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**Policy and Procedure Manual**

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# 

# Pathways to Leadership- who we are and what we do.

## Our Vision

People with disabilities will be living rich, meaningful and inclusive lives and be valued members of the community.

## Our Mission

Pathways to Leadership mentors people who have a disability, families, and other organisations in directing and managing, wholly or partially, lifestyle development, government funding and other resources, in order for the person with disability to live a rich and independent life in the community.

## Scope

Pathways to Leadership supports people with disability and families who:

* choose self-direction;
* have a vision and a plan for the person with disability to live an inclusive life in the community;
* choose to manage all or part of their lifestyle development and funding;
* are seeking assistance with planning this lifestyle development;
* are seeking information about the different models of self-direction and management and who wish to develop their skills in the various aspects of self-direction;
* need advice and information to ensure quality and the realisation of their vision.

## Values

In line with the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Pathways to Leadership fully recognises the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons. Pathways to Leadership believes that people with disability and their families should have the freedom to make their own choices and be involved in all decision-making processes for their own lives.

**Justice**

The value of justice is at the centre of our belief that every person has the right to direct their own life and to fully realise their potential

**Dignity**

We value and affirm the inherent dignity and intrinsic worth of each person. We recognise that each person is unique with his or her own gifts, challenges and potential. We also believe that each person has his or her own valuable contribution to make to others.

**Relationships**

We believe that being in reciprocal relationships is essential to every person’s sense of worth and identity. Ongoing and valued relationships in a person’s life are crucial to their wellbeing and need to be fostered and nurtured.

**Community**

We believe that people with disability have the right to full and effective participation and inclusion in society. We believe that people thrive in communities where people support, care and challenge one another within a culture of mutuality and cooperation.

**Fidelity**

We have a steadfast commitment to beliefs and actions that are designed to enhance the common good. We honour the commitments that we make to individuals and families.

**Resilience**

We believe that ongoing resilience and consistent determination are essential for people to pursue their dreams and goals notwithstanding opposition and contradictions.

**Integrity**

We work within a strong ethical code that values the right of each person with disability to live a full, rich and valued life. Honesty and trustworthiness is integral to all of our relationships.

**Simplicity**

We esteem people and their essential wisdom and aim to strip away pretense and bureaucracy. Instead, we seek the essence of all things to create an openness and directness in all our dealings.

**Service**

We aim to foster the wellbeing of people with disabilities by supporting and walking beside them and their families in a spirit of hope and optimism to empower them to fulfill their vision.

**Empowerment**

We give people with disability and their families the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skill they need to fully embrace a lifestyle of their choice and the opportunity to be actively involved in all decision-making.

**Hope**

We believe in the power of dreams and “imagining better” to see possibilities and potential in all situations. *Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible and achieves the impossible.*

## Principles

**Vision**

Families/individuals with a disability have within them a positive vision for the person with a disability to live a full and ordinary life.

Each person’s vision is unique and is created from cultural background, language, stories, values, expectations and priorities.

**Natural Authority of Families**

Because of their long-term relationship, families and enduring friends have a natural authority to assist the person with the disability to choose the type, quality and level of support he or she needs to live a full and ordinary life within his/her community.

**Strengths**

Each person has unique strengths and skills and the capacity to be creative, competent and capable.

**Right Relationship**

When individuals/families and Pathways to Leadership embrace both their authority and the task of building a good life for people with a disability, they will work in right relationship based on trust and respect.

**Planning**

To reach their vision, individuals/families must plan for now, tomorrow and the future. They can be supported to do this by their friends, natural networks and Pathways to Leadership members and staff.

**Flexibility**

Flexibility of service response leads to the right amount of support, in the right manner, at the right time.

**Good Communication**

People need timely, open, honest and clear communication about what matters to them.

**Imagining Better**

The future will be shaped by what we imagine today to be a better life for people with disabilities and their families.

**Sustainability**

Services should be provided in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way.

Disability Service Standards

Pathways to Leadership complies with the NSW Disability Service Standards:

# Structure and Services

Pathways to Leadership is based on a shared governance and management arrangement where Pathways to Leadership and the person with disability and their family work together within an agreed plan to utilise government funding and other resources to best support and benefit the person with disability.

# 

# Initial Contact, Eligibility, Referral and Departure

People with disability and families deserve to be treated with care, dignity and respect when approaching or leaving Pathways to Leadership. They should feel better for the experience, whether we can meet their needs or not. Pathways to Leadership will respond to any person with disability, or a family member, who contacts us seeking support and information about our referral process.

We make sure that people with disability and families who refuse, or have been refused a service, understand that they are welcome to make contact with us again at any time without fear of retribution, to discuss our capacity and referral process.

**Who is eligible for Pathways to Leadership?**

People with disability/people on behalf of a person with disability who wish to self-direct individual funding in order for the person with disability to live an inclusive life in community.

Pathways to Leadership asks members to respect our values, principles of service and comply with our policies and procedures.

Pathways to Leadership assumes members want to self-direct and also manage their funds wholly or partially. However, the individual/family can withdraw from the agreement if it no longer works for them.

