

Diversity, cultural and social inclusion policy and procedure

Purpose

Access4u understands and values the unique identities, cultures, abilities, diversity, beliefs and life experiences of its customers.

Access4u is committed to:

- Ensuring a supportive workplace that respects and values diversity of customs, cultures and beliefs;
- Ensuring that its services are delivered in a manner that respects and values the customs, cultures and beliefs of its customers and staff; and
- Preventing harassment or discrimination of any kind.

This policy describes our objectives for achieving organisation wide diversity, inclusion, and flexibility, how we will achieve those objectives and how we will measure our achievements to ensure we do not have unequal treatment of any persons.

Scope

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all of Access4u staff, leadership, student placements, contractors and volunteers collectively referred to as 'staff' throughout this policy.

Responsibilities and delegations

This policy applies to	Governing Body. Staff and Volunteers
Specific responsibilities	The Board – Responsible for ensuring effective governance mechanisms are in place. The CEO and Managers – Responsible for monitoring and ensuring adherence to Policy and related procedures. Ensure due diligence and take reasonable steps to ensure Access4u are meeting their obligations. Ensure objectives of the policy are achieved. Staff – Responsible for adherence to this and related policies, procedures and forms that support this policy.
Policy approval	CEO

Policy context – this policy relates to:

Standards	• Family and Community Services Act 1972 • National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework • National Standards for Out-of-Home care (NOOHCS) • The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People - Charter of Rights
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Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Legislation	• Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) • Children and Young People (Safety) (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2017 • Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 • Children's Protection Law Reform (Transitional Arrangements and Related Amendments) Act 2017 • Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992 • Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) • Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) • National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018 • National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) • The Disability Act 2006 • The Disability Services Act SA 1993
Contractual obligations	• Government of SA, DCP Contract Management Framework • NDIS Code of Conduct
Organisation policies and procedures	• Code of Ethics and Conduct policy • Customer Feedback and complaints policy • Customer Participation and Social Inclusion policy • Customer rights and service charter • Customer safeguarding policy • Staff disciplinary procedure • Duty of care and dignity of risk policy • Grievances and disputes procedure • Human Rights policy • Performance management policy • Probationary review policy • Professional ethics and conduct policy • Reconciliation Action Plan • Staff recruitment policy • Worker clearance policy • Zero tolerance policy

Definitions

Definitions for the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:	
Word	Definition
<i>Diversity</i>	in this policy includes cultural background, linguistic, religious and spiritual beliefs, gender identity, nationality, education, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, marital status, parental status, social class and gender.
<i>Cultural diversity, cultural responsiveness, and inclusion</i>	involves recognising and respecting a culture of diversity, equity and social inclusion. It is acknowledging and understanding differences between individuals arising from diversity of life experiences, and backgrounds. In particular this applies to: • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; • People from non-English speaking backgrounds; • People from diverse racial, religious or cultural backgrounds; • People with a disability; • Gay, Lesbian, Transgender/gender diverse, Bisexual or Intersex people; and • People of varying age demographics and generations.
<i>Cultural competence</i>	is essential to work effectively with the many values, perspectives, styles, and priorities of our customers that arises from diversity of life experiences, and backgrounds. An understanding of the role of culture in people's lives is fundamental to providing needs-based and person focused care and services to result in meaningful outcomes.

Policy Statement

We are committed to support, develop and maintain cultural competence, safety and inclusion, at an organisation and individual level.

We:

- recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are Australia's First Peoples.
- recognise, respect, promote and celebrate the multicultural nature of Australian society.
- are sensitive and responsive to the cultural diversity of our community and embody ethical appreciation and recognition of cultural difference.
- are committed to an inclusive culture that celebrates diversity and provides equitable service delivery outcomes to empower our service users.
- create an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices, and respects individuals and groups of people.
- ensure our services are accessible to all those who need them and opportunities for culturally and linguistically appropriate services are provided.

- provide ongoing training opportunities to our staff, volunteers and students to ensure cultural competency and culturally responsiveness in order to provide inclusive services for our customers.

Through strategy and operations, we will monitor and review our progress to enhancing and maintaining a culturally inclusive organisation. Any complaints, feedback or suggestions relating to cultural diversity and inclusion grounds will be managed using our Feedback and complaints management policy. Where the complaint identifies a breach in our Code of Conduct, this will be managed in line with our Staff disciplinary procedure.

Implementation

The objectives of this policy are to ensure we:

- have a workforce that delivers a responsive and inclusive service through the ability to garner a deep understanding of our customer's preferences and needs.
- have a truly inclusive service delivery where every individual is respected regardless of cultural background, linguistic, religious and spiritual beliefs, gender identity, nationality, education, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, marital status, parental status, social class and gender.
- address any unfair, discriminatory or illegal practices which may result or have resulted directly or indirectly from cultural difference.
- promotes activities that celebrate diversity and needs.
- emphasise the value of diversity and strengthen our commitment to inclusiveness.
- deliver our services in a way that supports emotional, social and mental wellbeing.

