

YourBridge Cares

Participant Handbook

This handbook is a guide created for you so you can learn more about YourBridge Cares and the disability services that we offer. At YourBridge Cares, it's all about you, and quality service is our promise to you. Find out all you need to know about us, what we do, the services we offer and how we will walk with you to help you meet your individual and life goals through listening and working with you.

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About Us

Welcome to YourBridge Home & Community Care Services Pty Ltd trading as (YourBridge Cares), a Registered NDIS Service Provider offering Care and Support in Disability for Private and NDIS funded clients living in their own homes. At YourBridge Cares, it's all about you, and quality service is our promise to you. Our business is about providing person-centered and outcome-based service. We provide you with the care that meets your individual needs through listening and working with you.

Our Goal is to Empower, Encourage, and Inspire our participants to have Faith, Trust and Confidence in themselves and live positively.

Our Vision

To be the NDIS Service Provider of choice through word of mouth always exceeding our Participants expectations.

Our Mission

To provide quality services to people living with disabilities, their Carers, and family throughout the state of Victoria, and continuously strive for excellence.

Our Values

To uphold Integrity, Honesty, Respect, Loyalty, Trust, Compassion, Faith, and to see people for who they are and the potential in them and not through the disability.

YourBridgeCares Services

- Personal Care
- Household tasks (Cleaning & Domestic)
- Assistance with activities of daily living
- At home respite (Self-Care)
- Hospital respite
- Assistance with community access
- Private transport
- Public transport travel companionship
- Health & Wellbeing appointment assistance
- Short Term Accommodation (Respite) and Assistance
- Medium Term Accommodation and Assistance
- Supported Independent Living
- Specialist Disability Accommodation
- Assistive Prod-Household Task
- And more, please contact us if what you need is not in the above list

Areas We Service

- Inner Gippsland
- Western Melbourne
- Sothern Melbourne
- Outer Eastern Melbourne
- North Eastern Melbourne
- Inner Eastern Melbourne
- Hume Moreland
- Brimbank Melton
- Bayside Peninsula

YOURBRIDGE CARES DISABILITY STANDARDS

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

YourBridge Cares respects and fully commits to upholding your rights as our client, including those with disabilities.

YourBridge Cares considers your rights protected by the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 when it makes decisions, sets policies and provides services.

YourBridge Cares is committed to ensuring you are made aware of your rights and responsibilities and supported to exercise them. We acknowledge that people with disability have the same human rights as other members of the community and that the community has a responsibility to facilitate the exercise of those rights.

Our Client Charter sets out your rights and responsibilities, which contribute to ensuring the rights of all clients and staff are upheld.

YourBridge Cares will provide all prospective and existing clients with information about their rights through:

- provision of our Client Charter in YourBridge Cares' Handbook;
- displaying the Client Charter in YourBridge Cares' facilities; and
- verbal explanation by YourBridge Cares' staff.

YourBridge Cares will take into account your specific requirements as an individual when ensuring you as our client fully understand your rights through providing information in a format that suits your individual communication needs, whether they be due to disability or cultural background. Formats include different languages, Easy English, face-to-face or phone explanation by staff, and the use of interpreters and advocates.

As per our Access Policy and Procedure, staff will discuss with you, your rights and responsibilities during intake and assessment. Staff will confirm your understanding verbally, using an interpreter or advocate where required.

Client complaints will be addressed in accordance with our Feedback, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure.

In accordance with YourBridge Cares' Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure, respect for and protection of your privacy and confidentiality will be reinforced on an ongoing basis, verbally and in literature promoting the services offered by the organisation.

Staff will provide services with sensitivity to, and awareness of, people's disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse or Indigenous backgrounds.

CLIENT CHARTER

YourBridge Cares respects and fully commits to upholding the rights of all people, including those with disabilities. We are also committed to ensuring you, our clients (children, adults, family members, carers and guardians), are aware of their rights and responsibilities and can be confident in exercising them.

Client Rights

YourBridge Cares respects and fully commits to upholding the rights of its clients, as set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) and the Disability Act 2006 (Vic). In accordance with this legislation, you have the right to:

- respect for your inherent individual human worth and dignity;
- be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect;
- realise your individual capacity for physical, social, emotional, cultural, religious and intellectual development;
- recognition of your individual autonomy and independence, including your right to dignity of risk and the freedom to exercise choice and have control over your life;
- live a life free from abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- privacy and confidentiality, and access to all personal information kept by us about you;
- be assessed for service access in an equitable, non-discriminatory way, according to your needs;
- be consulted about your needs and preferences and participate actively in decisions affecting your life, including all decisions made about your care and the development of our policies, programs and services;
- information about:
 - available services and service options, within YourBridge Cares and with other service providers;
 - the services to be provided and any associated costs;
 - conditions that may apply to the services being provided;
 - how to make a complaint to us and to external agencies; and
 - your legal rights, entitlements and obligations under the Disability Act 2006;
- receive services:
 - that are appropriate, safe, of a high quality, are culturally relevant and adapt to your ongoing needs and goals;
 - in a way that results in the minimum restriction of your rights and opportunities; and
 - in a safe, accessible built environment appropriate to your needs;
 - and information necessary to support your rights, in ways that are appropriate and have regard to your disability and cultural background;
- have services and supports provided by appropriately qualified staff;
- change service providers and receive support in doing so;
- have a person of your choice support and advocate on your behalf in your interactions with us;
- refuse a service or support without prejudicing your future access to services; and

- pursue any complaint about your service provision without fear of retribution and receive support to pursue complaints.

Client Responsibilities

We expect that you will:

- respect the human worth and dignity of staff and other clients;
- treat staff and other clients with courtesy and respect;
- respect the rights of others including their rights to confidentiality and privacy;
- be responsible for your choices and the results of any decisions you make;
- play your part in helping us to provide you with services, by informing us of your support needs and any health, behavioural or wellbeing issues;
- proactively participate in the development, implementation and review of person-centered support plans;
- communicate any changes in your circumstances and needs to staff;
- promptly pay any fees and charges associated with the provision of your service; and
- inform us as early as possible when support is not required.

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK PROCESSES

Compliments, complaints and other forms of feedback provides YourBridge Cares with valuable information client satisfaction and an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of its service. Feedback is taken seriously by YourBridge Cares and seen as an opportunity for improvement.

YourBridge Cares records and handles feedback effectively in order to identify areas for improvement, coordinate a consistent approach to complaint resolution, reduce the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.

Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity in a way that respects and values the person's feedback can be one of the most important factors in recovering confidence about YourBridge Cares' services. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system will assist YourBridge Cares to achieve this.

YourBridge Cares has an effective feedback, compliment and complaint handling system that addresses the principles of visibility and accessibility, responsiveness, assessment and investigation, feedback, continuous improvement and service excellence.

You as our client, or other stakeholder wishing to lodge feedback or a complaint will be provided with information regarding this policy.

Information about providing feedback and making complaints will be provided in a variety of formats, including in Easy English and alternative languages. Interpreters and referrals to advocates can be provided.

YourBridge Cares' staff will provide all clients, their families and carers with this policy and procedure when they first access the service and, throughout service delivery, remind them of the policy and their right to make a complaint without fear of affecting their service.

Complaints and feedback can be lodged by a third party on behalf of another person, if their consent has been provided.

Feedback

Feedback can be provided to any staff member at any time in any way by any stakeholder, including through:

- a staff member (where applicable);
- YourBridge Cares' public email address; service@yourbridgecares.com.au
- Mailing address: Waterman Business Centres, Suite 201, Level 2/66 Victor Crescent, Narre Warren, VIC 3805
- Phone contact: (03) 5995 4187 or 0413 169 746
- Feedback and Complaint Forms
- staff planning days and management meetings (involving client and other stakeholder representatives);
- client forums;
- staff collection of client feedback after each major interaction with the service (e.g. initial assessment and planning; reviews; exit);
- annual client service delivery and satisfaction surveys. All clients will be asked to complete these surveys; and
- annual staff and stakeholder satisfaction surveys. All staff will be asked to complete these surveys and stakeholders will be selected on a random basis.

Where feedback is provided verbally, the receiving staff member will transcribe the feedback onto a YourBridge Cares' Feedback and Complaint Form.

Provision of feedback through any of YourBridge Cares' channels is voluntary.

A Feedback and Complaints Form will be made available to the individual to lodge their grievance, however it is not mandatory that they use the form. The Feedback and Complaints Form can be used to make anonymous complaints.

Grievances can be lodged:

- directly with a staff member, either verbally or by providing a completed Feedback and Complaints Form;
- *through our website:* www.yourbridgecares.com.au
- by email to: service@yourbridgecares.com.au
- by phone to Margaret Kinuthia on 0413169746; or
- in writing to:

YourBridge Cares
Waterman Business Centres, Suite 201, Level 2/66 Victor Crescent, Narre
Warren, VIC 3805

All clients making a complaint will be encouraged to use an advocate of their choice to act on their behalf if they wish. The advocate may be a family member or friend, or sourced (with the assistance of a staff member if required) through the National Disability Advocacy Program.

If a complaint alleges actual or possible criminal activity or abuse or neglect, it will be referred to the Director immediately. The Director will report the complaint as per YourBridge Cares' Incident Management Policy and Procedure and work with the relevant authority to investigate the allegation.

Staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure a complainant is not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

YourBridge Cares' Complaints and Grievances Register will be used by the YourBridge Cares Director to record every complaint, track investigation progress and outcomes and how the outcomes have been communicated to stakeholders.

Complaints Escalation and Dispute Resolution

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or grievance, they will be provided with the details of other agencies they can use to assist them to achieve a resolution.

Escalated complaints will be tracked in the Complaints and Grievances Register in the same manner as other complaints and the same communication processes as outlined above will be applied. If necessary, the Director will undertake communication with the complainant instead of the YourBridge Cares Coordinator.

- Complaints to the NDIS can be lodged:
 - by email to feedback@ndis.gov.au
 - by phone on 1800 800 110
- Complaints to the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Complaints, Integrity and Privacy Unit can be lodged:
 - by email to complaints.reception@dhhs.vic.gov.au
 - by phone on 1300 884 706
 - by post to
 - Complaints, Integrity and Privacy Unit
 - GPO Box 4057
 - Melbourne VIC 3001
- Complaints to the Victorian Disability Services Commission can be lodged:
 - by email to complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au
 - by phone on 1800 677 342 (TTY 1300 726 563)
 - online at www.odsc.vic.gov.au
 - via Skype by calling or emailing to make an appointment first
- Complaints to the Commission for Children and Young People Victoria can be lodged:
 - by email to childsafes@ccyp.vic.gov.au
 - by phone on 1300 78 29 78
- Complaints to the Office of the Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection can be lodged:
 - By phone on 1300 666 444
 - online at www.cdp.vic.gov.au
- Complaints to the Victorian Ombudsman can be lodged:

- by phone on 03 9613 6222 or (regional areas) 1800 806 314
- online at www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au
- Complaints to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission can be lodged:
 - by phone on 1300 735 135
 - online at www.ibac.vic.gov.au
- Complaints to NSW ADHC can be lodged:
 - by email to servicembx@facns.nsw.gov.au
 - by phone on (02) 9377 6000
 - online at www.adhc.nsw.gov.au
 - by post to
Locked Bag 10
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
- Complaints to the NSW Ombudsman can be lodged:
 - by email to nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au
 - by phone on 02 9286 1000 or Toll free (outside Sydney metro) on 1800 451 524
 - online at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

CLIENT INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

An incident may mean any of the following:

- Acts, omissions, events or circumstances that occur in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to a person with disability and have, or could have, caused harm to the person with disability
- Acts by a person with disability that occur in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to the person with disability and which have caused serious harm, or a risk of serious harm, to another person
- Reportable incidents that have or are alleged to have occurred in connection with providing NDIS supports or services to a person with disability

A reportable incident covers:

- the death of disabled person
- serious injury of a disabled person
- abuse or neglect of a disabled person;
- unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of a disabled person;
- sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, a disabled person, including grooming of the disabled person for sexual activity; and
- the unauthorised use of a restrictive practice in relation to a disabled person.

What are the key steps for incident management?

The key steps for incident management include:

- REPORT

- SUPPORT
- ASSESS
- NOTIFY
- INVESTIGATE

Report

All incidents (not just reportable incidents) are to be recorded in YourBridge Cares' Internal Incident Management System [Incident Register](#) and responded to appropriately and steps taken to prevent such incidents from happening again.

Once an incident report is received, key personnel will determine if the incident is reportable or non-reportable. The definition of *reportable incident* captures not only **incidents** that have occurred, but also **allegations** of the incidents fall under reportable incident category. **It also only includes incidents where the impacted person is a person with disability** – incidents that are recorded in an incident management system that relate to serious harm to workers or other people committed by a person with disability are not reportable. The only exception to this is where a person with disability is the impacted person of the incident.

Anyone can identify and report an incident, for example one of our staff members or you, as the client or a family member. An incident should be reported as soon as practicable so we can take action in response to whether the incident is serious (reportable) or non-critical.

Based on the information you provide about the incident, we will complete an internal incident form and record the details in our incident management system.

The relevant supervisor/team leader, or the Quality and Risk Manager in the absence of the supervisor/team leader will be notified of the incident. Details of our key staff for incident management can be found by calling us on 03 5995 4187 or email us at incidents@yourbridgecares.com.au.

Support

We may need to protect your health and safety and the health and safety of others and take emergency action if necessary. We will also be respectful and sensitive to the way in which you may respond to the experience of the incident and provide any appropriate support and assistance throughout the process.

You may want to get some support at any stage of the incident management process. This could be support from staff, family, a friend or an advocacy service. An advocate can work on your behalf or work with you in a way that represents your needs. We will also ask you to provide feedback and input into assessments, investigations and any proposed recommendations or actions taken to resolve the incident.

Assess

We will assess all incidents to determine:

- why the incident occurred;
- whether the incident could have been prevented;
- how well the incident was managed and resolved;

- future prevention measures; and
- who else needs to be notified of the incident.

We will also look at the effect of the incident has had on you and any operational issues that may have contributed to the incident occurring.

Notify

All reportable incidents, except for the unauthorised use of a restrictive practice, must be notified to the NDIS commission by the Quality and Risk Manager within 24 hours of us becoming aware of the incident. Any unauthorised use of restrictive practices must be notified within 5 days but reported within 24 hours if there is harm to the client.

We may also notify the police or relevant authorities to report suspected crimes or notify guardians, family or carers where appropriate.

For reportable incidents, the NDIS Commission will determine whether any action is required.

Investigate

At times, we may need to obtain further information about the incident and undertake an internal investigation in such cases where the cause of the incident is unknown or the nature and the impact of the incident is significant.

An investigation may take up to 5 business days followed up with a detailed report. Complex investigations may take longer, for example, we may be required to involve other external organisations or interview relevant people.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Your right to privacy and confidentiality is recognised, respected and protected in all aspects contact with YourBridge Cares.

You have the right to decide who has access to your personal information.

YourBridge Cares will collect, use and disclose information in accordance with relevant state and Federal privacy legislation.

YourBridge Cares will only collect information necessary for safe and effective service delivery. It will only use information collected for the purpose it was collected and secure it appropriately.

Information related to clients will not be released to other individuals or services without informed consent from you or your representative, or in exceptional circumstances

YourBridge Cares will only request and retain your personal or health information that is necessary to:

- assess a potential client's eligibility for a service;
- provide a safe and responsive service;
- monitor the services provided; and

- fulfil contractual requirements to provide non identifying data and statistical information to a funding body.

Your Responsibilities

- Providing accurate information when requested.
- Maintaining the privacy of any personal or health information provided to you about other individuals, such as contact details.
- Completing all permission forms and returning them to the service in a timely manner.
- Being sensitive and respectful to other clients and guardians who do not want their child to be photographed or videoed.
- Being sensitive and respectful of the privacy of other clients and families in photographs/videos when using and disposing of these photographs/videos.

DECISION MAKING AND CHOICE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

YourBridge Cares is committed to ensuring you are involved in making decisions and choices about all aspects of the support services you receive from the organisation.

YourBridge Cares recognises that some of its clients are children, where a parent or guardian will make decisions on their behalf.

All adults have the right to make their own decisions. However, if a person is unable to make reasonable judgements because of disability, a guardian or administrator can be appointed to make decisions for them.

Some children and adult clients will have an independent support person, representative, family member or advocate to assist them to make a decision or choice, or make a choice on their behalf.

An advocate can be a family member, friend or an independent person from a community organisation. Advocates assist clients to express their needs or speak on behalf of a client. They are not substitute decision makers, but are there to ensure the clients' needs and wants are listened to.

All people have the right to maintain their personal, gender, sexual, cultural, religious and spiritual identity, and the right to dignity of risk.

A representative or person responsible is not necessarily the client's next of kin it can be;

- a guardian or administrator appointed by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) or the Office of the Public Advocate (or in New South Wales, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) or through a legal process known as enduring guardianship); or
- a spouse, carer or close relative or friend (informal guardian).

YourBridge Cares' management (or delegates) will support you, as our client or your parents/guardians to access any information you reasonably require to enable you to participate in decisions affecting your lives. This includes supporting you to access technology, aids, equipment and services that increase and enhance your decision-making and independence.

Management (or delegates) will be responsive to the changing needs, goals, aspirations and choices of clients and will communicate in appropriate formats to facilitate their informed decision-making and choice.

Where YourBridge Cares is unable to meet your needs and goals or is not resourced to effectively meet the them, management (or delegates) will refer you to other relevant service providers or community-based organisations to facilitate your support needs.

YourBridge Cares' management (or delegates) will act upon the outcomes of a client/parent/guardian's input into decision-making.

Your Right to an Advocate

An advocate can be a family member, friend or an independent person from a community organisation. Advocates assist clients to express their needs or speak on behalf of a client. They are not substitute decision makers, but are there to ensure the clients' needs and wants are listened to.

We are committed to empowering you as our client and enhancing your capacity for self-determination and expression. We therefore seek to promote and protect your right to nominate an advocate of your choice who will be involved in the decision-making process regarding your service needs.

You also have the right to self-advocate, change your advocate or decide not to use your advocate. If you wish to nominate an advocate or want more information regarding advocacy services in the ACT, please let your Service Coordinator at YourBridge Cares know about your decision.

An advocate is a person who acts in your best interest and promotes your rights by speaking, acting and writing on your behalf. An advocate can be anyone you nominate including:

- A primary caregiver
- A family member
- A friend or neighbour
- Another service provider
- Staff- except if there is conflict of interest
- A person employed as an advocate with a specialised advocacy services (please see below)
- Employees of government departments such as the Department of Fair Trading
- Employees of Statutory bodies, such as the office of the Public Guardian

Specialised Advocacy Services in the ACT

ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)

Address: Suite 207, Block C, Canberra Technology Park

Phillip Avenue, Watson

Tel: (02) 6242 5060

E-mail: adacas@adacas.org.au

Web: www.adacas.org.au

ACT Public Advocate

Address: Level 3, 12 Moore Street

Canberra City ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6207 0707

E-mail: pa@act.gov.au

Web: www.publicadvocate.act.gov.au

Advocacy for Inclusion

Level 2, Room 02, Griffin Centre
 20 Genge Street, Canberra City ACT 2601
 Tel: (02) 6257 4005
 Fax: (02) 6257 4006
 E-mail: info@advocacyforinclusion.org
 Web: www.advocacyforinclusion.org

Legal Aid ACT

2 Allsop Street
 Canberra City ACT 2601
 Tel: (02) 6243 3471
 E-mail: legalaid@legalaidact.org.au
 Web: www.legalaidact.org.au

PROTECTING CLIENTS FROM HARM POLICY AND PROCEDURE

YourBridge Cares takes proactive steps to prevent the occurrence of abuse and neglect in its services and to its clients. This includes supporting the safety and security of people affected by family violence.

YourBridge Cares has a moral, ethical and legal responsibility to ensure that you, as our client is safe in our care, and will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this. YourBridge Cares is committed to:

- ensuring that your health, safety and wellbeing at the service is protected at all times;
- fulfilling its duty of care obligations under the law by protecting you from any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm;
- ensuring that all staff, students and volunteers caring for clients at the service act in your best interests and take all reasonable steps to ensure your safety and wellbeing at all times;
- supporting the rights of all clients to feel safe, and be safe, at all times;
- developing and maintaining a culture in which you feel valued, respected and cared for;
- encouraging active participation from parents/guardians and families at the service, and ensuring that best practice is based on a partnership approach with shared responsibility for your health, safety, wellbeing and development; and
- ensuring it is proactive in educating you of your individual rights by including personal safety education programs within YourBridge Cares.

SERVICES ACCESS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

To be eligible to receive YourBridge Cares disability-specific services, you must meet the following eligibility criteria.

- have one or more identified intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairments that are, or are likely to be, permanent, or
- have one or more identified impairments that are attributable to a psychiatric condition and are, or are likely to be, permanent, or
- is a child who has developmental delay

Consideration must also be given to your Priority of Access by examining:

- your relative need compared to others who receive or want to receive YourBridge Cares services;
- any special additional needs you may have, and where relevant, your family, carer or other supporters;
- the extent to which YourBridge Cares can contribute to those needs being met;
- the resources available within YourBridge Cares to meet your needs;
- other services you receive and how YourBridge Cares services will complement those and contribute to improved outcomes for you; and
- your best interests.

Where relevant, the interview will take into account information already provided you in your NDIS Plan.

Where required, management (or delegates) will provide this information in an alternative format such as a different language, Easy English, detailed verbal explanation or the use of interpreters and advocates.

Management (or delegates) will contact you or your supporter within 1 working day of the Intake Interview to advise of the outcome. Notification will be provided by phone and or email.

YourBridge Cares commits to uphold the right of people to access appropriate services that meet their needs and to ensure that the services are provided in a transparent and equitable way.

YourBridge Cares' service delivery environment is safe and engaging, physically accessible and responsive to its clients' support and communication needs.

YourBridge Cares' screening and eligibility, priority of access and waitlist management is undertaken in a fair, equitable and transparent manner, and in line with YourBridge Cares' Client Charter.

Access to services is based on relative need, service capacity, the best interests of people using the service and potential impact on existing service users.

Where required, you will be provided with information and support to access a person of your choice, such as an advocate, to assist you to access the service.

YourBridge Cares ensures its service environment is kept clean, hygienic, safe, secure and aesthetically pleasing at all times.

- YourBridge Cares services will be provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our Head Office hours are 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
- The business' phone number will divert to an after-hours contact from 5pm to 8am each weeknight and 24 hours on weekends. This will be answered by a manager (or delegate).

N/B: At the discretion of management, these hours may be extended to provide additional service options to clients, where this can be justified by demand.

Information for clients, including YourBridge Cares' signage and client information, will be provided in a variety of formats such as different languages, Easy English, face-to-face or phone explanation by staff, and the use of interpreters and advocates.

Where physical access issues are identified, the management will consider whether YourBridge Cares is accessible for you, and if not, how it could be made accessible.

Where a language or cultural barrier is identified, management (or delegates) will engage an interpreter or an appropriate external agency to support you.

Non-acceptance

Where a person is offered services but chooses not to accept the offer, the administration staff will respect your choice and encourage you to contact YourBridge Cares should you change your mind, noting that you may need to be placed on YourBridge Cares' waitlist if the service has no capacity to provide services at the time you may want to recontact

Service Refusal

Where services cannot be provided, you will be provided with a clear reason based on YourBridge Cares' eligibility criteria, Priority of Access requirements or waiting list processes.

