

## Summary

Life Without Barriers (LWB) recognises that many factors can affect a person's health and wellbeing in both positive and undesirable ways. These can include genetic predispositions, social, economic and lifestyle factors, a person's physical living conditions and the influence of their family, friends and community. LWB recognises the responsibility that it has for the people we support who are typically among the most vulnerable in our community. We also recognise the generally poorer health outcomes experienced by our target groups. We partner with people to ensure they are at the centre of decisions that relate to their health.

## What is our aim?

- To implement a holistic approach to health and wellbeing that is appropriate for the people we support
- To recognise and be responsive to the person's needs, and respect their right to make health decisions and choices
- To ensure that the best possible health outcomes for the people we support are achieved by providing a policy and practice framework that emphasises the need for a focus on health at all levels, from prevention to intervention
- To ensure that the health and wellbeing of the people we support is actively managed by them in the first instance and monitored in an agreed manner to maximise their quality of life. This includes input from the people we support, their families and carers, qualified health professionals and key stakeholders as appropriate
- To ensure that our recognition of, and response to, issues of health and wellbeing ensures the continuity of health care for the people we support, and maintains the coordination of, and access to, relevant services
- To provide an approach to service delivery that allows LWB staff to know each person they support well, valuing and understanding their individual needs and building relationships
- To ensure that safeguarding is adhered to through appropriate assessment, planning and review activities for the people we support
- To offer choice to the person in delivering supports safely and appropriately within a social, cultural and developmental context
- That LWB staff, who are assisting the people we support with complex and/or invasive health care support procedures, receive appropriate training and instruction as required for each procedure.

## Policy Statement

LWB will provide support to people around their health and wellbeing needs as requested by them, their families and decisions makers. This support will be based on guidance from health professionals and agreed responses at three levels:

### **Level 1 - General Health and Wellbeing**

General Health and Wellbeing includes health procedures that staff can perform without training and/or assessment by an Appropriately Qualified Health Professional (AQHP). Any required training for this level of support can be delivered by LWB staff or the person we support.

**Staff who have completed orientation/induction and feel confident to proceed can provide support in General Health and Wellbeing.**

### **Level 2 - High Intensity Daily Personal Activities (Complex Health Care Needs)**

This level includes complex and invasive procedures in which supporting staff must be trained and assessed as competent by an AQHP. High Intensity Daily Personal Activities (HIDPA) delivered by LWB include:

- Complex Bowel Care
- Enteral Feeding Support
- Tracheostomy Support
- Urinary Catheter Support
- Non-Invasive Ventilator Support
- Subcutaneous Injections
- Emergency Seizure Medication (Midazolam Administration)
- Complex Wound Care
- Spinal Injury – Autonomic Dysreflexia
- Severe Dysphagia Support

**Only staff who have completed training and feel confident to proceed can provide support in HIDPA.**

### **Level 3 - Nursing/Medical Support**

Nursing/Medical support includes complex and invasive procedures that must only be undertaken by registered nurses or other AQHP's.

## Person-Centred Guiding Principles

LWB considers working with people and their families to identify what's important to and for the person as an essential part of providing health supports that are flexible and meet people's needs in a way that is best for them. These principles are mandatory when planning with people to achieve good health outcomes.

**The person at the centre**

- The person we support is central to health planning and is supported to understand health-related discussions and to make healthy lifestyle decisions.
- Each person's life experience, age, gender, culture, heritage, language, beliefs and identity are considered.
- Cultural sensitivity is fundamental in a person-centred approach to health and wellbeing.
- Supports are flexible to suit the person's wishes and priorities.
- The person's strengths come first. People are acknowledged as the experts in their life with a focus on what they can do first and any help they need second.
- We will work in partnership with people to be courageous, imaginative and responsive in finding ways to enable them to be the experts in their own lives and decide how their supports and services are organised and delivered.
- The person's support networks are included as partners.
- The people we support have the right to make their own choices. They are encouraged to self-advocate and are supported to communicate their health needs and treatment preferences.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People**

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, good health is more than the absence of disease or illness; it is a holistic concept that includes physical, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual well-being for both the individual and the community.

Health is related to an individual's environment and circumstances such as where they live, their education level, income and living conditions along with their access to and use of health services (WHO 2017). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, factors such as cultural identity, family and kinship, country and caring for country, knowledge and beliefs, language and participation in cultural activities and access to traditional lands are also key determinants of health and wellbeing (AIHW 2023<sup>1</sup> and NIAA 2020<sup>2</sup>). These factors are interrelated and combine to affect the health of individuals and broader communities.

In addition to the person-centred health principles featured in this Policy, the following culturally sensitive matters should be considered when supporting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to manage their health and wellbeing:

- recognise the person's culture is a way of acknowledging and valuing their identity
- acknowledge the history of difficult relationships with government services
- recognise family, kinship and friend relationships and the person's connection to community and the land

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.indigenoushpf.gov.au/report-overview/overview/summary-report>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/health-and-wellbeing>

- determine who in the family or community should be approached for decisions and consent about health support and treatment
- ask who, how, where, and when the person would prefer to receive services
- confirm whether the person or family would prefer to work with the health system through an Aboriginal Liaison officer
- determine which health issues or practices are sensitive or taboo and who to refer to if they are.

### **Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**

Culture and religious practices influence the person's and family's behaviour, attitude, preferences, and decisions about health and wellbeing.

A person's cultural and religious preferences for health and wellbeing should be understood early in support planning. LWB staff demonstrate respect and sensitivity by considering the person's (and if relevant, their family's):

- perspective on health and illness
- perspective on health management and treatment
- views about Western healthcare practices and their use of alternative traditional practices
- spiritual and religious beliefs and practices in healthcare
- communication support needs, (e.g. is an interpreter required?)
- role in the process of problem solving and decision making
- preferences on who, how, where, and when they would like to receive services.

### **Inclusion of others**

- In accordance with the person's wishes, their health planning and support can be provided in partnership with their family, informal decision maker or guardian, health professionals and support workers.

### **Service access**

- Every person we support is assisted in accessing mainstream health services of their choice and disability-specific specialist health services where they are needed.

### **Continuity of care**

- Relationships are established with healthcare professionals and providers to promote continuity of care and to enhance mutual understanding of people's healthcare preferences and needs.

**Safeguarding**

- Implement safeguarding measures that balance what's important to and for the person.
- Only staff who have completed training and feel confident to proceed can provide general health and wellbeing support. They should report the need for additional training and/or support to their line manager if required.
- Where vulnerable people are supported in intimate activities such as personal care or invasive health procedures, their preferences regarding this support will be captured in a Personal Care Plan and incorporated into their care. Where appropriate, a second staff member may be present during such activities where additional safeguarding may be required.

**Health assessment**

- Where LWB is responsible for health support, each person we support will have an annual health assessment conducted by a medical practitioner, informing their health and wellbeing plan.
- The medical practitioner provides health planning advice during the annual health assessment with input from other health and wellbeing practitioners as needed.
- Health planning includes at least an annual dental and oral health check conducted by a health professional, which informs the oral health care plan.
- Annual health assessments identify and monitor the long-term physical and mental illness.

**Health and Wellbeing Plan**

- Where LWB has responsibility for health support, each person we support will have one health plan that incorporates all health and wellbeing assessments, reports, plans and recommendations. For people with multiple health requirements or HIDPA needs, the health support will be captured in subsequent discrete plans according to the health support.

**Regular review**

- Health and wellbeing related plans are reviewed with the person we support and their support workers, with input from the family, informal decision maker or guardian, others important to the person and other health professionals where it is required.
- Timely reviews will occur with the support of LWB staff to best enable successful and comprehensive NDIS Plan reviews with the NDIA. Unscheduled reviews prompted by a change in situation will be supported by relevant LWB staff by providing evidence that may demonstrate an increase in the person's support requirements. Where a review results in a person requiring HIDPA supports, LWB will endeavour to provide that support – or assist the person to transition to an alternate provider with the appropriate registration and skills.

## Nursing and Medical Support

- Where LWB is providing NDIS Supports that are restricted to AQHP’s, all health supports will be undertaken in accordance with the professional’s relevant registration body. This may include Codes of Conduct, maintaining professional skills as required, and undertaking procedures aligned to discipline-specific best practices and training.
- LWB does not provide explicit procedures for supports delivered by an AQHP.

## Definitions

Term	Explanation
<b>Capacity</b>	A person’s ability to make decisions about the things that affect their everyday life.
<b>Consent</b>	When a person gives permission for something to happen or agrees to do something. Consent must be given freely and be informed. Informed consent is when a person is provided clear information about their choices in a way they can understand to help them make a decision. A person can change their consent <u>at any time</u> .
<b>Family</b>	In the context of this policy, ‘family’ refers to any person who is a relative having a close and continuing relationship with the person we support, and who has a personal interest in the welfare of the person.
<b>Guardian</b>	A person that has been appointed by a court or otherwise has legal authority to make decisions concerning a person’s protection, personal care, education, health and lifestyle.
<b>Informal Decision Maker</b>	This can refer to anyone (e.g. a friend) who has a close and continuing relationship with the person who may require decision-making support. For example, an informal decision maker has a recognised interest in the person’s wellbeing, can support a person to make a decision or may decide on behalf of the person if they are unable to make a decision.