

Pol_358	<h1>Interpreter Services</h1>
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Australia is an ever-expanding, culturally diverse country, where over 20% of people speak a language other than English at home.

A lack of English language proficiency can present a significant barrier for individuals, inhibiting their ability to participate and access services. Life Choice is committed to ensuring that support is provided for those who do not speak English well enough, to ensure equity of access to resources.

The organisation will ensure that interpreters are engaged on occasions where people have difficulty communicating in English or have other requirements such as limited hearing, and will comply with Queensland and Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination legislation requirements.

The organisation will:

- Provide training for staff to identify when interpreter services are needed
- Adhere to the specific needs of the individual and ensure access to information is available in their preferred language
- Ensure the participant is aware that they are able to request an interpreter if needed
- Ensure equity and transparency in the services that are offered
- Value the individual’s right to freedom of choice and their right to be actively involved in the decision making surrounding their health

Record of policy development		
Version	Date approved	Date for review
2022/1	September 2022	September 2024

Responsibilities and delegations	
This policy applies to	Board/staff/volunteers
Policy approval	Quality & Risk Committee

Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	<u>NDIS Code of Conduct</u> <u>NDIS Practice Standards</u>
Legislation	<u>National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)</u> <u>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018 (Cth)</u> <u>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2018</u>

	<u>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018 (Cth)</u>
Organisation policies	Complaints policy Access, Transition and Exit of Services Easy Read Service Agreement information Service Information
Forms, record keeping, other documents	Complaints form

Definitions

Language services: measures taken to assist people who have a limited ability to communicate in English.

Interpreter: A person who facilitates communication between two parties who use different languages, through translating speech orally or through sign language.

Translator: A person who facilitates communication between two parties who use different languages, through written transfer of messages from one language into another.

Bilingual: A person who is fluent in two languages.

Eligibility

Individuals who experience:

- Difficulty communicating in English;
- Deafness;
- Difficulty hearing;
- Visual impairments;
- Limited literacy skills.

Procedures

- Language services will be provided free of charge for those requiring them;
- Life Choice will adopt a planned approach for disseminating information to ensure that participants who may not be able to communicate in English are made aware of their right to communicate in their preferred language;
- Life Choice will use a participant-based approach, which means adhering to the specific language needs of the individual;
- Staff need to be proactive in their assessment of individuals, to identify if an interpreter is necessary;
- In all circumstances the needs of the participant will be the primary consideration.

Rights and responsibilities

Understanding and addressing the link between culture and language will improve healthcare for more linguistically and culturally diverse communities. Disparities in healthcare between cultures can be addressed by increasing cultural responsiveness in healthcare systems. It is important that those involved are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

- Staff have the responsibility to:
 - Provide non-discriminatory services for individuals who are not fluent in English or have other difficulties such as hearing difficulties;
 - Understand and recognise when an interpreter may be required;
 - Treat the interpreter with respect;
 - Ensure that the participant is aware of the interpreter's role;
 - Ensure that the interpreter is aware of their responsibilities in regards to privacy and confidentiality;
 - Give the interpreter a brief before commencing and allow them to debrief;
 - Ensure complaints are handled promptly and appropriately;
 - Consider gender and ethnicity preferences as well as additional support required.
- Participants have the right to:
 - Receive high-quality healthcare regardless of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds or beliefs;
 - Access transparent and equitable services;
 - Request the use of an interpreter;
 - Refuse the use of an interpreter;
 - Freedom of choice and to active involvement in the healthcare decision making process.
- Interpreters/ translators have the right to
 - Be respected as a professional;
 - Receive adequate briefing and debriefing surrounding the patient's needs;
 - Safe and healthy working conditions.

Procedures for engaging interpreters

- The organisation will ensure that interpreters are appropriately qualified with one of the following:
 - NAATI accreditation level-professional interpreter;
 - NAATI accreditation level-paraprofessional interpreter;
 - NAATI recognised interpreter.
- Confidentiality

- Life Choice stresses the importance of confidentiality and requires that, prior to any session, the translator or interpreter agrees to ensure that confidentiality will be maintained under all circumstances.
- Gender preferences
 - Considering the gender requirements of a person is important especially in cases involving domestic violence or sexual assault;
 - Female/male interpreters are not always available however the organisation will attempt where possible to suit the individual's needs, this may include accessing a female/male telephone interpreter.
- Language requirements
 - In stressful situations, language skills may sometimes decrease and for many individuals, communicating in their first language would assist the process;
 - Life Choice will make its best effort to provide an interpreter in the individual's preferred language, however if this is not possible, the person's level of competency in the alternative language will be considered.
- Unacceptable interpreting practices
 - Family members should not act as interpreters in any context. This may inhibit the individual's willingness to disclose personal detail or may distort details due to bias or lack of competence in one of the languages;
 - Using other bilingual staff is also not preferable, unless they have NAATI accreditation.

Reporting and performance monitoring

- Life Choice is committed to the regular review of, and reporting, on the implementation of this policy
- Participants who are denied access or have an unfavourable experience can make a complaint
 - through [Insert internal company complaint system]
 - through the NAATI online form
 - or by booking an appointment with a NAATI office where staff can record your complaint.

End of document