To achieve these objectives we will:

- assess our organisational cultural competence and inclusiveness on an annual basis.
- ensure all persons are treated equitably and with a level of mutual respect.
- not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.
- facilitate accessible complaint processes for service users to voice their concerns.
- support our customers to participate in significant events such as cultural ceremonies, celebrations and events, funerals, sorry business
- continuously evaluate our services and programs to support diversity.
- consult with key stakeholders, communities and customer groups to achieve better outcomes.
- engage cultural consultants and interpreters to support our customers as required.
- ensure the resources we use are culturally sensitive and appropriate.
- always ensure compliance with Code of Conduct for all staff. Any breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action in line with our Staff disciplinary procedure.
- ensure compliance with our Reconciliation Action Plan which provides a framework for the way we continue to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Procedures

Access4u will strive to be a culturally competent and safe organisation for people of all cultural backgrounds, including by:

- Maintaining an awareness of the different cultures and backgrounds within the organisation, and the similarities and differences between these cultures;
- Appreciating and valuing each person's cultural diversity for the strengths they bring to the organisation;
- Ensuring everyone involved in the organisation feels that their cultural background and needs are understood and respected;
- Maintaining flexibility and adaptability to best respond to the diverse cultural needs within the organisation;
- Identifying each customer's individual background, culture, diversity, beliefs and life experiences as part of assessment and planning, and use this information to deliver services that are culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed;
- Implementing a system to recognise, prevent and respond to any form of discrimination such as violence, abuse, racism, neglect and exploitation; and
- Continuously improving its approach to inclusion and diversity.

Access4u has developed a cultural diversity strategy to ensure that:

- Cultural competence and the promotion and appreciation of diversity are set out in organisational documents (e.g. vision, values, strategic plan);
- Diversity and cultural inclusion is incorporated in the organisation's onboarding;
- Staff, including senior staff and management, will receive training and education in cultural competency and safety, and how to incorporate these into organisational values, practices, policies and service delivery;
- It will encourage the active recruitment of staff from diverse backgrounds or staff who have previous experience in service delivery to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Hiring practices and procedures work to mitigate any potential bias to ensure candidates are not disadvantaged by cultural perceptions;
- Information on the services and programs is available in forms which reflect the demographics of the target service areas, such as:
 - languages other than English;
 - easy read formats; and
 - disability-accessible (e.g. in audio form or with larger font sizing for visually impaired customers);
- It undertakes regular, active consultation involving people from diverse cultural and linguistic and backgrounds, to assist in identifying and prioritising needs and in planning service;
- Feedback and data collection from consumers and staff are reviewed and used in continuous quality improvement in service planning;
- Changes to local cultural and linguistic demographics are reviewed in planning for future services;
- Access, feedback and complaint policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure there are no barriers to people from cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Harassment or discrimination are not tolerated and that appropriate internal organisation and/or legal protocols, are followed to prevent or address harassment or discrimination; and
- Flexible approaches are adopted in response to customers, that recognise and meet individual cultural

and linguistic needs.

Access4u promises to engage with customers in a way that supports them to feel safe, welcomed, included and understood. Access4u therefore ensures that its staff will:

- Demonstrate respect for cultural or religious customs and health practices;
- Reflect on their personal cultural identity and potential biases on an ongoing basis to determine any potential improvements at an individual level;
- Arrange for accredited interpreters (including sign language interpreters) in circumstances where customers are unable to communicate easily in English. Access4u will endeavour to avoid using friends, family or translation applications for interpreting purposes unless absolutely necessary (e.g. an emergency);
- Conduct assessments for customers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities in a manner that is culturally appropriate and respectful. This may also include involving a larger group of extended family, friends or community members identified by the customer to assist in providing a culturally safe environment, or providing relevant details (e.g. health history where the customer cannot provide this information themselves);
- Actively seek information from customers, or where appropriate their family/carer, about their customs, culture and beliefs where it may affect the provision of service. (e.g. culturally appropriate diet preferences, religious rituals or the need for staff to be of the same gender as the customer);
- Attempt to meet specific requests from customers, where possible, to demonstrate respect for the customer (e.g. assistance in religious practices or help with establishing social networks); and
- Ensure where possible and if appropriate, that customers have access to staff (within the organisation and external services) from similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds

Recognition of First Peoples:

Access4u Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competency Commitment.

Access4u will commit to fulfilling the following to develop, sustain and promote cultural proficiency:

- Include statements of commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency in our organisation's foundational and planning documents.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Ensure that the service environment displays symbols and statements showing respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Ensure that speeches include an Acknowledgement of Country and/or Welcome to Country.
- Ensure documents are reflective of appropriate terminology, and that staff understand and practise appropriate terminology use (e.g. capitalising Aboriginal, Indigenous, and Torres Strait Islander, and not using acronyms or abbreviations such as ATSI).
- Consider the need for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group, and/or reserve seats on the board for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Implement policies and procedures to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented amongst the board, managers and staff.
- Ensure that professional development for the board/staff/carer/volunteer includes how to promote and facilitate cultural safety and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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Access4u will adapt resources to include the following topics in training and development for staff working directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's diverse history and cultures
- complex networks of family and kinship
- the continuing impacts of grief, loss and trauma
- the relationship between culture and wellbeing
- cultural protocols such as Sorry Business, Men's and Women's Business
- appropriate terminology and use of language, such as nation, region and clan names
- how to ensure cultural safety for staff and service users
- self-awareness and self-reflection about one's own culture, attitudes and beliefs

Access4u will adapt policies, procedures and processes to ensure that:

- There are processes in place to respectfully identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service users.
- We develop and implement processes to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers understand their rights.
- We develop and implement processes to provide culturally safe services from first point of contact and throughout service delivery.
- We establish documented procedures for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to identify, connect with and practise their culture (e.g. kinship mapping as a standard component of assessment/service provision).
- We document and implement processes to provide holistic support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers.
- We establish documented procedures for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, supports and communities.
- We document and implement procedures and protocols for collaborating and coordinating services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.
- Every stage of planning, review and evaluation is informed by feedback and input by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers/families/communities.