YourBridge Cares may refuse to offer a person services where:

- they do not meet YourBridge Cares' eligibility requirements;
- other potential clients are assessed as a higher priority based on YourBridge Cares' Priority of Access Considerations;
- YourBridge Cares does not have the capacity to cater to additional clients;
- YourBridge Cares does not have the resources to cater to the specific needs of the person.

A person who meets YourBridge Cares' eligibility requirements and cannot be offered a service due to lack of capacity, can elect to be placed on YourBridge Cares' Waiting List. You will be advised of the possible waiting time before services might become available.

In either case, you will be assisted with referrals and support to access alternative services, as per YourBridge Cares Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure.

Waiting List processes

Management (or delegates) will contact people on its Waiting List at least every three months to:

- advise them of their current status;
- check whether they want to remain on the list;
- provide referrals to other service providers if required; and
- advise the estimated wait time remaining.

To keep Waiting List size and wait times to a minimum, additional services will be offered where justified by demand and YourBridge Cares' resources allow.

Appeal

Any person refused services has the right to appeal management's decision. Appeals should be directed in writing to YourBridge Cares' management, who will make a final decision.

If required, staff will provide support to help you make an appeal, by either transcribing your feedback for management (or a delegate's) review or referring you to interpreter or advocacy services.

Those not successful in their appeal will be provided written advice to this effect. For procedures for those who successfully appeal, see YourBridge Cares' Assessment, Planning and Review Policy and Procedure.

If you are unhappy with outcome of your appeal, you will be directed to YourBridge Cares' complaints process. As per YourBridge Cares' Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure, information on YourBridge Cares' complaints process can be provided in a variety of formats if required including support to access interpreters or advocates if necessary.

Alternative supports

YourBridge Cares will work collaboratively with all people refused services and (with consent) their supporters, to identify what alternative services and referrals could best meet their needs.

With the client's consent, relevant information will be provided by YourBridge Cares to new service providers to support the client's seamless transition. Where required, YourBridge Cares' staff will also meet with staff of alternative providers to facilitate a smooth transition for the client.

Continuous improvement

YourBridge Cares will maintain a record of people who have been refused a service, summarising reasons for their being found ineligible or, if found eligible, reasons for being placed on YourBridge Cares' Waiting List.

Access, service refusal and referral information will be tracked in YourBridge Cares' client management system to inform YourBridge Cares' continuous improvement.

PROVIDING INFORMATION, ADVICE AND REFERRAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

YourBridge Cares works proactively as part of a broader service delivery network, which enhances its own service delivery and provides you with appropriate referrals and services that meet your needs.

YourBridge Cares informs you, the community, and potential clients about its services and access requirements through active engagement strategies that encourage and facilitate client and stakeholder participation.

Where possible, people (including clients leaving the service or people unable to access YourBridge Cares' services) will be referred using facilitated, warm or active referral processes in accordance with the Information Sharing Guidelines for Registered Community Services in Victoria.

Service Network Engagement

YourBridge Cares' management builds strong relationships with local government and non-government providers and agencies and participates in relevant local networks, to increase service and referral options for you, our client, and other stakeholders.

YourBridge Cares' management builds strong relationships with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) services to support it to identify and meet clients' needs and goals, as well as contribute to more coordinated service provision, better use of resources and improved outcomes for you, our client, and communities. This includes active involvement with ATSI and CALD communities and services, such as participation in community events, collaborative service provision and referrals.

Management will collaborate with local ATSI and CALD service providers to assist culturally sensitive service delivery, ensure staff are adequately trained and sensitive to the specific cultural needs of the service area (including in the development of referral practices) and generally facilitate participation of stakeholders from these backgrounds in the service and community.

Where applicable, YourBridge Cares will develop clear protocols with other service providers, such as memorandums of understanding or other forms of agreement. These protocols will outline relationships and delineate the roles and responsibilities of collaborating agencies. Management will be responsible for establishing, reviewing and modifying such agreements.

Management (or a delegate) will review YourBridge Cares' participation in service and referral networks on an annual basis to ensure the arrangements in place are the best use of YourBridge Cares' resources and are providing the best possible outcomes for YourBridge Cares' stakeholders.

Service Promotion

Management (or delegates) will ensure YourBridge Cares is listed on relevant directories, including through the 'Find Registered Service Providers' tool on the NDIS website.

YourBridge Cares will distribute information about its services in appropriate formats to local government and non-government providers and agencies in the organisation's geographical service area, including the local NDIA office and NDIS Local Area Coordination (LAC) service provider.

Referral and Information Sharing

YourBridge Cares will prominently display information (such as brochures) in its foyer regarding alternative services and local community participation options for clients and other stakeholders. Where clients are not accessing services at YourBridge Cares' premises, staff can provide them with brochures or information that may be of interest to them.

Management (or delegates) will maintain a comprehensive Referrals Database, which will be continuously reviewed and built upon by all delivery staff.

Management (or delegates) will respond to referrals and requests for its services within 1 working day, in accordance with its Service Access Policy and Procedure. Referrals required as part of YourBridge Cares' support of a client will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and procedure and YourBridge Cares' Assessment, Planning and Review Policy and Procedure.

YourBridge Cares will work collaboratively with all people refused services or leaving YourBridge Cares, and their supporters, to identify what alternative services and referrals could best meet their needs.

In all cases, referrals to other services will be made within 2 working days.

Staff making referrals must have an accurate knowledge of the services provided by other agencies and actively contribute to the continuous improvement of YourBridge Cares' Referral Database.

Management (or delegates) will provide referrals with empathy and respect for the person, a non-judgemental attitude and sensitivity to their needs.

Where required, you will be provided with information and support to access a person of your choice, such as an advocate, to assist you to interact with YourBridge Cares' management (or delegates) and other services.

When providing referrals, management (or delegates) will take into consideration:

- your most pressing needs of the client;
- safety issues and whether a referral will compromise your safety;
- the level of distress experienced. For example, it may be necessary to help calm the person or seek the support of a more senior staff member before referring them on to other services;
- the needs of children, vulnerable people and people with complex needs or at high risk;
- the person's age, ability, gender, sexual identity, culture, religion, spirituality and language and communication needs; and
- other services the person is already receiving and from where.

Management (or delegates) must be aware of possible barriers that a person may experience in using another service and, where feasible and appropriate, work with them to find ways to overcome these barriers. Barriers may include:

- lack of information about services and what is available;
- lack of client capacity or interest in taking up a referral;
- waiting lists that are too long to meet the client's needs;
- cost;
- lack of child care;
- cultural or language barriers;
- difficulties in contacting clients (e.g. lack of phone services);
- family ties;
- lack of anonymity in small communities;
- lack of interpreters;
- lack of services particularly in rural and regional areas; and
- lack of transport options.

Management (or delegates) will be assisted to support individuals with special or complex needs through ongoing formal and on-the-job training and professional development opportunities.

Management (or delegates) will acknowledge and address any concerns and explain the reasons why a particular referral has been made.

Where more than one service may assist you, it is appropriate to provide you with information about the range of services available and give you choice over which particular service or services you want to use. In doing so, staff may need to provide some guidance on any special conditions for using a service. It is important to refer people to the most appropriate service at the right time and avoid a 'merry-go-round' of referrals.

Where appropriate, management (or delegates) may also follow up with you to ensure the referral was effective.

Where required, information about alternative services, YourBridge Cares' referral process and feedback and complaints processes will be provided to people in alternative formats that facilitate their understanding. Information about YourBridge Cares' referral processes and information sharing provisions will be included in its YourBridge Cares' Handbook and provided where required by staff, including during service delivery.

Where a person is not satisfied with referrals provided or the integration of supports provided by YourBridge Cares with other services, they will be directed to YourBridge Cares' feedback and complaints processes.

Service access and refusal and referral information will be tracked in YourBridge Cares' client management system and on client files. Records will include the timeframes within which incoming referrals were actioned or outgoing referrals made.

Information Sharing Provisions

As per the Information Sharing Guidelines for Registered Community Services in Victoria, when sharing a person's information with another service, staff must:

- give priority to children's best interests, including consideration of the need to protect children from harm, protect their rights and promote their development;
- where they are not specifically authorised to share information by the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, only share information as authorised by privacy legislation (see YourBridge Cares' Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure);
- seek consent, where this is possible, before sharing information and where this does not place you, as our client or any other person at risk;
- exercise professional judgment – use their professional skills, knowledge and experience – in deciding what action to take in regard to a vulnerable child; and
- consult with a senior staff member where they are unsure of what to do.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND PARTICIPATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

All aspects of YourBridge Cares' service delivery promote your, as our clients', active participation in your community and support you to develop and maintain independence, problem solving, social and self-care skills appropriate to their age, developmental stage and cultural circumstances.

YourBridge Cares promotes a person-centred approach to its service delivery whereby individuals lead and direct their services and are supported to maintain connections with their family, friends and communities.

Client assessment, planning, service delivery and review will include activities or supports that help you, as our client to take control of and responsibility for your choices and enhance your autonomy, independence and community participation.

Service Delivery Principles

YourBridge Cares will put you at centre of decision-making in all aspects of your life and support you (as our client) to actively participate in your community and pursue your interests and goals.

Client assessment, planning and review will include activities or supports that help you to take control of and responsibility for your choices and enhance your autonomy, independence and community participation.

Where required, management (or delegates) will identify and provide referrals and linkages to services and activities that will enhance your community participation and provide support and assistance to help you as the client access these.

Referral possibilities include, but are not limited to: training, employment, education, health, wellness,

recreation, leisure, cultural and community services, activities and events, as well as public transport and affordable housing options.

Where possible, services and support provided to you by YourBridge Cares should support you to develop and maintain independence, problem solving, social and self-care skills appropriate to your developmental stages and cultural circumstances.

Management will develop a diverse workforce and employ diverse staff so that client assessments, planning, service delivery and reviews benefit from expertise from a range of staff with varying life experiences.

YourBridge Cares will work collaboratively with disability-specific and mainstream services to provide holistic service delivery to you, its client.

YourBridge Cares will use a strengths-based approach to identifying individual client needs and life goals, particularly in relation to recognising individuals' capacity to develop their independence, problem solving, social and self-care skills.

Services will be delivered in a way that respects individuals' personal, gender, sexual, cultural, religious and spiritual identity.

YourBridge Cares will support your access to information on which to base your decisions when you want to try new things or continue with options that may not have gone well in the past, including the benefits and risks, consequences and responsibilities to you, and others.

YourBridge Cares will recognise that people can communicate their choices, likes and dislikes in many ways, for example, verbal communication, withdrawal, acting out, engagement and disengagement, aggression, excitement, despondency and joyfulness. They will work with clients and adapt to their individual needs as they change over time, regardless of the frequency or cause.

Interpreters

YourBridge Cares recognises that the provision of language services is a quality and safety issue. The delivery of safe high-quality services requires effective communication between the client and YourBridge Cares has a duty to provide language services appropriate to a person's needs.

Interpreters will be made available at no costs to you and YourBridge Cares will promote this in its client information.

Where it is determined that an interpreter may be required, staff will first assess how well the client can understand information in English. An effective method for assessing English proficiency is to conduct a short, informal interview with the person, asking for basic details about their reason for attending and their background.

Stressful or unfamiliar environments may affect a person's ability to communicate effectively, even if they generally have a level of proficiency in English suitable for that type of appointment or meeting.

An interpreter will be engaged if you request one.

Where a client has limited or no English language skills or uses Auslan, YourBridge Cares will offer the use of a professionally accredited interpreter to ensure the client understands and can communicate in

response to the information being provided to them.

Every reasonable effort must be made to use an accredited interpreter before your family member or friend is asked to assist. They may assist in communicating with a client where an interpreter is required but is not available and a matter must be dealt with in a restricted time frame. The decision to do so, and the circumstances justifying that decision, must be documented in the client's file or relevant record. As soon as practicable the services of a professional interpreter will be engaged to ensure the information has been accurately conveyed, especially in the case of medical or complex situations.

Any individual under the age of 18 must never be asked to act in the place of an accredited interpreter.

Unless they are an accredited interpreter or employed for their language skills, staff members who speak a language other than English may only assist with communicating low risk information such as making appointments or obtaining basic personal details such as name and address. Unaccredited bilingual staff cannot be used to communicate information that is legally binding or puts at risk either the client or YourBridge Cares.

The following are critical points at which people with low English proficiency should have access to information in their preferred language:

- you, as our client are being informed of your rights (for example, privacy, confidentiality) and responsibilities (for example, fees);
- you are required to make significant decisions concerning your life (for example, provision of test results, medication regimes, other interventions, undertaking assessment and care planning, conducting assessment outcomes);
- essential information needs to be communicated and understood to inform decision making (for example, procedures and referral options); and
- giving informed consent (for example, to treatment, release of information, power of attorney and guardianship matters).

YourBridge Cares will access Interpreters and Translators through the Victorian Interpreting & Translating Service (VITS). Services provided by VITS include:

- telephone interpreting;
- on-site interpreting (spoken languages and Auslan);
- language translations; and
- video remote interpreting.

Bookings for interpreters and translations can be made using YourBridge Cares' VITS PIN:

Interpreting bookings including those for video remote interpreting can be made:

- online at <http://client.vits.com.au>;
- by email to interpreting.bookings@vits.com.au; or
- by phone on (03) 9280 1955 (24 hours seven days a week).

VITS' Video Remote Interpreting service is for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing and use Australian Sign Language (Auslan) to communicate.

Clients can request a preferred interpreter. However, while the use of the client's preferred interpreter is recommended, if that interpreter has a qualification lower than a professional level, they can only interpret basic information. A professionally accredited interpreter must be used for the communication of critical or legally binding information.

Translation

Translated information can supplement interpreting services and provides information that you as our client can later refer to, or provide to family, carers and other support persons to aid understanding. Some people may prefer written information.

Translation enquiries can be made:

- online at <http://client.vits.com.au>;
- by email to translations@vits.com.au; or
- by phone on (03) 9280 1941.

ASSESSMENT, PLANNING AND REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURE

YourBridge Cares will provide you with limited assistance with planning, including regarding its own service delivery and through providing advice, information and referrals.

Extensive assistance with planning is provided by service providers funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services or NDIA to deliver planning or case management support as one of their core functions and with the expertise to develop informal, community and disability-specific responses. See YourBridge Cares' Referral Database for relevant contacts.

Should you request assistance with support planning that is beyond the scope of this policy and procedure, you will be directed to a relevant support coordinator. Referral and support to connect you to the relevant agency or service provider will be provided within a service benchmark of 5 working days.

All documentation relating to assessment, planning and review will be maintained on client files and tracked in YourBridge Cares' client management system.

For all assessments, planning and review activities, management (or delegates) will discuss your rights and responsibilities with you. They will confirm your understanding verbally, using an interpreter or advocate where required.

Management (or delegates) will advise you of your right to involve a support person in your dealings with YourBridge Cares.

Where required, clients will be provided with information and support to access a person of their choice, such as an advocate, to assist them to access the service.

In accordance with YourBridge Cares' Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure, respect for and protection of clients' privacy and confidentiality will be reinforced on an ongoing basis, verbally and in literature promoting the services offered by the organisation.

Where physical access issues are identified, management (or delegates) will consider whether the YourBridge Cares is accessible for you, and if not, how it could be made accessible.

Where a language or cultural barrier is identified, management (or delegates) will engage an interpreter or an appropriate external agency to support you.

