

## 1.1.3 Preferred Method of Communication Policy and Procedure

### 1.1.3.1 Purpose

All participants have the right to access support that promotes, upholds, and respects their legal and human rights and enables them to exercise choice and control. There is a variation in the modes of communication that each participant will require due to individual needs. This policy is designed to ensure that our employees understand each participant's preferred method of communication. This preferred method of communication will then be embedded in the support and services provided to the participant.

### 1.1.3.2 Scope

At all stages of service provision, staff must understand the participant's preferred method of communication and put that preference into practice wherever possible. The Disability Support Manager will inform the staff of each participant's communication requirements and will always endeavour to place staff that can communicate effectively with a participant.

### 1.1.3.3 Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Interpreter</b>	A person who interprets and translates speech orally or in sign language. An interpreter translates the spoken words based on whatever grammatical knowledge of the language they interpret, and their interpretation is based on their expertise in the subject.
<b>Translator</b>	A translator is a professional person who translates one language into another language. A translator must be equipped with excellent linguistic skills. They must have a sound knowledge of <a href="#">grammar</a> and express the thoughts presented in the language to a participant.
<b>Mode of communication</b>	This term is an expressive medium or channel of communicative intent expression - natural speech, facial expression and gesture. Exceptional communication modes include the use of graphic symbols or synthetic speech.
<b>Easy Read documents</b>	Easy Read documents simplify information, so it is easy to understand by the participant. It uses simple text and pictures to explain text and has lots of white space.

### 1.1.3.4 Policy

The participant's best communication method is determined at the initial contact and recorded and used from that point forward. Staff are required to treat all participants respectfully and use their preferred mode of communication wherever possible. Variations in the mode of communication may include:

- written documents with no adjustments
- verbal explanations
- demonstration
- Easy Read documents – explanations and forms
- interpreters (oral)
- translators (written).

Participants may use their interpreters and access their advocate to assist them.

### 1.1.3.5 Procedure

At the initial contact meeting, staff will consult with the participant and their family, carer, or advocate to determine the most preferred mode of communication.

#### 1.1.3.5.1 Initial Meeting

The Disability Support Manager will undertake the following steps:

1. Determine the best means of communication via discussion or assessment.
2. Record this mode of communication in the support plan.
3. Inform all staff who work with the participant.
4. Match staff with these skills or train and support staff to communicate.
5. Prepare the relevant form of information for provision to the participant.
6. Arrange for an interpreter or translator (if required).

#### 1.1.3.5.2 Provision of Information

Staff are to use the information gained in the initial meeting to provide information to the participant in their mode of communication, where information must be discussed with the participant. Methods that will be used may include:

- providing information in written Form without any adjustments
- providing information in written form using Easy Read Documents
- explaining the information orally to those with issues with reading or comprehending written documents

- demonstrating information (if able to do so)
- accessing an interpreter via [Translating and Interpreting Services](#), Department of Home Affairs.

#### **1.1.3.5.3 Communicate effectively**

Staff must review information to determine how best to communicate with the participant. All communications must be:

- clear, inclusive, and respectful.
- adapted to suit the participant's age, culture, and cognitive ability.

Staff must monitor their verbal and non-verbal communication styles as they will differ from the participant and find ways to communicate effectively. The participant and staff member must be persistent and patient to work out the best communication means.

Communication techniques that should be used include:

- using plain English
- speaking clearly
- checking for understanding
- using body language
- keyword signing

To enhance independence, staff may need to use tools and adaptive techniques such as:

- alphabet or word boards
- communication charts or cards

#### **1.1.3.5.4 Documentation**

Record the following in the participant's file and support plan:

- best means of communication
- type of information method used to inform the participant
- verbal explanation – by whom, when, and how
- list of information supplied
- how the participant agrees that they had been informed (verbal, signature, family, carer or advocate)

#### **1.1.3.6 Related documents**

- Participant Intake Form
- Support Plan
- Support Plan – Easy Read
- Participant Handbook
- Easy Read Documents and Forms

#### **1.1.3.7 References**

- NDIS Code of Conduct Rules 2018
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- NDIS Workforce Capability Framework
- NDIS Act 2013 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities