

LIFE INDEPENDENCE DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

www.lifeindependence.com.au

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Drafted by	Merryn Farnsworth	Approved by	20/11/2020 manager
Responsible person	Merryn Farnsworth	Scheduled review date	20/11/2021

Anti-Discrimination Policy

INTRODUCTION:

This policy exists for the purpose of explaining to any person receiving services, any relevant stakeholders, supporters and any staff how this service views issues surrounding discrimination in the conduct of business and delivery services. This policy outlines the expectations the service has in applying fair and impartial practices to any person to create an environment and support services free of discrimination in all dealing with Life Independence and its representatives.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the ethical, legal, legislative and complaint practice standards that Life Independence adheres to while describing the types of services and supports available to the service users that this policy applies to.

Outlined are processes and options for clients, family or other stakeholders receiving services from Life Independence to provide feedback or make complaints should they feel they have been unfairly discriminated against. This policy also describes the minimum set of standards regarding the rights and fair and equal treatment attributed to any person receiving services from Life Independence.

This policy is written from the perspective of a person or supporter receiving services from Life Independence in the core business of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funded support services.

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The context of receiving services also includes any intake procedure where a person may have been declined or delayed service should the person believes may have amounted to or resulted in discrimination against them.

SCOPE OF POLICY:

This policy is applicable to all staff including contractors and covers all work related activities, functions or external training courses if sponsored by Life Independence.

POLICY:

The purpose of Life Independence Anti-Discrimination Policy is to improve business success and client outcomes by providing a safe, respectful & flexible work environment and delivering our services in a safe, respectful and reasonably flexible manner.

The policy further defines and describes how services are to be delivered to meet this objective. The policy provides definitions as to what constitutes discrimination and how any person who believes they have been discriminated against by Life Independence is able to address that matter.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION & BULLYING

Life Independence is committed to a support service delivery and environment that is free from all sexual harassment, discrimination or bullying. Any and all behaviours that constitute sexual harassment, discrimination or bullying as defined below will not be tolerated and further action will be taken.

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy:

Discrimination:

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfavourably because of a personal characteristic that is protected under Victorian law.

Indirect Discrimination happens when there is a policy that applies in the same way for everybody but disadvantages a group of people who share a protected characteristic, and you are disadvantaged as part of this group.

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. which makes a

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person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, where a reasonable person would anticipate that reaction in the circumstances.

Equality of Service

Life Independence offers equal service and opportunities to people without discrimination based on any personal characteristic protected under state and federal equal opportunity legislation.

Under State legislation they include:

- age
- breastfeeding
- carer status
- disability
- employment activity
- gender identity
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status
- personal association with someone having any of these characteristics
- physical features
- political activity/belief
- pregnancy
- race
- religious activity/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Any employee of Life Independence found to have breached this policy will receive disciplinary action, which could include dismissal dependent on specifics of the breach.

Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment refers to changes required to allow people with a disability to receive services safely and productively. It is considered a discriminatory action to not make reasonable adjustments to help a person receive services. Life Independence will make reasonable adjustments for a person with a disability or their supports who receive services from Life Independence or requires the adjustment to be made in order to participate in the service delivery process.

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Examples of what constitutes a reasonable adjustment include:

- the ability to provide flexible service provision hours
- reviewing and adjusting the performance requirements of a service offered if necessary
- Allowing and planning for regular breaks for people with chronic pain or fatigue
- Purchasing or sourcing screen reading software for clients with a vision impairment

Life Independence will determine the need for change in conjunction with the expense and effort required in making it when considering reasonable adjustments. If making the adjustment requires a very high cost or great disruption to the service delivery, it will likely not be deemed reasonable.

Legislations & Regulations

Life Independence works to the provisions and stipulations of the following applicable legislations and regulations:

- Disability Act, 2006 (Victorian)
- Carers Recognition Act, 2012 (Victorian)
- Equal Opportunity Act, 2010 (Victorian)
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (Cwlth)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, 2001 (Victorian)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006 (Victorian)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act, 1986 (Cwlth)
- Age Discrimination Act, 2004 (Cwlth)
- Racial Discrimination Act, 1985 (Cwlth)
- Sex Discrimination Act, 1984 (Cwlth)

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Procedures

Life Independence works and manages the following procedures to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to eliminate any incidence of a person experiencing discrimination when applying or receiving services:

- Information is readily available to any person via the web site allowing the ability to lodge a complaint of discrimination and provide information for accessing resources available through the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission and the Human Rights Commissioner of Victoria
- Any person who applies for services through Life Independence will be provided with information on the criteria used for accepting people for service. This information can also be accessed at any time via the company website.
- Any person who feels they have experienced discrimination is able to lodge a grievance with the service, and be provided assistance to do so if necessary, to allow the matter to be investigated by Life Independence or another agency.