If necessary and with you or your supporter/s consent, other parties such as service providers who deliver existing or complementary services you will be included in assessment, planning and review activities.

Management (or delegates) will take into account your wishes in regards to accepting or rejecting particular support options.

Assessment

Following the Intake Interview, where you are offered services and accept, management (or delegates) will work with you and your supporter/s to assess your needs, develop and agree upon a Service Agreement.

Management (or delegates) will meet with the client and their supporter/s within 5 working days of their acceptance, or sooner if able, for an Assessment and Planning Interview.

Management (or delegates) will conduct all Assessment and Planning Interviews.

The assessment will take into account:

- your needs (including health, wellbeing and safety needs), goals and longer-term aspirations;
- the supports that can be provided by YourBridge Cares to meet those;
- your preferred links to family, friendships and other support networks;
- you and your supporters' age, ability, gender, sexual identity, culture, religion or spirituality;
- any barriers to community participation and strategies that could be put in place to help clients overcome them; and
- how, when, and where the client requires the supports to be delivered.

Where possible, support provided to you as our client by YourBridge Cares should:

- support you to develop, maintain and strengthen independence, problem solving, social and self-care skills appropriate to their age, developmental stage and cultural circumstances; and
- help you as your client to take control of and responsibility for your choices and enhance your autonomy, independence and community participation.

Where relevant, the interview will take into account information already provided in your NDIS Plan.

Where required, management (or delegates) will identify and provide referrals and linkages to other services and activities that will enhance your community participation and provide support and assistance to help access these.

Referral possibilities include, but are not limited to: training, employment, education, health, wellness, recreation, leisure, cultural and community services, activities and events, as well as public transport and affordable housing options.

Referrals to alternative services will be provided in accordance with YourBridge Cares Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure.

Planning

Management (or delegates) will work with you and your supporter/s to formalise the supports to be provided by YourBridge Cares in a Service Agreement. YourBridge Cares' Service Agreement Templates can be tailored to the individual needs of each client.

The Service Agreement will include:

- the supports that will be provided;
- the cost of those supports;
- how, when, and where you require the supports to be delivered;
- the period for when you require the supports to be provided;
- when and how the Service Agreement will be reviewed;
- how you, as the client and YourBridge Cares will deal with any problems or questions that arise, including complaint handling and dispute resolution;
- what the client's and their supporter's responsibilities are under the Service Agreement;
- what YourBridge Cares' responsibilities are under the Service Agreement; and
- what notice is needed for you, the client or YourBridge Cares to change or end the Service Agreement and how this is done.

Service Agreements will be prepared within no more than 7 days of you, as our client commencing to regularly access YourBridge Cares' services, and ideally by a service benchmark timeframe of 5 days.

Management (or delegates) must ensure you (and your supporter/s) understand their plan, or are supported to understand it, and provide you with a copy. A copy will also be kept on the client's file and key elements captured in YourBridge Cares' client management system.

You must sign the Service Agreement before service delivery can commence.

Review

The terms of the supports will be reviewed every 6 months with the client by the management or CEO. Reviews will include the following;

- Identifying and celebrating the clients progress.
- Whether the services offered need to be modified.
- The clients age, gender, sexual identity, culture and religion and what the client is capable of.
- The client's preferred links to family, friendships and other support networks.
- Any challenges to community involvement and the measures that could be put in place to help clients overcome them.
- The clients short-term and long-term goals, needs and the clients progress towards addressing their need and achieving their goals.

Flexibility will be provided based on the timing of review assessments, depending on the your needs and expectations. If you wish to change your service delivery before the 6-month review process, the you can request a review or complete a change of booking form.

Factoring information in your NDIS Plan, if any changes to the services are required, you will need to complete a change of booking form and the form which will be attached to the your service agreement.

YourBridge Cares' annual participants satisfaction surveys will assess your:

- Satisfaction with supports provided;
- Satisfaction with the relevance and quality of referrals and connections provided by YourBridge Cares workers; and
- Awareness of, access to and experience of supports provided to enable them to maintain and enhance links with other people and organisations.

EXIT AND TRANSITION PLANNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Clients have the right to terminate their service provision at any time, and this decision will not prejudice future access to the service.

YourBridge Cares collaborates with other services to enhance exit/transition planning to meet people's needs.

Exit procedures will be fair, transparent, follow due process, uphold the rights of clients and protect the safety and integrity of YourBridge Cares' staff, clients, programs and services.

Procedures

Should you or your supporter/s or YourBridge Cares wish to end service provision before the dates set out in the Service Agreement, they must give the other party at least 2 weeks' notice.

Service exit and referral information will be tracked in YourBridge Cares' client management system to inform continuous improvement.

Management (or delegates) is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the requirements of this policy and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements.

Client feedback and complaints will be addressed in accordance with YourBridge Cares' Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure.

In accordance with YourBridge Cares' Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure, respect for and protection of clients' privacy and confidentiality will be reinforced on an ongoing basis, verbally and in literature promoting the services offered by the organisation.

Where required, clients will be provided with information and support to access a person of their choice, such as an advocate, to assist them to access the service. See YourBridge Cares' Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure.

All clients exiting the service will be offered an Exit Interview, where management (or delegates) will explain the reason for the client's service termination (if applicable), obtain feedback about where YourBridge Cares can improve its processes and communicate the steps to re-accessing the service should the client wish to.

Service Termination

As part of YourBridge Cares' entry processes, clients are informed of their rights and responsibilities. Where a client is asked to leave YourBridge Cares, information regarding the reason for being asked to leave will be provided and explained to the client and their supporter/s. These reasons will be included in the client's exit plan if required (see below).

YourBridge Cares will only terminate a client's services when:

- they are unwilling over a period of time to work towards agreed goals;

- other people using the service, staff or the person themselves are at risk of harm;
- financial requirements are not being met;
- severe incompatibility with other clients using the service is displayed;
- dramatic health changes require significantly increased levels of care or a service model not provided by YourBridge Cares.

The service exit will only be actioned after discussion and consultation with you as our client, your supporter/s and other important stakeholders, and strategies have been implemented to meet irreconcilable differences.

Clients will be offered support to access interpreters or advocates to assist them through this process if necessary.

Client Requested Termination

As our client, you have the right to terminate service provision at any time, and this decision will not prejudice future access to the service.

On termination of service you will be sent a letter informing you of your rights to future service provision and information regarding advocacy services if required.

Appeal

Clients who have their services terminated by YourBridge Cares have the right to appeal. Appeals should be directed in writing to the director and a final decision will be made by management. Clients who successfully appeal will be supported to continue accessing YourBridge Cares' services. Applicants who are not successful in their appeal will be provided advice in writing to this effect.

If you are unhappy with outcome of your appeal, you will be directed to YourBridge Cares' feedback and complaints processes. As per YourBridge Cares' Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure, information on YourBridge Cares' complaints process can be provided in a variety of formats if required and support to access interpreters or advocates if necessary.

Transition Planning

Management (or delegates) will work collaboratively with you and your supporters to identify what alternative services and referrals could best meet your needs. See YourBridge Cares Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure.

With you and your supporters' consent, YourBridge Cares will provide relevant information to new service providers to support your seamless transition. Where required, YourBridge Cares' staff will introduce you to staff of alternative providers to facilitate a smooth transition. See YourBridge Cares' Information Sharing Provisions in its Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure.

Prior to exit you will be provided guidance and support to:

- investigate other options or models of support from YourBridge Cares;
- explore the consequences of your decision to exit the service; and
- consider re-entry to the service in the future should your needs or circumstances change.

An Exit Plan will be agreed with the client and with their informed consent, any other stakeholders. The Plan will contain identified timeframes outlining actions and those responsible to implement the actions.

Service Re-entry

Clients who have chosen to exit YourBridge Cares have the right to re-access services within a 1-month period of exiting, without having to follow formal access processes, provided the necessary service resources are available.

Following expiration of the one-month cooling off period, a new intake assessment will be undertaken if you request service at some point in the future.

Files and Documentation

Upon a client's exit all documentation and information developed and implemented by YourBridge Cares will remain the property of the service. Any documentation provided by other service providers and included in your file that has been used to facilitate your support will be returned to you or your supporter/s. YourBridge Cares will retain copies of these documents.

All information in relation to the client will be retained, secured and stored in accordance with YourBridge Cares' Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT AND RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

YourBridge Cares promotes the dignity, worth, rights and developmental potential of people with a disability. Client rights and ethical principles should always be considered when adopting any strategy that relates to the management of challenging behaviour.

Restrictive interventions are used only when YourBridge Cares has authorisation from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services to use them and other options have failed, as one part of a wider plan to manage behaviours of concern.

YourBridge Cares uses a Positive Behaviour Support approach in working with people in situations where there is challenging behavior or behavior of concern.

Positive Behaviour Support

YourBridge Cares' staff will use Positive Behaviour Support strategies to respond to behaviours of concern in a positive, encouraging way. Strategies include:

- proactively preventing behaviours of concern occurring in the first place;
- working to the primary goal of enhancing the quality of life of a person and a secondary goal of reducing behaviours of concern;
- taking into consideration the context in which any behaviours of concern occur and the environments in which the person lives;
- inclusive, person-centred approaches to behaviour management;
- seeing the person's strengths and being committed to the person's potential;
- valuing the person and seeing the behaviour in context;
- an appreciation that all behaviours have a purpose; and
- being positive.

YourBridge Cares' management (or delegates) will discuss how to manage behaviours of concern with the client and their supporter/s.

In managing behavior, staff will always use the least restrictive alternative. Any action taken to benefit a client should intrude as little as possible on their rights and lifestyle.

Restrictive practices that constitute aversive restraint, psycho-social restraint or exclusion are inconsistent with rights-based and person-centred service delivery to people with disability and must not be recommended or used in any circumstances.

Restrictive Practices

Restrictive practices restrict the liberty of individuals and should be considered only in exceptional circumstances where the health, safety and wellbeing of a person with disability and/or the safety of others is at risk and all other reasonable, less restrictive alternatives have been trialled.

The use of a restrictive practice within YourBridge Cares requires the following:

- Comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment
- Recommendation of the restrictive practice by an appropriate professional, within the context of an holistic individual support plan for the person with disability
- Informed consent by a person with legal authority
- Where required, authorisation by the relevant government institution for the Public Guardianship
- Application of the restrictive practice by appropriately trained disability services staff, to the extent legally authorised
- Regular review of the use of the restrictive practice as part of individual support planning with the person.

Within YourBridge Cares, the use of a restrictive practice requires recommendation by:

- a practitioner, being a medical practitioner, relevant health professional or manager of the relevant service unit or area; **and**
- Management

Individual Plans

The plans of people subject to restrictive practices must include the following key quality elements in relation to positive behaviour support:

- The plan identifies the function of the behaviours of concern
- Environmental factors that trigger or support the behaviours of concern are identified
- The plan introduces both environmental change and supports new behaviour
- Reinforcement of new behaviours is identified
- The response to recurrence of behaviours of concern is described
- The plan contains a strategy to communicate between relevant persons.

YourBridge Cares may seek the expertise of psychologists and/or developmental educators in the development and implementation of individual support plans.

An appropriate individual support plan must be in place before a restrictive practice is recommended.

Management (or delegates) are to be advised and instructed on the individual support plan, which must be readily available in the person's file for ongoing use by staff when required.

YourBridge Cares is required to ensure that your specific consent and/or authorisation arrangements, including the details of your substitute decision-maker or guardian, or any orders by the relevant Public Guardianship authority are clearly documented to inform management (or delegates) about arrangements relating to the use of restrictive practices.

Restrictive Interventions

YourBridge Cares in principle does not support the use of restrictive interventions. Should YourBridge Cares need to implement restrictive interventions routinely, it will register with the Senior Practitioner, appoint an Authorised Program Officer (APO) to monitor the use of these practices within the service and report the use of these practices to the Senior Practitioner using the Department of Health and Human Services' Restrictive Intervention Data System (RIDS).

Once registered with the Senior Practitioner, where restrictive interventions are deemed necessary, management will consult with you, as our client, your supporter/s and other key stakeholders to develop a Behaviour Support Plan using the Department of Human Services' Behaviour Support Plan Toolkit.

The primary focus of any Behaviour Support Plan will be to improve your quality of life with a secondary focus on eliminating or reducing behaviours of concern. Restrictive interventions approved for use will be used in a way that is deemed least restrictive and only as a last resort.

For each client that restrictive interventions apply to, the restrictive practices will not be implemented until that client's Behaviour Support Plan is approved by the Authorised Program Officer and until the client subject to the restrictive interventions has been notified in writing at least two days prior to the proposed use of the practices, except in the case of an emergency.

Notification will be in an accessible communication format for the client and advise that a restrictive intervention has been approved for use and under what conditions. Clients subject to restrictive intervention and their supporters will be made aware of the reasons restrictive interventions are to be implemented and when and how this will be reviewed.

Before any restrictive intervention is used, staff will discuss the proposed intervention with you as our client and your supporter/s if applicable.

Before any restrictive intervention is used, staff will make sure the person showing the behaviours of concern and their supporter/s if applicable, understand they have the right to appeal to the Senior Practitioner if they do not agree with the intervention.

If a client does not have a supporter or guardian and is unable to advocate for themselves, staff will make sure the person is supported to access an advocate (see YourBridge Cares' Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure).

Staff will consult with management (or delegates) before they introduce any restrictive intervention.

Any use of a restraint must be approved by management (or delegates) .

If restraint is used, it will be for as short a time as possible and its use will be reviewed frequently as per the relevant Behaviour Support Plan.

If restraint is used, staff will record the details of every time it is used and how the client responded.

Restrictive intervention will always be overseen by a specialist in behaviour. A medical specialist will also oversee any restrictive intervention to identify any potential side effects.

Emergency Restrictive Interventions

Staff may use restrictive interventions as an emergency measure if they consider that a person's safety is in serious and urgent danger. If this happens, the intervention will be as short and as limited as possible.

After implementing any emergency restrictive intervention, staff will report immediately to the management, who will report immediately to the Senior Practitioner.

Reporting

Management (or delegates) will report the use of restrictive interventions to the Senior Practitioner on a monthly basis through RIDS.

Management (or delegates) will report on the use of emergency restrictive interventions as soon as possible after they occur through RIDS.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

We are committed to quality, innovation and promoting a culture of continuous improvement in our governance, management and service delivery. We include the management (or delegates), clients and other relevant stakeholders in our continuous improvement activities to ensure services are of high quality and meet client needs.

YourBridge Cares' management will specifically focus on continuous improvement in its governance by reviewing its own performance annually. Director, client and other stakeholder feedback will all be taken into account in this review.

All continuous improvement issues or opportunities identified will be reported to and tracked by management or a delegate in YourBridge Cares' Continuous Improvement Plan.

As a policy YourBridge Cares continuously reviews all its policies to identify opportunities for improvement for better service delivery and higher customer satisfaction.

GOVERNANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

YourBridge Cares has effective systems and processes in place to guide and support its overall direction, effectiveness, supervision processes and internal and external accountability.

Accountable and transparent governance arrangements ensure YourBridge Cares:

- complies with relevant legislation, regulations and contractual arrangements;
- supports and develops its staff; and
- delivers quality and safe services to its clients.

YourBridge Cares operates in accordance with the terms set out in the YourBridge Cares' Constitution.

