NDS Quality and Safeguards Sector Readiness Project

Tipsheet: Policy to Practice – Gaining insight from people with disability and their networks

Policy to Practice essentially means that the **principles, expectations, actions and desired behaviours** laid out in your policies and procedures, can be seen consistently in the delivery of your services and are reflected in the experience of people receiving services.

This resource includes tips and ideas for including people with disability and their networks. The information is general in nature and is a starting point and should be used and adapted to meet the size and scope of your organisation and the supports you provide.

This resource provide information and links to resources for:

- **Policy to Practice – Gaining insight from people with disability and their networks**
- **Tips for Involving People with Disability**

Gaining insight from people with disability and their networks

People with disability have a right to be consulted and have choice in the services they receive and NDIS providers play an integral role in this.

NDIS Practice Standard Outcome 2.1, Governance and Operational Management states organisations are expected to:

"Provide opportunity for people with disability to contribute to the governance of the organisation and have input into the development of organisational policy and processes relevant to the provision of supports and the protection of participant rights".

The NDIS Code of Conduct requires providers to:

"Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions."

Beyond compliance, involving people with disability and their networks, gives providers a unique understanding and insight into the services and supports they provide. It can help organisations to understand, acknowledge and respond to the experience of the people receiving them.

By ensuring that your information and policies are accessible to people you support, you increase your ability of your workforce to implement expected practice. You do this by creating a shared understanding between people who access your services and your workers, whom have the same information of what your services should look like.

By ensuring you have regular, clear and open avenues to provide feedback, you increase the likelihood of becoming aware of issues or concerns within your services. This can help you to manage risks or issues quickly and in a way which minimizes the impact.

By involving and including people with disability and their networks as partners in the development, design and delivery of services you bridge a gap between people who write your policies and people who are impacted by them. This can help you to ensure that your policies reflect and represent the people who access your services.

Tips for Involving People with Disability

☐ **Ensure you provide all required information to people with disability** and their networks.

> NDS have developed a checklist of information registered providers required to provide to all participants: NDIS Commission requirements on Information providers are required to provide

☐ **Have your key policies and procedures online** or given to people as part of your onboarding and intake processes.

☐ **Have service delivery paperwork in place** and readily available for people with disability and workers to use such as:

- Goal/Support plans developed with the person to translate high-level NDIS goals into actionable strategies based on the persons needs and preferences in relation to the services available.

- Participant profiles to capture key information about the person. Often referred to as a getting to know you document.

- Individual Risk Assessments developed with the person to identify and manage risk including what will happen in the event of Emergency and Disaster Management.

- Specific protocols where there are higher risks which involve key people in their development.

- Service Agreements which are clear, act as a contract with the individual and include terms and conditions of service access, delivery and cessation.

> NDIA have produced information on Service Agreements including Easy Read information which can be found here Service agreements | NDIS.

☐ **Providing your policies and procedures as part of your intake process**, in a format the person is most likely to understand and in a way which is proportionate to your supports and services: Options to consider include:

- Providing hard copy of policy and procedures.
- Providing thumb drives of documents.
- Having a client portal or management system (this could also include access to rosters, access information, make a complaint or provide other feedback).
- Using plain English and some offer Easy Read versions.

> An example is NDS Easy Read template on the Code of Conduct Code of Conduct Easy Read.

☐ **Having policies and procedures available (or having a process in place to make them available) in different languages and Auslan**.

> The NDIS Commission have produced resources for participants in different formats and languages which could be used by providers to information people of their rights. NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission - For participants

☐ **Having a robust and accessible complaints system in place** and a culture where people feel comfortable to provide feedback. The process needs to be consistently promoted by the organisation and readily available and accessible in in the way that best supports people with disability to understand and participate.

> To assist you in the development of your processes:
> - NDIS Commission have produced 'Speak up' and 'Make it known to make it make it better' resources that can be shared with participants (and support workers working with them) to show people how to make a complaint. NDIS Commission resources Speak up resources and Make it known, make it better resources and NDIS Commission Complaints case studies.
> - NDS have produced Complaints management in disability services resources

☐ **Providing a dedicated feedback email address** for use by people with disability accessing services.

☐ **Allocating a key contact for each person with disability**, who can answer questions or provide routine, regular information about how they are going, their service experiences and progress toward goals.

☐ **Having a disability inclusion plan** that identifies engagement points and includes program of activity to seek, gather, analyse and respond to the experience of people with disability.

☐ **Developing reference/advisory groups** with representation from people with disability who access services that are project or issues based or can generate their own tasks/activities.

Some useful NDS templates to get you started include:

- This factsheet provides information and considerations for involving people with disability - Involvement of participants in the governance operations and or leadership of your organisation.
- These 2 templates demonstrate a Terms of Reference and Action Plan for a policy and review group.
- This easy read template explains consultation: Consultation Easy Read.

☐ **Using co-design and consultation groups** or processes for problem solving or as an intentional initiative to improve services. It includes shared decision making with people with disability.

The Victorian Government have developed this webinar and suite of resources on working in partnership with people with disability when designing policies, programs and services. Victorian Government - Co-design and disability inclusion

Please note: This resource was reviewed in August 2023 by the NDS Quality and Safeguards Sector Readiness Project. The resource is general in nature and is provided as a guide only. NDS believes that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publishing, however, NDS reserves the right to vary any of this publication without further notice. The information provided in this publication should not be relied upon instead of other legal, medical, financial, or professional advice. Please always refer to online documents for the latest versions including the NDIS Practice Standards and advice to providers on the Code of Conduct.