**What do we do if someone approaches Pathways to Leadership requesting support?**

When a person with disability and their family approaches Pathways to Leadership requesting support, they are referred to one of the Intake staff.

We will have an initial conversation with the person and their family to:

* verify that they understand the responsibilities of self-management;
* outline our process;
* provide information and contact details of other agencies who may assist;
* provide relevant forms to complete;
* document the person’s details for statistical and other purposes.

**What happens when a person no longer wants to receive support?**

If a person and their family leave the Pathways to Leadership service, they are able to re-apply without fear of retribution and whenever it suits them. The person and their family will be required to engage in relevant referral procedures.

If Pathways to Leadership ceasesto provide a service to a person and their family, a Director will:

* ensure the person and their family are provided with reasons for the refusal;
* assure them there will be no retribution if they reapply at another time; and
* identify other relevant services if available and provide information on other options.

If a person with disability and their family are transferring to another service, we will assist them to make the transfer as smooth as possible by providing any relevant information from their file, details on the service currently provided, and information and contact details on the service they are proposing to use.

# Rights and Responsibities

As we have stated in our values and in line with the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Pathways to Leadership fully recognises the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons. We believe in equity, access and fairness for all people regardless of ability, gender, religion, race, colour, marital status or sexuality. Pathways staff will treat all members with respect and dignity.

The link to an easy read document on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability is available on our website. Or go to

http://www.bcacl.org/sites/default/files/uploads/EasyReadUNConvention.pdf

**What can I do if I feel that I have been treated unfairly, discriminated against** **sexually harassed, vilified or asked for unnecessary information?**

Don't ignore discrimination, sexual harassment, vilification or requests for unnecessary information, thinking it will go away - often it just gets worse. Choose the action you feel most comfortable with. You can follow more than one action at the same time.

If you believe you have been discriminated against in any way, you have the right to complain.

Pathways staff would encourage you to contact them in the first instance to discuss the matter to determine what can be done to address the problem.

If you feel that you are not comfortable to speak to the staff of Pathways to Leadership you can contact these organisations to assist you with your complaint.

**Complaint Information Service**

Telephone: 1300 656 419

Website: [www.humanrights.gov.au/complaints\_information](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/complaints_information)

Email: [complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au)

Or if you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander person you may wish to call

Aboriginal Disability Network NSW (ADN NSW) - [adnnsw.org.au](http://www.adnnsw.org.au/)

First Peoples Disability Network (Australia) - [fpdn.org.au](http://www.fpdn.org.au/)

If you are from a non-English speaking background you may wish to call

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA) [mdaa.org.au](http://www.mdaa.org.au/)

National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) [neda.org.au](http://www.neda.org.au/)

Or contact [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au); please contact us for Pathways to Leadership’s TIS client code

<http://relayservice.gov.au> can help you if you are deaf or if have some trouble hearing or speaking on the phone.

# Privacy and Confidentiality

Pathways to Leadership recognises the significant level of information it is responsible for protecting within the operations of its services. We will only collect personal information directly relevant to providing our services and we will make sure that all information about people with disability and families, Directors, and employees is kept confidential and private.

We will use personal information only for the purpose for which it was provided, and we will make sure we have each person’s consent before we obtain or release any information about them.

Information relating directly to the operational management and/or governance of the organisation remains the property of Pathways to Leadership.

Pathways to Leadership endorses the eleven Information Privacy Principles in the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 (P2L is an exempt small business under the Privacy Act 1988).

**When should we collect information from members and families?**

Pathways to Leadership will only obtain the information essential to providing good service from people with disability and families. This information will be updated at least annually.

**When should we get consent to share information?**

Before any personal information is shared with individuals and agencies other than Pathways to Leadership, we will obtain consent to share the information.

If written consent is not possible, you should record verbal consent including:

* date that verbal consent is obtained;
* date that verbal consent expires;
* information that can be shared; and
* the person or agency that the information can be shared with.

Each time information is requested, we will inform the person with disability and family, and document when and what information is shared and who it is shared with.

People can withdraw or modify consent to share information with any person or organisation at any time.

**What if someone asks for the information we record about them?**

Upon request, people may access information from their file. Pathways to Leadership will send a copy of the information to them within threeworking days. This may be subject to some exemptions allowed by law.

**What happens to personal information when a member decides to leave Pathways to Leadership?**

Pathways to Leadership will forward copies of all personal documents to the member if a members requests this, and then all electronic copies with be securely deleted.



# Decision Making and Consent

People have the right to exercise control over their own lives and have as many opportunities as possible to make decisions about their lives. Pathways to Leadership provides the support required to support members to make informed choices and understand issues of consent. This support takes into account the person’s background, culture, heritage and beliefs.

**Decision Making**

People with disability can make decisions about day to day issues and if support is needed, families, close friends and people who work with them can provide it informally. This support should be provided with regard to the best interests of the person with disability.

Where lifestyle and other decisions are identified as part of a person’s plan, they should be supported to the fullest extent possible to make or participate in the decisions.

People with disability are encouraged to develop their decision making skills and assisted to access support from an external service, such as a self-advocacy group if it is required.

**Consent**

Consent is the permission given by a person. For consent to be valid it must be voluntary, informed, specific and current. A person must be free to exercise genuine choice about whether to give or withhold consent. Consent must be given without coercion or threat and with sufficient time to understand the request and, if appropriate, take advice.

Consent has a ‘use-by’ date and should be reviewed over time or when there is a change of circumstance. A person who has given consent to a specific matter may change her or his mind and revoke consent at a later time. Consent may also be provided by a legally appointed guardian on behalf of a person.

**What would a member of Pathways to Leadership be consenting to**?

Pathways to Leadership staff will ask members if they consent to accepting the agreed services provided by Pathways under the NDIS, or accepting the responsibilities and services for self-directing their funding by transferring to Pathways to Leadership.

They may also consent to sharing their information for the purpose of quarterly reporting to funding agencies.

It is important to remember that a person’s capacity to make decisions will vary depending on the type of decision or its complexity, or how the person is feeling on the day. The way information is provided to a person will also affect his or her capacity to make decisions. Choices must be offered in a way that the person understands.

**Capacity**

Capacity is a person’s ability to make decisions about things that affect their daily life. In the first instance, people are presumed to have the capacity to make their own decisions. This presumption of capacity applies each time a person is required to make a decision about a new issue or in a new situation. A person has capacity to consent if she or he is able to understand the general nature and effect of a particular decision or action, and can communicate an intention to consent (or refuse consent) to the decision or action.

If we are claiming that a person doesn’t have capacity we need to give good reasons. We will use facts to show that it is more likely than not that the person lacked the ability to make the decision at the time.

Before deciding that a person does not have the capacity to make a decision, we will ensure that everything possible has been done to support them to make their decision. Remember, substitute decision-making should be a last resort and used only when all efforts to assist a person to make a decision for themself have been unsuccessful.

It is not always obvious when a person can’t make a specific decision. However, particular circumstances, events or behaviours might lead you to question a person’s capacity at a point in time. These are called triggers. More detailed information about triggers is available in the [Capacity Toolkit](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/diversityservices/LL_DiversitySrvces.nsf/pages/diversity_services_capacity_toolkit).

If a trigger exists, a capacity assessment is the next step if all other attempts to solve the problem have failed and the conduct of the person is causing, or is likely to cause, significant harm to the person or someone else, or if there are important legal consequences of the decision.

**Person lacks capacity to consent**

A person who lacks capacity to give or withhold consent and does not have informal decision making support from a family member or other support person, may have frequently occurring and important decisions to make that require a legally appointed guardian with a specific decision making function.

People who are unable to make decisions with or without support, and who have a legally appointed guardian with a specific function, or a financial manager, are to be represented by that person whenever this is required.

When a person has a legally appointed guardian, decisions are to be made only about the issue or issues on which the person is unable to decide.

Sometimes there may be disputes between families, legally appointed guardians and Pathways to Leadership in relation to what is in the best interests of a person who it is deemed lacks the capacity to make decisions. If this cannot be resolved through informal discussion, and a decision is required, it will be made by the legally appointed guardian with the specific function.

The person’s decision should be taken into account whether they are the one making the decision or having a decision made by a legally appointed guardian.

**Further Information**

Capacity Toolkit - What is capacity? NSW Attorney General’s Department, 2008 <http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/diversityservices/LL_DiversitySrvces.nsf/pages/diversity_services_capacity_toolkit>

Guardianship Tribunal [www.gt.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gt.nsw.gov.au)

Office of the Public Guardian [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/opg](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/opg)

Office of the Protective Commissioner [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/opc](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/opc)

# Risk Management

Pathways to Leadership employs risk management practices that minimise risk and loss and that identify opportunities for improvement. Risk Management assists to protect the safety of individuals and families, staff and community members, and Pathways to Leadership from legal liability.

**What is a risk?**

Riskis the chance of something happening as a result of a hazard or threat which will impact on a business activity or planned event. Risk arises out of uncertainty. It is measured in terms of the likelihood of it happening and the consequences if it does happen.

Risk Management is the process which is used to avoid, reduce or control risks. There should be a balance between the cost of managing risk and the benefits one can expect from taking that risk.

**How do we minimise risks to people with disability?**

We work with people with disability and their families to assess risks to their lifestyle, health, safety and wellbeing, We can support the person or their family to complete a risk profile and, where risks are identified, support them to develop a risk management plan as part of their overall planning.

Assessing risk and developing a risk management plan helps us and our members meet workplace health and safety requirements in a manner that allows people with disability to take reasonable risks in their daily lives without placing employers, employees and others at risk of harm.

**How do we minimise risk to the organisation?**

The Directors determine areas where a risk management plan is required and work in partnership with relevant families, individuals and staff to develop and review the plan at least annually. The plan is also used to identify areas of continuous quality improvement.

# 

# Preventing and Responding to Abuse

Everybody has the right to feel safe, and to live in an environment where they are protected from assault, neglect, exploitation or any other form of abuse. Pathways to Leadership will respond to any information received about abuse, assault or neglect of any person with disability.

