SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Version 2.0: June 2026

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that Bilingual Care provides an environment that is physically accessible and socially inclusive, enabling consumers to safely access services, participate meaningfully and engage with others in ways that support their needs, preferences and wellbeing. This includes ensuring that service environments cater to consumers' diverse support, cultural and communication needs, and promote inclusion, connection and participation.

It applies to all staff and meets relevant legislation, regulations, and Standards. It should be read in conjunction with Bilingual Care's *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*, and *Safety and Security Policy and Procedure*.

Applicable Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

- *Standard 2. The Organisation*
- *Standard 4. The Environment*

Definitions

Accessibility[1] - removing physical, technological, and organisational barriers so staff and visitors with disabilities, including older people who may have mobility or vision/hearing impairments, can fully and independently access services. It incorporates the design of a building, such as its lighting, signs and parking, the setup of workspaces or activity areas, and the technology and equipment that is used. To create an accessible workplace it requires creating an equitable work environment through building adjustments, assistive technology, and inclusive workplace policies.

Easy English[2] – a style of written communication designed for people who have difficulty reading and understanding standard English, such as those with lower literacy skills, people with an intellectual disability, and people from different cultural backgrounds. It uses simple, concise language, focuses on key information, removes unnecessary detail, and often combines short sentences with supportive images to help with understanding. Easy English is focussed on the language used to keep things simple and clear.

Easy Read[3] – an accessible format that presents information in a simplified way using clear language, short sentences, and a structured layout supported by images to make content

[1] JobAccess (2025), *Making sure your workplace is accessible*, Australian Government, accessed 22 May 2026, https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/i-am-an-employer/create-accessible-inclusive/building-flexible-inclusive/making-workplace-accessible
[2] Disability Australia Hub (2026), *Easy English*, accessed 22 May 2026, https://www.disabilityaustraliahub.com.au/easy-english/
[3] Inclusion Australia. (2023). *What is Easy Read?*, accessed 22 May 2026, https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/What-is-Easy-Read-Fact-Sheet.pdf

easier to understand. It is designed to help people with intellectual disability, low literacy or other reading support needs to access, understand and use information. Easy Read is focussed on the format, layout, images and structure of documents.

Easy English and ***Easy Read*** are sometimes used interchangeably but are both accessible communication formats that use simple language, clear structure and visual supports to ensure information can be understood and used by people with diverse communication and literacy needs.

Policy

Bilingual Care ensures its services are physically accessible and safe. Bilingual Care also recognises that accessibility is not limited to physical access, but also includes supporting social connection, communication, cultural safety and meaningful engagement.

It takes a continuous improvement approach to ensuring ongoing accessibility for all staff, consumers, and others.

Procedures

Information

Bilingual Care provides information to consumers in a variety of ways so they can more easily access the services they need.

This includes through Bilingual Care's website, social media channels, advertising, signage, *Consumer Information Pack,* and brochures. Written information can be provided in different languages and Easy English or explained verbally by staff. Bilingual Care staff can also help consumers access interpreters or advocates where required.

Bilingual Care endeavours to provide information in formats that accommodate current and anticipated consumer needs. This includes considering consumers' cultural background and any specific communication needs. Bilingual Care will provide information in alternative formats where required to support accessibility, such as large print, Easy Read, audio or digital formats, and will ensure that images, diagrams and other non-text content are supported by clear descriptions where appropriate. These measures support equitable access to information and enable consumers, staff and stakeholders to understand and engage with information in a way that meets their individual needs.

Document Accessibility [4] [5]

Bilingual Care is committed to ensuring that all information and documents are accessible to people with a range of impairments, including vision, cognitive and learning differences. Documents will be designed and presented in ways that are clear, easy to read and understand, recognising that the structure, format and language used can significantly impact a person's ability to access information. This includes using plain language and short sentences, organising content with clear headings and bullet points, and avoiding large blocks of text to improve readability and comprehension.

[4] Disability Gateway (n.d.), *Create accessible materials – print and digital documents*, Australian Government, accessed 22 May 2026, https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads/strategy/good-practice-guidelines/print-digital-document

[5] Digital Access Solutions and Assistive Technology (DASAT). (2026). *Digital accessibility services and resources*. https://dasat.com.au/

Where possible, Bilingual Care will use accessible formatting techniques such as readable sans-serif fonts, appropriate font sizes, good spacing, left-aligned text and high contrast between text and background. Decorative formatting, complex layouts and cluttered designs will be avoided to reduce visual and cognitive load.

Physical Accessibility

Bilingual Care will undertake a risk assessment and consider ways to provide a physically accessible and socially inclusive office and premises that enables staff, consumers and others to attend with unobstructed access.

The risk assessment will cover aspects such as:

- design of a building, such as its lighting, signs and parking
- the setup of workspaces including layout of furniture
- consideration for any cultural, social or religious requirements e.g. a separate, private room or space for prayer time
- the technology and equipment used, and
- ways to reduce noise for people with sensitivities to noise

Additional guidance on workplace safety and security is also available in Bilingual Care's *Safety and Security Policy and Procedure*.

Where a consumer cannot access Bilingual Care because it is physically inaccessible for them, staff must consider alternative methods for providing services, such as meeting at a different location.

Physical access issues that are identified should be reported to the Managing Director for inclusion in the *Continuous Improvement Plan* and actioned or monitored as per Bilingual Care's *Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure*.

Cultural Considerations

When making decisions about accessibility and social inclusion and how to thoughtfully consider cultural needs and preferences, staff should refer to Bilingual Care's *Inclusion, Diversity and Culturally Safe Service Delivery Policy and Procedure* for further guidance.

Feedback and Complaints

Where consumers or others are unhappy with any aspect of Bilingual Care's social and physical accessibility and wish to make a complaint or provide feedback, staff must direct and support them to use Bilingual Care's feedback and complaints processes (see the *Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure*). Bilingual Care will take all feedback seriously and consider ways to make adjustments to the workplace where reasonably practicable.

Reporting

Incidents relating to physical accessibility should be reported in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Incident Management* policies and procedures.

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Consumer Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure*
- *Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure*
- *Inclusion, Diversity and Culturally Safe Service Delivery*
- *Safety and Security Policy and Procedure*
- *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*
- *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Consumer Information Pack*
- *Continuous Improvement Plan*

Monitoring and Review

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Leadership Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, consumer, and other stakeholder feedback, where relevant.

Bilingual Care will undertake an annual accessibility audit of its premises in accordance with *Schedule 2. Internal Review and External Audit Checklist*. Annual satisfaction surveys will assess consumer and other stakeholder satisfaction with Bilingual Care's physical access and service environment.

Six-monthly Service Delivery and Planning days and activities will include consumers and stakeholders where relevant and assess feedback provided by and to consumers and potential consumers around access and whether the information provided to consumers is appropriate and effective.

Bilingual Care's *Continuous Improvement Plan* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of Bilingual Care's service planning and delivery processes.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No.	**Issue Date**	**Document Owner**
2.0	**26/06/2026**	**MD**
Version History		
Version No.	**Reviewed Date**	**Revision Description**