

Ability Connect Client Handbook

Name:	«ClientFullName»
NDIS Number:	«ClaimNo»
Date:	5 August 2019



Contact Details

Support Coordinator Details:

The name of your Support Coordinator is:

Office Telephone:	02 9885 7090
Mobile Number:	«CurrentUserMobile»
Email Address:	«CurrentUserEmail»

Other Key Contact Details

Notes

Welcome

Congratulations on your choice and making it count, we welcome you to the Ability Connect team. We are excited that you have decided to join us and we look forward to an amazing collaborative, happy and successful partnership. Our purpose is about supporting you to achieve your goals, making your choices and protecting your rights.

For the purpose of the Client Handbook and all supporting Ability Connect Policies and Procedures, client will refer to all stakeholders unless otherwise specified. This includes: the client/participant/carer/person responsible/identified personal representative, service provider basically any individual who will benefit for the service information provided within the handbook.

The purpose of the Client Handbook is to introduce you to Ability Connect, the services that we offer, what we do, our terms, conditions and relevant supporting resources. The Client Handbook needs to be considered with your Plan and your individual Service Agreement.

The Client Handbook is not in itself an exhaustive guide, it has been designed to act as a resource and reference tool for you. The Client Handbook will be regularly reviewed and up-dated to align with any service changes and process improvements based on your needs and your feedback. You will be notified of any changes as they occur.

If you require further information in relation to the content or you would like to suggest improvements to the Client Handbook please do not hesitate to contact us directly on admin@abilityconnect.com.au or phone 02 9885 7090, alternatively you may contact your Support Coordinator.

About Ability Connect

Our Mission

Supporting our clients to exceed their own expectation of what can be possible, building resilience, independence and confidence through our service delivery approach.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide the highest standard of services with our client at the centre of everything we do. Providing a dynamic, lateral and person-centred approach supporting our clients to enhance their life style opportunities.

Our Values

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| Commitment | Ability Connect is committed to delivering on our visions for our clients and their family. |
| Respect: | We value cultural diversity. |
| Integrity: | We are transparent in what we do, how we do it and why. |



Working Partnership: We work collaboratively with all stakeholders, with the client at the centre of everything that we do.

Accountability &

Operational Excellence: We are accountable for all decisions that we make and actions that we take and we are committed to driving a culture of continued learning.

Our Services

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

We can assist you with the following NDIS support categories:

- Support Coordination and Support Connection
- Development-Life Skills
- Assist Personal Activities
- Assist-Life Stage Transition
- Assist Access/Maintain Employ
- Accommodation/Tenancy

How Can I Access Services Offered by Ability Connect?

Services can be accessed through self-referral or third-party referral utilising the following approach:

- Contact Ability Connect on admin@abilityconnect.com.au or phone 02 9885 7090, a consultant will be able to answer any of your questions and arrange a suitable time to meet with you.
- Complete Ability Connect Service Referral Form.

The NDIS self-directed funding model allows clients control over major decisions including which service provider or services you require. Ability Connect partners with you and supports you to manage your funding package. All referral enquiries will be responded to by the appropriate consultant on the same day that it is received. A representative from Ability Connect will arrange a time and place to meet with you and discuss your needs and your goals and how our services could support you. We will develop a personal plan with you and agree on how we will support you and the nature of the support. We will also be in regular contact with you and regularly review and up-date your plan. Your success and happiness is our goal.

What if we are unable to offer you support?

We will always endeavour to offer you service support within our maximum service capacity. If we are unable to offer you the desired service or support, we will explain the reasons to you. If it is because we do not have capacity to provide support at that time, we may suggest contacting other services that are available in the community. If appropriate, we will also assist you to access other services available in the community.



What if you want to end a service?

Situations for Change, Suspension or Withdrawal of Services

The following lists certain circumstances where services may be changed, suspended or withdrawn:

- If you request a termination of services: If you no longer wish to receive services from us, we will endeavour to find out the reason for this and will attempt to rectify any issues you may have with your services, if applicable. We will, however, respect your wishes in case you want your services to stop.
- If there are resource constraints: If our available services and resources change and if we have funding constraints, we may need to change or withdraw your support. We will, however, attempt to refer you to other services available in the community.
- If mutually agreed by you and Ability Connect: there may be occasions when the change or withdrawal of services are mutually agreed by you and our organisation.
- In situations where service provision raises safety issues for yourself or support staff: On some occasions the service provision may raise safety issues for clients and/or support staff. In this case, we will consult with you, the service provider agency and any other relevant parties to develop strategies to control safety issues and minimise risks for you and/or your support staff. If you refuse to cooperate with us in addressing the safety issues for yourself or your support staff, we may need to suspend your services to ensure safe service delivery for you and/or support staff's right to work in a safe environment.

How It Works?

We provide you with the support that you need to build your confidence and maximise your potential. Working in partnership with you we will assist you to explore all your options and apply a creative and effective methodology to assist you to manage your funding package and achieve your goals.

Our approach is not a one size fits all approach, you are an individual, your aspirations and support requirements will differ to other individuals who we support. We will tailor our support services to meet your needs. You can decide how much decision-making you will like. We can also assist you to become independent in managing your services.

We are here for you, what do you need?

What Are My Rights and Responsibilities as a Client of Ability Connect?

Clients are our organisational focus, we at Ability Connect acknowledge your rights and actively promote your rights through our services and service delivery model. As clients of Ability Connect there are also expectations and standards in place to support a strong and mutually agreeable partnership.

All Clients of Ability Connect have the following rights and responsibilities:

- The client has access to all information about themselves held by the organisation.
- In cases where a client has a legal guardian or advocate appointed to act on their behalf, the rights of the guardian or advocate are to be acknowledged and respected to the extent stipulated in the guardianship or advocacy arrangements.



- The client, with their permission, their person responsible must be involved in decisions about their plan. Plans will be developed including goals, activities, services and time frames.
- The client will be made aware of the standard of service, which they can expect. Services will be provided in a safe manner which respects the dignity and independence of the client, is responsive to the social, cultural and physical needs of the client and their family.
- The client's services should be decided with the client's agreement. Clients have the right to refuse a service.
- The clients have a right to complain about the service they are receiving without fear of being disadvantaged.
- Complaints by clients will be dealt with fairly, promptly and without discrimination. The client may involve an advocate of their choice to represent his/her interests.
- A person-centred approach will ensure the clients' views and choices will be at the centre of all planning and evaluation of the service maximising social participation and cultural inclusion.
- Client's rights to privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all times.
- Clients have a right to information and support to understand and exercise their legal and human rights.

Clients Responsibilities

Clients are required to advise Ability Connect if he/she is going to be absent from the service or a scheduled meeting. We ask that a minimum of 24 hours' notice is provided, notice can be provided in any acceptable communication format being phone, email, voice mail message or face to face.

Clients should act in a way which respects the rights of other clients and Ability Connect employees:

- Clients need to take responsibility for the results of any decisions they make.
- Clients are to play their part in actively participating in the service.
- Clients need to respect the property of Ability Connect.
- Clients need to be punctual.
- Clients need to provide accurate information about themselves.

Person Responsible/Client Representative/Parent/Guardian responsibilities

- Person Responsible/Client Representative Parent or Guardian will act in a way that respects the rights of the client and staff.
- Person Responsible /Client Representative / Parent or Guardian will speak to the staff and make requests in respectful ways.
- Person Responsible/ Client Representative/ Parent or Guardian will share appropriate information only with the correct people.
- Person Responsible/ Client Representative/ Parent or Guardian will work with the Ability Connect representative to ensure information is correct and clearly explained.

Complaints, Feedback & Advocacy

At Ability Connect we welcome feedback and regard this as a primary method for identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses in our service delivery model that is leveraged to support our continuous service



improvement framework. We also support the standards outlined by the NSW Disability Standards that stipulates that all participants, families, advocates or carers have the opportunity to make a complaint and provide feedback.

Ability Connect has implemented the Ability Connect Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure. All stakeholders can freely make a complaint without any recrimination. Ability Connect employees are aware of the supporting policy and procedures and will ensure it is adhered to at all times.

The procedure to lodge a complaint or provide feedback will be discussed during the Initial Meeting and ongoing service reviews. Early resolution of a concern or complaint will always be attempted in a collaborative approach reducing the risk of the situation escalating. Complaints and feedback can be lodged in the following ways:

- In writing, via email to admin@abilityconnect.com.au or contact 02 9885 7090 and speak directly to an Ability Connect representative – all employees are able to receive your feedback.
- Speak directly to your Ability Connect Support Coordinator, either face to face or over the phone
- Ability Connect Service Manager on 9885 7090, arrangements can be made to meet and discuss the concern or lodge the complaint face to face as well.
- Complete the Ability Connect Complaints and Feedback Form retained on the Ability Connect website being www.abilityconnect.com.au.

Complaints and feedback help us to know your experience with our service. We will always try to resolve complaints quickly and efficiently. If the complaint has not been resolved quickly at the source, Ability Connect Manager will contact you with an initial response and let you know how we will manage the complaint. You are able to appeal if you are not happy with how we have managed your complaint or the outcome.

Advocacy and Complaint Appeal Groups include:

- Advocacy Support Group
- People with Disability Australia (PWDA)
- Group and individual advocacy services: Phone: (02) 9370 3100 or toll free 1800422015
- Website: www.pwd.org.au
- External Complaint Access

Due to the varying types of complaints that may arise Ability Connect understands that there may be instances where a complaint is unable to reach a resolution internally or that the individual may not feel comfortable to raise the concern directly with their service provider. In this situation an individual may seek assistance through the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission or the NSW Ombudsman.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – according to their website their role is to work with NDIS participants, service providers, workers and the community to introduce a new nationally consistent approach so participants can access services and supports that promote choice, control and dignity. A complaint can be made to the NDIS Commission by:

Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.



National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.

Completing a complaint contact form – refer to their website www.ndiscommission.gov.au

The NDIS Commission can take complaints about:

- services or supports that were not provided in a safe and respectful way
- services and supports that were not delivered to an appropriate standard

NSW Ombudsman: handles enquiries and complaints about community and disability service providers.

Phone: (02) 9286 1000 or toll free on 1800 451 524 Website: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Person-Centred Strategic Plans

The term ‘person-centred’ describes service and supports that are centred on an individual and their strengths, needs, interests and goals.

Person-centred service delivery ensures that people with disability lead and direct the services and supports they use. Person Centred Strategic Plans are prepared with the Support Coordinator, client and/or parent, carer or person responsible on entry into the service. This is a written document that is reviewed as required.

The intention of person-centred approaches is to maximise, as much as reasonably possible, the capacity for people with disabilities to take control of their lives. Person-centred approaches ensure that clients are at the centre of service design, planning, delivery and review. The Client shapes and direct services and support arrangements to suit their strengths, needs and goals with the support of families, friends, carers, advocates and their circle of support.

Service Agreement

All clients will have a Service Agreement implemented when commencing services and after their NDIS Plan has been approved. A Service Agreement is not a Person-Centred Strategic Plan. A Service Agreement generally contains:

- Information on what supports the client will receive
- When, where, how they will receive those supports
- How much the supports will cost
- How long the supports will be for
- What is expected of the client
- What is expected from the Service Provider
- How the Service Agreement can be terminated
- What to do if problems occur
- Information on cancellation policy

Cancellation Policy



A minimum of 24 hours must be given by the client or representative if they cannot make a scheduled appointment otherwise a charge will be made. Any fee that is charged to the client's plan will be according to the terms set out in the service agreement between the client and Ability Connect.

If cancellations may be a problem, clients or their representative will discuss with the organisation in order to review methods that can be put in place to minimise cancellations.

General Service Information

Postal Address:

PO Box 457

ROUND CORNER NSW 2158

Service Operating Hours

Hours of operation are 9am till 5pm 48 weeks of the year between Monday and Friday, excluding Public Holidays.

Inquiries of support please contact: 02 9885 7090

Communication: Clients, Client Representatives, Families, Carers

Communication is through a variety of methods. Examples include, but are not limited to, plans, group emails, telephone, email, our organisational website and meetings.

Client Exit Planning

We are committed to providing clients with information and support through the process of transition or exit from our programs or services. For more information on how to exit or transfer, please speak to your Support Coordinator or you may request a copy of our Exit Planning Policy and Procedure.

We will ensure

- All clients are provided with the necessary information and explanation in appropriate communication formats in relation to their transition/ exit from the service.
- Clients are provided with information and support through the process of transition or
- Exit from the organisation's programs or services.
- Client transition strategies and exit planning will be documented in the client's individual person-centred plan.
- The client exit process is clear and that the organisation adopts fair and non-discriminatory processes when a client chooses to or is required to leave the service

