

## CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy number	8	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	28/07/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	28/07/2020

### Introduction

This code exists to make sure any children receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services receive that service in a safe, transparent and easily understandable environment. The code is written to be read by any children aged eighteen years or under who as part of their funding from the National Disability Scheme (NDIS) are receiving support coordination services from Life Connect Disability Services. The code is also written to be read by any family, carers, supporters, external stakeholders and staff of Life Connect Disability Services to understand what the service will do to keep children safe from abuse. The code can also be read by anyone considering receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services to understand the steps the service takes to keep children safe. The aim of this code is for anyone who reads it to have an understanding of all child safe principles Life Connect Disability Services will work to in delivering service including specific expectations of behaviour that must or must not be done by the service. Any person should be able to use this code as a ready reckoner to identify positive or inappropriate behaviour towards or children. It should also be possible for that same person to understand ways of reporting behaviour that does not seem consistent with child safe principles and practices. It should also create a clear understanding of steps the service will take to create a safe place for children such as pre-employment checking so that children or their supporters feel safe and entitled to ask for proof of reputable service and protection by child safe strategies in place during service delivery.

## **Purpose**

The code seeks to embed a child safe way of support coordination services in the community to disabled children as part of NDIS funded packages. It seeks to do this by setting a framework around the Child Safe Standards of Victoria of strategies, intentions and aspirations Life Connect Disability Services sets itself to meet each of the following aspirational goals and standards:

1. Embedding a culture of child safety through effective leadership.
2. Making a commitment to child safety with a policy or statement.
3. Having a clear code of conduct that establishes appropriate behavior with children.
4. Screening, supervision and training for staff, to reduce the risk of child abuse.
5. Clear processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
6. Identifying child abuse risks and ways to reduce them.
7. Empowering children to share their feedback and experiences about feeling safe.

## **Ethos of this Code of Conduct**

The ethos of this code of conduct is that child safety and zero tolerance to abuse or dangerous practices that put children in unsafe positions will be promoted and worked to in delivering support coordination services. Life Connect Disability Services commits to:

- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling us that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children.
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds when receiving support coordination services.
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability when working in public providing skills building programs.
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults delivering service for Life Connect Disability Services are not left alone with a child in any private place not within view of the general public or a supporter of the child.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the police or child protection agencies.

- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child or children are safe
- encouraging children to ‘have a say’ and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

### **Intention of this Code of Conduct**

Life Connect Disability Services commits to complying with Victoria’s compulsory child safe standards by:

- Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety of children with a disability.
- Provide a child safe service led from the top in its policies, processes and leaderships through to an embedding of a culture into everyday practice that makes child safety paramount.
- Apply strong governance, documenting how duty of care responsibilities to children will be met that any child or other person can easily obtain and understand.
- Make child safety a top priority in the organization’s operations
- Acknowledge the vulnerability of children with a disability and ensure child safe procedures always err on the side of safety to the child.
- Keep all mandatory certifications, training and licensing current and applicable such as suitability vetted staff with National Police check, Working with Children Checks, Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme Checks and a commitment to ongoing child safe training.

### **Scope**

This policy relates to all staff of Life Connect Disability Services whether delivering a service or outside of service delivery times. There are no exceptions. The consequences for any person delivering service on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services for not complying with this code of conduct may include disciplinary action resulting in dismissal or reporting to the relevant authorities depending on the nature of non-compliance.

## Principles of Conduct

This code declares the service commitment to the vulnerability of children with a disability by agreeing to show in words, deed and action that we believe that:

- a. Children with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to respect for their worth and dignity and to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- b. That this right extends to special consideration for the vulnerability of disabled children reflected in practice.
- c. Children with disability should be supported in all their dealings and communications with the service so that their capacity to exercise choice and control is maximized in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances and cultural needs
- d. Children with disability should be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability
- e. Children with disability should be supported to exercise choice, including in relation to taking reasonable risks, in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports
- f. Children with disability should have their privacy and dignity respected
- g. Children with disability should be supported to receive supports outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and be assisted to coordinate these supports with the supports provided under the NDIS
- h. The role of families, carers and other significant persons in the lives of children with disability is to be acknowledged and respected
- i. Innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary best practice and effectiveness in the provision of supports to children with disability are to be promoted
- j. Children with disability should be involved in decision making processes that affect them, and where possible make decisions for themselves
- k. The cultural and linguistic circumstances, and the gender, of children with disability should be considered, and
- l. The role of advocacy in representing the interests of children with disability is to be acknowledged and respected, recognizing that advocacy supports people with disability by:
  - i. Promoting their independence and social and economic participation

- ii. Promoting choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports, and
- iii. Maximizing independent lifestyles of people with disability and their full inclusion in the community.

At Life Connect Disability Services we give practical meaning to these principles of how we conduct our services in the public arena to help children with disabilities build capacity to receive services through coordination of supports. This means that we acknowledge that children with a disability may experience and be vulnerable due to:

- Social isolation
- Limited access to developmentally appropriate information on relationships and sexuality
- Low levels of expectation about capacity to identify and report concerns
- Inaccessible pathways to reporting concerns
- Communication Difficulties
- Personal care needs involving different levels of supervision
- Signs of abuse regarded as signs of the child's disability.

To keep our clients safe, we identify and respond to these unique potential experiences of our NDIS participants by having in place a child safe culture with risk assessment of activities along with sound and safe recruiting and operating procedures for staff. We also respond to our responsibilities with a strong provision of information on our web site for children to understand how to make a complaint along with our form and policies to help this process including special communication assistance.

### **Legislation and Regulations**

Anyone that receives service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect that the service delivered will comply relevant legislation and guidelines including with the conditions and requirements of:

- Child Well-Being and Safety Act, 2005 (Victoria)
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006

- Disability Act, 2006 (Vic)
- National Disability Insurance Agency Act, 2013 (Cwlth)
- Victorian Child Safe Standards, 2018.

## Procedures

Our procedures are how we put this code of conduct into action every day when we deliver services. Wherever possible any intake procedures including referring children and their supporters will be done in the presence of an adult who is valued and accepted as a supporter by the child. Wherever possible our service delivery will be planned with a responsible adult or acting on an initial exchange of information with that adult who is supporting the child about what service for each occasion will entail. We will as soon as possible after each time we deliver service to a child make a case note on our client management system about what was done and why it was done so there is a clear record of how we are working to this code of conduct.

As an example of our everyday practices we commit to informing and alerting children and their supporters to not only what we will do but what we will not do. For example, the following examples of inappropriate behaviour are not part of our procedures:

- develop any ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children.
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical such as ‘play wrestling’ with a child during service.
- put children at risk of abuse such as locking doors.
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children such as discussing personal social activities.
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation service delivery shifts such as baby sitting or catching up for a coffee without delivery of service.
- have any on-line contact with a child or their family except where for a legitimate purpose such as arranging or changing appointments.

- ignoring or disregarding any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

A full list of our operating procedures is contained in our record holdings and can be viewed by any child or their supporter if requested. Any person can also go to the Life Connect Disability Services web site which gives an overview of how to make a complaint about any action or inaction that may put a child in danger. The web site also includes information on signs of possible endangerment of children that children or their supporters can use to identify an unsafe practice.

# LIFE CONNECT DISABILITY SERVICES CHILD SAFE POLICY

Policy number	7	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved on	28/7/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	28/7/2020

## INTRODUCTION

This policy describes how Life Connect Disability Services will keep children safe while delivering support coordination services on a 1:1 basis in the community setting.

## PURPOSE

The policy seeks to make a clear and public commitment to child safety by describing how Life Connect Disability Services will address risks to child safety including how the service will address the cultural safety of Aboriginal Children and children from linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability. The policy also seeks to make it clear how the service will respond to any incidence or suggestion of unsafe practices that have harmed children or have the potential to harm children. The policy outlines how the service will put steps in place to prevent this harm where possible and respond to any harm be it physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglectful in nature or racial, cultural or religious in terms of the harm. The policy is best read in conjunction with other policies such as the incident reporting policy and Professional Conduct and Abuse policy which give depth to specific measures the service will take where abuse or incident occur or are suspected.

## Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules, 2018
- NDIS (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules, 2018
- NDIS (Practice Standards – Worker Screening) Rules, 2018
- Life Connect Disability Services Professional Conduct and Abuse Policy
- Life Connect Disability Services Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Life Connect Disability Services Guidelines
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006 (Victorian)
- The Crimes Act, 1958 (Victoria)
- Responding to allegations of abuse involving people with disabilities. Guidelines for disability service providers and Victoria Police – June 2018.

Published jointly by Victoria Police and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act, 2005 (Victoria)
- Child Safe Standards, Commission for Children and Young People, Victoria.

## **COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

All children who receive service from Life Connect Disability Services have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children we work with will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe environment where children feel safe to grow and develop in community based activities.

## **POLICY**

This policy puts into clear and actionable terms how the service will deliver its policy purpose and commitment to child safety to children receiving service and their supporters. The following terms of this policy statement describe what the service will do to keep children safe.

### **1. A Child's Right to Have a Say**

The service commits to each child who receives services having the opportunity to receive information on how the service will keep them safe including the opportunity to ask for service in a way that suits their needs. We use a range of forms and personal consultations as well as provide on-line resources on our web site to meet this obligation.

### **2. How Risk to Children is Managed.**

The service commits to only delivering service to children in the public domain and wherever possible avoiding situations where the service deliverer is alone in any secluded place with a child. The service also commits to doing risk assessments on any activity or proposed place that may propose a risk to children receiving service.

No one will be permitted to deliver service without having received a police check clearance as well as a disability workers exclusion scheme clearance and be in possession of a current working with children check. No staff member will be recruited to work for the service without having undergone interviewing and reference checking.

The service will keep and maintain policies on staff recruitment and management that any person can ask to see at any time.

The service also manages risk by highly publicising any risks to children such as inappropriate grooming or other behaviours. Children or any other person can go to the service web site to review risk management procedures recommended by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

### **3. How the Service Will Respond to Complaints or Suspected Child Abuse.**

Any child receiving service or their supporters can complain direct to Tony Herbert the manager of Life Connect Disability Services who is the dedicated Child Safety Person. They can do this verbally, in writing with a complaints form or on-line by email or via the service web site. Alternately, the service will arrange other means of assisted communication if the person requires help making a complaint.

Should this person not feel safe to do this they can go to agencies such as the Disability Services Commissioner, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission or Commissioner for Children and Young People whose details can be found on the service web site.

Where the complaint can be managed between the service and the young person and their supporter the service provider will manage the complaint according to the Life Connect Disability Services Complaints policy which can be viewed on the services web site.

Where the matter is urgent or appears to be criminal in nature the service will refer the matter onto the appropriate authorities such as the Victorian Police. This referral where urgent in nature will be made to comply with best practice guidelines such as immediately contacting emergency services on 000 and/or informing the Department of Human Services Child Protection Crisis line on 13 12 78. This report will be made by the service regardless of whether the reported abuse is against the service provider or other person. The service provider will also comply in non-urgent cases with the requirements of any adult in Victoria to report any suspected sexual abuse of a child under sixteen to the Victorian police and/or child protection crisis line.

While the service is not regarded as a mandatory child abuse reporter the service has chosen to comply with those conditions where any member of the service believes on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse the service will report and record this reporting to the relevant agencies which may include; Victoria Police, the Victorian Department of Human Services and the National Child Abuse Hotline.

[www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)

Ph: 0448 634 817, (03) 43090212

2/51 Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Victoria. 3354

E: [tony@lifeconnectdisability.com.au](mailto:tony@lifeconnectdisability.com.au)



## **SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy applies to any person delivering service on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services in any capacity. Any person who delivers any service is responsible for ensuring that the actions described in this policy are carried out.

## **PROCEDURES**

The service will apply the provisions of this policy and the associated Child Safe Code of Conduct in everyday operation. Those procedures are detailed in the Life Connect Disability Services Guidelines. These guidelines can be viewed upon request by any person. A minimum of procedure for any person receiving service who is a child is that this person be informed of this policy and the resources available on the service providers web site.

## LIFE CONNECT DISABILITY SERVICES CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy number	1	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	14/7/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	14/7/2020

### Introduction

This code of conduct exists to describe the principles of behaviour, governance and service delivery Life Connect Disability Services models. The document establishes an ethical direction of service It exists in the context of how the service delivers Coordination of Supports services to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants. The Code of Conduct is designed to be read by participants, supporters, staff and other stakeholders. It aims to create understanding of the ethical framework Life Connect Disability Services works within.

### Purpose

This code is designed to be used as a principle led framework which Life Connect Disability Services uses to determine and guide all policies, processes and other ways of delivering service. All staff whether they be directly employed, contracted or otherwise engaged by Life Connect Disability Services are to work to this structure. Service delivered in a person centred and participant led way to maximise choice and control is the guiding ethical aim of this principle led approach to service.

### Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines

Anyone that receives service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect that the service delivered will comply relevant legislation and guidelines including with the conditions and requirements of:

- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules, 2018.
- National Disability Insurance Agency Act, 2013 (Cwlth)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities
- Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Victoria)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2004 (Victoria)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants, students are any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## **Requirements to comply with this Code of Conduct**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document. It is also a requirement that any person representing Life Connect Disability Services completes the on-line Worker Orientation Module 'Quality, Safety and You' published by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

## **Consequences of Non Compliance With This Code**

We understand that in the event any member of staff does not comply with this Code of Conduct they will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## **Procedures**

The code is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

## **Declaration of Intent**

This Code of Conduct is intended to demonstrate what we at Life Connect Disability Service value and how we go about delivering service. It is our intention to have a range of policies, processes and practices proportional to the scope of our enterprise that effectively meet the needs of our customers. This Code of Conduct codifies that intent into a set of principles that act as an overarching framework of best practice with individual elements that guide our services.

