

## SERVICE EXIT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Purpose and Scope

This policy and procedure sets out Empowered Community Service's transparent and equitable service exit procedures, which are designed to uphold the rights of people with disability and support them to transition to other supports where required.

It applies to all potential and existing participants, their family members, carers and other supporters and meets relevant legislation, regulations and Standards as set out in Schedule 1, Legislative References.

### Applicable NDIS Practice Standards

#### Transitions to or From the Provider

##### *Outcome*

Each participant experiences a planned and coordinated transition to or from the provider.

##### *Indicators*

- A planned transition to or from the provider is facilitated in collaboration with each participant when possible, and this is documented, communicated and effectively managed.
- Risks associated with each transition to or from the provider are identified, documented and responded to.
- Processes for transitioning to or from the provider are developed, applied, reviewed and communicated.

### Policy

Participants have the right to terminate their service provision and any time, and this decision will not prejudice future access to the service. Exit procedures are fair, transparent, follow due process, uphold the rights of participants and protect the safety and integrity of Empowered Community Services staff, participants, programs and services.

Participant transitions from Empowered Community Service's services are planned and coordinated and undertaken in collaboration with participants. Transition arrangements are documented, communicated and effectively managed.

Where participants are transferring to other services, the transition is collaboratively planned, and the process is documented, communicated and effectively managed.

### Procedures

Should a participant, their supporter/s or Empowered Community Services 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 must be tracked in Careflow to inform continuous improvement.

The Management Team is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the requirements of this policy and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements. As per Empowered Community Service's *Human Resources Policy and Procedure*, all staff must undergo Induction, which includes training in Empowered Community Service's exit processes. Staff knowledge and application of this policy and procedure is monitored on a day-to-day basis and through annual Performance Reviews. Additional formal and on-the-job training is provided to staff where required.

Participant feedback and complaints regarding this policy and procedure must be addressed in accordance with Empowered Community Service's *Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure*.

In accordance with Empowered Community Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*, respect for and protection of participants' privacy and confidentiality must be reinforced with participants on an ongoing basis, verbally and in other information provided by staff.

Where required, participants must be provided with information and support to access a person of their choice, such as an advocate, to assist them to transition from Empowered Community Services. See the *Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure*.

To ensure participants or their representatives or families understand how to transition from Empowered Community Service's services, Empowered Community Services uses its *Participant Charter, Participant Handbook* and website to provide information about this policy and procedure, in an easy to understand format.

To ensure participants understand this information, staff must provide information to them and their supporters or families in ways that suit their individual communication needs. Written information can be provided in different languages and Easy English or explained verbally by staff. Staff can also help participants access interpreters or advocates where required.

All participants exiting the service will be offered an Exit Interview, where the Support Coordinator or Managing Director will explain the reason for the participant's service termination (if applicable), obtain feedback about where Empowered Community Services can improve its processes and communicate the steps to re-accessing the service should the participant wish to.

## **Service Termination**

As part of Empowered Community Service's entry processes, participants must be informed of their rights and responsibilities. Where a participant or family is asked to leave Empowered Community Services, information regarding the reason for being asked to leave must be provided and explained to them. These reasons must also be included in the participant's *Exit Plan* if required (see below).

Empowered Community Services will only terminate a participant'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 participants using the service is displayed; or
- dramatic health or behaviour changes require significantly increased levels of care or

a service model not provided by Empowered Community Services.

The service exit must only be actioned after discussion and consultation with the participant, their supporter/s and other important stakeholders, and strategies have been implemented to meet irreconcilable differences. Participants must be offered support to access interpreters or advocates to assist them through this process if necessary.

### **Participant Requested Termination**

Participants (or families, if the participant is a child) have the right to terminate their service provision and any time, and this decision will not prejudice their future access to the service.

Upon termination, the participant or family will be sent a letter informing them of their rights to future service provision and information regarding advocacy services if required.

