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 Donations over \$2 Tax Deductible

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CANCELLATIONS, FEE CHARGING AND FEE COLLECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Applies to: All Clients, Staff members, Management Committee Members, Volunteers and Students.	Version: 4
Specific responsibility: Manager and Management Committee.	Next review date: July 2025

Policy context: This policy relates to	
Legislation or other requirements	National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 National Disability Insurance Scheme Guidelines (Quality Indicators) 2018 NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits NDIS Support Catalogue NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework, 2016 NDIS Code of Conduct for Workers 2018 The Privacy Act 1988 Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 Information Privacy Act 2000 Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 Associations Incorporation Act 2009 Associations Incorporation Regulation 2016
Contractual obligations	NDIS Service Agreements and Schedules of Supports NDIS Service Registered Service Provider obligations



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POLICY STATEMENT

Early Connections - Port Macquarie/Hastings (EC-PMH) is committed to:

1. Informing clients of their obligations and rights in relation to cancellations of appointments.
2. The effective management of staffing resources and the organisation's financial sustainability.
3. Ensuring fee charging procedures are carefully considered and communicated in order to manage this process.

There are three types of cancellations referred to in this policy:

1. Cancellations by centre
2. Cancellations by family
3. No shows / late notice cancellations

To ensure the financial sustainability of EC-PMH, fees need to be collected from client families when supports are delivered. If a family develops a pattern of cancellations or no-shows, this may place EC-PMH in a position where we are no longer able to offer supports.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) through their annual Price Guides provide guidelines for the charging of cancellation fees. These guidelines will be followed by EC-PMH at all times. These guidelines are periodically changed and updated and EC-PMH will make the necessary changes to their billing of cancellation procedures accordingly. There is provision in the *NDIS Price Guide* for charging when participants make short-notice cancellations or are a no-show for scheduled appointments.

The NDIA have advised that providers can charge cancellation fees directly to participants, provided the arrangement is detailed in the Service User Agreement between the participant and provider.

EC-PMH requires a signed Service User Agreement and Schedule of Supports before services can commence.

SCOPE

This policy applies to fees for services / supports provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

- Fees and charges are set out in the Service User Agreement between EC-PMH and the client family.
- EC-PMH publishes a schedule of fees (Schedule of Supports document) for services in line with the prices which can be claimed under NDIS.
- EC-PMH will seek payment for supports and services in accordance with the relevant source indicated in the Early Connections – Port Macquarie/Hastings Service User Agreement with each client family, that is, NDIA, Plan Manager, or the individual where they are self-managing their NDIS plan.



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- EC-PMH may implement changes to fees, or increases to fees as set by the NDIA, as they occur throughout the year. EC-PMH will always refer to the relevant and current price published by the NDIA.

All client families will be notified in advance via email of any pending fee increases.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits 2022-23 (March 2023) Pricing arrangements | NDIS states:

Short Notice Cancellations

Where a provider has a Short Notice Cancellation (or no show), they are able to claim 100% of the agreed fee associated with the activity from the participant's plan, subject to the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits and the terms of the service agreement with the participant. A cancellation is a short notice cancellation if the participant:

- *Does not show up for a scheduled support within a reasonable time, or is not present at the agreed place and within a reasonable time when the provider is travelling to deliver the support; or*
- *Has given less than seven (7) clear days' notice for a support.*

FEES FOR TRAVEL TO PROVIDE THERAPY SUPPORTS

The NDIA, through their Price Guide, provide guidelines for the charging of travel when providing therapy supports outside the EC-PMH offices.

These guidelines are periodically changed and updated and EC-PMH will make the necessary changes to their billing of cancellation procedures accordingly. The NDIA have advised that providers can charge travel fees directly to participants, provided the arrangement is detailed in the Service User Agreement between the participant and provider.