In recognition that stakeholder participation in YourBridge Cares' governance and management processes will improve service outcomes, YourBridge Cares will seek feedback on its governance from stakeholders (clients, families, carers, advocates, staff, other service providers or government representatives) regularly.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- YourBridge Cares will maintain financial management and accounting systems that:
 - are transparent and accountable;
 - allow for the keeping of full and accurate records;
 - allow budgeting and reporting on an accrual basis;
 - meet applicable Australian Accounting Standards; and
 - are consistent with the financial compliance and reporting requirements for any of the organisation's government funding arrangements.
- All financial transactions, including receipts and payments related to NDIS service provision, are clearly identifiable and easily tracked within YourBridge Cares' financial accounts.
- Management will develop pricing structures for YourBridge Cares' services that align with the price controls and quoting requirements in place for NDIS supports, in accordance with the NDIS VIC/NSW/QLD/TAS Price Guide.
- The Director (or delegate) will maintain full and accurate accounts and financial records of the supports delivered to NDIS participants, along with records of all Service Agreements
- A NDIS Service Agreement will be used to formalise the supports YourBridge Cares will provide NDIS participants.
- As our client, you have choice over what level of control you have over your finances and this is reflected in your Service Agreement with YourBridge Cares.
- YourBridge Cares will work collaboratively with clients and their supporters to develop their Service Agreement.
- YourBridge Cares will declare prices to all clients before providing services and include all fees Service Agreements along with detailed information about the supports to be provided. Fees charged will not exceed the price controls set by the NDIA.
- YourBridge Cares' Service Agreements will clearly set out the costs to be paid for supports, when delivery of supports is to be performed and the method of payment required. See YourBridge Cares' Assessment, Planning and Review Policy and Procedure for more information on what the Service Agreement will contain.
- As our client, you must sign the Service Agreement before service delivery can commence.
- Through its invoicing and statement arrangements, YourBridge Cares will ensure that you are regularly provided with details of services delivered and the amount charged for those services.

- Service Agreements will be consistent with the NDIS' pricing arrangements, guidelines and the requirements of the A New Tax System (Goods and Service Tax) Act 1999 regarding the application of the GST.
- You and your supporters and other stakeholders have access to YourBridge Cares' feedback, compliments and complaints processes to raise issues about financial management of their supports without fear of retribution.

Other payment arrangements

- Where there is no funding requirement for fees to be charged for services rendered, YourBridge Cares will charge you on a fee for service basis.
- Where a client has difficulty paying their fees, they are encouraged to discuss this with YourBridge Cares so that mutually acceptable payment arrangements can be put in place.

Fee Payments

- Accounts are calculated each week and are to be paid weekly.
- Prices charged to NDIS participants will not exceed the price level prescribed for that support in the NDIS VIC/NSW/QLD/TAS Price Guide.
- No other charges will be added to the cost of supports provided, including credit card surcharges, additional fees such as 'gap' fees, late payment fees or cancellation fees.
- Receipts will be provided at time of payment and reprints provided upon request.
- Fees are to be paid by cheque, EFTPOS, online, direct bank transfer, YourBridge Cares' pay or credit card, either weekly as supports are provided. Cash will not be kept on YourBridge Cares' premises and YourBridge Cares will not accept cash payments.
- Fee payments can be made directly to Administration staff.
- Statements of services provided will be issued by mail or email at the beginning of each quarter for the supports provided in the previous quarter.
- YourBridge Cares will submit claims for payment within a reasonable timeframe, and no later than 60 days for the end of the support booking.

Outstanding Accounts

- Where a client's fees are outstanding for more than one week, management (or a delegate) will call them requesting payment.
- Where fees are outstanding for two weeks, provision of supports will be cancelled.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- The health and safety of all of YourBridge Cares' stakeholders is of paramount importance.

- Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) is the responsibility of all YourBridge Cares' stakeholders – management, employees, volunteers, contractors, clients, families, carers and visitors.
- YourBridge Cares will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, clients, parents, families, guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, as well as a safe and healthy environment.

Procedure

- All issues regarding OH&S must be reported to the Director (or delegate) who will address or respond to the issue or nominate a suitable staff representative to do so. The Director (or delegate) will track progress and outcomes in YourBridge Cares' Occupational Health and Safety Improvement Register and refer any relevant items for inclusion in the Continuous Improvement Plan.
- OH&S matters are to be reported to management on a quarterly basis.
- Upon commencement, all staff will undergo Induction, which will include general and task-specific OH&S training where appropriate.
- Management is responsible for ensuring YourBridge Cares meets its obligations under OH&S legislation by diligently understanding the nature of the services provided and the associated hazards. Management must ensure appropriate resources are allocated to control any identified risk.

Responsibilities of YourBridge Cares' Director

- Provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and without risks to employees' health. For contractors completing non-routine tasks, YourBridge Cares must ensure that YourBridge Cares' daily operations and layout do not pose unreasonable risks.
- Implement an effective OH&S program that includes managing key sector risks such as manual handling, occupational assault and stress.
- Ensure other individuals, such as clients, families and visitors, are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from YourBridge Cares' activities.
- Consult with employees about OH&S matters that will, or will likely, affect employees directly, including identifying hazards; making decisions on how to manage and control health and safety risks; making decisions on health and safety procedures; and proposed changes at YourBridge Cares that may impact on health and safety.
- Notify WorkSafe Victoria as appropriate about serious workplace incidents, and preserve the site of an incident.
- Hold appropriate licenses, registrations and permits, where required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) and Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 (NSW).
- Make every reasonable effort to resolve OH&S issues with employees or their representatives within a reasonable timeframe.
- Not discriminate against employees who are involved in health and safety negotiations.

- Allow access to an authorised representative of a staff member who is acting within his/her powers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Produce OH&S documentation as required by inspectors and answer any questions that an inspector asks.
- Not obstruct, mislead or intimidate an inspector who is performing his/her duties.
- Ensure regular safety audits of indoor and outdoor environments; all equipment, including emergency equipment; playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments; cleaning services; horticultural maintenance; and pest control.
- Monitor the conditions of the workplace and the health of employees.
- Protect other individuals from risks arising from YourBridge Cares' activities, including holding an open day or a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the service e.g. contractors cleaning the premises after hours.
- Provide adequate instruction to staff in safe work procedures and inform them of known hazards to their health and wellbeing that are associated with the work they perform.
- Ensure all plant, equipment and furniture are maintained in a safe condition.
- Develop procedures to guide the safe use of harmful substances, such as chemicals, in the workplace.
- Ensure OH&S accountability is included in all position descriptions.
- Allocate adequate resources to implement this policy.
- Display this policy in a prominent location at YourBridge Cares.
- Ensure the physical environment at YourBridge Cares is safe, secure and free from hazards.
- Implement and practice emergency and evacuation procedures.
- Implement and review this policy in consultation with all staff.
- When developing an occupational health and safety program, refer to AS4801 and AS4804.
- Identify and provide appropriate resources, induction and training to assist staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy and ensure they are kept informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

YourBridge Cares is committed to establishing and maintaining information and records management practices that meet its business needs, accountability requirements and stakeholder expectations. A well-maintained records management system supports the delivery of quality client services

Records are to be retained and disposed of in accordance with:

- The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services' Record Retention Guide for

- Organisations Funded Under the Service Agreement; and
- (where applicable) the Functional Retention and Disposal Authority: FA306 issued to ADHC, NSW.

Use of records by management (or delegates) is monitored and file audits are undertaken to ensure files are complete, up-to-date, and procedures are being followed.

Storage and Security

Electronic records are stored securely with backup and disaster recovery systems in place. The greatest level of care is taken for client-related records.

YourBridge Cares' electronic data, including email data, is securely stored on Microsoft 365 server and Microsoft OneDrive, which is protected and backed up by Microsoft

YourBridge Cares uses the following business and administrative databases and software applications for the capture and storage of specific information and records:

- Client Management System (CMS): **Brevity Care Software**
- Finance system: **Reckon One**

Regular physical access and digital access internal audits will be undertaken in accordance with YourBridge Cares' Internal Review and External Audit Schedule.

YourBridge Cares' Continuous Improvement Plan will be used to record and monitor progress of any improvements identified and where relevant feed into YourBridge Cares' service planning and delivery processes.