



## 3.02 Access, Diversity and Advocacy

Original Ratification Date	14/11/2018
Persons affected by Policy	All management and Team Members
Who is Responsible	Governance Body
Reviewer	Executive Officer
Terms	The Service – Community Links Wellbeing Team Member – Employees & Volunteers unless otherwise stated Project – Individual projects auspiced/ run by Community Links Wellbeing Governance Body – The governing body of Community Links Wellbeing

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Service will promote a service culture that is inclusive and welcoming; that celebrates community diversity in all its forms including (cultural diversity, religious diversity, disability, age, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, financial status, sexual preference, gender identity) ensuring services are available to the target group/s living in the geographic area stated in Funding Agreements, without discrimination. The Service supports and encourages our Consumer's right to nominate an advocate of their choice to represent their interests at any time.

### PROCEDURES

#### 3.02-1 Access

No eligible person shall be excluded from access to any of the Service's Projects on the grounds of their:

- gender (female, male, transgender)
- sexual preference/orientation (or their uncertainty about their sexuality)
- HIV positive status or AIDS
- being a parent, pregnancy, or breastfeeding
- being a carer
- marital status
- being a victim of domestic violence
- dress or appearance
- religion or spirituality
- ethnicity (including indigenous, "Anglo" and all non-English speaking ethnic backgrounds)

- recent migration to Australia, or their experience as a refugee
- poor English literacy (written or spoken)
- disability
- mental illness
- history of drug use or addiction
- criminal record or involvement in the justice system
- challenging behaviours
- financial situation or poverty
- homelessness
- address (e.g. an isolated area, a particular suburb, public housing etc.)
- belonging to a particular social group or subculture
- age

Eligibility criteria for each Mental Health program is determined by the Primary Health Network (PHN)

Each Project will ensure that the individual needs of people who are within the target population and eligible for a service will be recognised and will ensure that access to those services will be prioritised according to needs-based principles as determined by formal assessment at intake.

The Service will ensure easy accessibility to all its programs by:

- Implementing a clear transparent eligibility criteria;
- Providing information to our consumers in a timely manner to ensure they have the information to make informed decisions;
- Promoting and respecting the Rights of Our consumers;
- Promoting and working with advocates of Our consumers;
- Ensuring training of Team Members is designed to welcome and celebrate diversity;
- Asking our consumers at intake if they have any specific lifestyle, cultural or personal issues they would like us to consider and respect when providing their service;
- Designing service models and operations that adapt to demographic changes in the community and targeting promotion to ensure greater equity of access;
- Ensuring information regarding “capacity to pay” is included in intake and promotional material (where relevant).
- Respecting the right of a Consumer to refuse service at any time and ensuring consumers understand that such refusal will not prejudice any future request for services.

The Service reserves the right to refuse service to persons who it reasonably believes may pose a risk to the safety or wellbeing of other consumers, team members or themselves.

### 3.02-2 Celebrating Diversity

The Service celebrates diversity in all its forms by actively promoting inclusiveness, respect and individuality in all its Projects.

All people are encouraged and supported to develop skills that will assist them to participate in activities that promote their status as valued community members.

Inclusiveness means that our consumers not only know about and can access our services, but also feel included as a valued person at the service. Inclusiveness principles demonstrated by each Project include:

- *Access*- Services are available to all our consumers within the specified target groups and are free of any form of discrimination. Each Project takes active steps to help our consumers overcome any barriers which may prevent them from accessing the services.
- *Equity*- Each Project ensures that everyone gets a 'fair go'. Services are developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment of our consumers. We allocate our resources according to need.
- *Communication*- Each Project informs the community and other stakeholders about how the Service can be accessed. Each Project also consults with Our consumers regularly about the adequacy, design, delivery and standard of services.
- *Responsiveness*- Each Project is sensitive to the needs and requirements of our consumers from diverse backgrounds, and is responsive, as far as practicable, to the particular circumstances of individuals. Each Project will work with our consumers to meet their needs in an appropriate and timely way.
- *Effectiveness*- Each Project aims to create good processes and outcomes for our consumers.
- *Efficiency*- Each Project makes the best use of available resources. Projects carefully consider resource allocations according to the needs of our consumers, including the re-distribution of existing resources to meet the needs of particular target groups.
- *Confidentiality*- Each Project maintains strict confidentiality as required by law in order to create an environment where all our consumers have the confidence to work with us.
- *Accountability*- Each Project reports on what we do and what we achieve, to ensure we are accountable for implementing access and equity principles. Each Project is open to public scrutiny by our consumers, governments, our community, our Team Members and management.

All Team Members have a responsibility to be committed to the development of an inclusive service.

The Service demonstrates its commitment to inclusive positive action by:

- Having zero tolerance of any sort of vilification, bullying or discrimination

- Recruiting team members that represent diverse groups
- Providing professional development options for team members to understand and embrace diversity

### Referral Pathways to dedicated cultural services

There are limited dedicated cultural services available locally. CLW works with consumers to provide culturally-sensitive services and will follow *3.05a(i) Mental Health Consumer Pathway* to make referrals to external organisations, as needed.

