

## **2.7 SERVICE ACCESS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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### **Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to demonstrate Partner In Your Care's commitment to service access procedures that uphold the right of people to access appropriate services that meet their needs and are provided in a transparent and equitable way.

This policy and procedure applies to all potential and existing participants, their family members, carers and other supporters and meets relevant legislation, regulations and standards as set out in Schedule 1, Legislative References.

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure:

- *Participant Charter*
- *Fee Schedule*
- *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*
- *Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure*
- *Work Health and Safety Policies and Procedures*
- *Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure*

### **Policy**

Partner In Your Care service delivery environment is safe and engaging, physically accessible and responsive to its participants' support and communication needs.

Partner In Your Care's screening and eligibility, priority of access and waitlist management is undertaken in a fair, equitable and transparent manner, and in line with Partner In Your Care's *Participant Charter*. Access to services is based on relative need, service capacity, the best interests of people using the service and potential impact on existing service users.

### **Procedures**

The Management Team are responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the requirements of this policy and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements.

The Coordinators report to the Management Team on the effectiveness of the entry and referral processes. This is discussed at the Management Team meetings.

Participant feedback and complaints will be addressed in accordance with Partner In Your Care's *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure*.

In accordance with Partner In Your Care's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*, respect for and protection of participants' privacy and confidentiality will be reinforced on an ongoing basis, verbally and in literature promoting the services offered by the organisation.

Where required, participants will be provided with information and support to access a person of their choice, such as an advocate, to assist them to access the service. See Partner In Your Care's *Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure*.

To ensure participants understand how to access Partner In Your Care, staff will provide

information in ways that suit participants' individual communication needs. This includes using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand. Methods include providing written information in Plain English, explaining information either face-to-face or over the phone and using interpreters and advocates.

## Service Environment

Partner In Your Care ensures its service environment is kept clean, hygienic, safe, secure and aesthetically pleasing at all times, through implementing the following:

- Partner In Your Care's *Work Health and Safety Policies and Procedures*, including fire safety and emergency; safety and security; maintenance and management of equipment, furniture, lighting and ventilation; electrical safety; vehicle safety; physical accessibility; chemical use and storage; infection control; and food storage and preparation; and
- Partner In Your Care's *Risk Management, Incident Management, Feedback, Compliments and Complaints*; and *Continuous Improvement* policies and procedures.

Partner In Your Care's physical accessibility is ensured through its *Physical Accessibility Policy and Procedure*. Reasonable adjustments to the support delivery environment will be made and monitored to ensure it is fit for purpose and each that each participant's health, privacy, dignity, quality of life and independence is supported. Partner In Your Care takes a continuous improvement approach to its physical accessibility and encourages participants to use its *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure* to assist it to respond to accessibility needs where required.

Partner In Your Care's opening hours are 8.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, and 9.00am to 4.30pm Saturday and Sunday.

The Coordinators/Manager will track demand, as well as participant and accessibility needs, by monitoring:

- **Demographic data:** relating to the local community and its needs from Local, State and Federal Government Sources, including ABS data and specific NDIS market data published by the NDIA;
- **Unmet need:** demographic data (as above), Partner In Your Care's enquiry and waitlist data and feedback from staff, including those involved in local service networks; and
- **Opportunities for innovation and improvement:** through monthly review of Partner In Your Care's *Complaints Register* and *Continuous Improvement Register* and annual staff and participant satisfaction surveys.

Information for participants, including Partner In Your Care's signage and participant information, will be provided in a variety of formats such as different languages, Plain English, face-to-face or phone explanation by staff, and the use of interpreters and advocates. Specific formats provided will be responsive to demand data (as above) and individual participant needs.

Partner In Your Care will provide suitable participant resources to accommodate the local population. These will take into account cultural backgrounds, disabilities, age and developmental stage where appropriate. Any premises signage will also be consistent with local population requirements.

## Service Access

The Coordinators will deal with all enquiries from prospective participants or their supporters about accessing services. If the Coordinators doesn't take the initial enquiry personally, they will contact the person seeking services or their supporter within 1 working day.

In their first contact with the person or their supporter, the Coordinators will assess whether the person requires any support to move through the intake process. They will also:

- advise the person of their right to involve a support person in their dealings with Partner In Your Care;
- provide information and assist the person to access a support person of their choice, such as an advocate, to help them to interact with the service (see Partner In Your Care's *Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure*);
- where physical access issues are identified, consider whether Partner In Your Care is accessible for the person, and if not, how it could be made accessible; and
- where a language or cultural barrier is identified, engage an interpreter or an appropriate external agency to support the person. See Partner In Your Care's *Service Delivery and Participation Policy and Procedure*.

The Coordinators will book an Intake Interview with the person within 5 working days of their initial contact with them or sooner if the person's needs are considered urgent.

The Coordinators will conduct all Intake Interviews. They will provide the person with information about:

- entry and exit procedures;
- eligibility and priority of access requirements;
- conditions that may apply to service provision; and
- fees.

The Coordinators will undertake a non-discriminatory assessment of eligibility based on:

- the best interests of the participant;
- service guidelines; and
- identified participant needs and risks.

To be eligible to receive Partner In Your Care's services, a person must meet the following eligibility criteria. The person must:

- have one or more identified intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairments that are, or are likely to be, permanent;
- have one or more identified impairments that are attributable to a psychiatric condition and are, or are likely to be, permanent; or
- be a participant who has developmental delay.

Consideration must also be given to the person's Priority of Access by examining:

- the person's relative need compared to others who receive or want to receive Partner In Your Care services;
- any special additional needs of the person, and where relevant, their family, carer or other supporters;
- the extent to which Partner In Your Care can contribute to those needs being met;
- the resources available within Partner In Your Care to meet the person's needs;
- other services the person receives and how Partner In Your Care services will complement those and contribute to improved outcomes for the person; and
- the best interests of the person.

Where relevant, the interview will take into account information already provided about the person in their NDIS Plan. The Coordinators will provide the person with:

- a Partner In Your Care *Participant Handbook*, outlining Partner In Your Care's entry and exit procedures and appeal processes (see service refusal below), priority of

access requirements, waitlist procedures, fees, hours of operation, booking procedures, conditions that apply to service delivery (including when supports may be withdrawn), rights and responsibilities, privacy and confidentiality, and feedback, compliments and complaints processes;

- information about fees associated with the delivery of supports, based on Partner In Your Care's *Fee Schedule*; and
- Partner In Your Care's *Participant Charter, Privacy Statement and Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Form*.

Where required, the Coordinators will provide this information in an alternative format such as a different language, Plain English, detailed verbal explanation or the use of interpreters and advocates.

The Coordinators will contact the person or their supporter within 1 working day of the Intake Interview to advise them of the outcome.

Where the participant is offered services and accepts, see Partner In Your Care's *Assessment, Planning and Review Policy and Procedure*.

### **Non-acceptance**

Where a person is offered services but chooses not to accept the offer, the administration staff will respect this choice.

The Coordinators will encourage the person to contact Partner In Your Care should they change their mind, noting that they may need to be placed on Partner In Your Care's waitlist if the service has no capacity to provide services at the time they do recontact.

### **Service Refusal**

Where services cannot be provided, the person will be provided with a clear reason based on Partner In Your Care's eligibility criteria, Priority of Access requirements or waiting list processes.

Partner In Your Care may refuse to offer a person services where:

- they do not meet Partner In Your Care's eligibility requirements;
- other potential participants are assessed as a higher priority based on Partner In Your Care's Priority of Access Considerations;
- Partner In Your Care does not have the capacity to cater to additional participants;
- or
- Partner In Your Care does not have the resources to cater to the specific needs of the person.

A person who meets Partner In Your Care's eligibility requirements and cannot be offered a service due to lack of capacity, can elect to be placed on Partner In Your Care's Waiting List. The person will be advised of the possible waiting time before services might become available.

In either case, the person will be assisted with referrals and support to access alternative services, as per Partner In Your Care's *Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure*.

## **Waiting List Processes**

The Coordinators will contact people on the Waiting List at least every three months to:

- advise them of their current status;
- check whether they want to remain on the list;
- provide referrals to other service providers if required; and
- advise the estimated wait time remaining.

To keep waiting list size and wait times to a minimum, at the Accommodation Manager/House Leader's discretion, additional services will be offered where justified by demand and Partner In Your Care's resources allow.

## **Appeal**

Any person refused services has the right to appeal the Coordinator's decision. Appeals should be directed in writing to Partner In Your Care's Accommodation Manager/House Leader and a final decision will be made by the Management Team.

If required, staff will provide support for a person to make an appeal, by either transcribing their feedback for the Accommodation Manager/House Leader's review or referring the person to interpreter or advocacy services.

Those not successful in their appeal will be provided written advice to this effect. For procedures for those who successfully appeal, see Partner In Your Care's *Assessment, Planning and Review Policy and Procedure*.

If a person is unhappy with outcome of their appeal, they will be directed to Partner In Your Care's complaints process. As per Partner In Your Care's *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure*, information on Partner In Your Care's complaints process can be provided in a variety of formats if required including support to access interpreters or advocates if necessary.

## **Alternative Supports**

Partner In Your Care will work collaboratively with all people refused services and (with consent) their supporters, to identify what alternative services and referrals could best meet their needs.

With the participant's consent, relevant information will be provided by Partner In Your Care to new service providers to support the participant's seamless transition. Where required, Partner In Your Care staff will also meet with staff of alternative providers to facilitate a smooth transition for the participant.

## **Continuous Improvement**

Partner In Your Care will maintain a record of people who have been refused a service, summarising reasons for their being found ineligible or, if found eligible, reasons for being

placed on Partner In Your Care's Waiting List.

Access, service refusal and referral information will be tracked in Partner In Your Care's participant records to inform Partner In Your Care's continuous improvement.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Management Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, participant and other stakeholder feedback. Participants and service networks will be advised of any changes.

Annual satisfaction surveys will assess:

- participant and other stakeholder awareness of Partner In Your Care's access procedures;
- participant and other stakeholder satisfaction with Partner In Your Care's physical access, service access procedures and management of service refusal and appeals regarding access; and
- whether participants are satisfied with the service environment, service delivery and referral and support to access other services.

Six-monthly Service Delivery and Planning days and activities will include participants and stakeholders, where relevant, and assess whether:

- Partner In Your Care's eligibility criteria are reflected in its participants; and
- feedback provided by and to participants and potential participants around access and refusal and whether the information provided to participants is appropriate and effective.

Partner In Your Care's *Continuous Improvement Register* will be used to record identified improvements and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be fed into Partner In Your Care's service planning and delivery processes.

Endorsement Date:	Reviewed Date:	Reviewed Date:	Reviewed Date:	Reviewed Date:
12/11/2018	10/09/2019	01/06/2021	21/11/2022	
Reviewed by / Rob Nelson Signature: 	Reviewed by / Rob Nelson Signature: 	Reviewed by/ Bianca Yee Signature: 	Reviewed by/ Bianca Yee Signature: 	
<i>This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually and changes endorsed by the Management Team.</i>				