



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION BOOKLET

Our aim is to assist our participants in pursuit of their life choice, either in their home or in our community, to enable greater quality of life experiences.

Contents

About Life Choice.....	3
Our Teams	3
CEO	3
Board of Directors	3
NDIS Coordinator.....	3
Participant Services	4
Finance	4
Support Coordination	4
Allied Health	4
Lifestyle Support Workers	4
Supported Independent Living (SIL)	4
Definitions:	4
Process of Onboarding, Service Agreement and Renewal	5
Onboarding.....	5
Service Agreement	5
Review and Renewal of Service Agreement.....	6
Updating your information.....	6
What to expect from us:.....	6
How you can help us:	7
Your Rights:.....	7
The NDIS Code of Conduct	7
How to Make a Complaint or provide Feedback.....	8
How we Manage Complaints:.....	8
How you can participate in your services:.....	8
Choice and Control and Dignity of Risk	8
Your Privacy and Confidentiality	9
Duty of Care:.....	10
Behavioural Supports and Restrictive Practices	10
Seizure management.....	10
Manual Handling	10
Incident Reporting.....	11
Non Face-toFace Billing	11
Disability Advocate	11
Transitioning and Exiting Life Choice.....	12

About Life Choice

Life Choice has been a trusted advocate for community inclusion, respect and valuing of people with a disability on the Fraser Coast since 1996. Our aim is to assist our participants in the pursuit of their life choices, either in their own home or the community, to enable greater quality of life experiences.

Our individual lifestyle plans and increasing range of support services ensures we meet the changing needs of participants, new and existing, and their families. Through support services including community access, every day learning programs, in-home support, support coordination, supported independent living and allied health our 100+ staff provide positive, and rewarding experiences in line with the life choices of each of our participants.

You can find information about our services on our website <http://lifechoicewbb.org/> or by asking one of our staff.

Our Maryborough and Hervey Bay offices are open Monday to Friday between 8am and 4.30pm (Mon-Thurs) and 8am to 3pm (Fri). You can reach us on telephone (07) 4123 6288 or email participantservices@lifechoicewbb.org

Life Choice is committed to providing the highest quality services that we can. We will work with you to make sure you get the support that is available and right for you.



Our aim is to assist our supporter-participants in pursuit of their life choice, either in their home or in our community, to enable greater quality of life experiences.

Our Teams

CEO

The CEO is directed by and is accountable to the Board of Directors, and is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation. The CEO has a Leadership Team who look after different areas of the organisation.

Board of Directors

Life Choice is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is therefore governed by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors Life Choice consists of 7 Directors who are either parents of people with disabilities, people with disabilities and other interested parties.

NDIS Coordinator

Our NDIS Coordinators are the team who will do new intakes, draw up Service Agreements, make any requested changes to your budgets for supports and monitor your budget to ensure you are spending it as you have requested. Your NDIS Coordinators make regular contact throughout your NDIS plan period, and will also attend your NDIS review if you have requested. The NDIS Coordinators report directly to the CEO.

Participant Services

Our Participant Services Team monitors your goals, your supports and will make regular contact with you to ensure that all goals are being worked towards. The Participant Services Team assists in the development of your Support Plan which helps your support workers support you.

Finance

The Finance Team ensures that Life Choice Runs smoothly, and also bill for all supports that participants use. This could be through the NDIA, Plan Managers or self-Managed Participants. They also manage all Transport billing.

Support Coordination

Life Choice has a large team of Support Coordinators. Support Coordination runs separately from the rest of Life Choice.

Allied Health

The Allied Health Team can offer:

- Psychology
- Speech Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Exercise Physiology
- Physiotherapy
- Social Work
- Dietetics

Allied Health services are offered on an individual or group basis

Lifestyle Support Workers (LSW)

Lifestyle Support Workers are the people who work with you when you have support. Life Choice employs people who have the skills, qualifications and life experiences that can best assist you. We will work with you to pick the right team of Lifestyle Support Workers. You have a choice in who will work with you. We will always encourage you to have different support workers in your team to cover times when some workers are on leave. All our Lifestyle support workers have a Blue Card, Yellow Card, Police Check, and go through our thorough interview process.

Supported Independent Living (SIL)

Participant Support Team Coordinators report in to the Operational Development Leader. Each SIL home has a senior support worker and a team of LSWs to support independent living

Definitions:

Advocate: An advocate is a person who, with explicit authority, represents another person's interests.

Informal Advocate: A friend or family member who is nominated by a participant as their personal advocate.

Legal Advocate: A nominated advocate whose role has legal status, for example an Enduring power of attorney, or OPG.

Agreement means this legally binding contract.

Participant is a person who is receiving services as outlined in **Item 7** of the Schedule.

Service is what will be provided subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement.

