

SD – Continuity of supports Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

Continuity management is integral to 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 maximises 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 already available to the individual, i.e. informal arrangements that are part of family life or natural connections with friends and community services and other formal supports, such as health and education. Headway Gippsland will ensure that the participant has consistent supports or services to allow them to undertake daily activities and supports to maintain their life choices.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to Headway Gippsland staff managing and working with participants.

3.0 Policy

The Client Services Engagement Coordinator will arrange schedules to ensure participants know who will attend to their needs and supports. The Client Services Engagement Coordinator will pair a participant with a worker with appropriate skills and knowledge. Our participant requests are matched with their preferred staff 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 have been requested.

Staff will be placed with participants whose locations are close to their homes (where possible) to reduce travel time and increase staff satisfaction and retention.

Continuous support will be planned by allocating a consistent staff to a participant. All supports and strategies are recorded in the participant's plan. The staff will use them when supporting a participant's preferences and needs

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In the case of an Emergency or Disaster, staff should refer to the Support Plan for strategies and relevant information. This document is reviewed during any emergency or disaster and will provide the relevant information, and staff should contact management if unsure.

4.0 Procedure

To ensure participants have timely and appropriate support, without interruption, Headway Gippsland's staff will:

- access, read and comply with the participant's plan, including the Participant Emergency Plan
- Review strategies listed in the support plan before the provision of support
- provide quality services as per the participant's plan
- document all the participants' 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 the Client Services Engagement Coordinator 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, our staff factor in enough travel time and must ensure the correct arrival time.

4.1 Disruptions and changes

Headway Gippsland notifies participants when an unavoidable interruption occurs. The staff will attempt to inform the participants, via telephone and email, before any unavoidable disruptions to services or participant appointments. When it is impossible to contact the participant, they will be briefed on arrival at the next meeting or scheduled service.

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The Client Services Engagement Coordinator will contact a participant to:

- inform and explain that there is an unavoidable change
- seek the participant's agreement and ensure that they are entirely aware of any changes
- Explain, in detail, alternative arrangements.
- ask the participant if they agree with the proposed arrangement
- participant to confirm their agreement or refuse the alternative arrangement
- record details of agreed arrangement or non-agreement in the participant's records
- confirm that the delivered services were appropriate to their needs, preference and goals

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), Headway Gippsland will attempt to place a known worker to the participant. However, if this is not possible, we will send the best match available to the participant. Headway Gippsland will contact the participant, advise them of the situation, and provide details of the replacement worker.

4.2 Absence or vacancy

When a staff member is absent or a vacancy becomes available, then the Client Service Engagement Coordinator will:

- contact a staff who is a suitable replacement (e.g. a person with the relevant qualifications or language requirements)
- provide, where possible, a staff who has worked with the participant previously and is aware of the participant's preferences and needs
- select an appropriate replacement worker who will be sensitive to the participant's requirements, ensuring care is consistent with the participant's expressed preferences
- inform the participant of the replacement's details, where possible
- upon completion of the service, gather feedback from the participant on the replacement staff member.

Home Care Officers and Life Skills Officers are required to notify the Head Office (Morwell Office) as soon as practicable if they cannot attend their shift.

Notification Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm should be done via the Head office (Morwell), if you have a shift before 9:00 am please contact the On-Call mobile number on 0448 472 007

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4.3 Service agreement

Headway Gippsland ensures arrangements are in place so that support is provided to the participant, without interruption, throughout their service agreement. These arrangements are relevant and proportionate to the support scope and complexity.

4.4 Critical supports

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

6.0 References

- NDIS 2013 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021