### **Appeal**

Participants who have their services terminated by Empowered Community Services have the right to appeal. Appeals should be directed in writing to the Managing Director and a final decision will be made by the Management Team. People who successfully appeal will be supported to continue accessing Empowered Community Service's services. People who are not successful in their appeal will be provided advice in writing to this effect.

If a person is unhappy with the outcome of their appeal, they will be directed to Empowered Community Service's feedback and complaints processes. As per Empowered Community Service's *Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure*, information on Empowered Community Service's complaints process can be provided in a variety of formats if required as well as support to access interpreters or advocates if necessary.

### **Exit Transition Planning**

Where relevant, the Support Coordinator must work collaboratively with participants and their representatives or families to identify alternative services and referrals that could best meet their needs. See Empowered Community Service's *Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure*.

With the participant's or their supporter's consent, Empowered Community Services must provide relevant information to new service providers to support the participant's seamless transition to them. Where required, Empowered Community Services staff should introduce the participant to or meet with staff of alternative providers to facilitate a smooth transition for the participant. See the Information Sharing Provisions in Empowered Community Service's *Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure*.

Prior to exiting, participants and their families must be provided guidance and support to:

- investigate other options or models of support from Empowered Community Services, if appropriate;
- explore the consequences of their decision to exit the service (if relevant); and
- consider re-entry to the service in the future should their needs or circumstances change.

An *Exit Plan* must be agreed with the participant and with their informed consent, any other stakeholders. The Plan must contain identified timeframes outlining actions and those responsible to implement the actions. In addition, risks associated with the transition must be

identified, documented and responded to.

Empowered Community Services must also ensure a copy of the participant's most recent *Participant Risk Assessment* and *Home Risk Assessment* (if applicable) are provided to new service providers, with the participant's consent of this information sharing documented in their *Exit Plan*. In addition, a risk assessment must be completed with any new service providers to ensure any risks of the transition process are captured within the *Exit Plan*, along with actions that will be taken to reduce those risks.

A copy of the *Exit Plan* must be provided to the participant. A copy must also be kept on the participant's file and key elements captured in Careflow. Where this is not practicable, or the participant chooses not to have an *Exit Plan*, staff must include a case note on the participant's file explaining the reasons why the participant did not receive a copy of their plan.

### **Service Re-entry**

People who have chosen to exit Empowered Community Services 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. After this period, a new intake assessment must be undertaken if they wish to re-enter the service.

### **Files and Documentation**

Upon a participant's exit from Empowered Community Services all documentation and information developed and implemented by Empowered Community Services remains the property of the service. Any documentation provided by other service providers and included in the participant's file that has been used to facilitate the participant's support must be returned to the participant or their representative or family. Empowered Community Services will retain copies of these documents.

All information in relation to the participant will be retained, secured and stored in accordance with Empowered Community Service's *Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure*.

### **Supporting Documents**

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Participant Charter*
- *Exit Plan*
- *Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*
- *Decision Making and Choice Policy and Procedure*
- *Service Access Policy and Procedure*
- *Providing Information, Advice and Referrals Policy and Procedure*
- *Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure*

### **Monitoring and Review**

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Management Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, participant and other stakeholder feedback. Participants and service networks will be advised of any changes.

Empowered Community Service's feedback collection mechanisms, such as participant

satisfaction surveys and service delivery planning activities, will assess:

- participant awareness of Empowered Community Service’s exit procedures;
- participant satisfaction with Empowered Community Service’s exit procedures and management of appeals regarding exit; and
- feedback provided by and to participants and potential participants around access and refusal and whether the information provided to participants is appropriate and effective.

Empowered Community Service’s *Continuous Improvement Register* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of Empowered Community Service’s service planning and delivery processes.

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>
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1	01/01/2019	Managing Director
Version History		
Version No.	Review Date	Revision Description
1	09 December 2019	Policy and Procedure Manual created to meet NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission Practice Standards.