## **Principles of Conduct**

Any person receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect to receive services that address and achieve the following principles of service.

1. Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.
2. Respect the privacy of people with a disability
3. Provide Supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill.
4. Act with integrity, honesty and transparency.
5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with a disability.
6. Take all reasonable steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and service provided to people with a disability.
7. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.
8. Continuity of service

### **Meeting Each Element of the Principles of the Code of Conduct**

It is important that this code while not trying to replace other policies and guidelines gives life and practical meaning to what delivering principle led service means to our customers, staff and others who we deal with. Some examples of how people dealing Life Connect Disability Services can know if we are following the intent or elements of each principle might include for example:

- Clients receiving service tailored to individual rights to freedom of expression can expect to determine who supports them in receiving service and how choices and control over options for service is determined. For example, if clients are not given the opportunity to have written down and kept as a record who supports them then they will know this code has not been complied with.
- Clients receiving respectful services that protect their privacy can expect that any information collected from them will only be released to another person where the client consents for this to happen. If this doesn't happen you will know that this code has not been complied with.
- Receiving supports and services in a safe and competent manner means that clients can ask for staff to produce evidence of having the appropriate worker safety checks complying with legislation. If this doesn't happen you will know that this code has not been complied with.
- Receiving service with integrity, honesty and transparency means people can ask to see our conflict of interest register or read our policies in a manner that suits their needs. If this doesn't happen you will know that this code has not been complied with.

- Concerns or matters impacting on quality and safety can be raised with us on-line via our website or in writing or by just telling us if something is wrong. Clients can see our complaints policy on our web site to understand how we protect their rights to quality service. If this doesn't happen you will know that this code has not been complied with.
- Staying safe from violence, exploitation, neglect or abuse is supported by our commitment to Zero Tolerance for violence. Our clients can see our Safety from Abuse policy online or in a way that meets their needs. If this doesn't happen you will know that this code has not been complied with.
- Preventing and responding to sexual misconduct is protected by our compulsory staff training and policies on staying safe from sexual misconduct which any one can read on our website. If this doesn't happen you will know that this code has not been complied with.
- Receiving continuous service is protected by forward planning we do with you. Each person receiving service will be given an individual goal plan. This plan clearly identifies who their worker is what the backup plan is if that person is unavailable.

Anyone receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services can see our policies, processes and practices available in the public domain. Those resources go into greater depth than this ethical overview of how we work to deliver ethical, principle led service.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Policy number	12	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved on	3/8/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	3/8/2020

### INTRODUCTION

Life Connect Disability Services is committed to high standards of ethical conduct and accordingly places great importance on making clear any existing or potential conflict of interest. This policy exists to explain how the service will deal with an actual or perceived conflict of interest encountered while delivering service to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants. The policy is developed and published for the benefit of NDIS clients, supporters, stakeholders, oversight authorities and staff working with Life Connect Disability Services.

### PURPOSE

This policy seeks to achieve a clear aim of establishing a service ethos that puts the rights of participants, supporters, funding authorities and the public to receive unbiased and fair service as our number one priority. It aims to do this by establishing a number of objective benchmarks to guide users of this policy in understanding the following:

- What constitutes a conflict of interest?
- How to identify the underpinning causes of an actual or perceived conflicted interest and steps the service has in place to avoid any perception of conflicted interest in how service is delivered.
- How a participant or supporter can identify and report a conflicted interest that has the potential to negatively affect the quality of service received.
- What steps Life Connect Disability Services will take to deal with that conflict of interest.
- Where participant and their supporters can get help dealing with a conflict of interest from bodies from Life Connect Disability Services or by other avenues if they need to do so.

## **Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines**

Anyone that receives service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect that the service delivered will comply relevant legislation and guidelines including with the conditions and requirements of:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Registered Providers of Support) Rules, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme ( Code of Conduct) rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
- NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers, 2017

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants , students or any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## **Requirements to comply with this Code of Conduct**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

## **Consequences of Non Compliance With This Policy**

We understand that in the event any member of staff does not comply with this policy they will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## **Procedures**

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those

sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

### **Declaration of Intent**

This policy is intended to demonstrate what we at Life Connect Disability Service value and how we go about delivering service. It is our intention to have a range of policies, processes and practices proportional to the scope of our enterprise that effectively meet the needs of our customers. This policy codifies that intent into a set of principles that act as an overarching framework of best practice with individual elements that guide our services.

### **Principles of this policy**

Any person receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect to receive services that address and achieve the following principles of service.

1. Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.
2. Respect the privacy of people with a disability
3. Provide Supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill.
4. Act with integrity, honesty and transparency.
5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with a disability.
6. Support people with disability to pursue their goals and maximise independence and social and economic participation
7. Develop the capacity of people with disability to participate in the community and in employment
8. Build a sustainable scheme that is based on insurance principles.

### **Compliance with principles of this policy:**

Any person receiving service can expect that Life Connect Disability Services will have practices for service delivery in place that comply with each of the following:

- Relevant rules, guidelines and policies issued by the NDIA
- Life Connect Disability Services own Code of Conduct and Customer Service Charter
- Any commonwealth, state or territory laws and any other requirements that are applicable to the registered provider.
- Life Connect Disability Services will notify the NDIA if the service is in breach of any Commonwealth, State or Territory law, including any Commonwealth, State or Territory law and/or quality and safeguard arrangements.
- Life Connect Disability Services will notify the NDIA if they become subject to an investigation for breach of any of those laws and arrangements listed.

### **What this Policy means for people using our service in practical terms:**

Any person delivering services on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services or acting in any way on behalf of the service is expected to act in the best interests of NDIS participants. This policy goes towards informing and empowering our practice and the knowledge of participants receiving service so they can have choice and control in receiving service. This knowledge is expected and desired to be in the form of participants understanding what action Life Connect Disability Services must take to ensure that any conflicts of interest do not harm the best interests of the participant. Life Connect Disability Services commits to having steps in place to identify clearly to participant aspects of its business and relationships through information and declaration of interests that are available and easily understood.

### **Definitions:**

A conflict of interest may arise from any action, omission to act or other influence exerted by someone exerting influence on the receiving of service that may alter that service been delivered to a participant in a way that best serves their interests over the interests of Life Connect Disability Services. Examples of a conflicted interest working to benefit the service provider might include a direct benefit such as delivering a service to a participant where another service provider with special skills could better deliver that service to benefit the participant. A conflict of interest by omission might also occur in situations such as when a service provider fails to mention a personal relationship with a service provider the participant is referred onto for service. Wherever a participant feels they were not given the full range of information potentially available to help them decide the potential for a conflicted interest situation exists.

### **Procedures**

The steps we will take are described in how we manager our internal and external procedures in a clear and transparent fashion. Before requesting service or at any time after, a participant and their supporter can view our website. The site clearly explains our organisational focus on delivering Support Coordination services along with a description of our professional qualifications. Any one is also able to view all our policies about how we deliver service on the web site. These policies include our Code of Conduct, Customer Service Charter and Delivery of Services Policy display our commitment to ethical conduct. Prospective clients can also view this Conflict of Interest Policy on-line which describes how we will manage, document and report on individual conflicts. This will allow prospective participants to make an informed decision on our services with the information they need. The web site also gives links to advocacy and other groups able to give unbiased information on service available and qualifications that best suit those services. When receiving a no obligation quote for service, participants are given an estimate and description of services along with a referral to available advocacy services to help them make an informed decision on our services. When applying for or receiving service the participant can ask for or go on-line to view a copy of our Anti-Discrimination Policy.

Participants applying for service will also receive a client details form and service agreement to fill in and keep. These forms give a short summary of our intake criteria to understand how and why we make decisions around intake of clients. Any person receiving service will receive an itemised service agreement identifying the agreed regime for service including all costs associated. This agreement will declare any notice periods or cancellation terms. Participants are not bound to engage our services after reviewing our pricing and conditions offer in the agreement. Prices charged to participants do not exceed the price level prescribed for that support in the NDIS Pricing Guide. No other charges are to be added to the cost of the support, including credit card surcharges, or any additional fees including any 'gap' fees, late payment fees or cancellation fees. These requirements apply whether funding for the support is managed by the participant, or managed by a Registered Provider, or managed by the Agency. We submit claims for payment within a reasonable time (and no later than 60 days from the end of the Service Booking). We do not charge cancellation fees, except when specifically provided for in the NDIA Price Guide. We do this to give participants all the knowledge around pricing and processes they need to make a decision. The service agreement also contains information on who to contact if not satisfied with any offer of services made or intake criteria applied.

As part of our endeavours to remain fair and unbiased in our service delivery no one acting on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services is able to receive gifts, gratuities or other benefit outside allocated NDIS payments. We do this to avoid any systematic influence that may affect how we deliver services or make decisions around this service delivery. We also keep a register of any perceived conflicts of interests along with a register of community groups and agencies in the local area. Any person can ask to see these registers or ask about information regarding a specific service or individual on that register to explore any perceived conflict of interest. We do this to be clear in who we work with and to give an overview of services available in the wider area. If asked we can also help anyone interested in receiving service or currently receiving service who wants to explore the NDIS Provider portal to identify services available in the local area.

Where we refer you to or recommend or service, we will declare any relationship we have with that person or business. Where that person is a family member or other close relative, we will place that information on our conflict of interest register for viewing. If a prospective or current client wishes to report an experience of conflicted interests receiving during service from Life Connect Disability Services, they can go to the service web site at any time. This web site has resources for contacting advocacy and other support groups able to help the person understand their rights and to review the actions of Life Connect Disability Services. Any person can ask for a complaint and compliments form from Life Connect Disability Services to report a conflict of interest experienced with harmed the level or quality of service received. This form can be given to a representative of Life Connect Disability Service who will investigate the matter and give you a written reply within 14 days. If you are not happy with this reply or do not feel comfortable with this approach the service will help you contact oversight bodies such as the Quality and Safeguards Commission and/or the National Disability Insurance Agency. You can seek advice and/or action from them regarding any conflict of interest that you believe has harmed the service you have received.

## life Connect Disability Services Complaints Policy

Policy number	4	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	14/7/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	14/7/2020

### Introduction

The aim of this policy is to describe the types of services and supports available to service users to which this policy applies. The policy also aims to articulate the ethical, legislative, legal and complaint practice standards Life Connect Disability Services (the service) works to. The policy describes options for complaint, redress or feedback available to clients, family and other interested stakeholders receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services.

### Purpose

The guidance in this policy is for NDIS participants, supporters, other stakeholders and people acting on behalf of the service to read and use as a reference source. It is designed to give those people information about the key principles and good practices the service will use for effective complaint management. People reading this document should be able to form a clear view of not only how their rights are protected but what processes are in place for receiving, managing and responding to a complaint about service.

### Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules, 2018
- The NDIS Code of Conduct

## Scope

The procedures and processes of this complaints policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants, students are any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## Requirements to comply with this complaints policy

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

## Consequences of non-compliance with this complaints policy

Any member of staff not complying with this complaints policy will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## Procedures

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

## Declaration of Intent

The starting point for how the service responds to complaints is built around the understanding that the provider has a responsibility to deliver safe and quality supports and services to people with a disability. This is prefaced in the context of the service delivery of 1:1 Support Coordination supports to NDIS funded participants and their supporters. This means the service has a responsibility to deliver the safe services in the context of the following principles of the NDIS Act, 2013. People with a disability have the right to:

- Realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.
- Be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability

- Be supported to exercise choice including in relation to taking reasonable risks in pursuit of their goals and the planning of their delivery of supports
- Be respected for their worth and dignity and to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be able to determine their own best interests including the right to exercise choice and control and to engage as equal partners in decisions that will affect their lives to the full extent of their capacity
- Have their privacy and dignity respected
- Have the role of families, carers and other significant persons in their lives acknowledged and respected
- Have access to advocates and supports which promote innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary practice and effectiveness

## Definitions

For people with a disability and their supporters who may wish to make a complaint it is important for the service to be clear on what a complaint looks is and what our systems and processes are. These definitions taken from the NDIS Rules on complaints are:

- A complaint can be described as an expression of dissatisfaction with an NDIS support or service, including how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
- A complaints management and resolution system is a system created by a provider for dealing with complaints that puts the person with a disability at the centre of the complaints system.
- A complaints management and resolution system should be identifiable by the following features:
  - The system is transparent and encourages complaints i.e. people know how to make a complaint to the service provider and/or the NDIS commission and can do it easily.
  - Has clear, documented processes to receive and resolve complaints
  - Protects people making complaints from adverse effects
  - Assists people to make complaints in a way that suits their needs including anonymously
  - Provides information on the services complaints processes in an easily accessible way
  - Provides support and assistance to anyone that wishes to make a complaint
  - Receives, acknowledges and resolves complaints in a fair, timely and effective manner
  - Takes action to resolve issues raised in complaints

- Has processes in place for learning from complaints and improving service delivery processes
- Documents the complaints processes in terms of making information on making a complaint available and retaining information on complaints made.
- Shows procedural fairness that complies with rules laid down by the NDIS
- Shows evidence of a process in place for referring complaints to other agencies such as the NDIS commission where the seriousness of the complaint warrants this.

### **Life Connect Disability Services Complaint Management and Resolution Processes:**

The service has steps in place designed to meet each aspect of a good complaints management and resolution system. They are best described in stages and how they comply with the NDIS Commission rules on benchmarks you should be able to expect from a service.