Service Provider is the name of the entity providing the support or service, **Item 1** of the Schedule.

Support is the provision of a 'worker' for the purposes of the delivering services (including defined support ratios).

Authorised Person is a person who is formally and/or properly empowered to enter into an agreement on behalf of the Participant. An authorised person can be the participant's legally appointed Guardian or an identified next of kin or advocate in the absence of a formally appointed guardian.

Service Fees are the agreed fees for the services and support provided by the service provider to the client. These fees are those published at that particular time for the NDIS by the National Disability Insurance Agency ('NDIA').

Incidents: are acts, omissions, events or circumstances that occur or could occur during or in relation to the provision of supports, or the alteration or withdrawal of supports, that cause harm, either physically or emotionally, to a participant, worker (including staff, contractors and volunteers), or other stakeholders engaged by Life Choice. Incidents also include acts, omissions, events or circumstances that have caused or could cause damage to property, the environment, material or cause public alarm.

Process of Onboarding, Service Agreement and Renewal

Onboarding

Once you have decided that you would like to have Life Choice support you, we will conduct our onboarding interview. This process is where we gather all information relevant to providing the best services possible for you. This interview is conducted by our NDIS Coordinators and can be done in home, over the phone, or in one of our offices. Once you have your interview, the next step is to think about what Services you would like to participate in. Then we will have our Service Agreement meeting. If you are having in home supports, it is greatly recommended to have this first meeting in your home so our NDIS Coordinators can conduct a Home Risk Assessment.

When you attend you Onboarding or Service Agreement meetings, please bring:

- A support person
- Information about what Supports you require
- Your NDIS and personal Goals
- Your NDIS Plan
- Any Medical Information/ meal plan, behavioural plan, seizure management plans
- Any Questions that you have for the team

Service Agreement

A service agreement is developed in collaboration with all participants/participants representatives who have chosen Life Choice as their preferred service provider.

Life Choice will ensure that all parties are aware of, and have agreed, to all aspects of the services being provided.

The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that the supports delivered by Life Choice:

- Work towards the goals set out in the participant's NDIS plan;
- Enable the participant to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals;
- Support the independence and encourage the economic and social participation of the participant;
- Are compliant with relevant legislation.

Once you have decided on the Services that you would like to sign up through Life Choice, our NDIS Coordinators will draw up a Quote and Service Agreement. This will all be read through and signed by our NDIS Coordinators, and the participant and or Trusted Person.

After everything is signed and all relevant information provided, your information will be handed over to the Participant Support Team. They will be in contact to make a Support Plan in regards to your goals; work out the best support worker to fit your needs; and, get the roster and supports started as soon as possible. Your supports would be starting in 2-4 weeks after you have been handed over, but the Participant Support Team will be in touch regularly.

Review and Renewal of Service Agreement

NDIS Coordinators and the Participant Support Team will be in contact regularly (at least every 3 months) to check on how your supports are going; check on the progress of your goals; and, if your supports need to be increased/ decreased or any time changes needed.

We will also assist you with your NDIS review. Every time we contact you, this will be recorded, and all progress towards your goals is also recorded so when you have your review, we can provide this information to the NDIA. If you require, we will also attend the NDIA meetings with you.

Once you have had your NDIA review, and received your NDIS Plan, please inform the NDIS Coordinators at Life Choice so we can organise another Service Agreement, to ensure continuity of Supports.

Updating your information

It is important to keep all your personal information and medical information with Life Choice up to date. You can do this by ringing and handing the information over the phone, or booking an appointment with our NDIS Coordinators or Participant Support Team.

What to expect from us:

When you are in contact with our organisation, we will:

- Treat you with respect at all times
- Treat you fairly and without discrimination
- Provide you with sufficient information about the service and its terms of use
- Inform you of your rights and responsibilities
- Provide a safe and healthy environment within the service and their facilities
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality
- Ensure you don't face physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse
- Protect your personal information and only use it for the right reasons
- Involve you in decisions about the services you access and support you to have a say
- Support you to connect with other services if needed
- Tell you how to provide us with feedback on our service and how to make a complaint
- Ensure your complaints are dealt with fairly and promptly

How you can help us:

You can help us provide a quality service if you or your support person:

- Provide us with complete and accurate information about yourself and your situation
- Tell us if things change or you cannot keep an appointment or commitment
- Act respectfully and safely towards other people using the service, and towards staff and volunteers
- Provide us with feedback about our service and how we can work better

Your Rights:

Life Choice will:

- provide easily understood and accessible information to all participants at service commencement about what the organisation does, how participants can contact the organisation, the service standards they can expect and opportunities to provide feedback or make a complaint
- involve participants in the development of policies and procedures that impact on their service
- employ skilled staff and have systems and processes in place to support staff to promote and protect human rights
- take all allegations of abuse, harm and neglect seriously and respond according to best practice

At Life Choice participants are entitled to:

- Have the rights of freedom of expression, self-determination and decision making
- contribute to decisions about their lives
- receive sufficient information about the service and its terms of use
- privacy and confidentiality
- access information that the service has about them
- be treated with dignity and respect
- be free from physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse
- information on how to lodge a complaint if they are unhappy with any aspect of the service
- have complaints dealt with fairly and promptly
- be free from discrimination
- appeal decisions made about them and to have their appeal dealt with fairly
- a safe and healthy environment within the service and their facilities
- understand information to make informed life choices
- respect of their autonomy, right to privacy, intimacy and sexual expression Life Choice Participant Service Charter outlines these rights and responsibilities in a way that is accessible and easily understood by participants.

The NDIS Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct requires workers and providers who deliver NDIS supports to:

- act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions
- respect the privacy of people with disability
- provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill
- act with integrity, honesty, and transparency

- promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability
- take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse of people with disability
- take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

How to Make a Complaint or provide Feedback

We value your feedback on a positive experience you have had with us or how we can improve Life Choice services.

We also want to know if you are not happy with the service you have received, or believe you have not been treated fairly and reasonably by us or by someone delivering services on our behalf.

You can give us this feedback by:

- Talking directly to a staff member or volunteer
- Ask to speak to a more senior staff member
- Contact our head office on phone (07) 4123 6288
- or by writing to 75 Lennox Street, Maryborough QLD 4650

If you are not satisfied with the outcome from your complaint you can contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards commission on 1800 035 444

How we Manage Complaints:

We want to resolve complaints openly, honestly and quickly.

We will acknowledge your complaint within two (2) working days and respond within twenty (20) working days.

If you are not satisfied with our resolution of your complaint, you may contact an independent body such as NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission by calling 1800 035 544 or writing to Assistant Director Quality Assurance, NDIS Commission, PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2750.

How you can participate in your services:

We encourage our participants to participate in, and exercise choice over service decisions. We will ensure you are aware of and understand the services we provide. We are committed to supporting participants to make choices and participate in decisions by using interpreters, advocates, written materials in a variety of community languages, and culturally appropriate service strategies, where needed.

Choice and Control and Dignity of Risk

Life Choice will:

- inform participants about the opportunities for choice available to them
- support participants to make informed choices which will provide them opportunities
- keep records of participant preferences regarding their service
- enable participants to build independence and maintain social inclusion
- provide information in a timely manner in appropriate formats

- recognise the role of family, carers and advocates in representing participants interests and promote choice and control in the planning and delivery of supports. Acknowledge the person with a disability as their own expert

Your Privacy and Confidentiality

When you start receiving a service from Life Choice, we will make a record of your name, address, contract details, and information we need to deliver a quality service to you, including information about your disability.

We will make a record each time we have contact with you and keep records on how you are progressing towards achieving your goals.

You can ask to view your Life Choice file at any time

Photographs/audio/video will only be taken if you have signed a consent form and agree for your photo/audio/video to be used on the Life Choice website, Facebook page, newsletter and annual report.

Life Choice is responsible for ensuring the Privacy Act 1988 National Privacy Principles is upheld which means keeping your private information private.

This means we won't talk about you to anyone without your permission. Our employees will receive only the information they need to know about you to do their job. Your personal information will not be discussed with anyone who doesn't need to know about your circumstances without your permission.

It also means your file will only be accessed by people who are allowed to view your details. Also, if you want to see your file you can ask at any time by speaking with our Direct Support Team.

Life Choice recognises the importance of protecting the personal information of individuals. All staff who work at Life Choice are required to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of Life Choice information including that of our participants. Each participant's consent is obtained to collect, use and retain their information or to disclose their information (including assessments) to other parties, including details of the purpose of collection, use and disclosure. Each participant is informed in what circumstances the information could be disclosed, including that the information could be provided without their consent if required or authorised by law.

Life Choice collects and stores information so it can provide a safe working environment, high quality services and meet its legal requirements. Life Choice manages personal information in accordance with relevant legislation and disposal guidelines

Life Choice is committed to

- protecting and upholding the rights to privacy and dignity of participants, staff, volunteers and representatives of agencies we deal with.
- protecting and upholding the participants' rights to privacy in the way we collect, store and use information about them, their needs and the services we provide to them.
- Life Choice is subject to NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission rules and regulations and will follow the guidelines of the Australian Privacy Principles in its information management practices.

Life Choice will ensure that:

- it meets its legal and ethical obligations as an employer and service provider in relation to protecting the privacy of participants and organisational personnel

- participants are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy using the language, mode of communication and terms the participant is most likely to understand. (i.e. interpreters and easy access materials)
- all staff and volunteers understand what is required in meeting these obligations through orientation and where necessary specific training. All position descriptions and codes of conduct identify privacy practice expectations.
- it will adhere to all requirements imposed under the Privacy Act 1988, including the requirements imposed by the Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017, to strengthen the protection of personal information. This policy conforms to the Federal Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles which govern the collection, use and storage of personal information.

Duty of Care:

Life Choice has a duty of care to all participants and recognises and supports our participants rights to self-determination, independence and dignity.

Life Choice will act to ensure that participants do not suffer harm or loss either physically, financially or psychologically due to any action, or inaction by this organisation and its employees.

Life Choice's duty of care will include consideration of dignity of risk, that is, the right of informed participants to take calculated risks.

Behavioural Supports and Restrictive Practices

Life Choice endeavours to reduce and eliminate Restrictive Practices. All restrictive practices are reported to a Coordinator, who then informs our Quality & Safety Leader who lodges it with the NDIS Quality & Safe Guards Commission. It is essential for all participants who have behavioural supports to supply Life Choice with a Behavioural Plan to ensure that this is being followed and the right procedures are put in place.

Seizure management

Life Choice is committed to providing the highest standard of care and support for a participant requiring seizure management and care. Life Choice has developed the Seizure Management policy consistent with legislative requirements for a high intensity support activity, ensuring a safe, efficient and effective management service to our participant.

Before supports are to commence, we will need a copy of your current Seizure management plan. These are updated Yearly through your regular GP unless you have medication changes, or decline, where you would need to provide an updated Seizure Management Plan. If this is not provided, your supports may be put on hold. Please note: in some circumstances staff may need to be trained according to specific requirements of your plan prior to supports commencing

Manual Handling

In the interests of protecting our workers, and potentially participants from the high risk of injury associated with recurrent manual handling of people and general workplace manual handling, Life Choice operates under the "No Lift policy".

Life Choice has established a policy to reduce the risk of incidents resulting from manual handling both for general activities and hazard manual tasks involving the movement of persons when conducting work related activities.

We recognise that there are a number of hazards associated with manual handling activities within our workplaces. In meeting the obligations for workplace health and safety, Life Choice is committed to ensuring manual handling activities are evaluated and the hazards and risks managed.

Incident Reporting

Life Choice is committed to ensuring that incidents which occur in relation to the provision of services are managed consistently and effectively, and that workers can identify, manage, report and resolve incidents.

Life Choice will comply with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018. Life Choice collects and reviews data on incidents in order to inform improvement activities.

Life Choice regularly reviews its incident management system and processes to ensure that they are:

- Appropriate to the size of the organisation and the classes of supports it provides
- Well documented
- Readily accessible to all workers employed or engaged by the organisation
- Reflective and adaptive, with an intent to prevent incidents

Non Face-to Face billing

Businesses like Life Choice are permitted by NDIS to charge Non-Face to Face time.

What this means for you: This means that we can bill for all the extra time we spend reviewing and writing reports in regards to goals, how you are achieving goals, gathering evidence for the NDIA for Plan reviews and so on.

You have the right to deny being charged this Non-Face to Face Service, but this means for your NDIA review, we will unfortunately be unable to provide these reports for you. We will get signed consent at your service agreement of your approval or not for these services.

Disability Advocate

Advocacy is the process of standing alongside a participant who is disadvantaged, and speaking on their behalf in a way that represents the best interests of that person. If a participant has asked you to be their advocate, this means they would like you to act on their behalf. You may be a family member or friend of the person, or a member of an advocacy service. Participants and prospective advocates should be aware that interpreters cannot be used as advocates, as they have a distinct role to play in interpreting communication between two or more parties.

Our Local Advocate is:

Ilona Wildauer – People With Disability Australia

(working Monday-Wednesday 9am-5pm, Thursday 9am-1pm, not working Fridays)

Ph 02 9370 3100; **Mob** 0417 451714

Email: ilonaw@pwd.org.au

Transitioning and Exiting Life Choice

Either Life Choice or the Participant can ask to review their Service agreement if the participant regularly changes, cancels or does not attend planned supports

A minimum of two weeks' notice must be given to end Service Agreements

Serious breaches of the Service Agreement may result in the Agreement ending without a notice period. Serious breaches include (but are not limited to):

- Using Life Choice premises for an illegal purpose
- Damaging or misusing Life Choice property
- Taking action which is intended, or would reasonably be expected, to harm Life Choice or its reputation or which would reasonably be expected to lead to unwanted or unfavourable publicity

Life Choice may suspend supports if we have not been paid for the supports already received by a participant

If a Service Agreement ends for any reason, the participant will still need to pay for the supports already received.