Pathways to Leadership has a duty of care to notify the relevant authorities about abuse, neglect and assault of any person with disability. We will respond promptly, sensitively and in accordance with current legislation with regard to allegations made in relation to the abuse, neglect and assault of any person with disability.

**Abuse**,for the purposes of this document, refers to sexual assault, physical, emotional, financial and systemic abuse, domestic violence, constraints and restricted practices, and neglect.

**How do we prevent abuse?**

Pathways to Leadership makes sure that everybody that works for us understands and performs their role in reporting abuse of people with disability.

The types of strategies we have in place include a recruitment and selection process which includes reference checks, probity checks training around clear roles and responsibilities for employees, education in awareness and identification of abuse, and access to reporting procedures and contact information for relevant agencies.

**How do we identify abuse?**

We make sure that employees understand the behaviours or actions that constitute abuse. We also make sure employees are able to recognise signs that may be indicators of abuse. Types of abuse and indicators of abuse are outlined at the end of this section.

**How do we report abuse?**

We encourage and support any person who has witnessed abuse, or suspects that abuse has occurred, to make a report of abuse to the Directors. We make sure people feel confident in doing so without fear of retaliation and in a supportive environment.

**How do we respond to a report of abuse?**

We respond to reports of abuse in a sensitive, prompt and appropriate manner. This includes appropriate reporting to the Police, the provision of information around accessing medical care and referral to a sexual assault service if the abuse is of a sexual nature.

All reports of abuse are documented in accurate written accounts, including any follow up actions. Access to these records is restricted to those who are directly involved in reporting and responding to the report of abuse. This ensures that an individual’s right to privacy is upheld. A key person is allocated to be the sole contact for the person with disability and their family in providing information relating to the report of abuse and any subsequent investigations.

**What are our responsibilities?**

We will not compromise any investigation by the NSW Police or other external agencies, but will cooperate with these investigations.

We will make sure people with disability are supported by an independent support person during their contact with the NSW Police or other agencies.

## Types of Abuse

Abuse is not limited to the types outlined below and any inappropriate behaviour towards a person with disability may be viewed as abuse.

**Domestic violence**

Violence, abuse and intimidation perpetrated by one person against another in a personal, intimate relationship. Partnership violence includes violence perpetrated when couples are separated or divorced. Domestic violence occurs between two people where one has power over the other causing fear, physical and/or psychological harm.

**Neglect**

Neglect is a failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities of life. It can be wilful denial of medication, dental or medical care, therapeutic devices or other physical assistance to a person who requires it because of age, health or disability. It can also be a failure to provide adequate shelter, clothing, food, protection and supervision, or to place persons at undue risk through unsafe environments or practices and thereby exposing that person to risk of physical, mental or emotional harm. Neglect includes the failure to provide the nurturance or stimulation needed for the social, intellectual and emotional growth or well being of an adult or child.

Note: Neglect may occur when the primary carer of a member does not provide the essential elements for life described above, or when any person or organisation responsible for providing care or services to a person fails to meet this obligation.

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is assault, non-accidental injury or physical harm to a person by any other person. It includes but is not limited to inflicting pain or any unpleasant sensation, causing harm or injuries by excessive discipline, beating or shaking, bruising, electric shock, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation, female genital mutilation and attempted suffocation or strangulation.

Note: This type of abuse may be perpetrated by people known to clients or by strangers, and can occur at any time or place.

**Restraints and restricted practices**

Restraining or isolating an adult for reasons other than medical necessity or in the absence of a less restrictive alternative to prevent self-harm. This may include the use of chemical or physical means or the denial of basic human rights or choices such as religious freedom, freedom of association, access to property or resources or freedom of movement. These practices are not considered to be abuse if they are applied under a restricted practice authorisation.

**Sexual assault**

Any sexual contact between an adult and child 16 years of age and younger, or any sexual activity with an adult who lacks the capacity to give or withhold consent, or is threatened, coerced or forced to engage in sexual behaviour. It includes non-consensual sexual contact, language or exploitative behaviour and can take the form of rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment or sexual interference in any form.

Note: This type of abuse may be instigated by any person, against any other person of any age and of either gender.

**Emotional abuse**

Includes verbal assaults, threats of maltreatment, harassment, humiliation or intimidation, or failure to interact with a person or to acknowledge that person’s existence. This may also include denying cultural or religious needs and preferences.

Note: Although any person may initiate emotional abuse, it is likely to come from persons who associate with the person with disability regularly. The sources could be primary carers, family, friends, other persons with disability or other service providers.

**Financial abuse**

The improper use of another person’s assets or the use or withholding of another person’s resources.

Note: Possible sources of financial abuse are carers, families or guardians who act formally or informally as financial managers and have access to or responsibility for a person’s finances and property.

**Systemic abuse**

Failure to recognise, provide or attempt to provide adequate or appropriate services, including services that are appropriate to that person’s age, gender, culture, needs or preferences.

Note: Service providers and carers are the likely sources of systemic abuse.

## Recognising signs that may be indicators of abuse

We play an important role in protecting clients from further harm by recognising the indicators of abuse and responding to them. The presence of one or more indicators does not mean that abuse has occurred but does require vigilance.