### Proactively Encouraging the Support of Diversity by Our consumers

Team Members must never condone, ignore, or appear to condone or ignore harassment, bullying, vilification or offensive or excluding behaviour.

There are a range of interventions and consequences for such behaviour by our consumers will depend on:

- the specific behaviour,
- the effects of the behaviour on others,
- the intent and the degree of awareness behind the behaviour, and
- whether it is a first or repeat occurrence:

Interventions may include, but are not limited to:

- a quick comment by a Team Members member to let the person and everyone else who is aware of what happened know that such behaviour is not OK
- a longer discussion with the person, by themselves or with all the people present, discussing the behaviour and the issues involved
- provide support to anybody affected by the behaviour and inform them that they can make a complaint using the agency's complaints procedure or make a complaint to the Anti-Discrimination Board. If necessary, refer them to a community legal centre for advice on their options

If possible, Team Members should take an educative and persuasive approach rather than a purely punitive approach, remembering that our consumers may be repeating behaviour learnt at home or behaviour common in their own environment. Only exclude consumers from activities in cases of repeated behaviour where other interventions and consequences have failed, and other people are being seriously affected by the behaviour.

The agency is legally obliged to take all reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination against and harassment of any groups. Team Members must report to the Team Leader any patterns of such behaviour regardless of whether the offender or victim is a consumer, a Team Member, a volunteer or anyone else in the workplace.

### 3.02-3 Advocacy

The Service supports the right of our consumers to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be in relation to assessment, reviews, complaints or any other communication between our consumers and this Service. The Service will record the choice of our consumer on an Authority to Act as an

Advocate form and work cooperatively with any advocate nominated by a consumer and treat them with respect. Acceptance & Guidelines for Advocates will also be provided to any nominated Advocate to assist them in their role.

Where relevant each Project will develop an appropriate Advocacy Procedure which details:

- Team member training regarding advocacy and working with advocates;
- How the target group will be told about their right to use an advocate and how to do so
- How the Project team will work with the advocate (e.g. communication protocols)
- When a consumer may wish to use an advocate (e.g. at intake, when making a complaint etc.)
- What information and support will be provided to assist our consumer to get an advocate?
- What if the consumer has an “authorised representative” (e.g. Agents under the Medical Treatment Act 1988, Administrators under the Guardianship and Administration Act 1986)? What proof will the Project require?

### 3.02-4 Translation and Interpreting Service

Community Links Wellbeing staff have access to the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National). This is an interpreting service provided by the Department of Home Affairs for people who do not speak English.

1. Call 1800 131 450.
2. When prompted, say the language you need.
3. Choose the gender of your interpreter by pressing:
  - (1.) to select either gender
  - (2.) to select a female interpreter
  - (3.) to select a male interpreter.
4. Enter your ATIS Account number 683108 and ATIS Access number 1111 then press #.
5. Write down the job number provided

All documents have been written in plain English to help you find and understand the information you need quickly and easily. If you have any questions, please contact us

### 3.02-5 Supported Decision Making

Supported decision-making (SDM) helps people of any age or ability make their own decisions by using a range of coordinated supports. These supports might include trusted individuals, technology, community resources, or paid professionals.

They can assist a person to understand options, ask questions, receive information in ways that work best for them, communicate their choices to others, and develop their own decision-making skills.

While CLW staff do not use a specific SDM tool, they use clinical tools at the start of every occasion of service, review and closure which aid decision making, including the Kessler and SDQ, as well as goal setting tools.

### Project Specific Procedures

Each Project, where relevant, will develop procedures detailing:

- Diversity & Access
- Advocacy

<b>Policy context:</b> This policy relates to	
Legislation or other requirements	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (Commonwealth) 1986 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Anti-Discrimination Act (NSW) 1977 Sex Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1984 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) Commission for Children and Young People Act (NSW) 1997 Child Protection (Working with Children) Act (NSW), 2012. Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation (NSW), 2013. Freedom of Information Act (Commonwealth) 1982, (State) 1989 Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW) Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) The Australian Privacy Principles 2014 Guardianship Act (1987) NSW Powers of Attorney Act (2003) NSW Carer's (Recognition) Act 2010 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth) Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth) Age Discrimination Act 2004 Disability Inclusion Act 2014 No 41 (NSW) Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth) Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Crimes Act 1914 (Commonwealth) Criminal Code 1995 (Commonwealth) Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW). Funding Agreements NSW Family Services Principle Case Management Society of Australia National Standards NDIS Act (2013) NDIS Practice Standards Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights Australian Open Disclosure Framework Case management Society of Australia and New Zealand Standards NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 NSQDMHS and NSQMHSCMO Practice Standards

## DOCUMENTATION

Documents linked to this policy	
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	3.02a Authority to Act as an Advocate 3.02b Acceptance & Guidelines for Advocates

Review and version tracking		Date Original Approved:
BNG Version	Date This Review Approved:	Next Review Due
1	Executive Officer 12/11/2020	12/11/2021
2	Executive Officer 29/07/2024	29/07/2025
3	Executive Officer 21/07/2025	21/07/2026
4	Executive Officer 24/11/2025	24/11/2026
5	Executive Officer 13/01/2026	13/01/2027