

Continuity of Supports Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that participants of SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd receive consistent, reliable, and uninterrupted supports in accordance with their individual needs, preferences, and life goals. It safeguards participant dignity, choice, control, and safety, particularly during staff changes, emergencies, or service disruptions.

This policy also reflects our commitment to proactively identifying and managing risks that may affect continuity of care and to ensuring that participants with complex needs, high-intensity supports, or safeguarding concerns are never left without essential services. Feedback from participants, families, advocates, and stakeholders will be used to improve our practices continually.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors of SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd involved in the delivery, coordination, or management of supports and services to participants.

3.0 Policy

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is committed to ensuring that every participant receives ongoing, high-quality support that upholds their human rights and meets their individual support needs, even during unexpected disruptions. We align our practices with the NDIS Practice Standards, Risk Management Policy, Incident Management and Reportable Incidents Rules, and principles of person-centred, culturally safe, and trauma-informed care.

To ensure service continuity and safeguard participant wellbeing, SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will:

- Provide culturally responsive and trauma-informed communication to participants when changes to their supports are necessary
- Ensure that replacement staff are suitably trained and briefed on participant-specific needs, including behavioural support plans, communication preferences, health conditions, and any approved restrictive practices
- Actively involve participants, families, support coordinators, and representatives in continuity and contingency planning
- Match participants with staff who reflect their preferences, such as shared language, culture, gender, or other personal attributes, wherever practicable

- Schedule staff in a way that maximises consistency and reliability of supports, including geographical proximity to reduce travel time and increase staff retention and satisfaction
- Develop a Continuity of Care Backup Support Form to record current and backup staff and provide participants with clear information about who is supporting them
- Use the participant's Personal Emergency Preparation Plan to guide support delivery in emergencies or disasters, and revise this plan as needed
- Provide advocacy options to participants who are dissatisfied with continuity arrangements or wish to raise concerns about staff changes
- Review all service disruptions as part of our Continuous Improvement system, recording findings in the Continuous Improvement Register and updating processes where required
- Treat any disruption that places participant health, safety, or wellbeing at risk as a reportable incident and manage it in accordance with our Risk Management Policy and Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure

The Manager is responsible for coordinating support schedules, ensuring participants are informed of staff allocations, and arranging for trained, skilled backup staff when needed. All continuity strategies will be documented in the participant's individual plan and followed by staff to maintain service quality.

Where internal continuity is not possible, SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will liaise with external providers, support coordinators, or guardians to ensure no participant is left without access to essential supports.

4.0 Procedure

Participants will be consulted and asked for their consent and preference when a change in staff or support provision is required. Wherever possible, replacement staff will be introduced prior to service delivery to ensure participant comfort and compatibility.

To ensure participants have timely and appropriate support, without interruption, SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd's staff will:

- access, read and comply with the participant's plan, including the Personal Emergency Preparation Plan
- review strategies listed in the support plan before the provision of support
- provide quality services as per the participant's plan
- document all the participant's preferences and needs to allow for a consistent care approach
- list all appointments and tasks related to the participant's needs
- allow allocation according to a participant's requirements
- inform the Manager of any absences in advance to allow time to allocate a replacement who meets the participant's criteria and, preferably, is known to the participant
- contact participants if there are any changes, or potential changes, in their care
- undertake emergency procedures as required

No appointments are ever double booked. When travelling to participants' homes, our staff factor in enough travel time and must ensure the correct arrival time.

Participants are encouraged to provide feedback or raise complaints if they feel their support has been disrupted or if a replacement worker is not suitable. This process is outlined in our Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure.

All instances where participant support is disrupted will be:

- Recorded as part of risk management and quality improvement systems
- Reviewed to determine causes, including staffing, emergency, or systemic issues
- Used to inform future planning, training, and resource allocation
- Participants and families may be invited to participate in debrief and feedback processes, ensuring their voices shape improvements

Outcomes from reviews will be documented in our Continuous Improvement Register and may be used to update this policy.

4.1 Disruptions and changes

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd notifies participants when an unavoidable interruption occurs. The staff will attempt to inform the participants, via telephone and email, before any unavoidable disruptions to services or participant appointments. Participants will receive information about changes in their preferred communication format (e.g., Easy Read, translated materials, or through interpreters if required). When it is impossible to contact the participant, they will be briefed on arrival at the next meeting or scheduled service.

The Manager will contact a participant to:

- inform and explain that there is an unavoidable change
- seek the participant's agreement and ensure that they are entirely aware of any changes
- explain, in detail, alternative arrangements
- ask the participant if they agree with the proposed arrangement
- participant to confirm their agreement or refuse the alternative arrangement
- record details of agreed arrangement or non-agreement in the participant's records
- confirm that the delivered services were appropriate to their needs, preference and goals

Where appropriate, participants will be offered the option to involve family members, guardians, or advocates in decisions about replacement staff or alternative supports. Participants will be provided with

information about how to access external advocacy services if they disagree with proposed support changes.

In the case of an emergency, when a worker cannot attend work due to circumstances out of their control (e.g. illness or family emergency), SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will attempt to place a known worker to the participant. However, if this is not possible, we will send the best match available to the participant. SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will contact the participant, advise them of the situation, and provide details of the replacement worker.

4.2 Absence or vacancy

When a staff member is absent or a vacancy becomes available, then the Manager will:

- contact a staff who is a suitable replacement (e.g. a person with the relevant qualifications or language requirements)
- provide, where possible, a staff who has worked with the participant previously and is aware of the participant's preferences and needs
- select an appropriate replacement worker who will be sensitive to the participant's requirements, ensuring care is consistent with the participant's expressed preferences
- inform the participant of the replacement's details, where possible
- upon completion of the service, gather feedback from the participant on the replacement staff member

Staff unable to work must contact the Manager. If there is an intended absence (e.g. vacation or appointment), then the staff member must inform the Manager at the earliest opportunity to allow time to prepare the participant.

4.3 Service agreement

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd ensures arrangements are in place so that support is provided to the participant, without interruption, throughout their service agreement. These arrangements are relevant and proportionate to the support scope and complexity.

All service agreements will include a continuity of supports plan detailing preferred communication methods, emergency contacts, and participant preferences for replacement staff or service adjustments. Plans will be co-designed with participants, ensuring that participant voice, goals, and concerns are reflected.

4.4 Critical supports

Disaster planning will align with the NDIS Emergency and Disaster Module to ensure participant safeguarding and service continuity before, during, and after emergency events.

Contingency plans are drawn up and adhered to, allowing for the participant's continuity of care throughout their time with us. In a disaster, planning will incorporate strategies that enable continual support before, during, and after the disaster. Critical planning will be undertaken for participants who have complex needs.

For participants who require complex or high-intensity supports, a Care Plan will be included in their file, outlining specific requirements, trained staff, and escalation pathways if continuity is disrupted.

These plans will be reviewed regularly and will form part of our Risk Management Register and safeguarding strategy.

In situations where internal staff are unavailable, we will liaise with external providers, NDIS Support Coordinators, or formal guardians to ensure participants are not left without critical care.

5.0 Related documents

- Support Plan
- Service Agreement
- Contingency Emergency and Disaster Plan
- Access to Supports Policy and Procedure
- Responsive Support Provision and Support Management Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Participant Safeguarding Policy
- Advocacy Support Policy and Procedure
- Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure
- Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure

6.0 References

- NDIS 2013 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018
- NDIS Code of Conduct 2018
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)