be borne by the employee if the employee commenced employment on or after the date specified on this Policy ie 1st January 2006. The organisation will cover the cost of Police Certificates and subsequent Police Certificates for existing employees employed prior to the commencement date of this policy and for board members and volunteers.

Persons from overseas

Persons from overseas on temporary work visas are required by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) to undergo a criminal record check from the country in which they have lived. The DIMA also requires a Federal criminal record check as part of an application for permanent residency in Australia.

If a person has satisfied the DIMA that they are of good character, the person could be permitted to work or provide services. Community Vision is not required to obtain criminal record checks for personnel from overseas, either on a temporary work visa or seeking permanent residency (where the applicant has been in Australia less than six (6) weeks. Overseas personnel must provide evidence of their visa status to the section manager of the program within which employment is being sought.

Spent Convictions

A spent conviction is a conviction that has been spent (or removed from a person's public viewable police record) through one of the processes described below. It means a person who has had a conviction spent will have a Police Certificate issued without this conviction disclosed.

Under Schedule 3 of the Spent Conviction Act 1988 (effective from 31 May 2005), all Disability Services Commission funded disability service providers are exempt from all spent convictions. This means that these providers have access to all spent convictions information. Therefore all Police Certificates that are issued by the Offender Information Bureau (not a local police station) will be further screened by emailing the Offender Information Bureau.

Police Certificates obtained issued by the Offender Information Bureau and not by a local Police Station will be further screened through the Offender Information Bureau.

Disclosing criminal convictions

Community Vision:

- I. Requires applicants to provide details of any disclosable convictions recorded against them prior to an offer of employment being made;
- II. Requires any employee/ volunteer/ student/ board member/ contractor who is charged and/or convicted of a criminal offence to, as soon as practicable, advise the CEO or program section manager of the offence or offences. Failure to do so will result in the employee/volunteer/student/board member/contractor being liable to dismissal; and
- III. Requires, that any person nominating for the Board will provide a record of any criminal or indictable offences and the Board may, in its sole discretion, determine whether or not the nomination is accepted.

Determining the employment suitability of individuals with a criminal conviction

Community Vision reserves the right to judge an individual's suitability for employment based on the relevance of any conviction to the job in question. Where a criminal check reveals a conviction or convictions which would, in the opinion of the organisation, make an individual undesirable as an employee, that person will not be eligible for employment. The decision not to appoint a person on the basis of their criminal record is delegated to the CEO.

In determining whether a person's conviction will deem them to be ineligible for employment, Community Vision will base the decision to accept or reject the applicant on the following factors.

The nature of the offence(s)

Any decision should have regard to the nature, severity and frequency of the offence(s) and the relevance of the offence(s) to the particular position for which the applicant is being considered.

The recency of offences

As a general rule, persons under a good behaviour bond or on probation for offences of any seriousness are scrutinised very closely before being accepted for employment/appointment. Trouble free completion of bond or a probation period should be taken into consideration when assessing degree of rehabilitation. The CEO or Programme Manager may make contact with the Probation and Parole Service or the Department of Courts Administration to ascertain if information is available on the attitude and behaviour of the applicant for employment/appointment. ***This action MUST NOT be taken without the prior knowledge and written consent of the applicant.*** Community Corrections can provide an appraisal of the person to the Liaison Officer and give some indication of the likelihood of the applicant NOT offending in the future. This information can be of considerable assistance in the decision making process.

Mitigating or extenuating circumstances

Consideration should be given to any mitigating or extenuating circumstances which might be revealed in relation to the offence(s) committed. This might include provocation, effect of alcohol and/or peer group pressure at the time of the offence and the circumstance(s) in which the offence was committed.

Whether the offence is still a crime

Whether the offence has been de- criminalised or removed from the statutes.

The age at which the offence(s) was committed

The age at which offences are committed can often be an important factor. Certain offences committed as a minor may be viewed in an entirely different light to the same offences committed by a person of more mature years.

General character since the offence(s)

This aspect can also have an important bearing in some cases. The following factors may be relevant:

- i. Steady employment record/satisfactory appointment history; and
- ii. Favourable reports from past employers/institutions, interviewing officers or officers of Probation and Parole or Courts Administration departments.
- iii. Whether the person has a pattern of offending behaviour?
- iv. Whether the person's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour?
- v. The degree of remorse, or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change,

In determining a person's suitability for a position Community Vision will:

- I. treat applicants/employees fairly and will not automatically bar a person on the grounds of a spent conviction in the selection process for a position or in the terms and conditions on which employment is offered. There are, however, exceptions where convictions or disclosable spent convictions for certain offences can be taken into account in order to protect the clients of (insert organisations name);
- II. apply the principles of natural justice in all decisions taken, however the overriding consideration will always be in relation to the safety and well-being of clients of (insert organisation's name); and,
- III. deem the applicant ineligible for employment, where the conviction, spent or otherwise, is considered to preclude the establishment of trust between Community Vision and the applicant or conflict significantly with the values of the organisation;

Potential applicants/employees

Process for dealing with a potential employee/applicant with criminal convictions

The applicant's record(s) should be discussed in a personal interview unless the applicant specifically requests some other

form of communication such as telephone discussion or is unable to attend for interview. At the interview, the full details of the record should be read to the applicant and shown to the applicant if requested.