Indicators of abuse are not always obvious, and while we may suspect that abuse has occurred there might not be any evidence to confirm the suspicion. Indicators are variable, and people who are familiar with an individual and have a strong positive relationship with him/her are best placed to recognise behavioural changes that may suggest abuse.

| **Physical Indicators** | **Behavioural Signs** |
| --- | --- |
| **Physical abuse**  Facial, head and neck bruising or injuries.  Drowsiness, vomiting, fits (associated with head injuries).  Unexplained or poorly explained injury.  Other bruising and marks may suggest the shape of the object that caused it.  Bite marks or scratches.  Unexplained burns or scalds.  Unexplained fractures, dislocations, sprains. | Explanation inconsistent with the injury; Explanation varies.  Avoidance or fearfulness of a particular person or staff member.  Sleep disturbance (eg. Nightmares; bed wetting).  Changes in behaviour: out of character aggression; Withdrawal; excessive compliance. |
| **Neglect**  Hunger and weight loss.  Poor hygiene.  Poor hair texture.  Inappropriate or inadequate clothing for climatic conditions.  Inappropriate or inadequate shelter or accommodation.  Unattended physical problems or medical needs.  Health or dietary practices that endanger health or development.  Social isolation. | Requesting, begging, scavenging or stealing food.  Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep.  Direct or indirect disclosure.  Extreme longing for company.  Anxiety about being alone or abandoned.  Displaying inappropriate or excessive self-comforting behaviours. |
| **Sexual abuse**  Direct or indirect disclosure.  Sexual act described by client.  Trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs.  Difficulty in walking or sitting.  Injuries (e.g. tears or bruising), pain or itching to genitalia, anus or perineal region.  Torn, stained or blood stained underwear or bedclothes.  Sexually transmitted diseases.  Unexplained accumulation of money or gifts.  Pregnancy. | Repeat use of words eg “bad”, “dirty”;  Self-destructive behaviour, self mutilation.  Sudden changes in behaviour or temperament, eg. depression, anxiety attacks (crying, sweating, trembling), withdrawal, agitation, anger, violence, absconding, seeking comfort and security.  Inappropriate advances to others.  Sleep disturbances, refusing to go to bed, going to bed fully clothed.  Eating disorders.  Refusing to shower or constant showering.  Changes in social patterns, refusing to attend usual places (work, respite).  Excessive compliance. |
| **Psychological or emotional abuse**  Speech disorders.  Weight loss or gain. | Feelings of worthlessness about life and self; extreme low self-esteem self-abuse or self-destructive behaviour.  Extreme attention seeking behaviour and other behavioural disorders (eg. disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying).  Excessive compliance.  Depression, withdrawal, crying. |
| **Financial abuse**  Restricted access to or no control over personal funds or bank accounts.  No records or incomplete records kept of expenditure and purchases.  Missing money, valuables or property.  Forced changes to wills or other legal documents. | Stealing from others.  Borrowing money.  Begging. |

# Incident Response and Reporting

Pathways to Leadership aims to minimise incidents by documenting, reviewing and rectifying the negative consequences of incidents. This helps us to provide support to people with disability and families and a safe, stress free and positive work environment.

**What is an incident?**

An incident is a situation where any person associated with services provided by Pathways to Leadership is injured, put at risk, or distressed.

**Who is responsible for reporting incidents?**

All employees that work with Pathways to Leadership are responsible for identifying and reporting incidents. Pathways to Leadership promotes a culture where people are empowered to report incidents without fear of blame and feel confidence that, by reporting these incidents, they can help prevent similar issues from happening again.

Everybody should be encouraged to report any incidents that they are involved in or witness.

**What do I do if an incident occurs?**

**How do we review incidents?**

Team leaders maintain an Incident Register with copies of each incident form and the report of follow-up action. This allows us to identify patterns and trends in incidents to help us improve our services and minimise further incidents.

# Complaints Handling

Pathways to Leadership will consider all complaints seriously and will act promptly, fairly and confidentially with the involvement of the person to rectify any poor service or practice. We aim to redress any hurt caused to individuals and families and improve our overall performance by learning from complaints.

We are committed to providing a complaints handling process that protects the rights and interests of individuals and groups, encourages people to raise concerns, caters for age, development, literacy and cultural factors, and protects complainants against retribution. If a member requires particular or specialist support to make a complaint, Pathways to Leadership staff will encourage the person to engage an advocate or interpreter to support that person and ensure that the complaint is clearly identified and addressed appropriately.

Pathways to Leadership encourages employees to resolve complaints at first point of contact and at a local level. We will ensure the person making the complaint is regularly informed of what we are doing to address the complaint, work with the person to resolve the issue and discuss actions that are to be taken within an agreed timeframe.

Pathways to Leadership has access to the Feedback and Complaints Mechanism within the FACS Portal to log feedback and the actions taken, to assist us to monitor and resolve issues effectively and to inform continuous improvement of our services.

**What if a member is not comfortable complaining to their contact person?**

If a member is not comfortable complaining to their Pathways contact person they may wish to speak with one of the other Pathways consultants or to the Director to help them resolve the issue.

