

8. Privacy and Dignity Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

Australian Quality Care will manage and ensure that we provide the participant access to services and supports that respect and protect their dignity and right to privacy.

Scope

This policy applies to Australian Quality Care's staff and management engaged in working with participants.

Policy

Australian Quality Care is committed to protecting and upholding all stakeholders' rights to privacy and dignity, including participants, staff, management, and representatives of other service agencies.

Australian Quality Care is committed to protecting and upholding the participants' rights to privacy and dignity as we collect, store and handle information about them, their needs and the services provided to them.

Australian Quality Care requires staff and management to be considered and consistent when writing documents regarding a participant and when deciding who has access to this information.

Australian Quality Care is subject to NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission rules and regulations. Australian Quality Care will follow the guidelines of the Australian Privacy Principles in its information management practices.

Australian Quality Care will ensure that each participant understands, and agrees to, the type of personal information collected and the reasons for collection. If material is to be recorded in an audio or visual format the participant must agree to their involvement, in writing, before any material can be collected. The participant must also be informed at the time material is being recorded in an audio or visual format.

Australian Quality Care will advise each participant of our Privacy Policy using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand (Easy Read documents are available to all participants).

Australian Quality Care will ensure that:

- It meets its legal and ethical obligations as an employer and service provider, concerning protecting the privacy of participants and organisational personnel

- Participants are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy and confidentiality
- Participants and organisational personnel are provided with privacy and confidentiality is assured when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature
- All staff and management understand the necessary requirements to meet their obligations
- Participants are informed of Australian Quality Care's confidentiality policies using the language, mode of communications and terms they're most likely to understand
- Australian Quality Care will attempt to locate interpreters and will use easy access materials.

This policy conforms to the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles, which govern the collection, use and storage of personal information.

This policy will apply to all records, whether hard copy or electronic, containing personal information about individuals and to interviews or discussions of a sensitive personal nature.

Procedure

Dealing with personal information

In dealing with personal information, Australian Quality Care staff will:

- Ensure privacy for the participants, staff, or management when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature
- Collect and store personal information that is only necessary for the functioning of the organisation and its activities
- Use fair and lawful ways to collect personal information
- Collect personal information only with consent from the individual
- Ensure that people know of the type of personal information collected; the purpose of keeping the information; the method used when information is collected, used or disclosed, i.e. who will have access to information
- Ensure that personal information collected or disclosed is accurate, complete, and up-to-date and provide access to the individual to review information or correct wrong information about themselves
- Take reasonable steps to protect all personal information from misuse, loss and unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure

- Destroy or permanently de-identify personal information no longer needed or after legal requirements for retaining documents that have expired
- Ensure that participants understand and agree with the type of personal information being collected and the reason/s for collection
- Ensure participants are advised of any recordings in either audio or visual format. The participant's involvement in any recording format must be agreed to, in writing, before collection of material takes place.

Participant records

Participant records will be kept confidential and only handled by staff **directly engaged in the delivery of service to the participant**. Information about a participant may only be made available to other parties with the consent of the participant, or their advocate, guardian, or legal representative. A written agreement providing permission to keep a recording must be stored in the participant's file.

All hard copy files of participant records will be kept securely in their electronic file with suitable security.

Responsibilities for managing privacy

All staff are responsible for the management of personal information to which they have access. The General Manager is responsible for the content appearing in Australian Quality Care publications, communications, and on our website, and must ensure the following:

- Appropriate consent is sought and obtained for the inclusion of any personal information about any individual, including Australian Quality Care personnel (see 'Consent Policy and Procedure').
- Information provided by other agencies or external individuals conforms to our privacy principles.
- Our website contains a Privacy Statement that clearly outlines the conditions regarding any collection of personal information from the general public captured via their visit to the website.

The Board and their delegate are responsible for safeguarding personal information relating to Australian Quality Care's staff, management, and contractors. The Board and their delegate will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are familiar with the Privacy Policy and administrative procedures for handling personal information
- Providing participants and other relevant individuals with information about their rights regarding privacy and dignity
- Handling any queries or complaints about a privacy issue.

Privacy information for participants

During the first interview, participants are notified of the information being collected about them, how their privacy will be protected, and their rights concerning this data. Information sharing is part of our legislative requirements. Participants must provide consent to any information sharing between our organisation and government bodies. The participant is informed they can opt-out of any NDIS information sharing during audits.

Privacy for interviews and personal discussions

To ensure privacy for participants or staff when discussing sensitive or personal

matters, Australian Quality Care will only collect personal information which is necessary for the provision of supports and services and which:

- Is given voluntarily
- Will be stored securely on the Australian Quality Care database.

When in possession, or control, of a record containing personal information, Australian Quality Care will ensure that the record shall be protected against loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure, by such steps as is reasonable in the circumstances. If a record must be provided to a person in connection with the provision of a service to Australian Quality Care, everything reasonable will be done to prevent unauthorised use or disclosure of that record.

Australian Quality Care will not disclose any personal information to a third party without an individual's consent, unless that disclosure is required or authorised by, or under law.

Related documents

- Code of Ethics and Conduct Agreement
- Consent Policy and Procedure
- Participant Handbook
- Employee Handbook
- Easy Read Privacy Document
- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement

References

- [NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2020 – Version 3](#)
- [Privacy Act \(1988\)](#)
- [Australian Privacy Principles \(APP\)](#)