A final decision on the application because of his/her record should not be made until the person has been given adequate opportunity to discuss the record in order to:

- I. verify that it relates to him/her;
- II. check it for accuracy; and
- III. provide details in writing within five working days of any relevant matters that they wish considered in relation to the matter.

Disclosure of an applicant's criminal conviction is to be strictly limited to authorised persons.

If Community Vision decides not to employ/appoint an applicant because of a criminal conviction, the applicant should be informed of the reason for the decision, as well as the fact that they can request a review of the decision by the CEO. Any such request must be made in writing, within seven working days of being informed of the decision.

Process for dealing with potential employee/applicant with charges/ appeals pending

Where there are pending charges, and a date has been fixed for hearing, or where convictions have appeals pending, it may be possible to employ/appoint the applicant on a temporary basis, subject to the nature of the position and the nature of the charge, or else defer the decision regarding appointment pending the resolution of the outstanding matter by the Court.

Where a charge is pending against a person, who, if convicted would be refused employment/appointment, then:

- I. wherever possible, the offer should be deferred until the charge is heard; or
- II. if appropriate safeguards for clients are possible, temporary appointment may be considered; or
- III. if neither is possible then (insert organisation's name) should give preference to an applicant who has been subsequently acquitted (over equally qualified applicants) when a similar vacancy occurs.

Existing employees

Procedure for obtaining Police Certificates for existing employees

National Police Certificates for existing employees will be obtained progressively over three to five years commencing from the date of this Policy's implementation on the 1st January 2006. Employees will be grouped alphabetically by surname and National Police Certificates will be provided as follows.

Quarter 1	2005(Nov – January)	A to I
Quarter 2	2006 (Feb – April)	J to R
Quarter 3	2006 (May – July)	S to Z

Further certificates will be required every three years after the date of those provided above.

Program section managers will forward a notification to each employee outlining the need for them to obtain a Police Certificate when required. The employee is required to obtain the National Police Certificate from their local police station and return it to the program section manager within 14 days of the request. Employees will initially pay for the certificate but will be reimbursed by the employer in the pay following presentation of the certificate. Where the employee may suffer financial hardship from this requirement the employer may agree to other arrangements including provision of a cheque payable to the police service to allow purchase of the certificate.

Refusal to provide National Police Certificate by existing employees

If the employee refuses to provide a National Police Certificate the matter will be discussed with the individual, seeking reasons for this decision. The process will be explained and any concerns regarding the process will be addressed. If the employee still refuses to provide a National Police Certificate the matter will be referred to program manager who will issue the employee with a formal instruction to provide the certificate required. If the employee still refuses the program manager will consult with the CEO. The matter shall result in the employee being liable to dismissal.

Satisfactory certificate received

Upon receipt of a satisfactory Police Certificate, details will be noted on the payroll system and the certificate will be placed on the employee's file.

Certificate indicating convictions recorded

Upon receipt of a Police Certificate indicating the employee has a conviction that is of a serious nature – the Program Manager will consult with the CEO. Only convictions recorded since the date of their previous National Police Certificate will be considered. Contact with the employee will be made, preferably in person or by telephone. If written contact is necessary, for example, the employee is on leave, the conviction should not be specifically mentioned because of the risk of disclosure to other parties. Instead, the correspondence should only indicate that the employee is required to contact the nominated Manager.

The employee's criminal conviction(s) should be discussed in a personal interview unless the employee specifically requests some other form of communication such as telephone discussion. At the interview, the full details of the record should be read to the employee and shown to the employee if requested.

Determining suitability for continuing employment

A final decision regarding the continuing employment of the employee because of his/her record should not be made until the person has been given adequate opportunity to discuss the record in order to:

- I. verify that it relates to him/her;
- II. check it for accuracy, and;

- III. Provide details in writing to the (insert the authorised person) of any relevant matters that he/she wishes to be considered in relation to the matter. This should occur within 5 working days of notification to the employee that a satisfactory certificate has not been obtained.

The CEO will make the decision regarding continuing employment.

Pending charges or appeals pending

Existing employees are required to advise the program manager immediately following any charges being laid. Where a date has been fixed for hearing, or where convictions have appeals pending, it may be possible for the employee to continue in his/her place of work, subject to the nature of the position they occupy, the nature of the charge and its relevance to the work area.

Alternatively, a temporary transfer may be arranged, or the employee may be instructed to remain at home on full pay. The decision regarding continuing employment pending the resolution of the outstanding matter by the Court will be made by the CEO.

The decision regarding the employee's employment status will be made by the CEO, where pending charges or appeals result in a conviction.

Appeals against decision to terminate employment

Any action to be taken regarding the employee's continuing employment because of a criminal conviction should be conveyed in writing to the employee. The employee may request a review of the decision if the employee has any further information regarding the matter. Any such request must be made in writing, addressed to the CEO, and received within 5 working days of notification of the decision.

Employee right to representation

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a Staff Advocate or Union Representative at any meeting required to discuss the refusal to provide or result of National Police Certificate

Identification

Identification to the value of 100 points must be produced prior to commencing employment. Originals must be sighted and photocopies must be signed by the section manager. Where the

applicant has changed their name (i.e. through marriage or deed poll) evidence must be produced to support this.

The following types of identification required can be used:

Birth Certificate (original, certified copy or extract) Current Passport/international travel document Citizenship certificate (original or certified copy) <i>Use only one of the above</i>	70
Drivers license/permit Public Service ID card Social Security benefits card Tertiary student ID card <i>Name, signature and photograph where applicable must be supplied. Use only one of the above.</i>	40
A signed written reference from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a financial body • an acceptable referee <i>The reference must confirm a twelve month association with the recommended applicant. Use only one of the above.</i>	40
Medicare Card	25
Membership Card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union or trade/professional bodies • 	25
Recent arrival in Australia (less than six weeks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passport (resident) 	100
Isolated area aboriginal person A written statement of confirmation of identification signed by two acceptable referees.	100

Source: Health Department of Western Australia Criminal Record Screening Policy, flowchart and guidelines

Secure storage, handling, use and disposal of sensitive information

General principles

As an organisation using Police Certificates and other sensitive information to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Community Vision complies fully with the Privacy Legislation regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of information received through Police Certificates and other enquiries.

Storage and access

Information regarding an employee's criminal record will be placed in a sealed envelope on the relevant individual's personal file, which will be kept in lockable filing cabinet. Access will be strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. Under no circumstances are details of an employee's criminal record to be placed on an unrestricted file.

Handling

Sensitive information will only be passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. Community Vision will maintain a record of all those to whom information has been revealed. It is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it. Employees authorised to receive information about criminal convictions are required to sign a statement of confidentiality. Written information about criminal records must not be given to a third party unless securely bound and sealed, or hand delivered to an authorised employee.

Usage

Criminal records will not be used for any purpose other than determining suitability for employment (potential employees) or continuing employment (existing employees). Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, Community Vision will ensure that any sensitive information is immediately destroyed by secure means, that is, by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, sensitive information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle such as, waste bins or confidential waste sacks. Community Vision will not keep any photocopy or other image of the information or any copy.

Grievance resolution

When a decision is taken not to employ/appoint a person because of a criminal conviction or pending charges, the person must be informed by the Section Manager of the reason for the decision and be provided with information about how they may request an independent review of the decision. Any such request must be made within seven (7) working days to the CEO.

The following process will apply:

- I. upon receipt of a request for review the section manager will forward the relevant information to the CEO;
- II. The CEO will conduct a thorough review of the evidence and reports prepared by the section manager;
- III. A confidential consultation with Community Vision's CCI representative, may be necessary; and
- IV. A final decision will be made and relayed to the person concerned at a meeting

Legislative base and related legislation

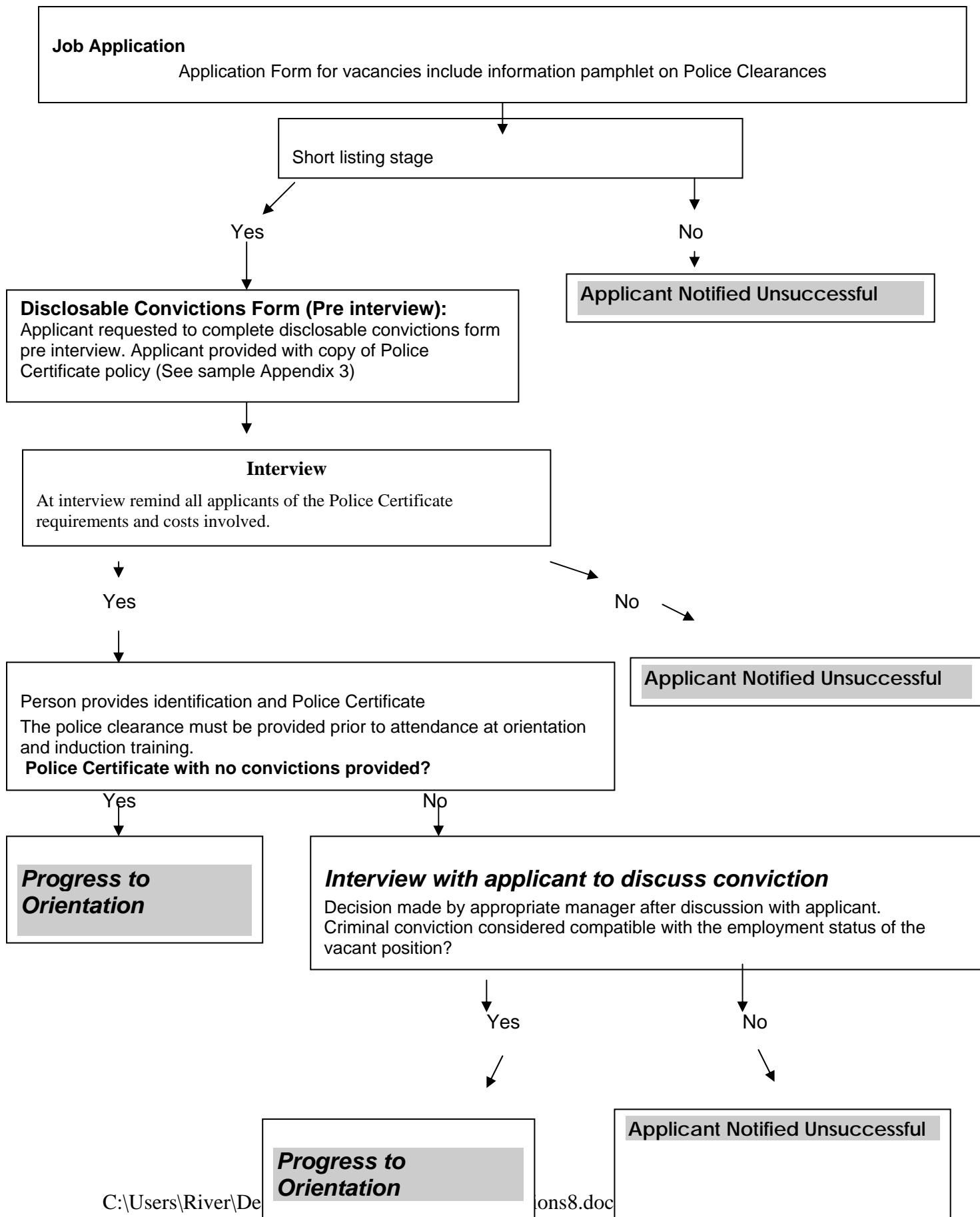
Spent Convictions Act (WA) 1988
Equal Opportunity Act (WA) 1984 as amended
Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986
Common law principles of confidentiality, duty of care and negligence
The Freedom of Information Act 1992
The Library Board of Western Australian Act 1951
Privacy Act 1988 (Federal)
Industrial Relations Acts (State and Federal)