**What do I do if someone feels uncomfortable about making a complaint?**

If a family feels uncomfortable about making a complaint on their own, the Pathways employee will encourage them to use an advocate.

**What if a member is unhappy with aspects of their funding or their service provider?**

If a member has questions regarding their funding they can contact their local FACS District or call

9377 6000 or go to the online complaints line <http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/contact_us/make_a_comment,_enquiry,_complaint_or_compliment>

On this site you will also find translated Community Complaints forms for people from CALD backgrounds; and have access to READ SPEAKER to assist people with a vision impairment.

Translating and interpreting services (TIS) can also be accessed on: 1300655082 or [tis@border.gov.au](mailto:tis@border.gov.au); please contact us for Pathways to Leadership’s TIS client code.

What is the relevant legislation and where can I get more information?

If you are still not satisfied that your issue has been resolved you can get more information about complaint handling from the NSW Ombudsman’s Office.

The *Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act* 1993 (NSW) requires good complaint handling systems to deal with complaints fairly, objectively and as quickly as possible.

<http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/>

**How do people know about our complaints process?**

Pathways to Leadership provide this information to all people and families at the commencement of support and every year after.

Pathways to Leadership also advise members that they can provide feedback and comments on our feedback email.

# Working With Us

Pathways to Leadership aims to provide a workplace that:

* supports a healthy work/life balance
* is healthy, safe, and free from discrimination, vilification and harassment of any kind
* offers physical, emotional, technical and spiritual support
* supports rehabilitation principles and practices and is committed to implementing them
* recognises and values the gifts of every person; and
* consistently applies fair and equitable methods in all dealings.

We engage the most appropriate person for the job, and use all appropriate avenues to accomplish this, provide appropriate training for the job, and encourage everyone that works with us to expand their knowledge and skills.

## Code of Conduct

Pathways to Leadership expects everyone that works with us to behave in an ethical and lawful manner

**Respect for the Law**

People who work for Pathways to Leadership will have an understanding of the legislation relevant to our work, and obligations within the legislation. Workers will respect the law in the general sense.

Pathways to Leadership will report to the police any alleged illegal activity in regard to any person who carries out the duties of the organisation.

**Following instructions**

You should carry out all reasonable and lawful instructions related to your work. Where the instruction is, or appears to be, unlawful, you may refuse to comply and report the matter to the Directors.

Where the instructions appear to be unreasonable, you should communicate this to the person giving the instruction. If the matter cannot be resolved through discussion, you may raise the issue through the internal grievance procedure.

**Workplace Health and Safety**

You must comply with our policy and procedure about Workplace Health and Safety and other instructions as issued. You must not wilfully place yourself and others at risk.

**Respect for Persons**

You should respect the rights, dignity and views of others. This extends from people with disability and their families to colleagues and members of the public. You should demonstrate your respect for the individual/family you are supporting, your workplace and others by:

* wearing clothing appropriate for the task: - clean and tidy, modest and dignified;
* always being punctual;
* not smoking while providing personal care or family support;
* not using inappropriate language; and
* respecting and acting within the culture of the family and the organisation.

Pathways to Leadership will not tolerate any abuse, neglect or assault of any person

**Personal Integrity**

Pathways to Leadership staff have a responsibility when supporting a person with disability and family to:

* Make sure the interests, choices and personal requirements of that person and family are prioritised above your own interests;
* Make sure you act fairly, equitably and without discrimination when negotiating work arrangements; and
* Immediately report any abuse or neglect of any person by another; including stealing money or property, instances of an employee using ‘community access’ for their own needs, or fraudulent recording of activities.

**Diligence, Care and Attention**

Pathways to Leadership staff must adhere to Pathways to Leadership’s Policy and Procedures and the employment contract. Pathways to Leadership will ensure that workers are made aware of all current and relevant manuals, procedures, guidelines and practice frameworks.

When working with people with disability and their families Pathways to Leadership staff should:

* exercise a high level of care, diligence and professional competency;
* avoid wilfully placing the individual, self and/or others at risk of injury, assault, abuse or neglect;
* avoid negligent conduct by giving sufficient consideration to actions and decisions, and by obtaining direction and advice;
* be familiar with all current and relevant policy and procedures, manuals, guidelines and practice frameworks and ensure these are followed when carrying out all duties;
* be completely free of the effects of alcohol and drugs whilst performing your specific duties as an employee, and in preparation for or while providing family support; and
* avoid any involvement with or transaction of alcohol or illegal drugs while supporting people and families.

**Economy and Efficiency**

Pathways to Leadership staff should ensure people with disability and their families are supported to use funding as efficiently and effectively as possible, and work towards positive outcomes for people with disability and their families over and above work satisfaction.

**Media Statements/Publicity**

All media statements and publicity events must be endorsed by the Chairperson. A worker should ensure that any individual being included in a photograph with Pathways to Leadership personnel has given consent or had the consent of his or her family beforehand (If the individual is aged over 18 or over and is unable to give consent, with or without support, consent can only be given by an adult with authority to make that decision).

## Recruitment and Selection

The suitability and skill of people who work with us directly affects the quality of service provided to families. Every person is valued for their current and potential contribution to our organisation.

We will carry out transparent, accountable and robust recruitment and selection policies and procedures that meet any specified regulatory requirements.

**Probity screening**

Probity screening is integral to operational effectiveness. The Directors will ensure applications for relevant probity screening are lodged for Directors, employees and unpaid assistants upon engagement.

Risk assessments are an integral part of probity screening. Pathways to Leadership will conduct and document a risk assessment when we become aware that a person is being charged or has been convicted of any offence that may have implications for their work within the organisation. This is so that a determination can be made as to whether that person should be recruited, or in the case of existing employees, continue to perform the service or any part of the service.

You must disclose to the Directors any criminal charge or conviction that arises during the course of your employment with the organisation.

## Discrimination

Pathways to Leadership believes that everyone should be able to work in an environment free of discrimination, victimisation, sexual harassment and vilification. We will not tolerate sexual harassment and discrimination under any circumstances, and will treat everyone on their merits, without regard to race, age, sex, relationship status or any other factor not applicable to the position.

## Induction, Orientation and Training

Pathways to Leadership provides appropriate and adequate induction, orientation and training opportunities for every employee.

Workers should attend induction, orientation and training opportunities with seriousness and diligence and identify any training or induction you need to perform the job.

## Grievances

Pathways to Leadership will take any grievance seriously. We expect employees to act promptly if they have a grievance and ensure the grievance does not impinge on any family or individual supported by Pathways to Leadership.

## Workplace Harassment

Workplace harassment has detrimental effects on all involved and Pathways to Leadership. It can create an unsafe working environment, result in a loss of valued people, the breakdown of organisation, teams and individual relationships, and reduced efficiency. People who are harassed can become distressed, anxious, withdrawn, depressed, and can lose self-esteem and self confidence. Workplace harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Pathways to Leadership will provide all employees with information about workplace harassment to increase awareness, and inform everyone about how to make a complaint, support systems available, options for resolving grievances and the appeals process. The Directors will ensure that people working for us are not exposed to workplace harassment, treat grievances seriously. We will ensure that when a person lodges or is witness to a grievance, that this person is not victimised.

We expect everyone to not tolerate unacceptable behaviour and report incidents of workplace harassment immediately.

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## Workplace Health and Safety

Pathways to Leadership will ensure the health and safety of all employees, Directors, families and individuals who use its services, and members of the public.

The Directors will appoint a Workplace Health and Safety Officer, facilitate an election for a Workplace Health and Safety Representative if requested and will abide by all relevant legislation.

All employees and Directors will act responsibly and carry out their role in accordance with workplace health and safety, and inform the Workplace Health and Safety Officer of all work injuries and incidents, including ‘near misses’.

The Workplace Health and Safety Officer will:

* conduct annual assessments at the workplace to identify any hazards;
* check that up to date first aid and fire equipment is available
* inform the Directors about the overall state of health and safety in their work area;
* advise on appropriate training programs, and promote and increase awareness in workplace health and safety;
* advise on risk assessment, health and safety roles and responsibilities, health and safety induction, and hazard reporting procedures;
* ensure that work injuries, work caused illnesses, dangerous events or immediate risks to workplace health and safety are reported to the Directors and recorded.

Pathways to Leadership will ask families to maintain a safe home environment for themselves and for their support workers.

## Ceasing Working with Pathways to Leadership

Pathways to Leadership will provide everyone who ceases to work with us an opportunity to give feedback on his or her experience of working with us. We are committed to continuous improvement and welcome opportunities to improve our services.

**Governance –**

Pathways to Leadership is committed to the continuous improvement of our services to people with disability and their families. We engage in a regular process of evaluation, review and planning relating to our services. We include people with disability and their families in all stages of the process.

Pathways to Leadership is governed by our Directors. The roles of the Directors of Pathways to Leadership are clear and documented in the Constitution.

Pathways to Leadership upholds the following principles with respect to running our organisation:

* **Lay solid foundations for management and oversight**
* **Structure the corporate governing body to add value**
* **Promote ethical and responsible decision making**
* **Safeguard integrity in financial reporting**
* **Make timely and balanced disclosure**
* **Respect the rights of stakeholders**
* **Recognise and manage risk**
* R**emunerate fairly and responsibly**

## Strategic Planning

Every five yearsor less, the Pathways to Leadership Board develops a Strategic Plan. The Plan is implemented by the Directors who report on outcomes monthly. The Directors will review the Plan annually.

## Review of Policy and Procedures

Informed by these reviews, we monitor the status of review/audit outcomes, suggestions and corrective/preventive actions, and review our policies and procedures. When there are changes to any of our documents we will make these available to team members as well as people with disability and families.

## Feedback from Families

Each year we invite families to provide feedback on the Pathways to Leadership Policies and Procedures Manual and the services we provide.

## Quality System Management

Pathways to Leadership uses the FACS Quality Framework Reporting Portal which guides our continuous improvement process.

## Funding, Fees, Fundraising and Donations

Pathways to Leadership aims to build and maintain a diversified funding base comprised of individual donations, foundation and government grants, consulting fees and other revenue. We see each and every donation as an expression of support in building an inclusive community for people with disability and their families.

