

North West Residential Support Services Inc.  
Policies & Procedures  
**COORDINATION OF SUPPORTS -- PROCEDURE**

## **Introduction**

Support Coordination is a service funded by the NDIS to support a participant in achieving outcomes from their plans. The NDIA's definition of the primary role of a Support Coordinator is to:

- Coordinate the implementation of all supports in the plan, including informal, mainstream and community, as well as funded supports
- Strengthen and enhance the participant's abilities to coordinate supports and participate in the community
- Ensure mainstream generic services meet their obligations (i.e. housing, education, justice, health etc.)
- Build the capacity of the participant to achieve greater independence towards self-directing services and supports in the longer term
- Provide the NDIA with reports on outcomes and success indicators within the agreed reporting frequency

NWRSS is registered with NDIS to operate a Coordination of Support service to assist participants as per the role defined. NWRSS draws on its experience as a service provider to support participants to understand their needs and opportunities for support.

## **Managing Conflicts of Interest**

When NWRSS Support Coordinators are supporting participants, there are potential conflicts of interest with NWRSS as a service provider. These conflicts could occur in a number of ways, but most likely by:

- Service coordinators encouraging participants to use NWRSS over some other service
- Not providing participants with unbiased information on the range of service providers who could support them
- Encouraging participants to continue using NWRSS services when they might not want to continue. NWRSS might not be the best fit or NWRSS might not be adequately providing the service
- Providing NWRSS information as preferential, making it appear the best choice

## **Signing the Service Coordination Agreement with the participant**

When you meet the participant (and their family) they will know that you work for NWRSS. You will need to develop a Coordination of Services Contract with the

participant. This is separate to any other Service Agreement they might have with NWRSS.

You should discuss this in a transparent way, but ensure participants know that you are focused on their needs and are not there as a representative of NWRSS. You should assure them that you will talk to them about a range of services and if NWRSS is an appropriate service for their needs you will include NWRSS.

Early on in your relationship with the client you should work to gain an understanding of the informal, mainstream, community, and funded providers used by the participants – how they use them, how satisfied they are with the services and their goals for future service use.

At this point it is beneficial for the participant to discuss consent to exchange information and any limitations they wish to put on this. A signed consent listing all services to be included is required. This would include NWRSS if it was going to be used.

### **Existing Service Provider Relationships**

Some participants will have an existing relationship with a service provider. If they are happy with this relationship and it is able to meet their needs, there is no need to test the market for additional service providers. But participants might want a change or simply “see what is out there” (never assume that clients are happy with the status quo); you must actively seek their feelings on this.

### **Seeking a Service Provider Response**

When approaching service providers on behalf of a participant, Service Coordinators should approach them in the same way that they would approach a quote for any service provision. Remember that taxpayer’s money, a sometimes very large amount over the lifetime of the provision of a service, is being considered here.

Service Coordinators should approach these offers with transparency, honesty and fairness.

Key points for seeking an offer are:

- Use your knowledge of the client’s needs and interests and your understanding of the skills and abilities of service providers to construct a short list. Your short list is made up of the services you believe will best meet the needs of the participant. Seek the participant’s input in the development of this list
- Do not exclude providers based on your perception of their availability unless they have specifically asked to be excluded for a period of time
- You should always ask a minimum of three services for a response. If you are asking NWRSS they should be added to the three making the minimum four. If there are less than three qualified providers ask them all

- A standard request for service provision should be emailed to all services that are on your short list. This will contain de-identified material about the participants, their needs and what they want
- No service provider should know the identity of the other short listed service providers
- If service providers ask you questions that generate new information, this information should be provided to all service providers. Before answering you should let the service provider know that your answer will be communicated to other parties
- Allow at least five working days to respond, unless the matter is urgent, in which case allow as much time as possible

### **Supporting a Participant's Decision Making and Choice**

The decision to choose a provider is the participant's choice. You may help them consider the options but your role is not to influence them toward one outcome or another. Your work should build the capacity of the client and their informal supports to make effective decisions.

All service provider responses should be presented to the participant, including any non-responses or declined responses. You can use decision support tools to help participants evaluate services.

The participant might want to meet with services prior to making a decision. If they do you are to facilitate these meetings. If they want to meet NWRSS you are not to 'represent' NWRSS but rather invite an appropriate manager to meet with them. You can facilitate this meeting in the same manner you would for other providers.

You can support the participant to define and quantify the services they want to obtain from the provider.

If a participant for whom NWRSS provides Service Coordination selects NWRSS as its service provider the NDIA should be informed of this. This can be done by letting their Planner know or, by completing a Change of Circumstances form.

### **Supporting a Participant to obtain quality outcomes**

You monitor outcomes and success indicators on a regular basis for the NDIS. This should be done collaboratively with the participant and you should help them document what services they have received and their level of satisfaction.

Encourage participants to have expectations and support their capacity to direct the service provider in a way that gets them the best service and outcome. Services should offer value for money and be delivered in a timely and effective manner.

With the participant's permission, you can work directly with service providers to monitor and improve the service being delivered. If services do not meet the standard and satisfaction level required by the participant, you can support them to seek other providers.

If you identify a breach of Service Standards you have an obligation to work proactively with the participant to put in place a complaint or report to the relevant authority.

### **Satisfaction with Service Coordinator**

Participants can make a comment, complaint or compliment about the service coordination service they obtain from NWRSS. The standard process as outlined in NWRSS' policy, Compliments and Complaints should be followed.

Ultimately, participants can change their Service Coordinator just as they can change service providers. No impediment should be placed in the way of this decision.

### **Service Coordination within the NWRSS Structure**

NWRSS' Service Coordination staff are independent to NWRSS service provision staff within the organisation. Service Coordinators report to the Direct Service Manager who reports to the General Manager. This team does not have line management responsibility or obligation to any other part of NWRSS service provision to NDIS funded clients.

Service Coordination staff are not involved in the delivery or direction of any NWRSS service provision.

### **Senior Practitioner Support Role within NWRSS**

NWRSS' Operations Manager has a "Senior Practitioner" role across all service provision. This role is focused on ensuring safe and responsive services are delivered to all participants regardless of who the funding agencies are.

The Operations Manager can initiate an investigation into any practice at NWRSS. This can be done without seeking permission from other area Managers or the General Manager. The outcomes are provided to the General Manager as either recommendations or Binding Findings.

Binding Findings must be carried out within the specified time frames. Failure to do this or permission for the General Manager not to implement a Binding Finding can only be granted by NWRSS Board of Management after all relevant information is presented to the Board

### **IT and File Management**

Service Coordination files should be stored in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only to the Service Coordination team. Electronic documents should be stored in the password controlled Dropbox storage system.

Service Coordinators should be blocked from seeing any NWRSS service hard copy.

Supportive related policies can be found on the NWRSS website under Policies and Procedures.

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**[www.nwrss.org.au](http://www.nwrss.org.au)**