



SERVICE ACCESS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013, and National Disability Strategy promote access, inclusion and choice for people with a disability, and a focus on their individual needs, goals and aspirations. Lift Up Voices aims to promote these principles within all aspects of policy and service delivery.

Lift Up Voices is committed to providing participants with a high standard of service aims at meeting individual need and promoting a sense of dignity, purpose and security. Lift Up Voices is committed to ensuring that it provides a consistent and transparent and non-discriminatory approach to all people entering or exiting the service.

Information about Lift Up Voices' services will be easy to read and widely available. Lift Up Voices will work with other service providers and community supports to share information and establish relevant networks placing the needs of people at the centre of their supports.

This policy supports the NDIS Practice Standards and the National Standards for Disability Services, in particular Standard 5: Service Access.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the service entry and exit process for Lift Up Voices participants, including those provided funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

It is not the intent of this policy to label a person, but it is recognised that this can be an unintended consequence of being determined eligible for disability services. The purpose of defining access and exit is to enable people with a disability to access supports and services, and to ensure that services are directed towards the intended target group. Lift Up Voices promotes the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all people with disability, and respect for their inherent dignity.

The policy provides direction for Lift Up Voices staff when considering the referral or request for supports and services to the organisation, or considering the exit of a person from the organisation. Where Lift Up Voices may not be resourced to provide a potential or existing participant the necessary and required supports, Lift Up Voices will assist them to obtain services elsewhere.

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Lift Up Voices is obliged to provide potential and existing participants and their family members/carers with clear and concise information about access to services, capacity and waiting times for supports to commence or be implemented and transparent processes to ensure an appropriate exit from the organisation.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all existing and potential Lift Up Voices participants and their family members/carers who have requested, or are currently receiving supports and services.

4. DEFINITIONS

Entry is the process through which a participant enters into a specific support or service agreement with Lift Up Voices.

Exit is the point, at which a participant leaves Lift Up Voices and no longer requires Lift Up Voices' support or transfers to another external service provider.

Stakeholder encompasses (but is not limited to) participants, family members, carers, guardians or external service providers.

Disability Service Standards is the benchmark by which the rights of people with a disability are upheld.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

- Lift Up Voices strives to promote the health, wellbeing, safety and security for all people receiving supports and services;
- Entry and access to services will be provided on the basis of relative need and availability of resources;
- Lift Up Voices adopts a non-discriminatory access process that respects age, gender, race, religion, sexual preferences and disability consistent with human rights and other applicable legislation;
- Lift Up Voices acknowledges all people have a right to accurate, clear and transparent information about gaining access to and exiting Lift Up Voices' services to inform their decision making;
- Information is not limited to one mode or type and can be changed to suit individual needs and preferences;
- Services are provided in a flexible, responsive and person centred way to meet each participant's individual support needs and goals;
- Lift Up Voices staff will assess all participants requesting supports and services, and where limitations of resources, knowledge or skills exist, manage waiting lists for services according to the participant's level of need.
- Lift Up Voices acknowledges that each person has the right to refuse a service or to leave Lift Up Voices at any time they choose. Lift Up Voices further acknowledges that it may discontinue a

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service after consultation with the person, their family and other important members of their support network if the service is no longer sustainable or appropriate for the person;

- Lift Up Voices is committed to working with and referring to other community services or organisations to meet the multiple needs of people;
- Exit procedures will be fair, transparent, follow due process and uphold the rights of the participants;
- Exit procedures will protect the safety and the integrity of Lift Up Voices staff, participants, programs and services. Lift Up Voices assists people when they exit the service and provides them with sufficient information on how to re-enter the service if/and/or when required;
- Lift Up Voices values feedback from people who use its service and will provide access to Complaints and Compliments processes to help inform and improve service access for others.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Lift Up Voices Directors are responsible for:

- Maintaining this policy, its related procedures and associated documents;
- Ensuring the policy is effectively implemented across the service;
- Monitoring staff compliance with the requirements of this policy;
- Ensuring training and information is provided to staff to carry out this policy.

All staff and volunteers are held accountable for the following:

- Complying with the requirements of this policy.

7. ENTRY FRAMEWORK

7.1 Entry Criteria

In line with the NDIS Operational Guidelines, a prospective participant will meet the disability requirement if they meet each of the following requirements:

- a) The prospective participant has a disability that is attributable to one or more intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairments or to one of more impairments attributable to a psychiatric condition
- b) The prospective participant's impairment/s are, or are likely to be permanent
- c) The prospective participant's impairment/s result in substantially reduced functional capacity to undertake, or psychosocial functioning in undertaking, one or more of the following relevant activities:
 - Communication
 - Social interaction
 - Learning
 - Mobility
 - Self-care or
 - Self-management

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For the above purposes, impairments that vary in intensity may be permanent and a prospective participant may still require support for their lifetime despite the variation.

7.2 Entry Procedure

7.2.1 To access the services of Lift Up Voices, a person or a family member/advocate must first make a request for service and be determined eligible to receive support.

7.2.2 Requests for service can be made in the following ways:

- Phone or email request
- On-site visit to Lift Up Voices
- Submit a Registered Interest form on the Lift Up Voices website www.liftupvoices.com.au
- A general enquiry via the contact page on the Lift Up Voices website www.liftupvoices.com

7.2.3 From the initial contact, the person's eligibility will be determined and arrangements negotiated for the person, their family members/carers and other significant people for their support network to meet with Lift Up Voices Director/staff member and social worker for a 1:1 initial consultation. This may take place at Lift Up Voices, the person's home or other community venue suitable to the person and their stakeholders. Various information will be obtained during the consult, including:

- Name, date of birth and contact information
- NDIS goals via completion of the 'L.U.V Goals' online form
- Client Consent online form

7.2.4 Lift Up Voices staff will assess the information provided by the person and offer a recommendation to the Director in regards to the suitability of the person's needs and requests for supports and services. If the Director deems the service has the appropriate resources and can effectively support the person to meet their goals and needs, the Director will approve the request for access.

7.2.5 The person will be notified of their acceptance to Lift Up Voices in writing from the Director. The person and/or their family/carer will receive a session confirmation email and a link to complete their online NDIS Service Agreement based on the needs and supports identified at the initial consult.

7.3 An information file, which includes an Assessment and Recommendation for the person will be developed and accessible via My Music Staff. This information is kept private and confidential as per the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* and only accessible to Directors and relevant staff.

7.4 As per the participant's Service Agreement, 1:1 Goal Sessions with a Lift Up Voices Director are available upon request. These sessions are an opportunity to review the participant's individual goals and the service provided by Lift Up Voices to ensure the participants' supports, communication needs and goals are being met

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8. EXIT FRAMEWORK

8.1 Exit Criteria

8.1.1 A person may leave Lift Up Voices for a number of reasons or circumstances including:

- Relocation to an area outside of Lift Up Voices service delivery;
- Where the support schedule is no longer able to meet the person's needs or assist in achieving chosen goals;
- Transfer to another service provider;
- Lack of available resources or funding;
- The death of a person using the service;
- The person is unwilling to meet the reasonable conditions required in their support plan and thus affecting the safe delivery of a service to the participant and the health and safety of the staff;
- Changes in the person's condition results in the support they require exceeds the skills and expertise Lift Up Voices staff can deliver;
- There has been no contact between the person and Lift Up Voices for a period of three (3) months;
- The person and/or family member/carer engages in behaviour which is unacceptable to Lift Up Voices such as violence, abuse, aggression, theft or property damage;
- Continued non-payment of service delivery fees incurred during support and services provided by Lift Up Voices.

8.2 Exit Procedures

8.2.1 Lift Up Voices acknowledges that exiting a service can be a daunting, stressful and anxious process for people using the service as well as their family members and carers. Lift Up Voices ensures that an exit occurs in a professional, planned and collaborative manner.

8.2.2 Prior to exiting Lift Up Voices, people are provided guidance and support to investigate other options or models of support from Lift Up Voices, explore the consequences of their decision to exit the service and consider re-entry to the service in the future should their needs or circumstances change.

8.2.3 Where a person has an NDIS support package and has entered into an agreement with Lift Up Voices to provide supports and services, they are required to provide two (2) weeks' notice of intention to exit, in writing to the Director.

8.2.4 The participant reserves the right to re-access the service, within a period of three (3) months after formally exiting the service, without having to follow formal access processes, provided the necessary service and support resources are available.

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8.2.5 Following expiration of the three month cooling off period, the person's place within the service is formally terminated and a new 1:1 consultation needs to be undertaken if the person requests service at some point in the future.

8.3 **When the person's consent to exit is not given**

As part of the entry process participants are informed of their rights and responsibilities contained in the service agreement document. Information regarding the reasons for being asked to leave the service will be provided and explained to the participant. These reasons will be included in the exit plan if required. Lift Up Voices may implement a person's exit under the following circumstances:

- An inability or unwillingness over a period of time to work towards agreed goals;
- Other people using the service, staff or the person themselves are at risk of harm;
- Financial requirements are not being met;
- Severe incompatibility with other person's using the service is displayed;
- Dramatic health changes require significantly increased levels of care or service model not provided by the service.
- The service exit will only be actioned after discussion and consultation with the person, their family/carer and other important stakeholders, and strategies have been implemented to meet irreconcilable differences.

Participants wishing to make a complaint regarding their exit are provided with details on the process of complaint.

8.4 **Evaluation and Feedback**

As part of the exit strategy the person and their family/carer will be offered the opportunity to provide evaluation and feedback to improve Lift Up Voices services and identify any training requirements for staff of the service.

8.5 **Files and Documentation**

Upon exit all documentation and information developed and implemented by Lift Up Voices will remain the property of the service. Any documentation provided by other service providers and included in the person's file that has been used to facilitate the person's support will be returned to the person and/or their family/carer. Lift Up Voices will retain copies of these documents.

All information in relation to the person will be retained, secured and stored as per the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

8.6 **Cultural Diversity**

Staff are to ensure that services are provided with sensitivity to and an awareness of the cultural beliefs and practices of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is inclusive of the awareness of needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities.

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8.7 Quality assurance mechanisms

Supports and services provided by Lift Up Voices must be underpinned by a quality framework that ensures consistency and a high level of quality care and support for participants, their families and carers. Lift Up Voices acknowledges that it will be required to undertake annual third party certification of their performance against the National Disability Insurance Scheme Commission (NDIS Commission).

8.8 Communication

Communication about this policy should be implemented in a way that suits each person with regard to his or her cultural background. This policy will be:

- Communicated to the key internal and external stakeholders of Lift Up Voices;
- Communicated to Lift Up Voices staff through professional development opportunities;
- Accessible through the Lift Up Voices website.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

All queries or complaints regarding this Service Access Policy should be directed to team@liftupvoices.com.au.

10. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis with participants, their families and staff of Lift Up Voices. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.

RELATED POLICIES

Code of Conduct Policy
Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy
Continuous Improvement Policy
Participation and Integration Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Quality Assurance Policy
Service Delivery Policy
Withdrawal or Termination of Services Policy

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Client Consent Form
Complaints Register
Continuous Improvement Plan & Register
Talent Release Form

RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR STANDARDS

Disability Discrimination Act
National Disability Insurance Scheme Act (2013)
NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators (2020)
National Standards for Disability Services, Standard 5: Service Access
United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

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