* We only use donated or contributed funds for the objectives of the organisation
* We make sure all publicity and promotional activities are truthful and non-deceptive
* We do not accept donations from organisations whose values conflict with ours
* We keep personal information confidential and will not sell, rent or give it to anyone without consent.
* We maintain a recognised accounting method to track and control donations and contributions

## Conflict of Interest

Pathways to Leadership engages in open, transparent and ethical decision making processes. Directors must declare potential, perceived and/or real conflicts of interests. A conflict of interest occurs when someone’s personal interests are in conflict with Pathways to Leadership’ interests. When there is a conflict it may influence the outcome of the decisions they are required to make. A decision that involves the whole community or a specific group of people does not normally lead to a conflict of interest.

Directors must disclose if they believe they have either

* a potential or real conflict of interest;
* a personal or material interest that may result in his or her financial gain in a matter that requires a decision to be made;
* or personal or material interest that may result in adverse effect in a matter that requires decision; or
* a concern about the conflict of interest of another person.

The Directors will establish and maintain a Conflict of Interest Register, ensure all disclosures are recorded, and take the necessary action to resolve the conflict of interest.

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## Reporting

Pathways to Leadership will comply with all requirements for reporting to ADHC. This includes financial reporting, annual compliance reporting, data reporting and other reporting as required.

## Finance

Pathways to Leadership understands that good accounting principles and practices are important for effective and efficient use of funds. There are also legal requirements including those determined by various agreements, which we must meet.

Pathways to Leadership conducts its financial affairs in a way that serves people with disability and their family as flexibly and responsively as possible. We will comply with the agreements and accompanying guidelines, which determine how government funding is used.

We will be open and accountable to members, funding bodies and other relevant organisations in its use of funds, as outlined in these agreements and guidelines.

The Chairperson will negotiate the agreements with the funding bodies and will sign the organisational agreements on behalf of Pathways to Leadership.

## Budgets

Pathways to Leadership will prepare an Annual Budget for the consideration of the directors.

## Finance and Administration Reports

Finance and Administration Reports are available to the Directors. These reports identify total income and expenditure for the organisation as a whole, and any discrepancy which may alter the correctness of the report (if known).

The reports contain:

* Summary Report
* Budget Year-To-Date income and expenditure
* Actual Year-To-Date income and expenditure
* Funding Body Reports when required

## Funding Reports

Pathways to Leadership will report annually to ADHC on our expenditure and funding to confirm that funding has been expended as per the agreed terms and conditions in the Funding Agreement schedules. This acquittal must include sufficient financial information to demonstrate whether funding has been appropriately expended or not.

Pathways to Leadership recognises for the purposes of the acquittal the financial requirements set out by the Corporations Act 2001.

## Financial Audits

Pathways to Leadership will provide an Association Audit once a year, in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001.

The Directors will also make available all documents requested by the auditor.

The Chairperson will table the audit report at the Annual General Meeting for ratification.

## Bank Accounts

The Directors will make sure all monies are banked in Pathways to Leadership’s name in the bank of their choosing. They will also ensure the appropriate bank forms are completed and updated if there are any changes and lodged with the bank, and keep a register of signatories for all accounts.

The Directors will carry out monthly bank reconciliations and yearly Bank Reconciliation in preparation for the Audit.

## Receipts

The Directors will make sure that all receipts are processed through the accounting software package and, if requested, by the payee these receipts are emailed or posted

## Purchasing and Payments

The Directors are responsible for supervising all purchases of Pathways to Leadership. They will ensure that the most competitive price has been sought for all major items of expenditure and that three quotes are obtained for all expenditure over $5000, and funds are available when orders for expenditure are prepared.

## Assets

Pathways to Leadership will track its assets in an Asset Register, including each asset sold, donated to someone else, or of no use.

## Insurance

The Directors will ensure that all insurances are current and cover the following risks:

* Public Liability (minimum $10,000,000)
* Workers Compensation
* Contents Insurance for Fire, Theft and other Damages
* Professional Indemnity
* Employment Practices Insurance
* Directors’ and Officers’ Insurance
* Building (where necessary)
* Other Insurances as determined by the Directors.

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## People with Disability and Family Managed Funds

People with disability and their family may buy services, goods or equipment as agreed in their support plan within funding guidelines.

People with disability and their family need to obtain a tax invoice for the purchase and record the transaction in their accounts.

Pathways to Leadership makes regular quarterly payments to people with disability and their families as agreed in the funding agreement.

People with disability and family may be asked to provide a copy of their bank statement at the end of each quarter.Both people with disability, their families (where appropriate) and Pathways to Leadership will have access to the accounts in which the transferred funds are recorded.

At the end of each financial year people with disability and their family may be required to sign a Statutory Declaration to declare that funds have been used according to appropriate Pathways to Leadership and funding guidelines.

**Check with authorities**

Pathways to Leadership understands that both the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and Centrelink do not consider support funds as assessable income. People with disability and their family are advised to contact the ATO or Centrelink if they want to check their obligations.