

Summary

At Life Without Barriers (LWB), we will:

- ensure we implement an approach of “[Nothing about me, without me](#)”.
- enable people to express themselves, to be heard and be safe.
- uphold equal rights and opportunities for all people we support.
- work together to support people to be involved in any decisions concerning their life and their supports.
- support people’s rights to make informed choices and decisions that others might not agree with.
- learn by listening to people about what is vital to them now, things that must be part of their future, and who are the right people to help with each decision.

Our practice reflects the policy when delivering supports to children and young people within a disability LWB Children Youth and Families foster care, residential care and aftercare services, and adults in Disability and Mental Health Services.

Who should read this document?

The people we support, any formal or informal decision makers and/or support network members, and all the staff working to support these people.

Policy Statement

Supporting informed choice and decision making

LWB staff will act as enablers and supporters. We will work with people to improve their access to information, knowledge, and skills. This will ensure that the people we support have real choices, a strong voice, and control to create new and empowering approaches to living their lives as individuals.

Our work will be guided by the following:

- NDIS (Provider Registration and Practice Standard Rules 2018).
- the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practice Standards and Quality Indicators,
- key elements of independence outlined by the UN Convention of Rights for People with Disabilities (CRPD), and
- [LWB My Rights – Nothing about me, without me](#).

LWB will approach engagement and planning as an “active” process to support and strengthen individual opportunities. We recognise that the mix and extent of responsibilities may fluctuate over time depending on the situation and the person’s abilities.

We respect that people should be appropriately supported, when necessary, in making decisions. We enable them to be the experts in their own lives, deciding how they want to live and how their supports and services are organised and delivered.

We recognise the right of people to make decisions free of fear, influence, or coercive control.

Our staff will ensure the people we support are included in decision-making on how they lead their day-to-day lives and their social and community interests. As a result, they are supported to experience and enjoy these to the fullest.

We will work in partnership with people to be courageous, imaginative, and responsive in finding ways to:

- to get to know and respect their unique self and life experience,
- build on their strengths,
- maximise their independence,
- shape their safeguards and solutions,
- understand and manage any potential risks related to choices and decisions.

LWB will work honestly and transparently and implement continuous improvement strategies that acknowledge people's rights and expertise to design, implement and manage their support approach.

We acknowledge that each person is unique, with their own lived experience and ideas, and should be offered every opportunity to explore and share these features and experiences in a way that suits the person's choice, preference, and way of doing things. Staff will be open and honest in discussions with the person when any decisions fall outside of LWB policy and procedure or may negatively impact others or the person's immediate needs or plans for the future.

People will be supported to:

- Express and participate in cultural, religious, or spiritual (for example, being on Country) communities and activities.
- Increase their knowledge and understanding of self-protective behaviours, consent and respect when engaging in personal and intimate relationships, sexual identity, and self-expression.

- Ensure people are equipped with knowledge about sexual rights and the difference between “healthy” and “risky” sexual choices and exchanges, which will allow them to be better positioned to resist sexual violence and abuse (SVA) in different social spaces¹.
- Create spaces where co-residents support opportunities for a true expression of self within their home environments. For example, people can exercise their right to enjoy the company of their romantic and intimate partners in their shared household or collectively explore strategies to address existing barriers.
- Ensure active participation in the decision-making of people we support who may sometimes experience reduced decision-making ability.
- Implement safeguards that balance what’s important to and for them.

Staff will be supported to:

- Fully understand the rights of the people we support and how to enact this in their practice.
- Ensure policy, associated procedures, and guidelines are reflected in their practice through induction, supervision, and training.
- Engage people we support in conversations about self-expression, identity, sexuality and intimacy.
- Courageously challenge their values, beliefs, biases, or personal perception of risk related to a person’s decision-making.
- Implement duty of care and safeguarding in our practice to ensure any foreseeable harm is addressed and lessened in a balanced and defensible way.
- Promote the development of strong working partnerships and networks with specialist team members such as interpreters (linguistic and cultural), cultural, religious, and spiritual leaders/counsellors and leaders/counsellors/services from the advocacy sector, LGBTI community, sexual health and family planning or other state-based services.

¹ World Health Organisation. (2012).