### **Roles, responsibilities, compliance and training of workers:**

The owner or manager of Life Connect Disability Services is directly responsible for receiving and dealing with complaints about service. That person is responsible for making sure people making a complaint have the means to make a complaint to the service or to the NDIS Commission. The same person is responsible for making sure each person representing the organisation complies with the complaint management and resolution processes and is trained in its use.

### **How to get information about making a complaint:**

Any person can go to the service web site. The site contains information on this policy. The site also contains links to other support services such as the NDIS, advocacy groups and information on how to access information in other ways. For example, receiving information in easy read documents and using interpreters to make a complaint. During intake for service the person with a disability and their supporters will be given information on how to make a complaint and given the opportunity to sign for this information to confirm their understanding of their options.

## **Making a complaint**

Any person can make a complaint to any representative of the service. This can be done verbally, over the phone or by email. The complaint can be made anonymously by the contact page on the service web site. The person can download a copy of the service complaint form and send it to the service. This can be done anonymously or by an authorised representative of the person with a disability. Anyone who does not feel comfortable to complain direct to the service can use the resources on the web site to make a complaint to other agencies such as an advocacy service or the NDIS commission. The web site also gives the person wishing to make a complaint information on services such as the National Relay Service to help make that complaint.

## **What happens after a complaint is lodged:**

The person making the complaint will receive confirmation of having received the complaint within 48 hours of the complaint been received. That confirmation will be in writing or in another way that suits the persons needs. The complaint will be recorded in the services complaints register. Once the complaint is received and recorded the service will deal with the complaint in one of a number of ways depending on the nature of the complaint and reporting procedures mandated by law. These steps may include:

- Early resolution of the complaint for example discussing and fixing the issue.
- Conciliation, for example meeting with a person with a disability and their advocate to work out a solution.
- Investigating the matter where there are serious issues involved for example staff misconduct.
- Referring the matter onto some other agency for example to the NDIS Commission where the seriousness of the matter makes it improper for the service to investigate it alone.

The service will work to a benchmark of 14 days from the receipt of complaint to resolving the matter. Where the nature of the complaint is likely to exceed this time frame the person making the complaint will receive written notification and ongoing support to understand what is happening with the complaint.

Some of the options that a person making a complaint might receive include:

- Answers to questions
- Actions to fix the problems including having some other agency look into it.
- An apology if appropriate

### **What happens when a complaint is resolved ?:**

At the end of the complaints process the service will write to the person or people affected by the complain to explain the outcome of complaint management. This written advice will include:

- The decision
- The information considered that led to this decision
- Any agreed actions for both the person reporting the complaint and agreements the service has made to address issues and concerns
- Your right to have our decision reconsidered by lodging a request with us using the same channels to have the matter reconsidered.

### **How do I ask for a reconsideration or you disagree with the complaint's resolution process ?:**

Any person can use the original channels to relodge a complaint within six weeks of receiving notice of the decision. Alternately the person can contact groups listed on the web site direct such as the NDIS commission to have the matter looked at in another way. Where the application for reconsideration is able to be settled in view of new facts or other ways of looking at it the person will again receive a written confirmation within 48 hours and an outcome within 14 days where able. If the matter cannot be adequately reconsidered in a procedurally fair way the person will be referred onto another agency mandated to receive complaints. For example, where the manager of the service is asked to reconsider a decision made by the same manager and this cannot done in an impartial fashion it will be referred onwards to an external agency.

### **How will the service support a person making a complaint ?:**

Any person making a complaint will be protected from recriminations by use of a number of options. Where able these fears will be conciliated to everyone's satisfaction if the person is happy to keep receiving service from the coordinator subject of the complaint. Where this is not possible the person making the complaint will have amendments made which may include shifting service to another support coordinator or referring the person to another provider of support coordinator service. During the complaint's resolutions process the person making the complaint will be offered the support of advocacy groups and other support services.

### **Referring Complaints**

The service has processes in place for assessing the nature and seriousness of complaints. This is considered in the context of a small organisation delivering a singular Support Coordination service. Sometimes the complaint may not relate to a

service delivered by Life Connect Disability or sometimes it may be a serious allegation that is not appropriate to be considered internally. The service is obliged to refer complaints on where required by any Commonwealth, State or Territory Laws or where the provider cannot due to the small size of the organisation of other reason provide procedural fairness. Examples where complaints must be referred on might include:

- Allegations of child abuse
- Allegations of criminal offences
- Reportable incidents such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse of a person with a disability.

Situations such as this may be referred onto organisations such as but not limited to the following:

1. Victoria Police
2. NDIS Commission

### **Keeping records of a complaint**

The service will keep a record of the complaint in the complaints register for at least 7 years. This record will include:

- Information about the complaint
- Any action taken to remediate or resolve complaints
- The outcome of any action taken.

### **Learning from complaints.**

The service has a system in place for reflecting on complaints processes and any outcomes. The service will consider whether:

- The complaint relates to a policy, procedure or process that needs refining.
- Do staff need further training
- Can the learnings from the complaint be embedded into the services continuous plan to improve the way things are done.

## life Connect Disability Services Customer Service Charter

Policy number	3	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	14/7/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	14/7/2020

### Introduction

This customer service charter (the charter) outlines the steps that Life Connect Disability Services (the service) takes to ensure that we comply with the guiding legislation, rules, guidelines and quality indicators that are a mandate and measure for what good service should look like. The charter guides the conduct of any person delivering services or acting on behalf of the service. It gives an overview of what people using the service can expect in the behaviour of representatives of the service and organisational processes that are guiding that service.

### Purpose

The charter is designed to be read by customer, supporters and other stakeholders to understand the range of services offered and the processes that guide those services. The charter should read as a resource for anyone wanting to understand what sort of service we deliver, who our customers are and features of our service that support our customers.

## **Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines**

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- NDIS Rules, 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Guidelines
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- Intergovernmental Agreement on Nationally Consistent Screening for the NDIS
- Procedures for determining breaches of the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and for determining sanction.

## **Scope**

This Customer Service Charter applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractors, consultants, students or any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## **Requirements to comply with this Customer Service Charter**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

## **Consequences of non-compliance with this Customer Service Charter**

Any member of staff not complying with this Customer Service Charter will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## **Procedures**

The code is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

## **Declaration of Intent**

This Customer Service Charter is intended to demonstrate what we at Life Connect Disability Service value and how we go about delivering service. The service has a range of policies, processes and practices proportional to the scope of our enterprise that effectively meet the needs of our customers. That framework is best understood in the context that our service is for people with a disability who are receiving funded packages from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The service is a registered provider of Support Coordination Services. We do not deliver any other services to NDIS participants. Nor do we deliver other services funded direct by clients or other agencies or options such as Work Cover and TAC for example. This intent is perhaps best measured through a step through description of services customers might expect and the framework that step is delivering within.

### **1. Client Services**

Our clients include people with a disability, their families and carers. This relationship extends to other stakeholders such as government agencies and other NDIS service providers we work with. In this setting we provide 1:1 Support Coordination services working one person at a time to help that person address unmet needs relating to their disability challenges.

### **2. Protecting Customer Rights and Responsibilities**

The service delivers customers individualised supports one person at a time according to the following principles:

- Person centred practice
- Respect for culture, diversity and values and beliefs of customers.
- Respect for privacy and dignity
- Practice to promote independence and informed choice
- Zero tolerance for violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.

### **3. Service Standards**

Our service standards are transparent and easily reviewed in the framework of our policies, processes and practices available on our website for anyone to view. They adopt and put into life indicators for practice and ways of managing incidents and complaints mandated by law. For example, our service standards are audited and comply with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators, July, 2018. This means that service standards mandated by law in those quality indicators can be expected to be supported in a practice, process or policy the service demonstrates. For example, the customer can expect the service to have a process in place for handling:

- Provider Governance and Operational Management
- Risk Management
- Quality Management
- Information Management and Privacy
- Feedback and Complaints Management
- Incident Management
- Human Resource Management
- Worker Safety Screening
- Quality Management and Continuous Improvement.
- Continuity of Supports
- Provision of Supports
- Support Planning
- Transitions to or from the Provider

Any customer can view any of our policies and standards on our web site for more detail on how we deliver safe and effective standards in each of these areas.

#### 4. Service processes

The service understands that customers have a right to not only understand the ethical framework and supporting policies and practices are in place. We also understand that customers have a right to understand our processes before, during and after receiving service. We understand that a transparent and understandable process helps our customers understand why they might choose us in the first place and what to expect when engaging in services with us. Any customer or any other person can review our processes on our website or ask for those processes to be given to them in a way that meet the persons communication and other needs. Customers can expect the following approach to service:

##### a. Considering receiving a service:

Anyone can go to our website for a full explanation of our services, pricing structures and listing of policies and procedures. There is no obligation to proceed with a service after meeting with a representative of the service to discuss service. There is no charge for phone or face to face meetings with the service up to the point where a service agreement is signed.

##### b. Our intake process

Our representative from the service will come to your house or other place or you can come to our office. If your needs make it impracticable for this to happen you can nominate someone else to represent you or we will work out another way of communicating. You will be asked a series of

questions about the service you wish to receive and asked to supply us a copy of your NDIS plan and sign an agreement for service with us.

**c. Receiving a service**

You will be allocated a support coordinator. This person will be your main point of contact. It is their job to follow your instructions and organise services to meet your needs. This person may communicate with you face to face at a place you choose or by other means such as over the phone or by email. They will also do things on your behalf such as talking to service providers. Your NDIS funds will be billed for these services. It is up to you and your support coordinator to organise how often you may meet and/or communicate.

**d. Lodging a complaint or incident**

You or your representative can raise any issue that is not meeting your needs with your support coordinator directly. If you are not comfortable with this you can contact the manager of the service direct. You can lodge a report via the company website or email direct. If you do not feel comfortable contacting the service in any way you can contact another agency such as the NDIS. The service website has instructions on other agencies and ways of lodging a complaint or giving feedback. Any feedback you give will be dealt with according to our policies and processes that cover the nature of the complaint or feedback. For example, your support coordinator may simply speak with you to understand your needs and act on that. Alternately, the matter may be referred onto another agency to investigate if needed such as the police or the NDIA.

## Life Connect Disability Services Delivery of Services Policy

Policy number	2	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	14/7/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	14/7/2020

### Introduction

The aim of this policy is to identify and articulate the ethical, legislative, legal and practice standards and how service is delivered by Life Connect Disability Services. The policy relates to service delivery ranging from initial contact with a client going through to assessment, service delivery and finalisation of client services.

### Purpose

The policy is written with the intention to provide a minimum set of expectations for Life Connect Disability Services employees, clients and other stakeholders participating in services provided by Life Connect Disability Services. The policy is not a prescriptive guide to each step taken in delivering or receiving service. Specific instructions for dealing with situations are given elsewhere in other policies and guidelines the service follows.

It is an overview of principles and major practice strategies and tools and the rationale underlying these approaches that support how service is delivered. The policy is designed to help clients, staff, supporters, stakeholders and other people understand what it is that Life Connect Disability Services does and why they do it. Anyone reading this document should be able to understand the steps, procedures and practices we have in place to deliver a safe service. That same persons reading this document should be able to develop an understanding of guiding principles we follow to do this.

## **Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines**

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- The NDIS Code of Conduct
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2018.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants, students or any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## **Requirements to comply with this policy**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document. It is also a requirement that any person representing Life Connect Disability Services completes the on-line Worker Orientation Module 'Quality, Safety and You' published by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

## **Consequences of non-compliance with this policy**

We understand that in the event any member of staff does not comply with this Delivery of Services Policy they will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## **Procedures**

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

## **Principles of this policy**

The framework we work to through principles are how we have developed our way of working and delivering service. Each of our policies, guidelines and practices in some way links to how we meet each element of the following principles.

Life Connect Disability Services commits in the context of a disability service engaged in the delivery of Support Coordination services to have a policy, guideline and practice to meet each following principle as detailed in the NDIS Insurance Scheme (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2018.

Any person reading this policy can understand that Life Connect Disability Services has a documented and worked to way of meeting each principle and element listed here.

- **Rights and responsibilities**
  - Supplying person centred supports to NDIS participants
  - Protecting a person's rights to their individual values and beliefs
  - Supporting every person's right to privacy and dignity
  - Supporting independence and informed choice
  - Protecting freedom from Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination
- **Governance and Operational Management**
  - Delivering service in a robust and transparent governance and operational management system in line with our scope of operations, scale of services and complexity of supports we provide.
- **Risk Management**
  - Delivering service to participants, workers and providers in a safe way where those risks are identified and managed.
- **Quality Management.**
  - Delivering service in a quality management framework that promotes continuous improvement of how we deliver service.

- **Information Management**

- Delivering service in a way that makes sure each participants information is managed in a way that is identifiable, accurately recorded, current and confidential. That this system is easily accessible to the participant and appropriately utilised by relevant workers.

- **Feedback and Complaints Management**

- Delivering service that has processes in place that are accessible and known by participants wishing to make complaints about service.
- Having a management and resolution system in place for managing complaints and other feedback made by all parties.
- Having a culture of complaints management that welcomes complaints and acknowledges and respects the role of complaints through good management of those complaints.

- **Incident Management**

- Delivering service within a safe incident management framework focussed on acknowledging, responding to, managing and learning from incidents.

- **Human Resource Management**

- Having systems and processes in place to make sure each participant's needs are met by workers who are competent in relation to their role, hold relevant qualifications, and who have relevant expertise and person to provide person centred support.