PROCEDURES

On intake to the service, a Service User Agreement is negotiated and signed by both parties outlining the roles and responsibilities of the service provider and participant (or participant representative). This includes the following statement in regard to cancellations of appointments:

CHANGES TO SUPPORTS/FAIL TO ATTEND/CANCELLATIONS

In the event that either Party needs to make alterations to agreed supports or the manner in which supports are delivered, the party requesting the change needs to give appropriate notice:



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- For minor support changes such as a change to location for appointment, the participant must notify the service prior to 9am the business day before the appointment.
- For major changes such as changes to agreed day/time or service delivery, please contact Early Connections staff to discuss.
- Where participants fail to present or when they cancel an appointment on the day of the appointment, Early Connections can charge a cancellation fee of 100% of the service – (as per NDIS Price Guide July 2023)

CANCELLATION CHARGES

Cancel notification received	Rate charged	Notification/ appointment reminder schedule
After 9am the working day prior to the appointment	100% of appointment charge	EC-PMH will send SMS reminder, email or phone call around midday two business days before the appointment. Client to contact EC-PMH via SMS, email or phone call by 9am the working day before the appointment to cancel appointment. Otherwise appointment will be charged at the full amount.
*Business days = Monday to Friday		

Should changes to supports become frequent, either or both parties may request a review of the Service User Agreement, with any changes being in writing, signed and dated by both parties. Consistent and unreasonable frequency to cancellations or changes to supports may result in the suspension of supports – see below.



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Confirmation of appointments is recommended or notifying us of inability to attend can be done by:

- a) Responding Yes or No to SMS reminders (scheduled and sent approx. midday two days before the appointment). Note – a 'No' response must be provided prior to 9am the day before appointment to avoid a cancellation charge. If a 'No' response is received, please expect a call from our administration staff to offer alternative service or reschedule the appointment.
- b) The Early Connections-Port Macquarie/Hastings administration staff between the hours of 8.30am and 5.00pm.
Email: reception@earlyconnections-pmh.org.au
Ph: (02) 6583 8238

Should the Early Connections – Port Macquarie/Hastings staff member be unable to attend the session due to unforeseen circumstances, and all alternative options have been exhausted, they will notify the participant. A minimum of 1 hour notice prior to appointment will be given via text or phone call. No claim against the Participant's Plan will be made under such circumstances and all reasonable attempts to reschedule any cancelled appointments will be made by administration staff.

It is the responsibility of the client representative (parent/carer) to notify EC-PMH staff if the child is unable to attend an appointment. This is applicable for ALL appointment types:

1. Home visits
2. Child Care/School visits
3. Early Connections centre sessions
4. Community visits
5. Scheduled meetings

A record of all cancellations will be made by staff in the child's CRM file (Echidna).

EC-PMH management will use their discretion in determining whether cancelled/fail to attend appointments will or will not be charged for. For example, in extenuating circumstances or where no previous failure to attend has occurred for the client, it may be determined that this fee should be waived. If travel fees are included in the appointment (e.g. staff member travels to school for appointment, but the child is not present at school) the travel will be charged. Invoices/Statements will state that a cancellation fee has been charged.

All disputes in relation to charges for cancelled/failed to attend appointments are to be directed to either the Administration Officer or Manager and will be promptly responded to. The



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“Managing Complaints Policy” will be adhered to where applicable.

POOR ATTENDANCE OF APPOINTMENTS

Where the client fails to attend, in excess of the three allowable appointments, the Service User Agreement may be discussed and continuation of service may be renegotiated (or ceased) with the client representative/parent/carer. See “Suspension of Supports” statement in Service User Agreement:

SUSPENSION OF SUPPORTS

EC-PMH may suspend the delivery of supports in the event that:

- The parent/carer fails to sign off on or pay the required amount for services delivered.
- The parent/carer fails to comply with the terms in this agreement.
- Early Connections-Port Macquarie/Hastings identify a risk to the child/family or Early Connections staff, in providing supports.
- The parent/child fails to attend, without notice more than 3 scheduled appointments within six months.

Where the client has frequent cancellations, which may be billable or unbillable, the following process is to be followed:

1. The staff member providing services will discuss current service delivery suitability with the client’s family/carer and if appropriate they will recommend/discuss changes that are agreeable to the family/carer.
2. If poor attendance continues, then the EC-PMH Manager will follow up with the client’s family/carer to discuss service provision options/suitability. If necessary, appropriate changes will be negotiated with the family/staff member.
3. If poor attendance continues, written notification will be emailed to the client’s family indicating that they have failed to meet the above attendance requirements and their supports/services may be cancelled/suspended.



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FEE COLLECTION

NDIS funded services/supports:

- EC-PMH will seek payment for services and supports provided at each appointment after the parent/carer has signed a Service User Agreement and a Schedule of Supports.
- All tax invoices must be paid within seven (7) days, as indicated on the invoice and in the signed Service User Agreement.

The way that fees are collected is determined by the NDIS plan management method as follows:

1. NDIA Managed

Claims for fees are made via the NDIS portal by EC-PMH administration staff. A copy of the statement of claimed fees is emailed to the participant's family for their records.

2. Plan- Managed NDIS plans

- A tax invoice for supports and services delivered is generated via the 'Echidna' client management system and emailed to the nominated Plan Manager. Invoices are emailed on a weekly basis (approximately).
- Payments for invoices from Plan Managers can be made by Direct Internet Bank Deposit. No cash payments/credit card payments will be accepted.
- If payment of plan managed plans is not received within 14 days of the date of the tax invoice, the plan manager will receive a reminder email/invoice requesting payment.
- If payment is still not received, the Administrator will call/email the Plan Manager requesting payment or seek clarification as to why the invoice has not been paid.
- If payment is still not received, the Manager of EC-PMH will follow up with the Plan Manager with a email/phone call requesting payment of the outstanding invoice within 5 days. Details of the invoice number, date and amount will be included in the correspondence. Record of this correspondence will be kept in the 'Echidna' client management system.
- All accounts that are unpaid will be forwarded to the NDIS for further action/notification.

3. Self-Managed NDIS plans

- A tax invoice for supports and services delivered is generated via the 'Echidna' client management system and emailed to the participant's family/carer. Invoices are emailed on a weekly basis (approximately).
- Payments for invoices from Self Managers can be made by Direct Internet Bank Deposit or credit card payment in person/over the phone. No cash payments will be accepted.



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- If payment of self-managed plans is not received within 14 days of the date of the tax invoice, the client's family/carer will receive a reminder email/invoice requesting payment.
- If payment is still not received, the Manager of EC-PMH will follow up the client's family/carer with a SMS/email/phone call requesting payment of the outstanding invoice within five days. Details of the invoice number, date and amount will be included in the correspondence. Record of this correspondence will be kept in the 'Echidna' client management system.
- If payment is still not received, a Letter of Demand will be sent to the client's family.
- At this time, suspension or cancellation of the Service User Agreement may be considered.
- EC-PMH reserves the right to take legal action to recover outstanding fees. All services and supports from EC-PMH may be cancelled or suspended if this policy is not adhered to.
- All accounts that are unpaid will be forwarded to the NDIS for further action/notification.

Privately Funded Supports/Services:

- An invoice will be generated for the service provision using the 'Echidna' client management system.
- Payments for privately funded supports/services can be made using internet bank transfer/credit card over the phone/EFTPOS/HICAPS.
- A receipt will be issued via email.
- Processing of Medicare/HICAPS claims will occur, as required.
- Payments for privately funded supports/services must be paid at the time of service provision.



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Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annually	Manager	Management Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	Feb 2017	Management Committee	Feb 2019
2	30.07.2019	Management Committee	July 2021
3	06.06.2022	Management Committee	June 2024
4		Management Committee	July 2025

Management Committee:

Signed:

Name:

Position:

Date: