

HECIS: Client Records Policy

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| 9.7 | CLIENT RECORDS |
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| Applies to: Staff |
| Specific responsibility: Staff, HECIS Co-Ordinator, Office Manager |

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| Version: 2 |
| Date approved: 20.2.18 |
| Next review date: Aug 21 |

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| Policy context: This policy relates to | |
| Standards or other external requirements | |
| Legislation or other requirements | Federal Privacy Act 1988 Australian Privacy Principles |
| Contractual obligations | |

POLICY

HECIS is committed to collecting, keeping and disposing of client records in ways that protect privacy and ensure confidentiality is maintained. This policy will operate in conjunction with the organisation's Privacy Policy. The HECIS conforms to the *Federal Privacy Act (1988)* and *the Australian Privacy Principles* which govern the collection, use and storage of personal information.

Specifically, HECIS will:

- collect and keep information about clients only when it is relevant and necessary to the provision of the service.
- ensure data about each client is up to date, accurate and secure, whether stored in hard copy or electronically, in accordance with privacy legislation.
- take account of any relevant cultural or religious sensitivities of people using services in the way information about them is collected, stored and used.
- store clients' records for the required length of time.
- transfer or dispose of client records correctly.

When the organisation collects, keeps and uses identifiable data about a client, the following procedures will be implemented to guarantee the privacy of the client, ensure that records are appropriate, accurate and secure.

PROCEDURES

Collecting identifiable data

The organisation collects and records only information which is relevant to determining and meeting the needs of the child and family.

Statistical information required by funding bodies will retain the anonymity of the user and answering these questions is optional.

This information is collected for the purpose of:

- service monitoring, evaluation and reporting (identified information only is used for this purpose)
- meeting the reporting requirements of HECIS funding bodies.
- monitoring and management of service to individuals (case files)
- meeting legal requirements (where applicable).

The HECIS Co-ordinator will review the scope of information collected periodically to ensure that only relevant information is being recorded.

When information is being sought from clients, the staff member seeking the information will request the person's consent to provide the information and inform them of:

- the reason for requesting the information

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- how the information will be recorded and stored
- what other information will be recorded during the provision of service
- how their privacy will be protected
- their rights to view or access information about them.

The staff member will ask the client if they have any concerns or specific requests about the way their personal information will be recorded or managed.

If identifiable information about a client will be shared with another agency, the staff member will obtain the client's consent for this (if not previously provided as part of the referral process) and record the date of the verbal consent on the child's file/obtain the client's signature on a consent form.

Storage and use of identifiable data

Information collected about individual clients is stored in the following ways:
in hard copy files and electronic forms and kept secure in locked filing cabinets within the locked HECIS offices to ensure privacy is protected.

All HECIS staff are authorised to access children/family files. The HECIS Co-ordinator and Office Manager are authorised to access staff files. Confidential 'closed meeting' files are to be accessed by the HECIS Co-ordinator (where appropriate) and the Committee members only.

Clients may request access to their files upon request. Access by a client to their file requires the authorisation of The HECIS Co-Ordinator, and will be arranged once approved. A request for access by a client must be considered and dealt with within (1) month.

Maintaining and verifying client records

HECIS Staff are responsible for reviewing and updating client records on a continual basis.

A file will be created for each client following a HECIS assessment and will contain:

- original copies of referrals, HECIS reports, other services reports and diagnosis etc.

In recording personal information about clients, all HECIS Staff will ensure that:

- ensure file note protocols are used to ensure objectivity, prevent inappropriate comment and verify information with clients.

Record disposal

Client records are kept for (5) five years from the last point of service provision/leaving service. Records of clients who have left the service are disposed of with a shredder.

DOCUMENTATION

| Documents related to this policy | | |
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| Related policies | | |
| Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents | | |
| Reviewing and approving this policy | | |
| Frequency | Person responsible | Approval |
| Annually | HECIS Co-Ordinator | HECIS Management Committee |

| Policy review and version tracking | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Review | Date Approved | Approved by | Next Review Due |
| 1 | 19.8.15 | HECIS Co-Ordinator | Aug 2016 |
| 2 | 4.8.16 | HECIS CoOrdinator | Aug 2017 |
| 3 | 15.8.17 | HECIS CoOrdinator | Aug 2018 |
| 4 | 6.9.18 | HECIS CoOrdinator | Aug 2019 |
| 5 | 17.9.19 | HECIS CoOrdinator | Aug 2020 |

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| 6 | 15.9.20 | HECIS CoOrdinator | Aug 2021 |
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