



12. **COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES**
12.1 **HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE**
12.1.16 **Basic Foot and Nail Care**

Background & Issues

It has been identified that a large proportion of the requirement for podiatry services in the HACC client population is for basic nail clipping and foot care.

Rather than for significant foot or nail conditions, many clients may require assistance because they are unable to perform these tasks themselves due to physical mobility and/ or visual problems. Elderly HACC clients are particularly likely to require assistance as mobility, manual dexterity and visual acuity decline with age.

The WA HACC Program has responded to these issues by supporting further research and consultation to inform a review of policy in this area. As a result of this review, the WA HACC Program has developed an alternative model for the provision of basic foot and nail care through Personal Care.

The Basic Foot and Nail Care Policy Framework and Guidelines applies to all Service Providers funded under the HACC Program that employ support workers who are involved in the provision of personal care and should be applied in conjunction with the Community Care Common Standards.

This service will target HACC clients who have no specific foot or nail conditions but are unable to perform this task themselves and do not have a carer that is able to.

All HACC funded Service Providers are required to have a written basic Foot and Nail Care Policy as part of their Personal Care Policy, which is available and explained to all staff, clients and other relevant people.

Objectives

HACC BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

Service Providers with support staff involved in the support and provision of basic foot and nail care as part of personal care must adopt the following beliefs and principles that have been endorsed by the WA HACC Program.

Beliefs:

- Frail aged people, people with disabilities and their carers have a right to remain living in the community for as long as possible;
- Clients should be encouraged to maintain their independence as long as possible.

In addition:

- Healthy feet and toenails are an important contributor to safe mobility and therefore, to client independence at home and within the community. For most people, maintaining healthy feet through regular nail clipping and basic foot care is a self-care task.

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- Support workers should be able to provide basic foot and nail care as part of personal care;
- Support workers should have access to training to ensure that they have appropriate skills and knowledge to provide basic foot and nail care as part of personal care.
- Specialised care is required when localised foot and nail pathologies exist or, alternatively, there are systemic conditions affecting the feet or placing the person at higher risk.

Principles:

- Each Service Provider must establish a written policy and procedures that outline the role of support workers in the provision of basic foot and nail care. This should include identifying factors whereby a client requires more than basic foot and nail care, ie client has diabetes or a nail condition.
- Clients with more complex foot and nail care needs have access or are referred to an appropriate health professional to provide support, as and when needed;
- Clients receive individual personal care assessment to ascertain their individual foot and nail care requirements and where appropriate this assessment be in conjunction with the client, family, doctor and other health professionals;
- Clients have a clear, individual support plan based on their assessed need;
- Support Workers have access to training that provides them with the necessary skills and knowledge to safely and confidently provide basic foot and nail care and be able to identify when specialised care is required. This should include pre requisite training eg Basic First Aid and manual handling and correct infection control procedures.
- There is an organisational commitment to ongoing assessment and monitoring of staff practices in relation to the provision of basic foot and nail care;
- Service Providers are committed to an initial and ongoing self-audit process to guide continuous improvement in the provision of basic foot and nail care are (continuous improvement).
- There are Identified referral pathways for higher risk clients to Podiatry services.

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- Service Providers will ensure they have possession of appropriate foot and nail care equipment.
- Service Providers will ensure they have access to appropriate sterilisation equipment.

Area of Application

Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care - Personal Care Services.

Policy Measures

- ❖ Before commencing basic foot and nail care training, a support worker must have a current certificate in basic or senior first aid.
- ❖ A support worker involved in basic foot and nail care will have basic foot and nail care training prior to assisting eligible clients with the support and provision of basic foot and nail care.

Note: A support worker must have achieved the Basic Foot and Nail Care competencies described under **Staff Training** below.

- ❖ The provisions of this service is based on the client having been assessed as needing basic foot and nail care requirements and no specific health or foot and nail conditions such as diabetes.
- ❖ During an assessment or review, the client will be asked by the assessment officer, how they manage their foot and nail care. If the client states that they are having difficulty maintaining their basic foot and nail care, further questions will be asked to establish if there are any specific health or foot and nail conditions. If there are none then an assessment of the clients' individual foot and nail care needs will be initiated and a detailed support plan written, stating their individual foot and nail requirements. The assessment will be in consultation with the client, family or carer and if necessary their doctor and other health professionals.
- ❖ If the assessment identifies specific health or foot and nail conditions such as diabetes or if there is any doubt at all regarding assisting a client with basic foot and nail care, the client, with their consent, will be referred to their doctor before commencing any assistance.
- ❖ Support workers must have necessary competency and skills to provide basic foot and nail care for clients. Competency of a support worker will be assessed by the manager, coordinator or assessment officer on completion of the initial basic foot and nail care training. A support worker will not be allowed to deliver basic foot and nail care to a client without supervision until they are deemed competent by the manager.

