



## ACCESS TO SUPPORTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure each participant and staff member is informed about the availability of supports and the access or entry criteria, and appropriate adjustments are implemented to suit each participant's needs and preferences during service delivery.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES staff, including permanent or casual employees, contractors, consultants, and people otherwise engaged by HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES (e.g., volunteers).
- All participants receiving NDIS services and support, including their families and support network.

### DEFINITIONS

| Term                        | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Access to supports</b>   | HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will provide services to all participants who meet the eligibility criteria without discrimination for any reason.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Eligibility Criteria</b> | Clear and well-defined requirements that determine whether an individual qualifies to receive the services and supports offered by the organisation.                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Dignity of Risk</b>      | Means the belief that each person with a disability is entitled to experience and learn from life situations even if these, on occasion, may be a threat to their well-being. Each person experiencing a risk, of which they have been informed, is to receive support in the situation. |
| <b>Duty of Care</b>         | Means the obligation to take reasonable care to avoid injury to a person whom it can be reasonably foreseen might be injured by an act or omission.                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Intake Process</b>       | The initial step where individuals express their interest in accessing services, providing essential information to determine eligibility and appropriate support options.                                                                                                               |

### POLICY

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES is committed to ensuring each participant accesses the most appropriate supports that meet their needs, goals and preferences.



HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES ensures:

- The supports available and any access/entry criteria (including any associated costs) are clearly defined and documented. This information is communicated to each participant using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand.
- Reasonable adjustments to the support delivery environment are made and monitored to ensure it is fit for purpose and each participant's health, privacy, dignity, quality of life and independence are supported.
- Each participant is supported to understand under what circumstances supports can be withdrawn. Access to supports required by the participant will not be withdrawn or denied solely on the basis of a dignity of risk choice that has been made by the participant.

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES's service eligibility criteria, priority of access and waitlist management is undertaken in a fair, equitable and transparent manner and in line with this policy and the *Rights and Responsibilities Policy and Procedure*.

Access to supports is based on eligibility, organisational capacity and available resources, participants' and/or families/carers' need for the service and the best interests or impact on existing participants.

Once they have met the eligibility criteria, participants are encouraged to contribute to the assessment process to make sure supports are planned and delivered in consideration of their individual needs and preferences.

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will recognise the right of participants to make informed choices and to take calculated risks. Every person has the right to experience and learn from life, take advantage of opportunities, and develop skills and independence, even when these situations may pose a risk to their wellbeing.

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES recognises they have a duty of care to prevent or minimise harm to the participant and their staff. The safety of the participant and the staff are considered in conjunction with risk-taking and, if required, takes priority over risk taking, privacy and confidentiality.

## **PROCEDURE**

The following procedures are implemented to ensure that HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES meets its policy objective:

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**



The Managing Director is responsible for defining the eligibility criteria and regularly seeking feedback about the service accessibility and provision.

Suggestions or feedback about the service's accessibility will be directed to HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES's *Feedback and Complaints Management Policy and Procedure*.

Before commencing any assessment process, staff must ensure participants meet the eligibility criteria.

Staff are responsible for:

- Responding quickly and appropriately to each request for support or service.
- Informing the participant and their family/carers of the eligibility criteria to access our supports or services and the associated costs for each service.
- Communicating the eligibility criteria to all participants using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand.
- Determine if the participant requires our Easy Read documents that inform them of their rights, their voice in the development of their Service Agreement and Support Plan, how to complain and how we will maintain their privacy. An interpreter will be provided to the participant if required.

Eligibility criteria for our NDIS supports or services include the following:

- The participant must hold an NDIS Plan that lists access to HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES registration groups.
- Availability of skilled workers to provide supports and services and meet participants' preferences.

Participants who meet the eligibility criteria will start the intake process.

### **PRIORITY OF ACCESS**

Priority of access will be given by taking into consideration the following considerations:

- The participants need to access our supports or services.
- The needs of their family members or carers, where relevant.
- HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES capacity to meet those needs in terms of resources and availability.
- The best interests of the participants and existing clients.

Participants who have priority of access to our supports will start the intake process.

### **INTAKE PROCESS**



HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will undertake an assessment to ensure that our organisation is able to provide the supports or services in the manner that the participant requires.

During the intake process, staff must:

- Undertake an intake interview to assess any barriers to the person accessing services. Only trained staff will conduct intake assessments of the participants.
- Advise participants of their right to involve a support person in their dealings with HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES.
- Provide information and support for the person to access an advocate, where needed, to assist them during service intake, planning and delivery.
- Engage an interpreter or an external agency where language or cultural barriers are identified.

The Managing Director will delegate the responsibility to undertake intake interviews.

Staff are responsible for providing the following information to participants during the intake interview:

- Intake and exit procedures.
- Eligibility and priority of access criteria.
- Support or service fees.

The *Participant Intake Form* will be completed by the participants and staff members undertaking the intake processes to ensure comprehensive and thorough records of the participants' service requests and intake processes are recorded accordingly. The *Participant Intake Form* will include the following details:

- Participant details (their full name, DOB, NDIS number, contact details, etc.).
- Eligibility
- Referral information
- Consent to collect and manage their personal information
- Specific needs, preferences and requirements.
- Family/carer details.
- Services or supports requested.

Participants will be contacted within one (1) business day of the intake interview to advise them of the outcome. Staff will inform them by phone or email. The outcome of the intake process may include one of the following options:

- Service offering
- Placement on the waiting list
- Service refusal
- Alternative services or referral to other service providers.

## **SERVICE OFFERING AND ACCEPTANCE**



Following their intake process, if a participant is offered HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES's supports or services and they accept, staff will work with the participant and their family/support network to assess their needs, goals and preferences and develop and agree upon a *Service Agreement*.

Staff will meet with the participant and their family/support network as soon as practicable for an assessment and planning meeting.

Upon service commencement, participants will be provided with a Welcome Pack that includes the following:

- Participant Handbook
- Participant Rights and Responsibilities Statement
- Complaint Report Form
- Participant Satisfaction Survey
- Easy to read documents.

### **WAITING LIST PROCESS**

If the participant has been found eligible but HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES cannot accept or accommodate the participant due to a lack of capacity or resources to provide the supports or services, the participant will be given the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list with their consent.

The reasons for placing a participant on a waiting list must be recorded accordingly using the *Participant Intake Form*.

While participants are placed on a waiting list, staff must:

- Provide an estimation of the wait time to the participants and their family/support network.
- Maintain regular contact (at least every 3 months) to inform participants of updates regarding their positioning on the list. Each time a participant on the waiting list is contacted, staff will confirm their place on the list and recommend appropriate alternative service providers.
- Confirm whether or not they want to remain on the waiting list.
- Provide referrals to other service providers where required.

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will ensure the waiting list is used in the correct manner, which means that participants who applied earlier will receive the approval of admission to HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES supports prior to those who applied later. Also, HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will maintain a manageable list to ensure participants are not waiting for long periods of time.



## **SERVICE REFUSAL AND APPEAL PROCESS**

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will document the reason for service refusal using the *Participant Intake Form*. The participant and their family/support network will be given the reason why HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES is unable to offer our supports or services. Some reasons why HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES may refuse acceptance to our supports or services include but are not limited to:

- If HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES does not have the appropriate resources to accommodate the participant's specific support needs and requirements.
- If HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES cannot provide the supports or services as the organisation is not registered to provide the class supports required by the participant.
- If the participant does not meet the eligibility criteria for HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES.

Where a participant's service request is refused, or they are ineligible for service with HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES, staff will advise them of their right to appeal the decision.

If a participant wishes to appeal the service refusal decision, they will be advised to fill out the *Application for the Review of a Decision Form*. All appeals will be referred to the Managing Director or their delegate for its assessment, and a final decision will be made by them or the Senior Management Team where appropriate. The final decision will be provided by email.

If the participant is unsatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they can raise a complaint as per the *Feedback and Complaints Management Policy and Procedure*. The participant will be provided with information about the complaints management and resolution system using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand.

Staff will provide support to the participant in making an appeal or raising a complaint by either transcribing their feedback/complaint or providing support to the participant in accessing an interpreter or advocacy services.

If the service has been refused, HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will work collaboratively with participants and their families/support network to identify alternative services or referrals that could meet their needs and preferences.

## **REFERRAL PROCESS**

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will provide assistance in circumstances in which participants were refused acceptance or denied acceptance. This includes referring the participant to alternative services or providers with the participants' consent.



If the participant consents, HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will provide all relevant information to the service providers to ensure a seamless transition. HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES may also meet with the service providers to facilitate this transition.

If HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES offers our supports or services to a participant and they decide to deny their acceptance, staff must not offer incentives or persuade the participant to accept HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES offer. However, staff should ensure participants are aware they are able to contact HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES again if they change their mind.

### **REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT TO SUPPORTS**

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will make reasonable adjustments to the Participant's Support Plan and support delivery environment to ensure it is fit for purpose and each participant's health, privacy, dignity, quality of life and independence is supported.

During the provision of supports and at each support plan review meeting, staff will consult with the participant and their family/support network if they are satisfied with the way supports are delivered or if reasonable adjustments must be implemented.

Also, adjustments can be made as a result of continuous improvement initiatives, feedback from participants, their family/support network or staff, and incidents or complaints.

Any adjustment must be discussed and negotiated with participants and their family/support network and recorded in the *Participant Assessment and Support Plan*. The *Service Agreement* will be changed if required.

### **WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES may withdraw supports if any of the following circumstances occurs:

- If the participant fails to comply with the *Service Agreement*.
- If the participant fails to comply with the policies and procedures of HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES.
- If the participant and/or their family/carer is unwilling to work toward agreed goals.
- If other individuals may be at risk of harm from the participant.
- If the participant no longer has an approved NDIS Plan.
- If payments for supports or expenses have not been received as per *the Service Agreement*.
- If the participants' health care needs change to a higher support level that cannot be provided by HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES.



Access to supports required by the participant will not be withdrawn or denied solely on the basis of a dignity of risk choice that has been made by the participant.

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES may withdraw or terminate services at any time with a minimum of 14 days' written notice. Should the participant wish to end the *Service Agreement*, they must give 14 days' notice as well.

HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will inform the reason for the termination of services to the participant and their family/support network.

Upon termination of the Service Agreement by either party, HAPPY TO HELP CARE SERVICES will take steps to ensure:

- The termination of service has been reported to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).
- All services that have been provided under the terms of the *Service Agreement* have been claimed.
- The participant has alternative support solutions in place for their safety and well-being.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Participant Handbook
- Participant Intake Form
- Application for the Review of a Decision Form
- Referral Form

## REFERENCES

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators – November 2021
- Disability Act 2006 (VIC)

## REVIEW DETAILS

|                             |                |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
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