Review of the policy

Community Vision retains the right to review the policy and amend accordingly if the legislative, policy or funding environment is such that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form.

APPENDIX 1

Process for managing Police Certificates for potential employees



Sample information sheet for prospective employees

Why do I need to provide a Police Certificate?

Community Vision provides services to Children, the aged and people with disabilities. Our clients are highly vulnerable to neglect and abuse. This vulnerability has been acknowledged and responded to by our funding bodies and linked to the Standards that underpin service delivery to our clients. Standards such as Standard 8 of the Disability Services Commission require us to obtain Police Certificates and regularly update them for all staff, Board Members, volunteers and contractors. To this end Community Vision requires all recommended applicants for positions, existing staff, volunteers, contractors and board members to undergo a comprehensive criminal records check on a three yearly bases.

When do I need to get a Police Certificate?

Potential employees do not need to get a Police Certificate until they have been offered a position (after an interview) on the condition that a satisfactory Police Certificate is obtained.

Who pays for my Police Certificate?

It is a condition of employment that you provide a satisfactory National Police Certificate prior to employment (and every three years during your employment). It is your responsibility to cover the cost of the National Police Certificate.

How much does a Police Certificate cost?

Applications for National Police Certificates attract a fee of \$42.00 (July 05).

What type of Police Certificate do I need?

National Police Certificate is to be obtained (and updated every three years).

How do I get a Police Certificate?

You must apply in person at your local police station and provide suitable identification.

What information is on a National Police Certificate?

A National Police Certificate lists your disclosable criminal history, recorded in any Australian police jurisdiction.

What if I refuse to provide a National Police Certificate?

If a person refuses to provide a Police Certificate following proper explanation and reassurance, he/she is precluded from appointment.

Previous criminal conviction or pending charges will not necessarily preclude appointment or involvement in the provision of services.

Community Vision reserves the right to judge an individual's suitability for employment based on the relevance of any conviction to the job in question. Where a criminal check reveals a conviction or convictions which would make an individual undesirable as an employee, in the opinion of the organisation, that person will not be eligible for employment. The decision not to appoint a person on the basis of their criminal record is delegated to the Executive Director.

What if I have a conviction?

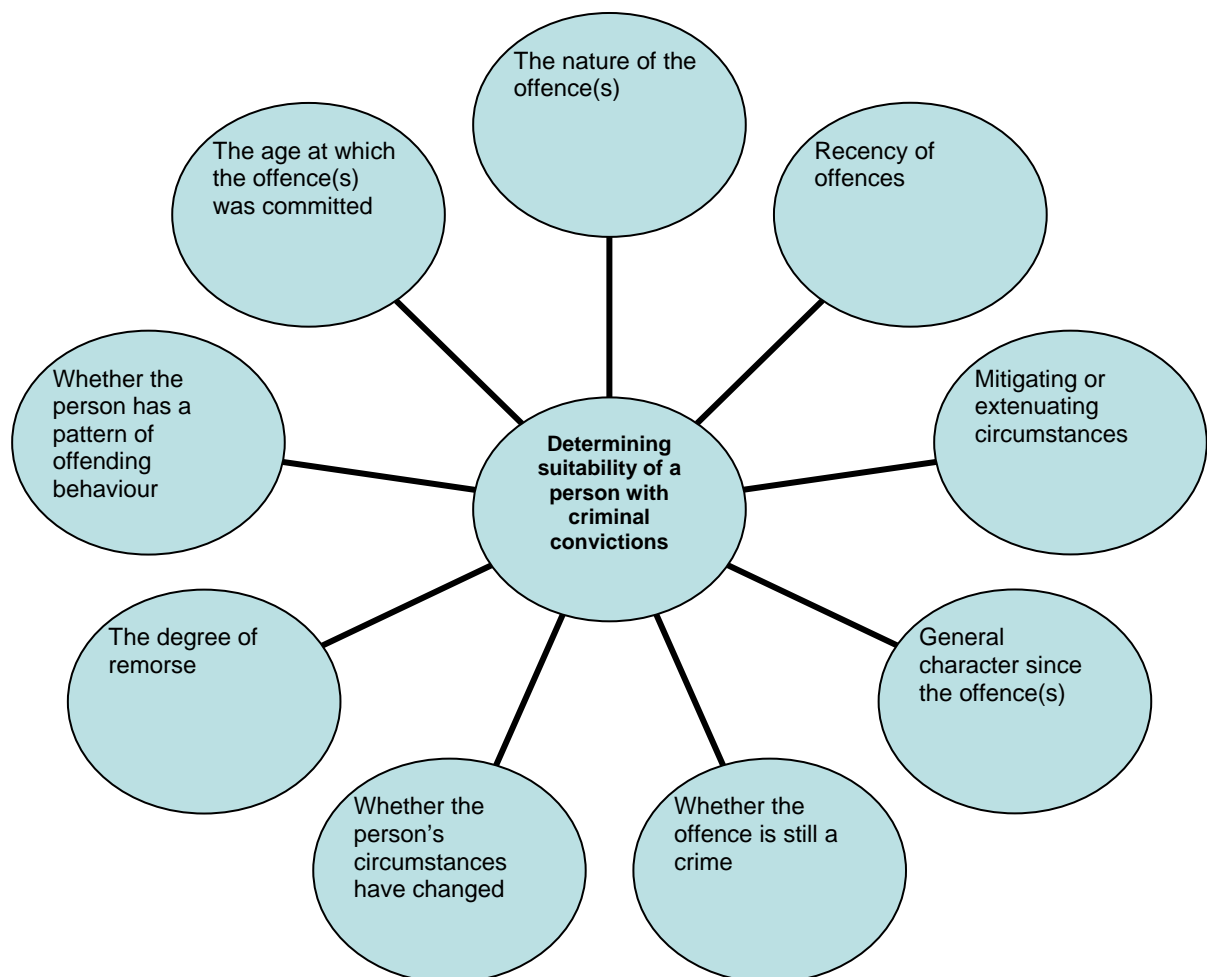
You will be contacted to arrange a meeting to discuss in a personal interview (unless you specifically requests some other form of communication such as telephone discussion). At the meeting, the full details of the record will be read to you.

You will be given adequate opportunity to discuss the record in order to:

- verify that it relates to you;
- check it for accuracy; and
- Provide details in writing within five working days of any relevant matters that you wish considered in relation to the matter.

If Community Vision decides not to employ/appoint you because of a criminal conviction, you will be informed of the reason for the decision, as well as the fact that you can request a review of the decision by the CEO. Any such request must be made in writing, **within seven working** days of being informed of the decision.

Diagram1: Factors considered in determining suitability of a person with criminal convictions.



What if I have Spent Convictions?

Community Vision, because it supports vulnerable people, has exemption from spent convictions. Therefore all Police Certificates obtained that are issued by the Offender Information Bureau will be further screened by emailing the Offender Information Bureau stating the organisation's name and exemption and seeking any reportable spent convictions.

What if I have charges/ appeals pending?

Where there are pending charges, and a date has been fixed for hearing, or where convictions have appeals pending, it may be possible to employ/appoint you on a temporary basis, subject to the nature of the position and the nature of the charge, or else defer the decision regarding appointment pending the resolution of the outstanding matter by the Court. Where a charge is pending against you, for an offence that would result in you being refused employment or appointment if convicted then, wherever possible, the offer will be deferred until the charge is heard.

Is the information I provide kept securely?

Yes, the information you provide is only available to authorised persons who have signed a confidentiality agreement. Information is kept in a locked filing cabinet only accessible to authorised personnel.

What identification do I need to show at the interview?

Identification to the value of 100 points must be produced prior to commencing employment. Where you have changed your name (i.e. through marriage or deed poll) evidence must be produced to support this.

Types of identification required

Birth Certificate (original, certified copy or extract) Current Passport/international travel document Citizenship certificate (original or certified copy) <i>Use only one of the above</i>	70
Drivers license/permit Public Service ID card Social Security benefits card Tertiary student ID card <i>Use only one of the above.</i>	40
A signed written reference from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a financial body• an acceptable referee <i>The reference must confirm a twelve month association with the recommended applicant.</i> <i>Use only one of the above.</i>	40
Medicare Card	25
Membership Card (Union or trade/professional bodies)	25
Recent arrival in Australia (less than six weeks) (passport (resident)	100
Isolated area aboriginal person A written statement of confirmation of identification signed by two acceptable referees.	100

Source: Health Department of Western Australia Criminal Record Screening Policy, flowchart and guideline

Who do I contact to find out more?

Manager Community Aged Care

93018274

Manager Children and Family Services

93018202

POLICY: CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Policy Number; 35
Date Approved: 4th February, 2003
Updated: 2nd October, 2006
Review Date: 2 October, 2007

PURPOSE: It is the intention of this policy to reflect the importance of staff and clients by acknowledging the potential for critical incidents within this workplace and the need for procedures to ensure adequate support for the staff, carers and clients of CVI following any such critical incident. The procedures outlined will ensure adequate support for the staff and clients of CVI following any critical incident.

PHILOSOPHY: The staff and Carers of CVI are valued members of this organization and are recognised for their central role and crucial importance in providing the quality, caring services to the clients of the organization.

In line with contemporary societal awareness, CVI is concerned with the potential for psychological impact following any workplace critical incident. It is therefore the aim to insure that a professional support system is implemented to address the psychological and other needs of the staff, Carers and clients following any such incident.

POLICY: To ensure that there is in place a Critical Incident and After Hours Support Response Management Strategy that is structured in a way to ensure staff and Carers are supported and prepared to handle CI's and emergencies and able to support our clients in either event.

This Critical Incident and After Hours Support Response Management Strategy must cover the organisational

preparation for such incidents, cover the time of any incident and continue for some time after the incident through debriefing and reviewing and taking action as appropriate.

1. Principles on which this Policy and Procedures are founded.

- 1.1 The successful achievement of the objectives of the CVI services is dependent upon the knowledge, experience and skills, as well as the emotional and physical health of the staff.
- 1.2 CVI has a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of its staff, Carers as well as its clients and volunteers, and to minimise the negative impact of the work environment on staff's wellbeing.
- 1.3 It is essential that the work environment culture is one that recognises, openly discusses and gives validity to the occurrence of stress reactions following CIs. The development of this culture is the responsibility of all staff.
- 1.4 It is important that each discreet CI is assessed, responded to and managed for its own individual impact on the clients, staff and the organization.
- 1.5 All individuals within the organization have a responsibility to minimise the potential for CIs wherever possible.
- 1.6 At the time of any CI, all staff have an important role to fulfil, with the on-call support staff and managers having particular roles and responsibilities as outlined in this policy document.
- 1.7 Following any CI, an investigation will be conducted by CVI in addition to any external investigation that may be conducted. This investigation will aim to establish a clear understanding of the context of the incident as well as the details of the event.

1.8 Due to the unique situation in some work environments within some programmes, the organization, sections and programme management need to be particularly mindful of the individual's needs for privacy, security and support.

2. Principles in implementing this Policy and Procedures.

2.1 Any member of staff / Carer involved in an accident will be given the opportunity to report their experience to the section manager in a respectful environment in which they feel listened to.

2.2 All staff / Carers involved in work related CIs have the right to access appropriate psychological and emotional support and the EAP (Employee Assistance Program) Provider. Such support should be made readily available from the time of the incident, during any convalescent period and if relevant when the staff member recommences work, whether or not he or she is on a specific rehabilitation programme.

2.3 Prompt debriefing for all staff/ Carers involved in a CI is part of contemporary workplace practice in trauma management, and attendance by all staff/ Carers involved in the CI is expected. The extent to which each person actively participates and utilises the debriefing procedures is, of course, within the individual's control.

2.4 The needs of any individual employee/ Carer for follow-up support and / or counselling should be facilitated, and referral of employees/ Carers for more formalised and perhaps ongoing support might on occasions be necessary.

2.5 Should the CI require Police involvement, then any staff member/ Carer to be interviewed by the Police can be accompanied by another colleague of their choosing.

- 2.6 Where the programme requirements have other immediate family members involved with the employee/ Carer then psychological support will be genuinely offered to those individuals following an incident.

DEFINITIONS: In general terms, a **Critical Incident** is defined as a traumatic event which does or is likely to cause extreme physical and/or emotional distress to Staff, clients and / or their Carers or the other service users and may be regarded as outside the normal range of experience of the people affected.

Certain situations by their nature may be defined as traumatic, for example, being the victim of an assault of physical or verbal threats, being the victim of verbal harassment and bullying, being a witness to clients being threatened or injuring themselves. Examples of CI do vary between programmes.

It is important however, to note that what may be a CI for one individual may not be a CI for another. Therefore, a CI incident can also be defined by the response of an individual to a situation which he or she experiences as traumatic.

A critical incident should be regarded as any incident, which may put the staff, clients and / or their Carers at risk.

The **After Hours Support Service** is provided by Community Vision outside the core business hours of Monday to Friday 08.30 hrs to 17.00 hrs to support staff, Carers and clients involved in critical incidents.

CI Response Management:

is a structured way of using staff and outside professionals to provide defusing and debriefing for those employees/ Carers directly affected by their exposure to a CI as well as ensuring that the technical aspects of the incident are

managed and controlled. Appropriate management of any incident begins with the organisational preparation for such incidents, covers the time of the actual incident and continues for sometime after the incident dependent on the nature and complexities.

Defusing:

is the unstructured, informal, usually one-on-one practical and psychological support that is made available to individuals immediately following an incident and generally at the site of the incident or on campus. Defusing allows the staff member to talk or just be kept company and is accompanied by practical supportive actions (e.g. phoning family, seeing to immediate needs, arranging relief, and providing transport home). Defusing can be provided by a counsellor, peer, other staff members, Carer, colleagues, family members or a manager as required.

Psychological debriefing:

is a more formal counselling session, usually conducted in a group which allows employees to discuss their experiences in a supportive, caring and informative environment. Debriefing is to be conducted within a day or two of the CI and is to be conducted by an experienced facilitator.

In this way, employees are assisted to:

- Understand their reactions to the CI;
- Receive information about CI stress and normal response patterns;
- Reduce their feelings of isolation;
- Begin the process of recovery and facilitate the return to work or to normal work performance;
- Identify for themselves if they require more intensive, individual counselling.

Technical debriefings:

are structured group meetings that focus on the actual details of the incident and the organisational response to it, rather than the individual's psychological reaction to the experience. The aim of the technical debrief is to ensure that any learning which can occur as a result of the incident,

and changes which need to be implemented, are identified. There may be more than one technical debriefing over the length of the incident, dependent on the nature and implications of the event. Outside agencies may be invited where they play an important role in the incident.

In most circumstances, Section Managers will be in a position to conduct the technical debriefing. Notes would be taken during this meeting to ensure that issues and ideas are recorded and that appropriate action can follow.

