

# 25. Continuity of Supports Policy and Procedure

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## Purpose

Continuity management is an integral part of our organisation's operating plans, risk management and decision-making. Continuity of care to our participants falls within this remit. Continuity of care planning contributes to improved quality and safety of care; increases the satisfaction of the participant, Staff and our organisation; and will maximise the use of resources to provide the appropriate level of care and access.

The participant's NDIS Plan incorporates reasonable and necessary supports; any informal supports that are already available to the individual, i.e. informal arrangements that are part of family life or natural connections with friends and community services; as well as other formal supports, such as health and education. Australian Quality Care will ensure that the participant has consistent supports or services to allow them to undertake daily activities and supports to maintain their life choices.

## Scope

This policy applies to the Staff managing and working with participants.

## Policy

Management will arrange schedules to ensure that participants know who will be attending to their needs and supports. Management will pair a participant with a worker who holds appropriate skills and knowledge; participant requests are matched with preferred workers wherever possible. Examples of meeting a participant's wishes may include accessing a Staff who speaks the participant's first language, shares the same cultural background or meets specific criteria that has been requested.

Staff will be placed with participants whose locations are close to their home, to reduce travel time and increase Staff satisfaction and retention. Continuous support and predictability will be planned through the allocation of a consistent Staff to a participant. All supports and strategies are recorded in the participant's plan and will be used by all Staff when supporting a participant's preferences and needs (see 'Responsive Support Provision and Support Management Policy and Procedure').

## Procedure

To ensure participants have timely and appropriate support, without interruption Australian Quality Care's Staff will:

- Access, read and comply with the participant's plan
- Review strategies listed in the support plan before provision of support
- Provide quality services as per participant's plan
- Document all the participant's preferences and needs to allow for a consistent care approach
- List all appointments and tasks related to the participant's needs
- Allow allocation according to a participant's requirements
- Inform management of any absences, in advance, to allow time to allocate a replacement who meets the participant's criteria and, preferably, is known to the participant
- Contact participants if there are any changes, or potential changes, in their care
- Undertake emergency procedures, as required.

No appointments are ever double booked. When travelling to participants homes, it's essential that our Staff factor enough travel time to ensure correct arrival time.

## Disruptions and changes

Australian Quality Care notifies participants when an unavoidable interruption occurs. Staff will make every attempt to inform the participants, via telephone and email, before any unavoidable disruptions to services or participant appointments. When it's not been possible to contact the participant, they will be briefed on arrival at the next meeting or scheduled service.

Management will contact a participant to:

- Seek the participant's agreement and to ensure that they're entirely aware of any changes
- Explain, in detail, alternative arrangements.

In the case of an emergency, when a worker cannot attend work due to circumstances out of their control, e.g. illness or family emergency, Australian Quality Care will attempt to place a worker who is known to the participant. However, if this is not possible, the best match available will be sent to the participant. Australian Quality Care will contact the participant and advise them of the situation and provide details of the replacement worker.

## Absence or vacancy

When a Staff is absent, or a vacancy becomes available, then management will:

- Contact a Staff who is a suitable replacement, e.g. Staff with the relevant qualifications or language requirement
- Provide, where possible, a Staff who has worked with the participant previously and is aware of the participant's preferences and needs
- Inform the participant of the replacement's details, where possible; and upon completion of the service gather feedback on the replacement Staff
- Select an appropriate replacement Staff who will be sensitive to the participant's requirements, ensuring care is consistent with the participant's expressed preferences.

Staff who are unable to work are required to contact management. If there is an intended absence, e.g. vacation or appointment, then the Staff must inform management at the earliest opportunity to allow time to prepare the participant.

## Service agreement

Australian Quality Care ensures arrangements are in place so that support is provided to the participant, without interruption, throughout the period of their service agreement. These arrangements are relevant and proportionate to the scope and complexity of supports delivered.

## Critical supports

Contingency plans are drawn-up and adhered to ensure the continuity of care to all participants throughout their time with us. In the case of a disaster, planning will incorporate strategies that enable continual supports before, during and after the disaster. Critical planning will be undertaken for participants who have complex needs.

## Related Documents

- Access to Supports Policy and Procedure
- Participant Support Plans
- Service Agreement

## References

- [NDIS Act 2013](#)
- [NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2020 – Version 3](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)