

## Customer Experience and Service Innovation

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides a range of services and supports to people on the autism spectrum and the Autistic community.

Aspect strives for excellence and professionalism in providing exceptional customer service, both inside and outside the organisation across the full customer journey.

Aspect constantly strives to find new ways of working, embracing new technologies, investigating new service offerings and applying research to better meet the changing and diverse needs of people on the autism spectrum.

Aspect's approach is to build an organisational culture that is customer centric and prioritise strategies and practices that create positive experiences for students and participants, their families and carers through communications, daily interactions, service delivery and service innovation. This is evidenced in Aspect's Service Commitment which outlines the way it works with students, participants, families and carers as well as our participant handbooks.

Aspect values, respects and promotes the diversity of our participants/students, their families and the communities in which we work. Aspect recognises the importance of this in creating a culture that is inclusive, respectful and equitable and enables Aspect to respond appropriately and sensitively (see Embracing Diversity policy).

Aspect schools and services work in collaboration with the individual, their family/support network and the broader community, as consented to by the individual (or their person responsible), to make appropriate referrals, and/or release appropriate and necessary information to third parties, where required.

Aspect collects information and data about its customers' experience and journey with Aspect through customer and staff feedback to continuously improve its services (see Quality Management Framework policy).

Individuals and families have access to Aspect's feedback and complaints process (see Feedback, Complaints and Incidents policy). All people who interact with Aspect are encouraged to provide feedback about the service entry process, either positive or negative, including when service entry was refused, to support continuous improvement practices.

### Customer experience principles

#### Enquiries

The following principles guide our interactions with all people who seek to enquire about Aspect services:

- Aspect provides multiple entry points for enquiries via email, web and phone.

- Each participant is provided with information using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand.
- All enquiries are handled with courtesy, sensitivity and empathy, fostering a climate of mutual respect between Aspect and enquirer.
- Enquiries are dealt with promptly and in line with the approved standard operating procedures.
- Aspect provides information to support decision making and maintains a database of approved service providers to refer enquirers to where Aspect is unable to or not suitable to provide a requested service. This is reviewed regularly with relevant senior management.
- All Aspect services, supports and schools have clearly defined service descriptions, associated costs and entry eligibility criteria, which are publicly available (see Aspect website) in a variety of accessible formats.

### **Service Entry**

Each service, support or school within Aspect maintains its service entry eligibility criteria, as outlined in relevant procedures, based on the factors relevant for the service, including, relevant guidelines and requirements of government or other agencies that fund the program or service.

Decisions about eligibility for service and allocation of service are guided by the following principles. These are communicated through documentation such as our Service Commitment, Service Agreement, school prospectus as well as on the Aspect website.

- Aspect prioritises service access to people on the autism spectrum whose support needs primarily relate to their autism and on the basis of their eligibility to participate in a funded program or access a program of fee for service (as outlined in the Eligibility and Entry procedure for the school/service);
- Access and equity principles are applied in decision-making to ensure fairness, and that access to services is without discrimination.
- Services are provided within the limit of available resources; and Aspect's ability to make reasonable adjustments to support service delivery that meets the individual needs of the student/participant.

### **Service delivery**

Aspect provides a range of services across Education and Individual and Community Supports. Whilst each service is unique, it follows the Aspect Comprehensive Approach (see Aspect Comprehensive Approach policy) and maintains relevant procedures to support service delivery, and are guided by the following principles:

- All procedural decisions are undertaken in the best interest of the person accessing Aspect services. Involvement of other stakeholders, with the individual's consent, acknowledge the importance of inherent dignity and respect of the person involved.

- Aspect's programs, services and supports are structured in a way to accommodate flexibility and responsiveness to individual strengths and interests, preferences and choices.
- Individual services and supports reflect an agreed approach to person-centred planning, including the presence of an active consultation process with all stakeholders (see Aspect Comprehensive Approach policy).

#### **Leaving, transitioning from and exiting services**

Aspect offers transition support in the event students/participants and their families exit and services and schools maintain relevant procedures to support transition and exit. Where possible, this is done in a planned and documented manner, in collaboration with the student/participant and their family, as well as any other relevant Aspect service or support, or wider community service which they consent to include.

In consultation with the student/participant and their family/support network (as required), Aspect may decide to exit a person we support from a program or service if we are no longer able to meet the needs of the student/participant. This includes when, after applying all risk management strategies in collaboration with the student/participant and their family (where relevant), Aspect is unable to maintain a safe environment for other people it supports and staff. Reasons for discontinuation, suspension or withdrawal of service as outlined in this policy will be identified where possible in a service or enrolment agreement. Where this is not possible, a copy of this policy shall be provided to students/participants and their family on service, support or school entry.

