



## **PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Lift Up Voices (L.U.V) is a registered NDIS provider based in Kent Town, South Australia, offering mentoring, music therapy and group programs for people living with disability. We specialise in strengths-based, individualised supports that promote confidence, social connection, communication and emotional regulation through creative expression.

Our **vision** is to create an inclusive space where individuals of all abilities feel empowered to grow, express themselves and thrive. We strive to foster belonging, celebrate individuality and support each person in becoming the best version of themselves.

Our **mission** is to deliver highly individualised, person-centred supports that celebrate each person's unique strengths and passions. We tailor our services around motivating activities that spark joy and engagement, encouraging growth through creativity, connection and innovation.

Lift Up Voices recognises that all people with disability have the right to feel valued and the opportunity to participate fully in life and in society as they choose. We are committed to promoting a positive image of people with disability, recognising that this can positively influence self-esteem and provide opportunities for enhanced citizenship through community inclusion.

We also ensure that the concept of inclusion is culturally appropriate and are committed to working in collaboration and partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, agencies and services to strengthen the impact and application of this policy.

This policy supports the *NDIS Practice Standards, Rights and Responsibilities* Core Module. It also reflects updates introduced in the NDIS Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No.1) Act 2024.

### **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline Lift Up Voices' commitment to ensuring people with a disability are encouraged and supported to contribute to social and civic life in their communities in ways that are important to them. This policy describes the processes to be implemented to facilitate participation and inclusion in community and civic life for each participant accessing Lift Up Voices as their chosen service provider. Lift Up Voices will strive to build opportunities to create an inclusive culture/environment in which

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differences and capabilities are recognised and valued based on each participant's choice and level of participation.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy has been developed and will be implemented to meet the requirements of the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators, the Disability Services Act (1993) and the National Standards for Disability Services.

**This policy applies to:**

- All people who are currently provided supports and services at Lift Up Voices;
- All people who will use supports and services provided by Lift Up Voices in the future;
- All service types, models of support and programs offered by Lift Up Voices
- All Lift Up Voices policies, practices and systems that relate to people who use our services

### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Participation** is taking part in and sharing activities with people with similar interest to achieve personal goals.

**Inclusion** is a sense of belonging developed when a person is accepted by others, seen as an individual, has interaction with others and not excluded.

**Participant** is a person who is accessing Lift Up Voices to be involved in specific program activities.

**Civic life** is participating in the life of the community of which one is a part.

### 5. POLICY STATEMENT

**Lift Up Voices is committed to ensuring:**

- Participants are supported to contribute in community and civic life in ways that are important and meaningful to them;
- Participants have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by other people in the community, including the right to access community services, resources and facilities;
- The development of connections in the community to promote opportunities for participants to have active and meaningful participation in community and civic life;
- Have the opportunity to socialise and build relationships with members of the wider community.

**To ensure this commitment, Lift Up Voices will:**

- Support and encourage participants to realise their goals, dreams and aspirations;
- Implement person-centred planning principles and guidelines to ensure control and decision-making is afforded to the persona and their families/carers.
- Support and encourage participants to identify how they would like to live their life;

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- Develop plans which outline ways in which participants can actively and meaningfully participate in community and civic life;
- Maintain and develop community connections;
- Facilitate linkages between the participant and the community;
- Enhance participants current community connections and informal supports;
- Record examples of community participation and inclusion;
- Review service user engagement and participation in community and civic life;
- Train staff in the importance of community participation and inclusion; including how they can encourage and support participants to actively and meaningfully participate in community and civic life.

## 6. PROCEDURES

The following procedures are to be implemented to enable Lift Up Voices to meet its policy objective of ensuring that participants are supported to contribute in community and civic life in ways that are important and meaningful to them.

- 6.1 Structure its programs and services to be provided in a way that facilitates the integration and participation of clients with other members of the community.
- 6.2 Build strategies into Lift Up Voices' programs to make the greatest possible use of community facilities and services.
- 6.3 Use community facilities and services in a manner at a time with coincide with those of the wider community.
- 6.4 Select contractors, employees and volunteers on the basis of their own involvement and connection with the wider community, amongst other attributes.
- 6.5 Involve other members of the community in the integration of Lift Up Voices' clients in participative community activities.
- 6.6 Collaborate with other community groups, and their members, to facilitate the inclusion of Lift Up Voices' participants in their activities.
- 6.7 Avoid large group activities for participants that are likely to have the unwanted effect of stigmatising or excluding them from community contact, acceptance or involvement.

## 7. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The following performance standards must be met to ensure that the procedures specified in Section 6 are implemented effectively:

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- 7.1 All participants and their families or advocates can access a copy of Lift Up Voices' *Participation and Integration Policy* on the Lift Up Voices website.
- 7.2 All Lift Up Voices personnel are aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to participation and inclusion principles.
- 7.3 All staff members and volunteers have been provided with a copy of Lift Up Voices' *Participation and Integration Policy* and a staff copy is kept in each service outlet.
- 7.4 All staff members, volunteers and Directors have been provided with training in relation to this policy as required.
- 7.5 Ongoing support and guidance is provided to all employees in relation to implementing this policy.
- 7.6 All Lift Up Voices programs and services have been structured in a way that facilitates the integration and participation of clients with other members of the community.

## 8. FEEDBACK

Feedback in relation to participation and inclusion gathered from participants and their families/carers is analysed annually and used to inform systems improvements. A copy of this Policy will be accessible on the Lift Up Voices website or upon request.

## 9. BREACHES OF POLICY

All Lift Up Voices personnel are expected to follow this policy. Failure to follow Lift Up Voices policies and procedures will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action. Serious breaches of policy resulting in gross misconduct could result in instant dismissal.

## 10. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis. 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, Service Access Policy, Service Delivery Policy

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR STANDARDS

Disability Services Act (1993)

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act (2013)

NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators (2021)

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006

NDIS Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No.1) Act 2024

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