Critical Incidents may include:

- Fires
- Major break-ins
- Major accidents including vehicle accident (Primary Carer or Client)
- Death (Primary Client or Carer)
- Suicide (Attempted Suicide –Client or Primary Carer)
- Actual or suspected physical, sexual or verbal abuse of staff or clients
- Accusations of illegal drugs in the Service
- Vandalism of premises
- Critical illness of Carer or Users
- Criminal activity of Carer or Users
- Unfavourable community or media attention focusing on Carers or Service Users
- Natural disaster
- Injury resulting from excursion / conference / home visits, etc
- Serious threat to Staff/Carers, Carer, clients or facilities
- Allegations of assault against Staff/Carers
- Hold up or attempted robbery
- Custodial apprehension of a child.

After Hours Support may include:

- Any of the critical incidents listed above.

PROCEDURES: 1. Underlying Rationale

1.1 The staff and Carers of CVI are valued members of this organization and are recognised for their central role and crucial importance in providing the quality caring services to the clients of the organization.

- 1.2 In line with contemporary societal awareness, CVI is concerned with the potential for psychological impact following any workplace CI. It is therefore the aim to ensure that a professional support system is implemented to address the psychological and other needs of both the clients and the staff following any such incident.

Critical Incident & After Hours Support Procedure for Staff & Carers

1. *A staff member will be rostered on call on a weekly basis and will be responsible for responding to after hours support issues.*
2. The on call staff member is required to comply with all the usual conditions of employment and is paid in accordance with the variation to contract agreement in place between CVI and the individual.
3. The Staff member will need to be a Level E or above employee according to CVI's Certified Agreement.
4. The staff member on call will ensure that they have on hand:
 - The on call phone and charger
 - The Resource folder containing:
 - a) Staff contact details & staff emergency contact details
 - b) Contact details of contracted providers including Family Day Care Carers
 - c) Contact details for community based support agencies
 - d) Roster of on call personnel (sign on/sign off)
 - e) Critical Incidents and After Hours Support Policy
 - f) Hazard/Incident Report
 - g) Accident Report.
5. All phone calls must be responded to and followed up appropriately with client, staff member and or Manager.
6. Contact appropriate community support agency as required.
7. Complete all relevant documentation including case noting.
8. Section manager will follow up as required to ensure resolution of issue.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

At the time of any CI it may be appropriate for the Manager to delegate a number of roles relevant to the good management of the incident, including but not limited to the Manager of the incident and an Advocate for the other party.

Role of staff member experiencing a Critical Incident

If you are involved in a CI the responsibilities of each individual staff member are:

- Ensure the safety of all concerned.
- Contact appropriate Support services, if required Inform Community Vision's After Hours Support On Call Person.
- Notify the police, if required.
- Contact client's primary Carer.
- Document the incident as soon as possible using relevant Community Vision Form and in client progress notes.
- Notify the section manager and or supervisor on the next business day.
- Request further individual support as you require it.
- Attend the defusing and debriefing sessions as available.
- Co-operate with all internal and external investigations and evaluations of the incident.

Role of Colleagues

When you are not directly involved in the incident:

- Pull together and do what is necessary to share tasks on a practical level.
- Be prepared to cross role boundaries in order that the needs of the clients and staff involved are met.
- Be aware of the implications when required to cross role boundaries.
- Be available to listen to each other.
- Offer support.

- Actively check out how others are feeling and listen to them.
- Be mindful not to seek information for the sake of satisfying one's own curiosity.

Role of After Hours Support Back-Up Team

Following a call from a member of staff experiencing a CI:

- Assess the individual staff member's immediate needs.
- In consultation with the staff assess the situation, determine the needs of the clients.
- Prioritise the needs of the clients, and if necessary, call for another professional to support the staff.
- Attendance for support when requested or when assessed as appropriate to circumstances.
- Take control to assist wherever possible.
- Inform the Manager of details of the CI as soon as is practicable.
- Provide counselling and support.
- Support the staff to do their job.
- Following the incident, be proactive by checking on staff and clients.

Responsibilities of the Back-Up Team

- To ensure that you are contactable as much as is practicable.
- To be kept informed of the current incident and needs of clients.
- To be available to talk and / or to attend or otherwise respond when called.
- To be genuinely prepared to attend the scene or arrange for another member of the response team to attend the scene.
- Provide appropriate and professional advice and assistance to other staff/ Carers involved to assess adequately the needs of staff/ Carers and clients and to ensure that staff/ Carers are attended to as necessary by the EAP Provider or other appropriate professional.

Role of the Manager and Chief Executive Officer

The role of the Manager and the Chief Executive Officer is to manage all the components of the CI scene and to instil a sense of control. This includes working with the staff/ Carer, on call staff or the EAP Provider to determine the:

- Client needs and the needs of families where appropriate.
- Staff/ Carer needs at the time of the CI and in the ongoing process of recovery and return to work or prior level of performance.
- Organisational needs, including the need for work to continue, and managing organisational boundaries.
- Ensure the availability of staff/ Carer, a suitable environment and resources for the psychological debrief.
- Manage media attention and response.
- Ensure correct information is passed back to the rest of the organization.

Responsibilities of the Manager and Chief Executive Officer

The primary responsibilities are to:

- Ensure that the needs of the clients, staff, Carers and the organization are assessed and responded to.
- Inform any relevant Departments and the Police as required.
- Enable appropriate defusing and debriefing for staff / Carer involved.
- Keep everyone informed.
- Be interested in what's going on.
- Instill a sense of control and certainty that assists to "hold" everyone together.
- Respond to staff's / Carer's request for support.
- Acknowledge the experience and impact for staff/ Carer.
- Acknowledge the work of staff/ Carer.
- Conduct an investigation into the incident allowing staff/ Carer primarily involved appropriate input, identify corrective action and implement in a timely and effective manner.
- If additional resources are required, discuss any recommendations with the Chief Executive Officer and receive appropriate authorisation prior to proceeding.

Role of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Provider

Having a contract with an external EAP provider means that the following expectations of involvement and assistance can be met:

- Available when called.
- To provide back-up support to the professional on call team.
- Able to offer support to all staff / Carers involved.
- Able to respond on short notice - within 1 – 2 hours of a call.
- Facilitation of a group debriefing as necessary.
- Provide ongoing advice and support to managers.
- Provide ongoing counselling to individuals as required.

Strategies for Minimising the Potential for CIs and their Impact

1. Staff / Carer Training and Awareness

During induction into each section / programme, all staff/ Carers will be given a copy of this policy and procedures document and expected to read it. All existing staff/ Carers will similarly be given a copy and are expected to be familiar with its content.

Staff / Carer training related to performance with the job required will be arranged on a regular basis for all staff / Carers dealing directly with clients in any role. Such training will include dealing with violent or aggressive behaviour and CI stress awareness.

2. Relief Staff/ Carers

As there are many circumstances which require the employment of relief staff, it is desirable to have a number of reliefs trained and available. The role of each relief will be clearly defined at the time of starting the relief period.

Where a CI is ongoing or involves the removal of a staff member from the situation, then it may be

necessary to utilise also existing support staff to cover shifts.

Family Day Care Carers who use relief Carers will be required to fully inform their relief Carers of these procedures.

3. Staff/ Carer Recognition

To avoid the compounding psychological damage which can be experienced by staff/ Carers who feel unrecognised during such incidents, all staff / Carers involved in a CI or in the response to an incident will be acknowledged by their manager and senior management.

This acknowledgement may take several forms, where the aim is to communicate directly to staff/ Carers an understanding and appreciation of the impact of the incident upon them and their role and contribution during the response.

Where employees are concerned, it is an expectation that staff will be paid for the extra hours worked during such a response time, either by direct payment of hours or via commensurate time off in lieu.

4. Communication within Programmes/Sections

At the time of any incident that is likely to cause unrest and rumour, the Manager will ensure that an appropriate level of information is made available to all staff within the section and / or programme. This will not necessarily include all details of the incident, but rather that the incident has occurred, the process as it will then happen and the status for the staff members/ Carers involved. Such information will be given verbally or in writing and will be updated as often as new information arises.

All staff are required to respect the sensitive nature of such information and to protect the confidentiality of the situation as appropriate.

5. Communication with other agencies and organizations

It is primarily the responsibility of management to communicate with other agencies and the Government Departments and Police and to ensure that all relevant information concerning the incident and the role of the section/programme staff/ Carers is communicated effectively to the relevant bodies. It is also the responsibility of management to ensure that staff/ Carers of these sections/programmes are provided with the opportunity to a fair and reasonable hearing in relation to their part in the incident.

Once information is obtained from any relevant other organization, it is the responsibility of management to decide on the most appropriate level of information to be passed on to all staff / Carers and to arrange for such communication as soon as possible. Certain details may of course remain confidential to only management or only those staff / Carers most directly involved in the incident or allegations.

Closure of CI

Once the objectives of the CI Management Response Strategy has been completed, the Chief Executive Officer and Manager will then implement a Review process of the incident. This will look at the manner in which the Management Response Strategy was implemented and will make any necessary changes to the process or to the Policies and Procedures of the affected Programme or organisation as required to reduce the likelihood of any further CIs of a similar nature occurring.

MEDICATION

Policy: Participants will be supported with medication needs in a safe and informed manner.

Procedures:

- I. Medication will only be administered by staff who are trained in Certificate III or above in Disability Services
- II. Volunteers may not administer or prompt clients to take medication
- III. Prior to administering medication, staff will ensure that the client or their authorized guardian has completed and signed a prescribed or non-prescribed medication authority form specifying the day on which the medication is to be administered.
- IV. The staff member will ensure that medication is out of the reach of children and that the medication is stored as per storage requirements stated on the label.
- V. Medication would only be given if it were :
 - a. Presented in its original dispensing container with the original dispensing label,
 - b. Stored in a blister pack,
 - c. Presented in dosette boxes or containers with original labels (not from envelopes with handwritten instructions).
- VI. All medication to be administered must state:
 - a. The name of the medication.
 - b. The dosage, frequency of administration.
 - c. The way it is to be administered.
 - d. Date of dispensing and or the expiry date.

- VII. All medication to be administered must be accompanied by the appropriate administration apparatus stating the dosage measurements.
- VIII. Before the medication is administered or prompted, the staff member will verify the correct dosage specified on the dispensing label and the authorization note.
- IX. After giving the medication, the staff member will complete the following details on the medication authority form:
 - a. Date medication was administered
 - b. Time medication was administered
 - c. Dosage of medication administered
 - d. Name of medication given
 - e. Staff members name and signature
- X. If the client refuses the medication, the staff member must inform the person who authorized for the medication to be administered.
- XI. Medication would not be force-fed to clients or mixed into drinks /food unless stated as part of the administering process on the dispensing label, or by the prescribing doctor or certified alternative health practitioner.