



Victim Support ACT

Standard Operating Procedure - Exceptional Cases

Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the processes used by Victim Support ACT (VS ACT) to review and determine approval of requests for additional client contact hours on completion of Level 3 service. The *Victims of Crime Regulations 2000* contains a mechanism which can be used in exceptional cases so that victims who are about to achieve their rehabilitation goals when their level 3 hours finish can receive the additional services required to achieve the goals. This mechanism recognises that in such cases it makes sense to spend a little more time and money to achieve the rehabilitation goals rather than leaving the victim just short of reaching those goals. Under the mechanism, the Case Manager can recommend that additional contact hours be provided if;

- It is considered that the client will derive substantial therapeutic benefit from these hours, and
- Services cannot be provided other than through the Victims Services Scheme.

The Victims of Crime Commissioner or delegate must consider the recommendation made by the Case Manager for these additional hours and make a decision to carry out the recommendation, or a variation of it.

Scope

This SOP applies to all Victim Support ACT Case Managers and clients of the Victims Services Scheme and Panel Service Providers when additional contact hours known as, exceptional cases, are requested upon conclusion of Level 3 hours.

Background

1. Exceptional Cases approval may respond to certain circumstances affecting an existing client including:
 - Extent and complexity of harm suffered;
 - Further instances of trauma/victimisation;
 - Court proceedings;
 - Unexpected personal circumstances; and/or
 - Problems with client engaging in initial contact.
2. Exceptional Cases should usually be seen as providing a process of transition that:
 - Reinforces the client's personal strengths;
 - Reinforces the client's personal and social networks;
 - Strengthens their attachment to the community;
 - Has a specific and substantial therapeutic purpose;
 - Assists for a particular set of time-limited circumstances; and/or
 - Will effectively conclude intervention with the client.

Procedure

1. If the Panel Service Provider or client requests additional hours under Exceptional Cases, a specific written report prepared by the Panel Service Provider detailing the rationale for the request **MUST** be sent to the Case Manager. The Panel Service Provider should use Form F011 *Request for Additional Circumstances Approval* (see Appendix A). On receipt of the request, the Panel Service Provider and the client shall be advised within **five working days** of the outcome.
2. The report should outline:
 - interventions to date;
 - provider's assessment of progress toward attainment of rehabilitation goals;
 - rationale as to how the additional hours would help to conclude therapeutic intervention with the client;
 - plans for case finalisation and referral to other agencies / services for ongoing support; and
 - any other relevant information requested.
3. The Case Manager will discuss the request with the Panel Service Provider and the client to clarify the request for additional hours. A transitional care plan will be developed, which is a review of the Recovery Care Plan, which has identified the client centred goals in Service Level 2 and Service Level 3. The transitional care plan will identify the specific goals and interventions to be used, to support further attainment of these goals in the additional hours requested. The transitional care plan, which in effect is also an exit plan, to outline how the client will be linked into other mainstream or specialist services as necessary at the conclusion of these additional hours.
5. The Case Manager is to make a written recommendation to the Team Leader, as the Commissioner's delegate that—
 - (a) on information available, further contact hours in addition to Level 3 service contact hours would give substantial therapeutic benefit to the victim; and
 - (b) it is impossible or impractical to provide the further contact hours under a scheme or program other than the victims services scheme.
6. Exceptional circumstances consist of no more than 6 contact hours.
7. The Case Manager shall consult with the VS ACT Team Leader regarding the application and the reasons for supporting the request and the Team Leader will, as the Commissioner's delegate, make a decision to carry out the recommendation, or a variation of it. The Team Leader will complete the form FO 12 *Approval of Exceptional Circumstances Services* (Appendix B) as a record of the decision making process.
8. Should the VS ACT Team Leader not approve the recommendation, a meeting with the Case Manager, Team Leader, Director and Victims of Crime Commissioner will be scheduled within **3 working days** to determine an outcome.
9. If the authorisation is approved, the Case Manager confirms approval of exceptional case service hours in writing to the client and service provider. The Panel Service Provider shall also be advised that no further contact hours will be approved at the conclusion of the additional hours..
10. **A Case Manager may also request additional hours under exceptional circumstances for in-house services. The procedure for approval is the same.**
11. When exceptional case hours have been approved, the Panel Service Provider should contact the Case Manager *immediately* if a client fails to attend an appointment so that contact can be made in a timely

manner to ascertain if there are any difficulties. As with other levels of service the “first did not attend” (DNA) under exceptional cases the appointment will be paid for at the missed appointment rate (i.e. ¾ hour)¹.

Client file closure²

1. Once a Closure Form is prepared or received, and providing there is no continuing justice advocacy involvement, the file will be closed.
2. The Case Manager will arrange a time to either meet with or contact the client to discuss the achievement of their recovery care plan goals and provide them with a survey to complete to provide an evaluation of the services received.
3. For clients who do not choose to meet with their Case Manager to discuss closure and there has been no contact after three months, a letter is sent to the client letting them know that their file is closed but will remain onsite for 2 years and that they may call Victim Support ACT again as needed. (NB if client has requested no correspondence, simply follow case closure procedure).
4. Case Manager stamps the client service audit sheet with file closed stamp, including date and initials.
5. After 2 years of no contact, files are archived off-site.

¹ As stipulated in the Approved Service Provider agreement

² As per Case Management SOP

Evaluation

Outcome Measures and Methods

- A register is maintained of all Exceptional Cases that have been recommended. The register will contain information regarding approval and those that have not been approved and the arbitration process which has occurred.
- File audits will be conducted biannually to:
 - Monitor and evaluate whether transitional care plans have been completed for those clients receiving exceptional case hours;
 - Monitor and track client closure meetings and the number of client surveys offered, and track the number of completed surveys; and
 - Monitor case closure processes.

Standards

Code of Ethics, Australian Association of Social Workers

Code of Ethics and Practice of the Association for Counsellors in Australia

Code of Ethics, Australian Psychological Society

Public Sector Management ACT

Public Sector Management Standards

Public Service Code of Conduct

Public Service Code of Ethics

Policies and Legislation

- Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act 1983
- Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act 2016
- Victims of Crime Act 1994
- Victims of Crime Regulations 2000

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Exceptional Cases	Further contact hours in addition to level 3 service contact hours may be applied for by the case coordinator, if on the information available, these hours would give substantial therapeutic benefit to the victim; and the further contact hours cannot be provided under a scheme or program other than the Victims Services Scheme. Up to 4 additional contact hours may be approved.
Care Plan	Documents the intervention negotiated with the client and states - (a) the rehabilitation goals for the eligible victim; and (b) the number of contact hours and particular services to be provided to the victim for achieving those goals. All services are provided in accordance with the Care Plan.

Case Manager	The Case Coordinators are responsible for managing the delivery of services to eligible victims under the Victims Services Scheme. The case coordinators develop a care plan in consultation with the eligible victim. In addition they assist clients with justice advocacy.
Closure Form	<p>Is submitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ at the conclusion of approved contact hours at either Level 2 or Level 3; or Exceptional Cases; or ▪ it has not been possible to make contact with the client for 6 months, and ▪ Must include particulars of the number of contact hours and the extent to which the rehabilitation goals of the care plan were achieved.
Contact hours	These are the hours allocated for each level of service provision through the Victims Services Scheme under the <i>Victims of Crime Regulations 2000</i>
Justice Advocacy	The primary focus of justice advocacy is to assist clients with their rights and entitlements in law and their engagements with justice in achieving these. Justice advocacy is not prescribed by Levels of Service as per the Victims of Crime Regulations. Justice advocacy may form part of a response to the client under the statutory functions of the Victims of Crime Commissioner.
Panel Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approved Panel Service Provider means a person approved as a Service Provider [under section 40 of the Victims of Crime Regulations 2000] by the Victims of Crime Commissioner who has the power to approve service providers. ▪ Contact hours for an eligible victim who lives in the ACT must be provided by the responsible service agency [VS ACT] or an approved service provider. <p>Contact hours for an eligible victim who lives outside the ACT may, with the written approval of the responsible service agency, be provided by a person that is not an approved Service Provider – known as an Authorised Exception Provider.</p>



Appendix A

Form F011 Request for Additional Circumstances Approval

REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES APPROVAL

[If insufficient space please attach additional pages in support of this request]

Client Name:

I) INTERVENTIONS TO DATE:

II) ISSUES IMPACTING ON ATTAINMENT/VARIATION OF AGREED GOALS:

iii) **NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL HOURS REQUESTED (up to a maximum of 6 hours):**

iv) **INTERVENTIONS PLANNED IF ADDITIONAL HOURS APPROVED:**

v) **PLANS FOR CASE FINALISTION AND/OR REFERRAL TO COMMUNITY AND/OR SPECIALIST AGENCIES:**

PROVIDER SIGNATURE: DATE: _____



APPENDIX B

APPROVAL OF EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE SERVICES

For clients of Victim Support ACT who are eligible under section 36 of the Victims of Crime Regulations 2000 for further Exceptional Case contact hours/services

Client Details	
Client UI:	
Date of Initial Contact:	Date of Receipt of EC Request:
Name of Provider:	
Case Manager	
CM Name:	
Completion of Level 3 Contact Hours/Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Substantial therapeutic Benefit	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Attachments	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of Minute to VS ACT Team Leader
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of Draft Transitional Care Plan
Case Manager to Sign	
I confirm that the client is eligible for Exceptional Case approval as per section 36 of the <i>Victims of Crime Regulations 2000</i> .	
Name:	
Phone:	Email:
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Not approved
Signed:	Dated:
Approving Officer (VS ACT Team Leader)	
Name:	
Phone:	Email:
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved

DRAFT

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