#### **Service Innovation principles**

Innovation is about providing improved customer service, enhanced supports and positive customer experiences.

Innovation spans both improvement to existing services or the creation of new offerings.

Any improvements or new service offerings are based on the following principles:

- Person centred – based on customer needs and an understanding of the current customer experience.
- Co-designed – involve all stakeholders (where possible and relevant) to capture shared experiences and perspectives (see Working in Partnership policy).
- Evidence-based – consideration is given to available research to inform practice and service delivery (see Research at Aspect policy).
- Holistic – Consideration is given to every aspect of the service and the full customer journey.
- Prototyped – a pilot is implemented on a small scale before being developed in full (where relevant and possible).

## External Framework

The Customer Experience and Service Innovation policy demonstrates Aspect's implementation of the:

- NDIS Practice Standards (2018) and NDIS Code of Conduct, specifically within the NDIS Practice Standards & Quality Indicators:
  - Core Module: 1. Rights and Responsibilities, under all Outcomes.
  - Core Module: 2. Provider Governance and Operational Management, under the relevant Outcomes.
  - Core Module: 3. Provision of Supports, under all Outcomes.
  - Core Module: 4. Support Provision Environment, under all Outcomes.
  - Supplementary Module: 2. Specialist Behaviour Support Module, under the relevant Outcomes.
  - Supplementary Module: 2a. Implementing Behaviour Support Plans, under the relevant Outcomes.
  - Supplementary Module: 3. Early Childhood Supports, under all Outcomes.
  - Supplementary Module: 4. Specialist Support Coordination, under all Outcomes.
- Disability Standards for Education (2005), specifically:
  - Part 4: Standards for Enrolment.
  - Part 7: Standards for Student Support Services.
- NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW Manual), specifically:
  - 3. Requirements for Registered Non-government Schools, under requirements for Curriculum; Premises and Buildings; Facilities; Safe and Supportive Environments; Discipline; and Attendance.
- Standards for Registration and Review of Registration of Schools in South Australia, specifically the relevant quality related criteria for:
  - Standard 1 School Governance.
  - Standard 2 Student Learning and Assessment.
  - Standard 3 Student Safety, Health and Welfare.

## Critical Definitions

**Evidence based** – Aspect defines 'Evidence-Based Practice' as strategies that:

- have the highest quality available research showing positive impacts for Autistic people and their families in real-world settings;
- meet the aspirations, preferences and values of people on the autism spectrum;
- fit with Aspect's 50 years of expertise in autism practice and assists the work of our educators, therapists and support staff;
- are positive and not painful or distressing, respect the full diversity of Autistic people and can contribute towards an Autistic person's satisfaction with their quality of life and their inclusion in society.

**Evidence informed** – Evidence-Informed Practice refers to emerging practices that have yet to develop a research base. Sometimes, it takes time for new research evidence to emerge. Where there is limited research available and strategies meet Aspect’s evidence-based practice criteria, Aspect’s Research Centre for Autism Practice (ARCAP) conducts research in partnership with the Autistic community to investigate evidence-informed strategies. This might include the use of technology (iPads or telehealth), strategies to support emotional regulation or approaches to training (e.g. the police) to respond positively.

## Legislation References

### **National**

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings Standards) 2010 (Cth)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Disability Services Act 1986 (Cth)

Disability Standards for Education 2014 (Cth)

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)

National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Quality and Safeguards Commission and other measures) Bill 2017 (Cth)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

### **New South Wales**

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW)

Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)

Education Act 1990 (NSW)

Privacy of Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)

### **Victoria**

Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)

### **South Australia**

Disability Services Act 1993 (SA)

Disability Services (Rights, Protection and Inclusion) Amendment Act 2013 (SA)

Education Act 1972 (SA)

Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)

Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Act 2007 (SA)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)

Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)

Health and Community Services Complaints Act 2004 (SA)

Racial Vilification Act 1996 (SA)

**Australian Capital Territory**

Disability Services Act 1991 (ACT)

Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)

Freedom of Information Act 1989 (ACT)

**Queensland**

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)

Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)

Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)

**Northern Territory**

Anti-Discrimination Act 1992 (NT)

Disability services Amendment Act 2012 (NT)

Information Act 2002 (NT)

**Tasmania**

Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)

Disability Services Act 2011 (Tas)

Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas)