



A5	Appropriate Services	Communication Support Policy and Procedures
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What this policy aims to do	Ensure that people who use MASS services have every opportunity to communicate their wishes and thoughts, however they communicate – see ' <i>Forms of Communication</i> ' below
Who this policy applies to	Every person who uses any of MASS services and all staff
Who is responsible for carrying out this policy	Director or responsible managers and service delivery staff
What words used in this policy mean	<p>'<i>Augmentative and alternative communication</i>' (AAC) means ways that help people who have difficulties speaking clearly or do not speak, and the people they are talking to, to understand each other. Strategies can include gestures, signing words, electronic communication devices and technology devices like chat books, talking mats, diaries and schedules, 'all about me' books, personal communication diaries or personal identification wallets</p> <p>'<i>Language</i>' includes spoken and signed languages and other forms of non-spoken languages</p>
Legislation this policy is based on	<p>National Disability Service Standards</p> <p>Victorian Human Services Standards</p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</p> <p>NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2020</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act, 2010 Vic</p>

Other relevant policies

A2 Decision Making and Choice
HS11 Complaints and Disputes
A1 Person-centred Planning
HS9 Guardians and Administrators

Version	Date	Author/Editor	Approved by	Notes
1.0	26/8/2016	Peter Lane		
1.1	31/5/2018	D Stephenson		Update format
1.2	18/05/2020	K Grant	S.Reeves	Update

Communication Support Policy

Communication is a fundamental human right, explicitly identified in the *Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (CRPD)*.

Forms of communication include:

- Verbal communication through oral language, audio cues
- Non-verbal communication such as sign language, gestures and body language
- Written communication through text (can be large print) and braille
- Tactile communication including touch
- Accessible multimedia
- Interactive technology

MASS will make sure people using our services can exercise their rights about communication and receive the support they need to communicate their needs and wants effectively. All clients also have a right to receive accessible information. Accessible information means making information easy to understand and in a mode of communication that the individual is most likely to understand.

MASS staff will take practical steps to help make sure people with complex communication needs can communicate effectively with other people and can achieve as much independence as possible.

Communication Support Procedures

- ☑ It is important for people to have information that is clear, in plain English and in a mode of communication that the participant is most likely to understand.
- ☑ Staff should ensure that each service user (whether adult with disability or family/guardian of child or young person) can exercise the right to:
 - communicate and be listened to
 - understand what is being communicated to them
 - have access to the aids, services and resources they need to communicate
 - be respected as an equal partner in conversation
 - choose how they want to communicate
 - express their feelings
 - ask for or reject information, objects or actions
 - be included in social interactions
 - live and work in environments that promote communication and support their needs
 - be communicated with in ways that are meaningful, respectful and culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- ☑ Accessible information helps people find out what they need to know and assists with independent choice and decision making.
- ☑ Communication supports are identified during the Initial Access Interview.
- ☑ Staff will further support professional assessment of communication skills and needs wherever possible by advising NDIS Support Co-Ordinator to engage suitable Allied Health professionals to provide advice.
- ☑ Staff will assist and refer a person who needs AAC strategies to get specialist help, through NDIS Support Coordinator.
- ☑ Service users and members of their natural support network will be involved in the assessment and selection of communication strategies.
- ☑ Staff will work with the service user to implement the communication strategies that have been recommended by suitable Allied Health professional.
- ☑ Staff will actively promote the use of these strategies to help people get better access to community activities and relationships.
- ☑ Staff will discuss how effective the strategies are with the person using the service and people in their support network and getting more specialist assessment and advice to make changes if they are needed.
- ☑ Staff will be provided with training to ensure they understand and can effectively promote and use prescribed communication strategies or devices where possible this advice and training will be provided by suitable Allied Health professionals who have completed assessments and written recommendations.