

Preferred Method of Communication Policy and Procedure

All participants have the right to access supports that promote, uphold and respect their legal and human rights and to enable them to exercise choice and control. Due to the variation in types of disability, there is a variation in the modes of communication that each participant will require. This policy is designed to ensure that our employees understand each participant's preferred method of communication. This preferred method of communication will then be embedded in the supports and services provided to the participant.

Staff at initial contact and those who work with our participants must understand the participant's preferred method of communication and put that preference in practice wherever possible. The Director will inform the staff workers of each participant's communication requirements and will always endeavour to place staff that can communicate effectively with a participant.

Definitions

- **Interpreter:** A person who interprets, especially one who translates speech orally or in sign language. An interpreter translates the spoken words based on whatever grammatical knowledge they have of the language from which they interpret. Their interpretation is based on their expertise in the subject.
- **Translator:** A person who professionally translates from one language into another.
- A translator must be equipped with great linguistic skills. They must have a sound knowledge of grammar and should be in a position to express the thoughts presented in the language to a participant.
- **Mode of communication:** The medium or channel through which communicative intent is expressed. Typical communication modes include natural speech, facial expression and gesture. Exceptional communication modes include the use of graphic symbols or synthetic speech.
- **Easy Read documents:** Easy Read documents simplify information, so it is easy to understand by the participant. Typically, it uses simple text, pictures to assist in explaining text and has lots of white space.

POLICY

The best means of communicating with a participant is determined at the initial contact and will be recorded and used from that point forward. Staff are required to treat all participants with respect and use their preferred mode of communication wherever possible. Variations in the mode of communication may include:

- Written documents with no adjustments
- Verbal explanations
- Demonstration

Core Module

Core Module Manual

Full Care Lifetime

- Easy Read documents – explanations and forms
- Interpreters (oral)
- Translators (written)
- Participants may use their own interpreters and access their advocate to assist them.

PROCEDURE

At the initial contact meeting, staff will consult with the participant, and their family or advocate to determine the most preferred mode of communication.

Initial Meeting

The Director will undertake the following steps:

- Determine the best means of communication via discussion or assessment.
- Record this mode of communication in the support plan.
- Inform all staff workers who work with the participant.
- Match staff with these skills, or train and support staff in how to communicate.
- Arrange for interpreter or translator (if required).

Provision of Information

Staff are to use the information gained in the initial meeting to provide information to the participant in their mode of communication where information must be discussed with the participant. Methods that will be used may include:

- providing information in written form without any adjustments.
- providing information in written form using Easy Read Documents.
- explaining the information orally for those with issues with reading or comprehending written documents.
- demonstrating information (if able to do so).
- accessing an interpreter via Translating and Interpreting Services, Department of Home Affairs.