

## Interpreter Services

Australia is an ever-expanding, culturally diverse country, where over 20% of people speak a language other than English at home.

A lack of English language proficiency can present a significant barrier for individuals, inhibiting their ability to participate and access services. The People Project is committed to ensuring that support is provided for those who do not speak English well enough, to ensure equity of access to resources.

The organisation will ensure that interpreters are engaged on occasions where people have difficulty communicating in English or have other requirements such as limited hearing.

The organisation will:

- Provide training for staff to identify when interpreter services are needed
- Adhere to the specific needs of the individual and ensure access to information is available in their preferred language
- Ensure the client is aware that they are able to request an interpreter if needed
- Ensure equity and transparency in the services that are offered
- Value the individual's right to freedom of choice and their right to be actively involved in the decision making surrounding their health

## Definitions

**Language services:** measures taken to assist people who have a limited ability to communicate in English.

**Interpreter:** A person who facilitates communication between two parties who use different languages, through translating speech orally or through sign language.

**Translator:** A person who facilitates communication between two parties who use different languages, through written transfer of messages from one language into another.

**Bilingual:** A person who is fluent in two languages.

## Eligibility

Individuals who experience:

- Difficulty communicating in English;
- Deafness;
- Difficulty hearing;
- Visual impairments;
- Limited literacy skills.

## Procedures

- Language services can be funded under an NDIS plan for those requiring them;
- The People Project will adopt a planned approach for disseminating information to ensure that clients who may not be able to communicate in English are made aware of their right to communicate in their preferred language;
- The People Project will use a client-based approach, which means adhering to the specific language needs of the individual;
- Staff need to be proactive in their assessment of individuals, to identify if an interpreter is necessary;
- In all circumstances the needs of the client will be the primary consideration.

## Rights and responsibilities

Understanding and addressing the link between culture and language will improve care for more linguistically and culturally diverse communities. It is important that those involved are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

- Staff have the responsibility to:
  - Provide non-discriminatory services for individuals who are not fluent in English or have other difficulties such as hearing difficulties;
  - Understand and recognise when an interpreter may be required;

- Treat the interpreter with respect;
- Ensure that the client is aware of the interpreter's role;
- Ensure that the interpreter is aware of their responsibilities regarding privacy and confidentiality;
- Ensure complaints are handled promptly and appropriately;
- Clients have the right to:
  - Receive high-quality healthcare regardless of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds or beliefs;
  - Access transparent and equitable services;
  - Request the use of an interpreter;
  - Refuse the use of an interpreter;
  - Freedom of choice and to active involvement in the healthcare decision making process.
- Interpreters/ translators have the right to
  - Be respected as a professional;
  - Safe and healthy working conditions.

## **Procedures for engaging interpreters**

### **If it is identified that a support coordination or plan management client requires interpreter services to engage successfully with these services:**

- The organisation will ensure that interpreters are appropriately qualified with one of the following:
  - NAATI accreditation level-professional interpreter;
  - NAATI accreditation level-paraprofessional interpreter;
  - NAATI recognised interpreter.

- Confidentiality
  - The People Project stresses the importance of confidentiality and requires that, prior to any session, the translator or interpreter agrees to ensure that confidentiality will be maintained under all circumstances.
- Gender preferences
  - Considering the gender requirements of a person is important especially in cases involving domestic violence or sexual assault;
- Language requirements
  - In stressful situations, language skills may sometimes decrease and for many individuals, communicating in their first language would assist the process;
  - The People Project will make its best effort to engage an interpreter in the individual's preferred language, however if this is not possible, the person's level of competency in the alternative language will be considered.
- Unacceptable interpreting practices
  - Family members should not act as interpreters in any context. This may inhibit the individual's willingness to disclose personal detail or may distort details due to bias or lack of competence in one of the languages;
  - Using other bilingual staff is also not preferable unless they have NAATI accreditation. Staff delivering services in their native language is not considered to be interpreting.

#### Record of policy development

Version	Date approved	Date for review
V1.0	15/11/2023	November 2024
V1.1	29/07/2025	November 2026

#### Responsibilities and delegations

This policy applies to	The People Project NDIS Staff
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Policy approval	CEO
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<b>Policy context</b> – this policy relates to:	
Standards	NDIS Practice standards, specifically standard 4.1
Legislation	Anti Discrimination Act 1998 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Organisation policies	Client Rights Providing Client Advocacy and Support Key Elements of Client Safety and Wellbeing Client Participation and Social Inclusion Safeguarding (responding to abuse) Client Feedback Access to Services Intake and referral
Forms, record keeping, other documents	