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- ❖ Support workers will be trained in the use of all equipment required to provide basic foot and nail care. A list of equipment required will be clearly documented in the client support plan.

Resources required consist of;

- Suitable chair for the support worker carrying out the foot and nail care
 - A chair and footstool for the client receiving the foot and nail care
 - Towel and bath mat
 - Bowl and water
 - Medi-wipes or baby wipes
 - Disposable gloves
 - Sorbolene cream
 - Cottonwool/ cottonwool buds
 - Nail Clippers
 - Disposable emery boards (various sizes)
 - Disposable towels
- ❖ Documentation will be kept in the HACC office that identifies when equipment has been cleaned/ sterilised
 - ❖ A client will not receive basic foot and nail care without a specific and current basic foot and nail care support plan. Refer to Shire of Manjimup HACC Policy 12.1.14 Client Support Plan.
 - ❖ Support workers and clients will have access to documentation that describes the correct procedures to provide basic foot and nail care in the support plan. These procedures will also be kept in the Shire of Manjimup HACC Policy and Procedure Manual.
 - ❖ A record of the date, time of service, length of service, basic foot and nail care given and the support workers name and signature will be documented in the client progress notes kept in the in house client support plan. This record will also be used to report on changes of foot conditions/health including any triggers for change. Any notes written must be brought to the attention of the manager or assessment officer.
 - ❖ A support worker is required to read all records written in the progress notes kept in the in house client support plan before commencement of basic foot and nail care.
 - ❖ If the support worker has any concerns they must clearly document these concerns in a case note which must then be dealt with by the manager.

In the event of an incident whilst assisting a client with basic foot and nail care the support worker should:

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1. Remain calm and acknowledge that an incident has occurred.
2. Identify the nature of the incident. For example, a cut to the skin, equipment required not available, or no in house client support plan.
3. Call your manager/coordinator to seek further advice.
4. Administer basic first aid if necessary.
5. Observe the client for changes in behaviour or well-being as a result of the incident and report these to your manager.
6. Record the incident in the client's progress notes.
7. Complete a **Foot and Nail Care Incident Report Form** and provide this report to your manager.
8. Reassure the client and do not leave the client until instructed to do so by your manager/coordinator.

In the event of an incident when assisting a client with basic foot and nail care the manager/coordinator should:

1. Remain calm and acknowledge that an incident has occurred.
2. Identify the nature of the incident.
3. Contact the general practitioner for information and instructions if necessary.
4. Follow the advice provided by the general practitioner (get this advice confirmed in writing as soon as possible after the event and include it as part of the medication incident report).
5. In accordance with the general practitioner centre instructions, instruct the support worker to observe the client for changes in behaviour or well being as a result of the incident and report these to the general practitioner as advised;
6. Instruct the support worker to call an ambulance if the client is in distress or showing signs of being unwell.
7. Advise the support worker when they can leave the client.
8. Assist the support worker to complete a Basic Foot and Nail Care Incident Report.

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9. Advise the client's carer or significant other of the incident.
10. Ring to check on the client later in the day/next day (if appropriate).
11. Carry out an investigation of the specific incident with emphasis on the process associated with the incident not on the people involved.
12. Develop an action plan to prevent re-occurrence of the incident and share the decided actions.

- ❖ Reference to infection control procedures
- ❖ Reference to relevant OSH procedures to all aspects of client support
- ❖ Service provider has a process in place to maintain appropriate communication with client/carer and family.

Staff Training

The Basic Foot and Nail Care Policy Framework and Guidelines is supported by a competency based training program and will assist HACC funded Service Providers to improve current practice. Competencies include:

- A written assessment and a practical assessment at the end of the training day.
- A second practical assessment within 6 weeks of the training in your workplace to complete competency.
- Ongoing workplace competency assessment will be required on an annual basis. This will involve a workplace observational assessment by a HACC Coordinator who has attended the foot and nail care training.

The training is available through CommunityWest Inc.

Administration

HACC Manager/ Coordinator/ Support Workers

Adoption and Date Due for Revision

**ADOPTED 20 October 2011
NEXT DUE FOR REVIEW October 2015**

The Administration of this Policy is by Community Services.