- **Continuity of Supports**

- Having a system in place where changes or interruptions to service occur to make sure the participant understands and agrees with plans to manage this and alternate arrangements are put in place.

- **Collaborating with Other Agencies**

- Having a system in place to share information with other agencies with the consent of the participant to improve service for the participant.

## **Meeting each element of the principles of the policy**

It is important that this policy while not trying to replace other policies, guidelines and gives life and practical meaning to what delivering principles led service means to our customers, staff and others who we deal with. Some examples of how people

dealing Life Connect Disability Services can know if we are following the intent or elements of each principle might include for example:

### **Rights and responsibilities**

Anyone can go to our website to review our policies and/or read are informed consent statement on how we protect the rights and responsibilities of people we deliver a service to. Policies that people may wish to review include our; Code of Conduct, Anti -Discrimination Policy, Customer Service Charter and other policies we work to.

### **Governance and Operational Management**

Anyone can go to our website to review our governance policy to understand the effective systems we have in place to deliver service.

### **Feedback and Complaints Management**

Anyone can lodge a complaint via our website or in writing with our complaints management form or ask to see our Complaints Policy.

### **Risk Management**

Anyone can ask to see how we manage risk through use of our risk management register, risk assessment forms and Risk Management Policy.

### **Quality Management**

Participants and others can give feedback to us to build into our continuous improvement plan which we use to guide our well we deliver and improve our service.

### **Information Management**

Participants are able to supply information in a secure and protected way through use of protected intake procedures and secure storage. Processes and procedures we follow can be reviewed in our Information Management Policy.

### **Incident Management**

Participants and others are able to review our Incident Recording register and forms we use to document, report and learn from incidents which we feed into improving how we manage incidents.

© 2019: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of Tony Herbert, 2/51 Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, 3350.

## **Human Resource Management**

Our Staff Recruitment Policy shows how we comply with worker screening obligations to make sure our participants and others are safe in how they receive service from us.

## **Continuity of supports**

Each participant will receive an individual goal plan. That plan will clearly identify their allocated worker and have a plan in place for what happens if that worker is not available or some other unexpected delay or obstacle to service is experienced. The service will also provide a transition plan if the participant decides to go to another agency to make sure service is not disrupted.

## **Collaborating with other agencies**

Each participant will receive an individual goal plan. When creating that plan the participant will be asked to identify other services they would like approached and communicated with to deliver better service to the participant.

Anyone wanting more information on how we meet each of these principles and elements in delivering service other than the overview given in this policy can easily access resources available on-line, in person and in a way the person can understand those resources.

## **Financial Advice**

The service does not give advice on how to manage money nor does the service assist with the handling of money. The only advice the participant will receive is around the effective management of NDIS funding allocations to supports.

## life Connect Disability Services Incident Reporting Policy

Policy number	5	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by	14/7/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	
		Scheduled review date	14/7/2020

### Introduction

The aim of this policy is to describe the types of services and supports available to service users to which this policy applies. The policy also aims to articulate the ethical, legislative, legal and incident reporting standards Life Connect Disability Services (the service) works to. The policy describes and defines what an incident is and the service will manage those incidents.

### Purpose

The guidance in this policy is for NDIS participants, supporters, other stakeholders and people acting on behalf of the service to read and use as a reference source. It is designed to give those people information about the key principles and good practices the service will use for effective incident management. People reading this document should be able to form a clear view of not only what an incident is but steps the provider has in place to prevent, respond to and manage incidents. This policy should also inform interested readers procedures the service has in place for identifying, assessing, recording, managing, resolving and reports to incidents. The policy should also inform on practices and procedures in place for helping the service learn and improve from the experience of incidents and their management.

### Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines and Associated Documents

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules, 2018
- NDIS (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules, 2018
- NDIS (Practice Standards – Worker Screening) Rules, 2018
- Life Connect Disability Services Professional Conduct and Abuse Policy

- Life Connect Disability Services Child Safe Policy
- Life Connect Disability Services Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Life Connect Disability Services Guidelines

## **Scope**

The procedures and processes of this policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants , students are any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## **Requirements to comply with this complaints policy**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

## **Consequences of non-compliance with this complaints policy**

Any member of staff not complying with this complaints policy will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## **Procedures**

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver. For example, while this policy gives an overview on how the service manages incidents generally people can review specific policies on dealing with abuse and child protection and associated guidelines.

## **Systems Used**

The service maintains an incident reporting system that is based around how we record information internally in our own system and how that relates to other external systems. Information will be recorded by us in our Care View Client file which is a secure password protected file system. It will also be contained in our incident management registered with associated documents used by the service to manage incidents. This system is also secure and password protected. We also use the My Reportable Incidents page on the NDIS Commission Provider Portal to meet our reporting obligations for incidents mandated for reporting by the provisions of the oversighting legislation, rules and guidelines.

## Declaration of Intent

The starting point for how the service responds to incident management is built around the understanding that the provider has a responsibility to deliver safe and quality supports and services to people with a disability. This is prefaced in the context of the service delivery of 1:1 Support Coordination supports to NDIS funded participants and their supporters. This means the service has a responsibility to deliver the safe services in the context of the following principles of the NDIS Act, 2013. That responsibility also extends to the service in its capacity as a registered provider of disability services with the National Disability Insurance Agency. People with a disability have the right to:

- Realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.
- Be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability
- Be supported to exercise choice including in relation to taking reasonable risks in pursuit of their goals and the planning of their delivery of supports
- Be respected for their worth and dignity and to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be able to determine their own best interests including the right to exercise choice and control and to engage as equal partners in decisions that will affect their lives to the full extent of their capacity
- Have their privacy and dignity respected
- Have the role of families, carers and other significant persons in their lives acknowledged and respected
- Have access to advocates and supports which promote innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary practice and effectiveness

## Definitions

For people with a disability and their supporters involved or impacted on by an incident it is important for the service to be clear on what defines a reportable incident: Reportable incidents serious incidents or alleged incidents which result in harm to an NDIS participant and occur in connection with NDIS supports and services. Specific types of reportable incidents include:

- The death of a person with a disability
- Serious injury of a person with a disability
- Abuse or neglect of a person with a disability
- Unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, a person with a disability (excluding, in the case of unlawful physical assault, contact with and impact on, the person that is negligible.)

- Sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, a person with disability, including grooming of the person for sexual activity.
- The use of a restrictive practice in relation to a person with a disability, other than where the use is in accordance with an authorisation (however described) of a State of Territory in relation to the person or behaviour support plan for the person.

### **Describing and identifying incidents this incident reporting system covers:**

- Acts, omissions, events or circumstances that occur in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to a person with disability and have, or could have, caused harm to the person with disability
- Acts by a person with disability that occur in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to the person with disability and which have caused serious harm, or a risk of serious harm, to another person
- Reportable incidents that have or are alleged to have occurred in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to a person with disability

This policy and associated incident management system deals with any acts, omissions, events that occur or particular circumstances that arise in connection with provision of NDIS supports or services to a person with disability, if they have, or could have caused harm to the person with disability. The subject of the allegation for these incidents may be anyone, including a worker, or a member of the general public, as long as the incident occurred in connection with the provision of NDIS supports and services to the impacted person with disability.

Harm is defined as the resulting impact of the act, omission, event or circumstance that occurs, and can include physical, emotional or psychological impacts such as physical injuries, emotional impacts such as fear or poor self-esteem, and psychological impacts such as depression or impacts on a person's learning and development.

### **The steps the service takes to manage incidents:**

This policy and associated management guidelines used by service staff to identify and respond to incidents are built around the following framework:

- How we document and display our incident management system so those who should know what the system is and how it works can access that information
- How incidents are identified, recorded and reported.
- Who incidents must be reported to
- The person who is responsible for notification of reportable incidents

- How support and assistance to the impacted person of an incident (including information about access to advocates and supports), to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing is made available
- How the impacted person will be involved in the management and resolution of the incident
- How the incident management system records details of any investigations conducted to establish the causes of a particular incident occurring and the nature of that investigation.
- When corrective action is required and the nature of that action.

This framework creates a series of key practices that reflect how the services deals with incidents.

- Accessibility of the incident management system
- Identifying incidents
- Immediately supporting the impacted person
- Keeping records
- Recording and storing information
- Privacy and confidentiality
- What information is collected
- Recording management of correspondence
- Reporting incidents
- Investigations
- Learning from incidents

Any person can go to the service website to review this policy and other policies that relate to how we manage incidents generally (this policy) and specific situations such as in our Professional Conduct and Abuse Policy and Child Safe Policy. The service website also contains link to information and advocacy services which help describe and define types of abuse and incidents as well as supports available. People with a disability receiving a service will be offered other resources to help them understand incident management during intake into the service. The person receiving for service will get the opportunity to sign a receipt for this information in a way that suits them.

All staff any other person representing Life Connect Disability Services can access the staff link on the website for guidelines around managing incidents and associated forms used in that process. Those guidelines include processes for supporting immediate needs of an impacted person such as keeping people safe from harm and notifying the relevant authorities. The service staff site also contains a record of all incidents in an incident recording register. This register records the type of incident, how correspondence is managed, any investigations and who has been advised about the incident. All staff receive training in using the web site staff access area and in responding to incidents.

Information in the service staff site including details of the incident is secured by a confidential password. Anyone impacted by an incident can ask the manager of the service and/or responding staff member to help them understand the information recorded and used in the incident management system. Any person representing the service who receives a report of an incident or forms the opinion an incident has happened is responsible for reporting the incident. The manager of the service is responsible for investigating the incident including recording it in the register, notifying agencies and investigating incidents.

Learning opportunities through feedback from people impacted and other sources will be incorporated into the services continuous improvement plan to improve how the service deals with incidents.

A summary of the incident management processes is described in the following terms. If people involved with or using the incident reporting system are satisfied each aspect is catered to then the system is effective and fit for purpose:

1. Accessibility – people affected by incidents know where to get information and understand how to use those systems.
2. Identifying incidents – people know what an incident is.
3. Supporting the impacted person – people know where and how to get help
4. Record keeping – Information is stored in a central location, is retained and is secure.
5. Reporting an incident - Staff witnessing an incident must report it. The service manager is responsible for recording it in the register and following the matter through.
6. The manager of the service is responsible for notifying the NDIS commission if the circumstances require it.
7. Investigations – The manager of the service is responsible for investigating the incident.
8. The manager of the service is responsible for addressing any ways of improving practice that can be learned from an incident.

## GOVERNANCE POLICY

Policy number	15	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by Board on	02/08/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	02/08/2020

### INTRODUCTION

Governance in the community sector is concerned with the systems and processes that ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation. The owner and registered for incorporation nominee Tony Herbert of Life Connect Disability Services takes ultimate responsibility for the governance of the organisation. However, governance is also concerned with the way Life Connect Disability Services work with service users and other stakeholders to ensure the organisation is effectively and properly run and meets the needs for which the organisation was set up.

### PURPOSE

This Governance Policy is intended to clarify the underlying principles of governance approved by the Life Connect Disability Services organisation. This policy should be read and understood in the context of registered and incorporated business operating on a small scale in the disability industry. The business does not have a board or directors or other structures other than the registered person for incorporation who runs the business directly.

### POLICY

Life Connect Disability Services is an incorporated business engaged in the delivery of support coordination for people with disabilities. The function of the registered person responsible for the incorporated business is to ensure the delivery of the organisation's objects, to set its strategic direction and to uphold its values. The registered person is responsible and accountable for ensuring and monitoring that the organisation is performing well, is solvent, and is complying with all its legal, financial, and ethical obligations.

The responsibilities of the registered person that cannot be delegated to any other person or body include

- Compliance monitoring – ensuring compliance with the objects, purposes and values of the organisation, and with its constitution
- Organisational governance – setting or approving policies, plans and budgets to achieve those objectives, and monitoring performance against them
- Strategic planning – reviewing and approving strategic direction and initiatives
- Regulatory monitoring – ensuring that the organisation complies with all relevant laws, regulations and regulatory requirements
- Financial monitoring – reviewing the organisation’s budget, monitoring management and financial performance to ensure the solvency, financial strength and good performance of the organisation
- Financial reporting – considering and approving annual financial statements and required reports to government;
- Risk management – reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of risk management and compliance in the organisation; agreeing or ratifying all policies and decisions on matters which might create significant risk to the organisation, financial or otherwise
- Dispute management – dealing with and managing conflicts that may arise within the organisation, including conflicts arising between the sole trader and service users.
- Social responsibility – considering the social, ethical and environmental impact of all activities and operations and ensuring that these are acceptable

### **Relationship with management**

The registered person should focus on the strategic direction and the core policies of the organisation and be involved in day-to-day operational decisions.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Policy number	9	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	02/08/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	02/08/2020

### Introduction

Life Connect Disability Services is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information which the organisation collects, holds and administers. Personal information is information which directly or indirectly identifies a person. How we manage that information plays a large part in how secure the information is and how that protects your privacy. The aim of this policy is to describe how information is managed by Life Connect Disability Services in the variety of forms it is received, held, disseminated and disposed of by the service.

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for Life Connect Disability Services staff in dealing with information management. It also describes to our customers, supporters and stakeholders how their information is managed and secured. The policy also outlines the process for individuals and organisations to access client information from Life Connect Disability Services and the procedure to follow when dealing with these requests to make sure information is managed safely.

Aspects of how we protect your privacy in other ways is dealt with in more detail in our privacy policy. This information management policy describes the physical steps we take to keep your information safe when we have it in our possession or when we release it to other parties. This policy should show how client information is handled by Life Connect Disability Services in the following situations.

- When a client has provided consent for the handling of that information.
- What security measures Life Connect Disability Services will take to protect client information received.
- What we will do with your information once the program is finished and/or the information is no longer required.
- How Life Connect Disability Services will deal with the security of electronic data flows received and stored in systems used by the service.

Any person, employee, stakeholder, customer or other interested party reading and working to the detail of this policy should be able to understand the following:

- The state and federal legislation and its requirements that Life Connect Disability Services works to meet and report on where required.
- The peak government and other bodies mandated by law or other requirement that Life Connect Disability Services answers to and frameworks held by those organisations that the service works to meet.
- The principles of information management that Life Connect Disability Services works to meet.

This understanding is best prefaced in the setting of the service protecting private information under the rules, practices and guidelines of multiple federal and state legislations and agencies.

### **Scope**

This policy relates to any work practice carried out on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services by any person acting on behalf of the service be it as a direct employee, agent, contractor or person purporting to represent the service. The practices and intent of this policy also relate to any client or other stakeholder involved in the receipt of service from Life Connect Disability Services.

### **Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines**

Anyone that receives service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect that the service delivered will comply with relevant legislation and guidelines including with the conditions and requirements of:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Registered Providers of Support) Rules, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
- NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers, 2017
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Protection and Disclosure of Information – Commissioner) Rules 2018
- Freedom of Information Act, 1982 (Victoria)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Victoria)

- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Victoria)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)
- Service Information Kit for Funded Agencies, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 2018.
- Guidelines to protecting the security of personal information: 'Reasonable steps' under Information Privacy Principle 4.1, Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner
- Privacy and information security guideline for funded agency staff, Victorian Department of Human Services, 2018.
- The Victorian Protective Data Security Framework, 2016, Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

### **Requirements to comply with this policy:**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

### **Consequences of non-compliance with this policy**

We understand that in the event any member of staff does not comply with this policy they will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

### **Procedures**

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

### **Declaration of Intent**

This policy is intended to demonstrate what we at Life Connect Disability Service value and how we go about delivering service. It is our intention to have a range of policies, processes and practices proportional to the scope of our enterprise that effectively meet the needs of our customers. This policy codifies that intent into a set of principles that act as an overarching framework of best practice with individual elements that guide our services.

### **Principles of this policy**

Any person receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect to receive services that address and achieve the following principles of service.

1. Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.
2. Respect the privacy of people with a disability
3. Provide Supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill.
4. Act with integrity, honesty and transparency.
5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with a disability.
6. Support people with disability to pursue their goals and maximise independence and social and economic participation
7. Develop the capacity of people with disability to participate in the community and in employment
8. Build a sustainable scheme that is based on insurance principles.

### **Compliance with principles of this policy:**

Any person receiving service can expect that Life Connect Disability Services will have practices for service delivery in place that comply with each of the following:

- Relevant rules, guidelines and policies issued by the NDIA
- Life Connect Disability Services own Code of Conduct and Customer Service Charter
- Any commonwealth, state or territory laws and any other requirements that are applicable to the registered provider.
- Life Connect Disability Services will notify the NDIA if the service is in breach of any Commonwealth, State or Territory law, including any Commonwealth, State or Territory law and/or quality and safeguard arrangements.
- Life Connect Disability Services will notify the NDIA if they become subject to an investigation for breach of any of those laws and arrangements listed.

### **What this Policy means for people using our service in practical terms:**

#### **Definitions:**

- Personal information is described as any information, or an opinion about an individual whose identify is apparent, excluding health information. Examples include a person's name, address, telephone number and bank account details, Privacy and Data Protection Act, 2014 (Victorian).

- Health information is defined as information relating to an individual's physical, psychological or mental health, Health Records Act, 2001 (Victoria).

### **How we use your information**

Life Connect Disability Services recognises the essential right of individuals to have their information administered in ways which they would reasonably expect – protected on one hand and made accessible to them on the other. The organisation has adopted the following minimum standards in relation to handling personal information to reflect that ethos of secure information management.

- Collect only information which the organisation requires for its primary function i.e. delivering Support Coordination Services.
- Ensure that stakeholders are informed as to why we collect the information and how we administer the information gathered;
- Use and disclose personal information only for our primary functions or a directly related purpose, or for another purpose with the person's consent;

Store personal information securely, protecting it from unauthorised access; and

- Provide stakeholders with access to their own information, and the right to seek its correction.
- Manage electronic data flows to ensure effective and secure management of information.

### **How We Handle Client Information With the Clients Consent**

Any staff or other person acting on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services must not ask for or receive any personal information from a client unless:

- It is legitimately required to facilitate providing a service to the client.
- The client signs an information release form authorising receipt of the information.
- The client is given access to a copy of the Informed Consent Disclosure Statement explaining the reasons for receiving information, handling and conditions for release of information.

It is likely that Life Connect Disability Services will ask to collect personal and health related information from you for the purposes of delivering a service to you. This means we will receive information from you in the form of hard copy forms or information we may ask you to email to use.

## **How we Distribute and Handle Information Going to other Services.**

Any staff or other person acting on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services must not disseminate any personal or health information from a client unless:

- It is legitimately required to facilitate providing a service to the client.
- The client signs an information release form authorising receipt of the information.
- Life Connect Disability Services has received a written request from that agency or service on an official letterhead including; name, contact details and address of the client for whom the agency is seeking information, name and signature of the officer, date of the request, information required, specific purpose for which the information is required and legal power enabling receipt of the information.

That information will only be transmitted to another agency by using a secure email communication to the recipient or by handing hard copy information to the intended recipient.

## **How we Secure Your Hard Copy Information**

Client files are held in secure IT systems and a lockable cabinet or case which is accessible only to authorised personnel. Client files may contain information that is relevant to the service being provided, in addition to personal information such as name, address, and contact phone numbers. Information gathered as part of the assessment will only be accessible to authorised personnel nominated by the client on an information release form.

These hard copy files will only be retained as long as it is necessary for the transfer of those files to electronically holding storage facilities. The Life Connect Disability Services Policy is to not retain any hard copy files after they have been electronically stored.

## **How we Secure Electronic Data**

Data stored and/or transferred electronically is done so in accordance with the Victorian Protective Data Security Framework and Standards published by the Victorian Information Commissioner. Electronic data will be stored in password protected storage accessible only by authorised employees of Life Connect Disability Services. We will also comply with the provisions of the Privacy Amendment Act as it relates to notifiable data breaches in the Commonwealth Privacy Act of 1988. Where a data breach involving an unauthorised access to information meeting the

criteria of the amended act the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) will be notified.

### **How we Dispose of Your Information:**

We will comply with Public Records Office, Victoria, Document Destruction Guidelines on how long we keep your records and how we dispose of them. This means that once we have finished delivering service and there is no administrative reason for maintaining the records, we will destroy them. For example, any documents held in hard copy form will be destroyed or any cloud based documents will be deleted from our records.

## Life Connect Disability Services Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Policy number	10	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by	14/7/2019 manager
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	14/7/2020

### Introduction

Life Connect Disability Services will, as far as practicable, provide a safe work environment for the health, safety and welfare of our employees, clients, contractors, visitors and members of the public who may be affected by our work.

To do this, Life Connect Disability Services will:

- develop and maintain safe systems of work, and a safe working environment
- consult with clients, supporters and other stakeholders on safety
- provide information and training for clients, supporters and other stakeholders where required to undertake a service activity.
- assess all risks before service delivery begins, for example, using an approved Work Safe Victoria risk assessment tool to consider risks in a service activity such as travel training for a client with mobility issues.
- remove or control unacceptable risks to safety including workplace, travel, individual's home environment and weather conditions (i.e. extreme weather).
- make an entry of any risk identified along with maintaining, updating and learning from incidents we keep a record of in a risk register.

Ultimately, everyone at the workplace i.e. the service delivery environment is responsible for ensuring health and safety at that workplace.

## **Purpose**

All Life Connect Disability Services staff are responsible for the delivery of safe service activities to clients, supporters or other stakeholders. Any person receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services has an obligation to comply with any reasonable request for workplace safety made by staff. Any person receiving service or otherwise involved with the service is also obliged to act in a safe manner within the limits of the ability and understanding of safe work practices when involved with service delivery with Life Connect Disability. The purpose of this policy is for any person involved in service to understand what practices and practices are in place to ensure workplace safety. This includes:

- identifying practices and conditions that could injure employees, clients, members of the public or the environment
- controlling such situations or removing the risk to safety. If unable to control such practices and conditions, report these to their manager
- making sure workers and clients use personal protective equipment (PPE), training workers and clients to use PPE correctly where needed.
- making sure PPE is maintained and working properly.

This policy should be read by interested parties in the context of the delivery of support coordination services by a NDIS registered provider working with people with disabilities primarily in the community setting. Interested parties to this service should be able to understand that Life Connect Disability Services has a process in place for keeping staff, clients and others safe in the workplace. Also, that this policy gives an overview of the values and beliefs that underpin those processes along with the practical management of risk steps that the service will take to keep people safe.

## **Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2004 (Victoria)
- Occupational health and safety regulations 2017 (Victoria)

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants, students or any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## **Requirements to comply with this policy**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

## **Consequences of non-compliance with this policy**

We understand that in the event any member of staff does not comply with this policy they will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## **Procedures**

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

## **Principles of this policy**

The framework we work to through principles are how we have developed our way of working and delivering service. Each of our policies, guidelines and practices in some way links to how we meet each element of the following principles. Life Connect Disability Services commits in the context of a disability service engaged in the delivery of Support Coordination services to have a policy, guideline and practice to meet the requirements for a safe workplace. Any person reading this policy can understand that Life Connect Disability Services has a documented and worked to way of meeting each principle and element for safe work listed here.

## **Definitions**

- An employee can be defined as someone who has a contract of employment or contract of training. Volunteers are not employees although independent contractors may be employees.
- Reasonable care taken by employers, employees and others in the workplace includes, cooperating with reasonable directions to follow safe work practices and not intentionally or recklessly interfering with or misusing anything at the workplace that may support health, safety and welfare.
- A workplace for the purposes of receiving support coordination services can include any place frequented by workers and others including office space, public places and premises of other services visited during service.

## **Record Keeping**

The service will keep records of safe work practices at a number of levels. Record relating to incidents including near misses will be kept in secure storage for at least 7 years. The service will keep records of:

- Risk identified and steps taken to control that risk.
- A register of injuries and near misses for incidents occurring in the workplace.
- Records of training given to staff in safe working procedures.

## **Roles and responsibilities:**

Everyone is responsible for safe working within the limits of knowledge and ability. The manager of the service is responsible for keeping a record of safe work practices and incidents. The manager is also responsible for publishing details of processes used for keeping people safe in the workplace so that information is easily accessed. The responsibility of the employer in the context of support coordination services include:

- Providing and maintaining safe equipment
- Providing and maintaining safe systems of work
- Keeping workplaces in a safe condition and free of risks to health
- Providing suitable facilities for welfare of staff and others
- Provide employees the necessary information, instruction, training or supervision to enable them to do their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health.

## **Risk Management**

The service will:

- Consider the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring
- Consider the harm that would result from the hazard or risk
- Consider suitable ways to eliminate or reduce hazard and risk
- Consider the cost of eliminating or reducing hazard or risk

## **PROCESSES THE SERVICE FOLLOWS**

Apart from a general commitment to safe work including a system in place for identifying and managing risk and recording health and safety issues and information the service also has a specific response to features of the workplace. Any person

engaged in receiving services in support coordination should consider in that context the practices and steps in the following situations:

### **Manual handling policy**

It is Life Connect Disability Services policy to provide all employees, clients, supporters and other stakeholders with a safe and healthy workplace by identifying, assessing and controlling manual handling risks. While management is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all staff, clients, supporters and stakeholders, those persons must report potential and actual manual handling hazards. Never lift or manually handle items larger or heavier than you can easily support. If you are in any doubt, do not hesitate to ask for help.

### **Injury procedure**

If there is an injury:

1. The first priority is medical attention. The injured client, worker or other person should contact one of Life Connect Disability Services first aiders. For a serious injury also call an ambulance.
1. Any employer, client or other person who is injured during service delivery, experiences a safety incident or a near miss, must report the incident to their Life Connect Disability Services staff member.
2. The Life Connect Disability Services staff member must write a report in the Register of Injuries, Incidents and Near Misses. This standard report must include:
  - Persons name and details
  - time and date of injury
  - exact location the injury/incident occurred
  - how the injury/incident happened
  - details of the injury/illness and the part/s of the body injured
  - names of any witnesses
  - name of the person entering details in the Register

Life Connect Disability Services must report serious injuries to WorkSafe immediately.

### **Smoking policy**

Life Connect Disability Services has a non-smoking policy. Smoking is not permitted on Life Connect Disability Services property or in offices at any time. This includes public places where staff are present delivering services and are unable to remove themselves from the vicinity of any person who chooses to smoke.

### **Alcohol & drugs policy**

Life Connect Disability Services will do its utmost to create and maintain a safe, healthy and productive workplace for all employees, clients, supporters and other stakeholders receiving services. Life Connect Disability Service has a zero tolerance policy in regard to the use of illicit drugs on their premises or the attending of other business related premises (e.g. clients) while under the influence of illicit drugs. Contravening either of these points may lead to termination of the service delivery on the day and a review of the viability of continuing the service delivery over time.

# Privacy Policy

Policy number	14	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by	02/08/2019
		manager	
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	02/08/2020

## Purpose

This policy exists to explain to clients, supporters and other stakeholders how Life Connect Disability Services protects the privacy of clients and other people and agencies it works with. The policy describes the steps the service will take to protect information and privacy when receiving information. The processes the service takes to protect privacy when individuals and organisations seek to access client information from Life Connect Disability Services are also explained. The policy also outlines the requirements of Life Connect Disability staff in seeking to access personal information about clients from agencies, providers or other sources external to Life Connect Disability Services. The policy also explains what sort of private information can be asked for according to legislation and the reasons for the service doing this. This policy can be read in conjunction with our information management policy which describes steps we take to handle and secure information we deal with while delivering service. The core business of Life Connect Disability Services is delivering Support Coordination services to people with disabilities receiving National Disability Insurance funding. This policy should be read in that context on the grounds that any information the service asks for should serve a purpose towards delivering these community based disability services. It should also be read and understood in the context of an amalgam of state and federal rules that oversight the protection of privacy.

## **Objectives of the Policy**

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that the management of client information by Life Connect Disability Services satisfies or defines the following criteria.

- What information Life Connect Disability Services may ask clients or other stakeholders to provide.
- What protections are in place according to law in terms of what information the service may ask for and handle while delivering service.
- How client information is handled when a client has provided consent for the handling of that information.
- What happens to client information held by Life Connect Disability Services when a client requests the information, either for their own purposes or to be forwarded to a third party.
- What happens when Life Connect Disability Services is required to deal with client information to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat the health, safety and welfare of the client or the public.
- What happens when Life Connect Disability Services is required by law by or for a law enforcement agency for a prescribed purpose.
- What security measures Life Connect Disability Services will take to protect client information received.

Each of these objectives should be complied with stringently to ensure that within the limits of law, a person's privacy is protected by processes and procedures that treat information about a person as confidential

## **Scope**

This policy relates to any work practice carried out on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services by any person acting on behalf of the service be it as a direct employee, agent, contractor or person purporting to represent the service. The practices and intent of this policy also relate to any client or other stakeholder involved in the receipt of service from Life Connect Disability Services.

## **Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines**

Anyone that receives service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect that the service delivered will comply with relevant legislation and guidelines including with the conditions and requirements of:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Registered Providers of Support) Rules, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
- NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers, 2017
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Protection and Disclosure of Information – Commissioner) Rules 2018
- Freedom of Information Act, 1982 (Victoria)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Victoria)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Victoria)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)

### **Requirements to comply with this policy:**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

### **Consequences of non-compliance with this policy**

We understand that in the event any member of staff does not comply with this policy they will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

### **Procedures**

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

### **Declaration of Intent**

This policy is intended to demonstrate what we at Life Connect Disability Service value and how we go about delivering service. It is our intention to have a range of policies, processes and practices proportional to the scope of our enterprise that

© 2019: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of Tony Herbert, 2/51 Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Victoria, 3350.

effectively meet the needs of our customers. This policy codifies that intent into a set of principles that act as an overarching framework of best practice with individual elements that guide our services.

### **Principles of this policy**

Any person receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services can expect to receive services that address and achieve the following principles of service.

1. Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.
2. Respect the privacy of people with a disability
3. Provide Supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill.
4. Act with integrity, honesty and transparency.
5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with a disability.
6. Support people with disability to pursue their goals and maximise independence and social and economic participation
7. Develop the capacity of people with disability to participate in the community and in employment
8. Build a sustainable scheme that is based on insurance principles.

### **Compliance with principles of this policy:**

Any person receiving service can expect that Life Connect Disability Services will have practices for service delivery in place that comply with each of the following:

- Relevant rules, guidelines and policies issued by the NDIA
- Life Connect Disability Services own Code of Conduct and Customer Service Charter
- Any commonwealth, state or territory laws and any other requirements that are applicable to the registered provider.
- Life Connect Disability Services will notify the NDIA if the service is in breach of any Commonwealth, State or Territory law, including any Commonwealth, State or Territory law and/or quality and safeguard arrangements.
- Life Connect Disability Services will notify the NDIA if they become subject to an investigation for breach of any of those laws and arrangements listed.

## **What this Policy means for people using our service in practical terms:**

### **Definitions:**

- Personal information is described as any information, or an opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent, excluding health information. Examples include a person's name, address, telephone number and bank account details, Privacy and Data Protection Act, 2014 (Victorian).
- Health information is defined as information relating to an individual's physical, psychological or mental health, Health Records Act, 2001 (Victoria).

## **What this Policy means for people using our service in practical terms:**

Any person delivering services on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services or acting in any way on behalf of the service is expected to act in the best interests of NDIS participants. This policy goes towards informing and empowering our practice and the knowledge of participants receiving service so they can have choice and control in receiving service. This knowledge is expected and desired to be in the form of participants understanding what action Life Connect Disability Services must take to ensure that a participant's privacy is protected. These steps include:

### **How We Use Your Information**

We may ask you for personal information so we can work with you to develop your own plan for the skills that you want to develop. We may ask you about your health, symptoms and/or experiences of your life challenges through disability. We may ask you to fill in forms that give us details on this and other features of your life. We may also send personal information onto other agencies where you ask us to if it is going to help you work towards your plan. For example, if you were to tell us about your mental health challenges and wanted us to refer you to a specialist mental health agency, we would ask you for details so we could fill in a referral form and send it to that agency.

### **What Information Must You Provide?**

You are not obliged by any legislation or other guidelines that Life Connect Disability Services work with to provide any information to us. We will however ask for a minimum of information that helps us determine if we can provide you with a service and to help determine how that service looks. We will use the provisions of the National Disability Insurance Agency Act, 2013 (Cwlth) to help us determine a minimum of information we will need from you. For example, we will ask you if you have a funding package from the National Disability Insurance Agency and ask for evidence of that package. If you choose not to provide this information, we would not be able to offer you a service.

## **How We Handle Client Information With the Clients Consent**

Any staff or other person acting on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services must not ask for or receive any personal information from a client unless:

- It is legitimately required to facilitate providing a service to the client.
- The client signs an information release form authorising receipt of the information.
- The client has been made aware of how to access a copy of the Informed Consent Disclosure Statement explaining the reasons for receiving information, handling and conditions for release of information.

Any staff or other person acting on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services must not disseminate any personal or health information from a client unless:

- It is legitimately required to facilitate providing a service to the client.
- The client signs an information release form authorising receipt of the information.
- Life Connect Disability Services has received a written request from that agency or service on an official letterhead including; name, contact details and address of the client for whom the agency is seeking information, name and signature of the officer, date of the request, information required, specific purpose for which the information is required and legal power enabling receipt of the information.

## **When Might We Release Your Information Without Consent?**

Life Connect Disability Services are obliged in some circumstances by law to release your information regardless of your wishes. These circumstances include:

- Where we believe there is reasonable ground for which the release of information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to your life or the life of another person. For example, where we believe on reasonable grounds you may be about to harm yourself in the near future, we may notify the police or other agencies.
- In some instances, such as when the police, ombudsman or other agency produce proof of a legislative authorisation to receive your information we are obliged to release it.

## **How You can Receive Your Own Information**

We are authorised by law to provide what is known as ‘informal access’ to your own records you have provided us. For example, where you have given us copies of medical reports, we can give them to you without any further authorisation. Where information has come to us by other means such as from another agency, even though it may be about you we may need to work with you to lodge a Freedom of Information Request as we cannot release other agencies documents.

## **How we Secure Your Information**

Client files are held in secure IT systems and a lockable cabinet or case which is accessible only to authorised personnel. Client files may contain information that is relevant to the service being provided, in addition to personal information such as name, address, and contact phone numbers.

Information gathered as part of the assessment will only be accessible to authorised personnel nominated by the client on an information release form. Any electronic information we receive will be secured and password protected using a secure case management server based in Australia.

## RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Policy number	14	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by manager	02/08/2019
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	02/08/2020

### INTRODUCTION

This policy exists to demonstrate to clients, supporters, stakeholders and staff of Life Connect Disability Services how the service manages risk. How the organisation does that in delivering Support Coordination services to participants funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is explained. The policy defines how the service establishes and prioritises what constitutes a risk to service delivery and who that risk applies to. The policies, processes and checks the service puts in place for any person likely to be exposed to a risk are described in this policy. The policy also describes processes for improving how the service future plans for dealing with risk.

The policy is not a definitive list of each risk identified and managed by the service. It is a descriptive framework document that describes the underpinning ethos and focus of risk management in the operating context of a small community based service delivery organisation that delivers support coordination services. Anyone can ask for information from the service on specific steps in place for specific risks where required.

The policy can be read, understood and complied with by authorised staff in conjunction with procedural guidelines in the Life Connect Disability Services guidelines. Those authorised staff should also familiarise themselves with risk controls identified and managed using an approved Risk Management and Controls Model designed in accordance with the ISO 3001: 2009 Risk Management Standard. These guidelines, the Life Connect Disability Services Risk Control Model and a spreadsheet risk management tool can be found in service corporate data holdings.

The policy is best read and understood in the context of an organisation oversighted and obligated by multiple legislative tools, guidelines and oversight agencies both federal and state based.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to explain and define what a risk is. Also, to explain how we categorise risks and the criteria we use to identify and respond to risks. The

© 2019: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of Tony Herbert, 2/51 Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Victoria, 3350.

document explains our operating environment and our ethos, approach and focus of what areas of risk we prioritise to manage. It describes the strategies and steps we take to do that and how we review our performance to make sure that is happening. It gives examples of how the service meets its obligations to deal with risk ranging from the governance level through to actual procedures used in the field with clients.

## **POLICY**

Our ethos and prime purpose of our risk management strategy is to identify, manage and mitigate risk to clients, supporters, funding agencies and the public in that order. We put this before our business sustainability processes which also manage risk to our viability and success in the marketplace. Our strategies for addressing this direction lie in how we comply with legislation, funding body guidelines, safety oversight agencies, our own policies, guidelines and risk identification processes.

## **Our Operating Environment**

We define ourselves as a small, community based organisation using our risk management and control model across six key areas or elements of activity, informed by the Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF).

- Leadership
- Strategy and planning
- Financial Management
- Innovation, Quality and Improvement
- People
- Client and market focus

In this environment, the service has developed a range of policies, guidelines, tools and everyday processes that show how we identify and manage risk. This policy reflects steps we have in place in terms of broad strategies in each element area that focus on how we focus our risk management towards protecting our customers, funding agencies and the public. This is our risk management system using our risk management framework.

Each key element area also contains strategies for how we work in the individualised one on one support coordination delivery setting to improve how we manage risk. This is our risk improvement system.

Each key element area is broken down into a series of identifiable actions or omissions that can be rated in terms of risk. We call this our risk identification matrix. We use this matrix to identify how likely a risk is to a person or organisation and how well we are managing that risk.

## WHY WE MANAGE RISK

We manage risk to meet the following objectives.

- To reduce the likelihood and/or consequences of potential adverse events.
- To maximise the results of positive events.
- To provide people with information to assess risk in receiving service from us.
- To add value to how well we deliver our service
- To ensure that we deliver cost effective service that complies with the expectations of clients, funding bodies and the public interest.

## DEFINITIONS

“**Risk**” is the probability that an occasion will arise that presents a danger to our organisation, our staff, our volunteers, our clients, or the general public. It includes, but is not limited to,

- Physical hazards
- Financial hazards
- Reputational hazards
- Legal hazards

“**Risk Framework**” is the process used to deal with risks. This means that the standards we comply with, the policies we develop and the service we deliver are all done with a view to identifying how these steps respond to possible risks in service delivery. We do this by:

1. Identifying risk
2. Assessing risk
3. Eliminating, treating, reducing and mitigating risk
4. Evaluating, reviewing and improving dealing with risk.

## “RISK MATRIX”

Is the calculations we do to identify how likely a risk is to occur and how serious a threat that risk is to person receiving service. When we identify a risk to how we deliver service using our risk framework we give that risk a rating of how likely it is to happen and what the outcome will be. We prioritise risks to our clients including the wider public over our own business concerns when delivering service.

## **HOW WE APPLY OUR RISK MANAGEMENT MODEL TO OUR KEY ELEMENT AREAS.**

### **LEADERSHIP**

We manage and prioritise how are leadership relates to our clients through how transparent our governance procedures with evidence of how we do this. For example, our compliance with standards of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Victorian Disability Code of Conduct, Victorian Department Funded Agency Channel and Victorian State Disability Plan can be viewed in our Code of Conduct, Customer Charter and Service Delivery charter which can all be viewed on our web site. Also, for example, we use an opportunity for improvement form which clients can fill in at any time. We will use this form to help build our quality improvement plan which reviews how we can improve our service including risks identified to our service delivery.

### **STRATEGY AND PLANNING**

Our strategy and planning reflects how well the service has been set up and built to manage risk to our service users. For example, anyone can review our ASIC business registration on-line or our registration to the Victorian Human Standards listed online with the Victorian Department of Human Services. Anyone requesting service can request to see evidence of our insurance policy protections for managing risk in how we deliver service. We keep a register of all systemic risks we identify to receiving service along with a qualification register. Anyone can ask to see these records to be sure of our suitability to manage risk and delivery disability services.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Managing financial transparency and risk of improper financial dealings impacting on the client and wider public is addressed in our procedures. For example, any person can review our terms and conditions on our web site which explain how we bill for our services. Also, for example, each person receiving service is given a service agreement itemising costs before committing to service and is then invoiced for each individual service delivered.

### **INNOVATION, QUALITY AND IMPROVEMENT**

We manage risk in the flexible and changing environment of community based service delivery by been flexible in supporting the needs of people with disabilities. For example, the service uses a complaints and feedback form which any person can request and submit at any time.

The procedures we use reflect the importance of monitoring how we handle risk and improving our risk management processes. For example, we use an on-line server protected software compliance program to conduct regular reviews of how well we are giving our participants the information they need and how we comply with regulations and legislation.

## **PEOPLE**

How the service attracts and retains skilled and competent employees to deliver safe services to clients in accordance with the values of the organisation is an important part of how risk is managed. For example, any person can go to the service web site and view the Staff Recruitment Policy for the service. Also, for example, the service uses approved national police checking, qualifications and reference checking services before employing staff. No one is able to deliver service without a current working with children check, police check and clearance from the Disability Worker Exclusion scheme. Also, for example, anyone can go to the web site and view the service Occupational Health and Safety Policy including an explanation of risk assessments and forms used by staff to keep clients safe when receiving service.

## **CLIENT AND MARKET**

How effectively the service meets the needs of the client and marketplace is an important part of how well it manages the risk poor service poses to client wellbeing. For example, the service identifies and manages this risk by using a person centred approach to developing an individual plan for the client. This plan is regularly reviewed including how well the service is meeting the client need to be kept informed of options for service available to them. Our Occupational Health and Safety policy; also, on our web site shows how we protect our clients and others during the delivery of service.

## **SCOPE**

This policy relates to any work practice carried out on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services by any person acting on behalf of the service be it as a direct employee, agent, contractor or person purporting to represent the service. The practices and intent of this policy also relate to any client or other stakeholder involved in the receipt of service from Life Connect Disability Services.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Any person carrying out work on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services is responsible for complying with the procedures and aspirations of this policy. Those persons are also responsible for working with the guidelines and risk management model tools to manage risk available to them as part of their employment or relationship with the service. Any person receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services is responsible for informing the service of any likely risk that a reasonable person might expect would affect the receiving of service in an individualised community disability setting.

## **LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES THIS POLICY COMPLIES WITH**

This policy aims to meet prescriptive requirements of each listed resource. For a further explanation of specific aspects of those requirements people can go to those resources or request an explanation from Life Connect Disability Services:

- Victorian Disability Act, 2006
- Victorian Department of Human Services Funding and Service Agreement
- Victorian State Disability Plan, 2017-2010
- Standards for Disability Services in Victoria, 2007
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2004 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2017 (Vic)
- National Disability Insurance Agency Act, 2013 (Cwlth)
- Victorian Disability Workers Code of Conduct, 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Terms of Business
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Rules
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Provider Registration Guidelines

#### **PROCEDURES**

Life Connect Disability Services will take all reasonable steps available to it to put the intent of this policy into day to day practices. This means that any staff member receiving an inquiry for service or delivering service should aim to:

- Not deliver any service or inquiry for service without receiving the appropriate workplace safety checks such as national police check and other clearances listed in this policy and the guidelines.
- Advise any person requesting service or receiving services of the resources on the service web site including service policies.
- Refer any person requesting information on insurances and accreditations of the service with access to the relevant resources such as the ASIC portal.
- Advise any person requesting specific information on risk management practices of the service's response using the risk management model tool.
- Provide any person requesting facilities to provide feedback or complaint on how to improve services with the forms or other resources to do that.
- Refer any person seeking clarification on pricing to the resources available to them with the NDIS on pricing protocols and give an individualised breakdown of any funding provided or proposed to be provided.

## LIFE CONNECT DISABILITY SERVICES STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY

Policy number	16	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by	28/07/2019 manager
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	28/07/2019

### INTRODUCTION

The success of Life Connect Disability Service in any future role as an employer of staff relies on its ability to conduct probity and security checks that are fair, efficient, and effective. The worker screen procedures in this policy adopt and put into practice the zero tolerance for abuse principles of worker screening. Worker screening checks take a pro-active approach to addressing the risk of abuse of people with a disability present in unsuitable workers. This policy does not describe how Life Connect Disability Services manages the performance of staff after recruitment. Those details are described in the Human Resources Policy which is yet to be created.

### PURPOSE

The Staff Recruitment Policy has been established to ensure that Life Connect Disability Services shows transparency in staff recruitment as the basis for ongoing support and oversight of staff procedures for the safety of clients, supporters, staff and other stakeholders. Any person, employee, stakeholder, customer or other interested party reading and working to the detail of this policy should understand the following:

- The state and federal legislation worker screening requirements that Life Connect Disability Services works to meet and report on where required.
- The principles of service delivery and staff recruitment management that Life Connect Disability Services works to meet.
- The specific safe working checks that Life Connect Disability Services workers must have before starting work.

- The staff recruitment system in place for worker screening and visibility of that system for people with a disability, supporters and other stakeholders to be able to understand the protections in place.
- How the worker screening system used protects the rights of people with a disability to be safe and protected.
- How the worker screening system reduced the potential of employing individuals who post an unacceptable risk of harm to people with a disability
- How the worker screening system prohibits individuals who have a history of harm against people with a disability from having more than incidental contact with people with disability when working for a registered NDIS provider
- How the worker screening system deters individuals who pose a high risk of harm from seeking work in the NDIS sector

Any person reading this policy can understand that this policy represents a transitional response to worker screening as the new procedures for the NDIS Commission are developed and implemented. This position has been taken to allow for the strongest screening available under an amalgam of state and federal systems in place.

#### **GUIDING LEGISLATION, RULES, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Working With Children Act, 2005 (Vic)
- Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic.)
- Disability Act, 2006 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014: (Vic)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Regulations 1989 (Cth)
- Working with Children Regulations 2016 (Vic)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013 (Cth)

#### **RELEVANT GUIDING DOCUMENTS**

In addition to the requirement of legislation relating to what information on prospective or current staff Life Connect Disability Services must or can ask for and how that relates to the rights of the person been asked to provide that information the following resources are also adhered to in the delivery of this policy.

- The Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme Instruction, 2017, *The Victorian Department of Human Services*.
- NDIS Provider Registration Guide to Suitability, 2017
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Practice Standards – Worker Screening) Rules, 2018
- Code of Conduct for Disability Workers, Victorian Department of Human Services, 2018.
- Service Information Kit for Funded Agencies, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 2018.
- Victorian Disability Abuse Prevention Strategy, 2018.
- Victorian State Disability Plan, 2017-2018.
- Intergovernmental Agreement on Nationally Consistent Worker Screening for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, 2016
- NDIS Code of Conduct, 2018

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants, students or any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

## **REQUIREMENTS TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document. It is also a requirement that any person representing Life Connect Disability Services completes the on-line Worker Orientation Module 'Quality, Safety and You' published by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF NON COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY**

We understand that in the event any member of staff does not comply with this Code of Conduct they will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## PROCEDURES

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver.

## DECLARATION OF INTENT

This policy is intended to demonstrate what we at Life Connect Disability Service value and how we go about delivering service. It is our intention to have a range of policies, processes and practices proportional to the scope of our enterprise that effectively meet the needs of our customers. This policy codifies that intent into a set of principles that act as an overarching framework of best practice with individual elements that guide our services. This intent is best understood in the context of a NDIS registered service providing Support Coordination services. Those principles of worker screening and induction for workers supplying those services are:

- Human rights-based – the paramount consideration is the right of people with disability to live lives free from abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation, consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Provider duty-of-care – employers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that they do not engage unsuitable people and that their workers are not acting or behaving in any way that puts people with disability at risk
- Risk-based – ensuring decisions are made based on the potential risk an individual worker poses after assessing the details of a range of relevant information
- Proportionality – ensuring that only workers whose role poses a significant opportunity for harm are required to be screened
- Consistency – ensuring the NDIS worker screening assessment delivers the same outcome, regardless of the jurisdiction in which the assessment was conducted
- Privacy and appropriate use of information – an individual’s information obtained in the course of conducting an NDIS worker screening assessment will not be used for an improper purpose and will be protected from inappropriate disclosure

- Natural justice – procedural fairness and transparency, ensuring NDIS worker screening processes and decisions will be independent and fair
- Efficiency and effectiveness – streamlined and simplified screening processes for workers and providers who operate across jurisdictions, with a single screening process for all NDIS worker roles.

### **OPERATING SYSTEMS ADOPTED BY THIS POLICY**

This policy adheres to the principles and instructions laid down in the Funded Organisation Monitoring Framework, operated and oversighted by the Victorian Department of Human Services. The policy particularly complies with section 4.5 of the framework as it applies to the safety screening requirements for funded organisations. All staff should make familiarise themselves with the provisions of that clause contained in the Service Information Kit for Funded Agencies, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 2018. Life Connect Disability Services will also retain personal information on workers obtained during the course of worker screening in a secure register of workers protected by password and limited access.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The primary responsibility for effective worker screening rests with the manager of Life Connect Disability Services. This person has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that protocols of this policy are met. Any person working for the service who is issued with an exclusion notice following an NDIS Worker Screening Check must notify the manager. Non-compliance is a breach of company policy as well as the NDIS code of conduct and subject to internal action by Life Connect Disability Services and the NDIS Commission. Any person employed by Life Connect Disability Services who during any period of employment becomes subject of any action, inaction or offence posing a risk to a person with a disability is obliged to inform the manager. It is a pre employment requirement of any employee to conduct their own worker screening checks at personal cost as a condition of employment that involves contact with people with disabilities. It is the responsibility of the manager to sight and retain a copy of worker screening checks before any person starts employment.

### **DEFINITIONS**

As this policy is explicitly about making sure unsuitable people are not recruited or allowed to work with people with disabilities it is relevant to define key terms. Workers requiring valid and current NDIS Worker Screening clearance are defined as anyone who in the course of duties:

- Directly delivers support coordination duties to people with a disability.

- Are likely to have more than incidental contact with people with a disability as a normal part of their duties.
- Are key personnel in the service.
- Contact includes physical contact, face to face contact, oral communication, written communication and electronic communication.

#### **IDENTIFIED ROLES WITHIN THE SERVICE**

The proportionate response to worker screening in this policy is designed in the context of Life Connect Disability Services as a registered deliverer of support coordination services through a relatively simple and small business operating structure. The structure consists of key roles, ancillary supports and sub contracted labour delivering support coordination services to NDIS participants. Each role has been risk assessed with the following outcomes in terms of worker safety screening:

- Key personnel i.e. owner and manager. Worker screening required.
- Administrative staff. Worker Screening not required.
- Support coordinators. Worker Screening required.

#### **AUTOMATIC CLEARANCES, EXCLUSIONS AND PRESUMED EXCLUSIONS**

- an applicant who does not have a relevant criminal history record, disciplinary or misconduct record, any issues identified through self-disclosure, or any other relevant records, and has not previously been issued an NDIS Worker Screening Check exclusion will automatically be issued an NDIS Worker Screening Check clearance
- an applicant who has a conviction for specified offences within the following categories will be issued an exclusion due to disqualifying offences with no right of appeal (except on grounds of mistaken identity), provided the applicant was at least 18 years old at the time of the offence. Examples of exclusions and presumed exclusions are at the annexure to the rear of this policy.

#### **INFORMATION SHARING AND DISCLOSURE**

Information received by the manager of Life Connect Disability services the subject of worker screening checks whether the results of those checks be clearance or exclusion for the applicant are confidential in nature. Results for people employed will be retained in a secure environment. Results which exclude people will be destroyed with information not passed to any unauthorised person.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Life Connect Disability Services must keep record for at least 7 years for all workers who engage in risk assessed roles. Those records include:

- the name, date of birth and address of the worker
- the risk assessed role in which the worker engages
- whether or not the worker is eligible for an exemption, the start and end date of the exemption and the name of the worker's supervisor during this period
- the worker's application number or check number and outcome expiry date
- records relating to an interim bar, suspension, exclusion or any action taken by the registered NDIS provider in relation to those decisions
- allegations of misconduct against a worker with a check and the action taken by the registered NDIS provider in response to that allegation

## **PROCEDURES**

Life Connect Disability Services will take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff may be safely entrusted with the duties of their position. This will include a requirement that any person delivering client services must have the following before starting work:

- A valid Working With Children Check - Employee
- A current national police check certificate.
- Proof of checks and eligibility to be employed as a disability worker under the Victorian Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme.
- Proof of checks and eligibility to perform duties as a carer not excluded under the provisions of the Disqualified Carer Check where relevant.
- Reference and proof of qualifications checks with a registered agency to establish employment history.
- Suitable qualifications and experiences to deliver services to clients in accordance with business rules of the National Disability Insurance Agency and the Victorian Department of Human Services.
- Satisfaction of 100 point identity check of primary and other identification documentation.
- Proof of completion of the NDIA worker module, Code of Conduct.

**ANNEXURE: OFFENCES SUBJECT TO WORKER EXCLUSION (SOURCE:  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON NATIONALLY CONSISTENT WORKER  
SCREENING FOR THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME)**

- a) Disqualifying offences include:
- i. murder and attempted murder
  - ii. serious assault against a child or vulnerable person
  - iii. sexual assault of a child or vulnerable person including incest
  - iv. child pornography-related offences
  - v. abduction or kidnapping offences against a child or vulnerable person involving a sexual or abusive element
  - vi. bestiality and serious animal cruelty offences
- b) an applicant with a conviction or pending charge for specified offences within the following categories will be excluded, unless there are exceptional circumstances, provided the applicant was at least 18 years old at the time of the offence:
- i. manslaughter
  - ii. assault and sexual offences not captured in clause 61b
  - iii. dangerous or negligent acts against a person under care
  - iv. abduction or kidnapping offences not captured in clause 61b
  - v. animal cruelty offences not captured in clause 61b
  - vi. drug trafficking offences
  - vii. fraud and deception offences against a child or vulnerable person
  - viii. national security offences
  - ix. pending charges for offences captured in clause 61b.

Policy number	11	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by	02/08/2019 manager
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	02/08/2020

## Anti-Discrimination Policy

### Introduction

This policy exists to explain to any person receiving service, their supporters, other stakeholders and staff how the service views the issue of discrimination in the conduct of business and delivery of services. The policy relates to the expectations the service has in applying fair and equitable practices to any person to be free of discrimination in their dealings with Life Connect Disability Services.

### Purpose of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to describe the types of services and supports available to service users to which this policy applies. The policy also aims to articulate the ethical, legislative, legal and complaint practice standards Life Connect Disability Services works with to manage discrimination.

The policy describes options for complaint, redress or feedback available to clients, family and other interested stakeholders receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services feel they have been unfairly discriminated against. The policy also sets a minimum set of standards any person receiving services can expect in terms of protection for their rights to be treated fairly and equally.

This policy is written from the point of view of a person or supporter receiving services from Life Connect Disability Services in the core business of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funded support coordination services.

The context of receiving services also includes any intake procedure where a person may have been declined or delayed service which the person believes may have amounted to discrimination against them.

## Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff including contractors and covers all work-related functions and activities including external training courses sponsored by Life Connect Disability Services.

## Policy

The objective of Life Connect Disability Services Equal Opportunity Policy is to improve business success by:

- providing a safe, respectful and flexible work environment
- delivering our services in a safe, respectful and reasonably flexible way

This policy describes and defines how services are to be delivered to reach this objective including definitions of what defines discrimination and how a person who believes they are being discriminated against by Life Connect Disability Services can address that situation.

## Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Bullying

Life Connect Disability Services is committed to providing a service delivery environment free from discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying. Behaviour that constitutes discrimination, sexual harassment or bullying will not be tolerated and will lead to action being taken.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

### Discrimination:

**Direct discrimination** occurs when someone is treated unfavourably because of a personal characteristic that is protected under Victorian law.

**Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a rule seems neutral but has a discriminatory impact on certain people. For example, a minimum height requirement of 6 foot for a particular job might be applied equally to men and women, but would indirectly discriminate on the basis of sex, as women tend to be shorter than men.

**Sexual harassment** includes unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in circumstances in which it could reasonably be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

## Equality of Service

Life Connect Disability Services provides equal service opportunity to people without discrimination based on a personal characteristic protected under state and federal equal opportunity legislation.

Under State legislation they include:

- age

- breastfeeding
- carer status
- disability
- employment activity
- gender identity
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status
- personal association with someone having any of these characteristics
- physical features
- political activity/belief
- pregnancy
- race
- religious activity/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Any employee of Life Connect Disability Services found to have contravened this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments are changes that allow people with a disability to receive service safely and productively. To not make reasonable adjustments to help a person receive service may amount to discrimination. Life Connect Disability Services will make reasonable adjustments for a person with a disability or their supporters who:

- Receive services.
- requires the adjustments in order to participate in the service delivery process.

Examples of reasonable adjustments can include:

- reviewing and, if necessary, adjusting the performance requirements of a service offered.

- arranging flexibility in service provision hours.
- providing telephone typewriter (TTY) phone access for clients with hearing or speech impairments
- Purchasing or sourcing screen reading software for clients with a vision impairment
- Providing regular breaks for people with chronic pain or fatigue

When thinking about reasonable adjustments Life Connect Disability Services will weigh up the need for change with the expense or effort involved in making it. If making the adjustment means a very high cost or great disruption to the service delivery, it is not likely to be reasonable.

### **Legislation and Regulations**

Life Connect Disability Services will work to the provisions and stipulations of:

- National Disability Insurance Agency Act, 2013 (Cwlth)
- Disability Act, 2006 (Victorian)
- Carers Recognition Act, 2012 (Victorian)
- Equal Opportunity Act, 2010 (Victorian)
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (Cwlth)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, 2001 (Victorian)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006 (Victorian)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act, 1986 (Cwlth)
- Age Discrimination Act, 2004 (Cwlth)
- Racial Discrimination Act, 1985 (Cwlth)
- Sex Discrimination Act, 1984 (Cwlth)

### **Procedures**

Life Connect Disability Services will work to the following procedures to effectively manage and eliminate the incidence of any person experiencing discrimination in applying for or receiving services.

- Any person can go to the web site for information on how to lodge a complaint of discrimination including how to access the resources of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Human Rights Commissioner of Victoria.
- Any person applying for service will receive information on the criteria used for accepting people for service. Alternately, anyone can review our intake criteria on the company web site.
- Any person who feels they are experiencing discrimination can lodge a grievance with the service who will help the person report the matter for investigation by Life Connect Disability Service or to another agency.

## life Connect Disability Services Professional Conduct and Abuse Policy

Policy number	6	Version	1
Drafted by	Tony Herbert	Approved by	14/7/2019 manager
Responsible person	Tony Herbert	Scheduled review date	14/7/2020

### Introduction

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that the management of misconduct and abuse by Life Connect Disability Services satisfies the following criteria.

- There is an awareness of what defines abuse and/or professional misconduct by promoting and applying human rights, education and training to understand abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence and risks factors and indicators of abuse.
- That there are practices and safeguards in place which can help prevent abuse including policy and practice that protect people's rights by empowering people with a disability through a supportive organisational culture.
- That there are systems and processes in place for addressing risk for specific groups and service settings with targeted approaches for groups at increased risk of abuse along with understanding service settings that increase risk and understanding behaviours of concern.
- That there are systems and processes in place for early intervention and response to abuse that support the person and meet organisational requirement.
- That Life Connect Disability Services maintains and fosters a culture of analysis, learning and improvement that deals with instances of abuse to feed into continuous improvement in eradicating abuse.

### Purpose

The aim of this policy is to describe the types of services and supports available to service users to which this policy applies. The policy also aims to articulate the ethical, legislative, legal and compliance practice standards Life Connect Disability Services works to. Life Connect Disability Services has adopted the Zero Tolerance Framework Developed by the National Disability Services Association for dealing with misconduct and abuse. The framework and this policy endorse the right of each

person to be free from abuse, neglect, violence and preventable injury. The policy describes options for complaint, redress and protection available to clients, family and other interested stakeholders receiving service from Life Connect Disability Services who have experienced professional misconduct amounting to abuse and/or abuse or are at risk of abuse from any other person.

### **Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines**

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules, 2018
- NDIS (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules, 2018
- NDIS (Practice Standards – Worker Screening) Rules, 2018
- Life Connect Disability Services Professional Conduct and Abuse Policy
- Life Connect Disability Services Child Safe Policy
- Life Connect Disability Services Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Life Connect Disability Services Guidelines
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006 (Victorian)
- The Crimes Act, 1958 (Victoria)
- Responding to allegations of abuse involving people with disabilities. Guidelines for disability service providers and Victoria Police – June 2018. Published jointly by Victoria Police and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Scope**

The procedures and processes of this policy applies to all Life Connect Disability Services staff including permanent and temporary staff, agency staff, casuals, contractor, consultants, students are any person acting in any capacity whereby they are taken to be representing Life Connect Disability Services and its interests.

### **Requirements to comply with this complaints policy**

It is a condition of employment that all staff read and sign a receipt for this document acknowledging their commitment to abide by the principles of the document.

### **Consequences of non-compliance with this complaints policy**

Any member of staff not complying with this policy will be liable to disciplinary action. This may include but not be limited to immediate termination, counselling or other action compatible with our mandate and the law

## **Procedures**

The policy is not a manual on procedure for performing duties on behalf of Life Connect Disability Services. Where procedural advice is required by any staff member various companion documents are available on the Life Connect Disability Services web site ([www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au](http://www.lifeconnectdisability.com.au)). Staff are expected to check with those sources for full information on policies, legislation and other standards impacting on the service we deliver. For example, this policy is framed within the context of how the service manages incidents and should be read in conjunction with the incident reporting policy.

## **Declaration of Intent**

The starting point for how the service responds to abuse is built around the understanding that the provider has a responsibility to deliver safe and quality supports and services to people with a disability. This is prefaced in the context of the service delivery of 1:1 Support Coordination supports to NDIS funded participants and their supporters. This means the service has a responsibility to deliver the safe services in the context of the following principles of the NDIS Act, 2013. People with a disability have the right to:

- Realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.
- Be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability
- Be supported to exercise choice including in relation to taking reasonable risks in pursuit of their goals and the planning of their delivery of supports
- Be respected for their worth and dignity and to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be able to determine their own best interests including the right to exercise choice and control and to engage as equal partners in decisions that will affect their lives to the full extent of their capacity
- Have their privacy and dignity respected
- Have the role of families, carers and other significant persons in their lives acknowledged and respected
- Have access to advocates and supports which promote innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary practice and effectiveness

## **Definitions**

For this policy to be effective it is important to identify and define what constitutes abuse. Staff representing the service are to refer to guidelines and other reference sources available on the staff intranet site for behavioural indicators and physical signs that may indicate abuse. People with a disability, supporters and other stakeholders can receive information on these indicators from links on the service web

site or by asking their support coordinator to supply information. Types of abuse may include:

- Physical abuse, unlawful physical contact or physical assault
- Sexual contact, sexual assault or sexual misconduct
- Psychological, emotional or verbal abuse
- Domestic violence
- Neglect
- Financial abuse

### **Describing and identifying what and who this policy relates to:**

- Acts, omissions, events or circumstances that occur in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to a person with disability and have, or could have, caused harm to the person with disability
- Reportable incidents that have or are alleged to have occurred in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to a person with disability

This means that this policy is about keeping people with a disability safe from abuse by another person or persons. It is not about processes and steps involved where the person impacted by abuse is a worker or other person. This is regardless of whether the person causing or otherwise involved in the abuse to the person with a disability is a Life Connect Disability Services worker, carer, supporter or another person. There are special steps and protections in place where the alleged person causing the abuse is a staff member from Life Connect Disability Services.

Professional Misconduct is defined for the purposes of this policy as any action or inaction by an employee of a disability service provider during the course of service delivery that would amount to an offence punishable by criminal law if proven. This abuse or misconduct can relate to any member of Life Connect Disability Services, partner agencies or other person who is reasonably suspected of having committed an act of professional misconduct or abuse towards a person receiving service.

### **Abuse Awareness, Human Rights and Risk Factors for Abuse.**

Life Connect Disability Services is committed to upholding human rights for clients and all others involved in the delivery of service. We accept that people with a disability, particularly those with intellectual disability, dementia or other cognitive impairment, are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation than the general population. For this reason, any clients meeting these criteria will be considered vulnerable when conducting risk assessments on any proposed service delivery practice or process.

## **Practices and Safeguards in Place**

Life Connect Disability Services takes the following approaches to eliminating where possible the potential for actual event or abuse experienced or identified during the delivery of services.

We provide information and options for feedback to our clients in person and on our website describing what constitutes abuse and services available to any person experiencing abuse. We have a staff education policy on identifying and responding to abuse. We use safe employment screening processes such as police checks. We submit willingly and work closely with oversight agencies such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and Victoria Police where necessary. We protect and support the rights of people identified as whistle blowers who have reported abuse. We adopt and use an early response and reporting process to any direct allegation of abuse or other evidence that suggests abuse if occurring. This means that where we suspect abuse it will be immediately reported to the relevant authorities such as the police and assistance such as immediate medical treatment will be sought where appropriate.

In this setting we apply key terms that define the role of people involved and that defines what we as a service do to respond to allegations of abuse:

- A person with a disability and subject of abuse is defined as any person who is an NDIS participant and receives supports or services from an NDIS provider.
- The subject of the allegation means a worker or other person who has been accused of been involved in abuse directly or by inference upon a person with a disability.
- Trauma informed care means providing care that acknowledges with sensitivity how trauma negatively affects a person.
- Specified personal means the person experiencing abuse can know who is responsible for responding to allegations of abuse and how they will do that.

This means our practices prioritise clearly identifying who is experiencing abuse and making sure the alleged perpetrator is kept away from them. Also, that help will be sought as a priority for the person experiencing abuse in immediate and ongoing terms with information available on processes and who is handling those processes.

## **Addressing Risk for Specific Groups and Service Settings**

In addition to having a risk mediation approach to disability generally we also identify specific practices that pose a risk for potential abuse. For example, our practices where possible exclude remote and unsupervised service provision putting potentially vulnerable client at risk; instead preferring to deliver service in public places where practical.

## **Responding to abuse**

Where we form a reasonable suspicion of abuse by another person upon a person with a disability receiving services from us, we will implement early intervention responses. For example, if the suspected perpetrator is a staff member all contact with the client will be immediately suspended and the matter reported to Victoria Police. If a staff member forms a reasonable suspicion of abuse against a client by any other person the matter will also be reported to Victoria Police by that staff member with the support of the manager of the service.

Included in our early intervention procedures will be evidence gathering and record keeping. We will make notes of what we see, hear or otherwise perceive and may give these notes to an investigating authority. We will similarly notify specialist support service such as advocacy, medical or counselling services if we become aware of suspected abuse. This information will be kept securely and is available for review by the person with a disability and their supporters in our incident reporting register.

We are not able to keep suspected abuse quiet if the client asks us to where we have formed a reasonable suspicion of abuse taking place. It will be reported to investigating authorities, family members and support agencies where it is appropriate.

## **Analysis, Learning and Improvement**

We will adopt a continuous learning approach to dealing with abuse. Any client reporting abuse will be offered the opportunity to give feedback on their experience if appropriate for us to improve our processes. With the permission of the client we will use de-identified data of reported abuse to help us identify system issues we can address to stop abuse happening again.