ASPECT
CHOOSE AND CONNECT
& ASPECT CAPABLE
Handbook

A quick guide for participants, families and carers

© 2019 Autism Spectrum Australia
Acknowledgement of the traditional owners and country

As part of Aspect Autism Australia, we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples as the First Nations Peoples whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.

(Adapted from the Code of Ethics Australian Association of Social Workers, 2010).
Why we do what we do

We believe
every person with autism can, and has the right to, be an active participant in the community and to make their own choices.

We celebrate
differences and value the individual strengths and interests of all the people we work with.

We are passionate
about people, about being positive, and about possibilities.
01 - Why we do what we do

We work to understand people with autism, from their perspective.

Our focus is on the strengths and interests of people with autism.

Our solutions are evidence-informed.

Our services are designed around each person and family, for every stage of life,
- across all ages
- to live the best life possible

We work in partnership with you
01 - Why we do what we do

a different brilliant®
understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the spectrum

Learn more about our Vision, Mission and Values at:
https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/about-aspect
01 - Why we do what we do

Our approach

The Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) is our commitment to a consistent, evidence informed approach to service delivery.
We are engaged in the community

We are dynamic, flexible and reliable

We work through solutions together

We put your welfare and safety first

We are engaged in the community

We see our work with you as a partnership

We are here to support our participants to live the best life possible.

O1 - Why we do what we do
01 - Why we do what we do

Our commitment to you

- We will work in **partnership** with you to achieve outcomes that are important to you.
- We know that the NDIS can be complex and we will **take the time** to help you understand.
- We will **consult** with you to understand what you want and need, offer you choice, and support you to make decisions.
- We employ staff who are **knowledgeable, friendly, respectful and trustworthy**.
- We provide you with **easy to understand information** about services available to you.
- We will **communicate with you on your terms** - via email, over the phone, in writing, and in person (through interpreters, if required).
- If we can’t do something, we will **explain** why.
- We keep your information **private** and only use it for things you have agreed to.
- We provide you with information about **fees and charges** before you use our services.
- We welcome your **suggestions and feedback** and take any **complaints** you make seriously.
01 - Why we do what we do

Help us help you...

✅ Tell us what we need to know about you, so we can provide you with the best possible support and assistance.

✅ Keep us informed when your needs or circumstances change, so we can adjust your service if necessary.

✅ Provide Aspect with your funding details or payment for services in a timely manner.

✅ Act safely and respect Aspect staff, other people who use Aspect services and Aspect property.

✅ Listen to the instructions of Aspect staff when at our services, so that we can keep you and others safe whilst providing you with a quality service.

✅ Tell us if you see something or someone doing something that makes you feel uncomfortable or that you think is not safe.

✅ Provide us with feedback, so we know what we are doing well and how we can improve.
02 - Our services

Aspect Choose and Connect

Assistance with daily activities and self care - Access to community participation
We work with you wherever you most need help: living independently, assistive technology, travel training including using public transport.

Short term accommodation
The Lifestyle House, located in Werribee, services all participants in Victoria. It is a purpose-built facility with live-in accommodation and specially designed sports and recreational facilities. It offers respite care options for people with autism and their families.

Respite program
Assisted by Support Workers, this Victoria-wide program provides an opportunity to participate in social activities and short breaks. It includes challenging adventures, trips and interactive activities which encourage participants to engage with others and embrace new experiences. The events occur on two Saturdays every month, and there are also two weekend long camps per year.

Centre based group activities
With a focus on social integration and enabling participants to gain confidence and skills in community settings, we offer programs such as photography, film making and design, among others.

Social or interest based groups
The groups are for children, youths and adults and are designed to support the strengths and interests of people with autism so that social skills and capacity building across a range of areas can be achieved. The groups provide opportunities to meet others, develop friendships and explore shared interests.

Capacity building/Skill development
We work with you wherever you most need help - living independently, assistive technology, travel training including using public transport.

How
• Individually
• In small groups

Where
may include
• At home
• In the community
• In social settings
02 - Our services

Aspect Capable

Employment Mentoring Program

This Aspect Capable program offers guidance and advice to support adults with autism move into the world of work with ease and confidence.

Our Employment Mentors work with you to uncover your untapped potential and find meaningful employment.

School Leaver/Employment Services

This program is an early intervention approach for Year 12 school leavers. We help young people prepare, look for and gain employment.

The program offers a high quality, person-centred approach in finding meaningful employment placements.

It is designed to support their transition from school to employment: we work with our participants to provide meaningful, individualised capacity building activities so they can achieve their employment goals.

Employment Partnerships

Aspect Capable works closely with various employers across NSW, Victoria and South Australia to create employment opportunities for our participants. One of our partnership goals is to create internships that lead to meaningful employment for our participants.

We provide employer education workshops for managers and teams as well as in work support for employees and employers.

Support Co-ordination

Support Co-ordination

We provide the information and assistance to undertake the activities that will help achieve your identified goals.

This may include connecting and co-ordinating your supports, plan management, financial management and intermediary support.
03 - Accessing our services

You contact Aspect by email or phone

You receive an email receipt from the Aspect Administration Co-Ordinator within 48 hours

Aspect contacts you within 10 to 14 working days

You are eligible

Yes

You are placed on our waitlist

No

We refer you to the most appropriate provider

Your Support Worker or Mentor is selected and appointed

You sign a service agreement, and we work together to develop an Individual Support Plan.

Service begins
03 - Accessing our services

Supporting You in your Language

It is important to us that everyone can access information about what services Aspect provides, how we do our work, how you can access our therapy services.

The information on our website and in our brochures is accessible both in:
• Standard English
• ‘plain English’ / Easy English, with pictures.

To support our non-English speakers who need assistance with interpreting our services information, we use the National Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

To learn more about accessing our information and how we work with you in your language, go to our website: https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/accessibility
03 - Accessing our services

About our waitlist

We value and understand your needs and desire to start with our support services as soon as possible.

We do our best to find and allocate the right Aspect Support Worker or Aspect Capable Mentor for you within a reasonable timeframe.

This may take some time as the Support Worker or Mentor may not be immediately available in your region.

Aspect Choose and Connect or Aspect Capable will be in touch through your preferred style of communication to keep you informed on how we are progressing, and may discuss alternative services while you are waiting.
03 - Accessing our services

Locations in New South Wales

**Northern Sydney**
Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Ryde City, Warringah, Willoughby

**Sydney/South Eastern Sydney**
Ashfield, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury, Leichhardt, Marrickville, Strathfield Botany Bay, Sydney, Kogarah, Hurstville, Randwick, Rockdale, Sutherland Shire, Waverley, Woollahra, Georges River

**South Western Sydney**
Camden, Campbelltown, Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Wingecarribee, Wollondilly

**Western Sydney**
Auburn, Holroyd, Blacktown, Cumberland, Parramatta, The Hills Shire

**Blue Mountains/Nepean**
Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith, Lithgow

**Central Coast**
Wyong, Gosford

**Hunter**
Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Newcastle, Port Stephens

**Mid North Coast**
Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour

We also offer services in other locations. If your area is not listed here, please contact us.
03 - Accessing our services
Locations in Victoria and South Australia

**Adelaide**
City of Charles Sturt, City of West Torrens, City of Port Adelaide, Enfield (West)

**Bayside Peninsula**
Bayside, Frankston, Glen Eira, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, Stonnington

**North Eastern Melbourne**
Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra

**Inner Eastern Melbourne**
Boroondara, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse

**Outer Eastern Melbourne**
Knox, Maroondah, Yarra Ranges

**Southern Melbourne**
Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong

**Western Melbourne**
Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Wyndham

**Hume Moreland**
Hume, Moreland

**Inner Gippsland**
Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Latrobe, South Gippsland

**Brimbank Melton**
Brimbank, Melton

**Barwon**
Colac Otway, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe, Surf Coast

We also offer services in other locations. If your area is not listed here, please contact us.
We deliver NDIS funded Tele-services to any location in NSW, VIC and SA.

We also deliver Tele-Services across Australia in locations where technical access is available.

Please contact the Aspect Capable team about tailoring a tele-service program for you.
Aspect is committed to following the NDIS Practice Standards and the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS).

We comply with all the standards set by the Australian and state governments to make sure you receive a quality service from us.

These standards ensure:
- individual rights are respected,
- quality and safety,
- services are delivered competently.

It includes things like:
- Risk management
- Expected qualifications and competencies for employees
- Complaints systems
- Effective and inclusive governance
- High Intensity Daily Personal Activities
- Support Coordination
- Implementing behaviour support plans
- Specialist short term accommodation

For an easy read version of the NDIS National Standards, you may visit: https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au
04 - Our Standards and Policies

Your Privacy & Confidentiality

Aspect collects only the information we need to provide you with appropriate services and to do our work.

The support we provide may be limited if you choose not to provide all the information we need to give a service.

We will not provide your personal information to anyone else without your consent, except when we have to by law.

With your consent, Aspect may use the information you provide to refer you to other services.

We may also use your information to report to funding bodies and for research and evaluation without identifying you.

You can review information Aspect keeps about you by requesting an Aspect staff member or the manager of the Aspect service you use to show it to you.

A copy of Aspect Therapy’s Privacy Statement is available at any Aspect Therapy office or on our website, or you may download our Easy English Privacy Statement.
04 – Our Standards and Policies

Safeguarding the people we support

Aspect is committed to providing an environment free from abuse, neglect and exploitation of the people we support.

Our staff considers the safety, protection and wellbeing of all people involved in Aspect’s services of fundamental importance.

Staff have a duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent any harm and to promote the wellbeing of all individuals in our services.

Our *Safeguarding the People We Support* policy upholds Aspect Therapy’s intention to promote ethical, respectful and safe service delivery which meets legislative requirements and achieves positive outcomes for people we support across all Human Rights principles & conventions, as well as relevant state and national legislation.

For more information, see our [Easy English Safeguarding the People we Support](#) document.
04 – Our Standards and Policies
How we handle incidents

While Aspect is committed to safeguarding the people we support at all times, there are occasions when an incident may occur.

An incident is an event where:

• an accident occurs that hurts, nearly hurts or causes distress to someone and/or

• someone hurts, nearly hurts or causes distress to another person.

If you are not satisfied with how Aspect handles an incident, the support given or if you have any other concerns, you can follow our feedback and complaints process or find further support using the List of Advocates.

If an incident does happen, we follow the following steps:

Communication and Support
We let you know what is happening, and who you can talk to or ask questions. We help you find help and support inside and outside of Aspect (including advocates).

Respond
We check everyone is okay and provide first aid if needed. We put in place support for all people involved.

Report
We write an incident report, and communicate with other people as required (e.g. police, government etc.)

Investigate
We look for why the incident happened and what we can do to stop it happening again.

Analyse
We act to fix any problems from the incident and put in place changes to make it better.

Check
We regularly check the changes or fixes are still working.
04 - Our Standards and Policies

Feedback and Complaints

Aspect treats complaints seriously, sensitively and in a timely manner, having due regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality, and privacy.

Your feedback is important to us and provides an opportunity for us to further refine and develop our practices.

We are committed to resolving the matter for the person or people concerned where practicable.

All feedback and complaints are treated with confidentiality and stored subject to applicable privacy laws.

For more information, see our feedback and complaints process.

How can I give Aspect my feedback?

There are many ways to give us feedback, including:

- talking in person directly to Aspect staff
- calling our main office on 1800 ASPECT (1800 277 328)
- emailing a particular Aspect staff member directly, or emailing Aspect’s Customer Service at: customerservice@autismspectrum.org.au
- writing or drawing in a letter addressed to Aspect
- contacting us through our social media channels
- filling in a feedback or complaint form - available at your local school or service; or using the contact form on Aspect’s Contact Us page.
Advocacy for people with disability is acting, speaking or writing to promote, protect and defend the human rights of people with disability.

Advocacy ensures full and equal enjoyment of all human rights, enabling community participation by:

• acting in a partisan manner (being on their side and no one else's),
• being primarily concerned with their fundamental needs,
• remaining loyal and accountable to them in a way which is empathic and vigorous (whilst respecting the rights of others),
• ensuring duty of care at all times.

Advocacy services are available through the Department of Social Services (DSS) Finder.

The *Disability Advocacy Finder* is a web-based application developed to assist people with disabilities, carers and families to search for government funded disability advocacy agencies.

You can find more information about advocacy services via the Aspect website: [List of Advocates](#).
05 – Our Fees

For information on our NDIS and non NDIS fees and charges, please refer to our pricing document at the bottom of the following page on Aspect’s website:

I don’t have NDIS funding... Can I still access your services?

Yes, our fees for service rates are priced in line with our NDIS fees. Our NDIS Fees Guide is available at: https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/how-can-we-help/social-community-support

You will be invoiced directly for non NDIS services.

Why do I have to pay for reports or administration with my NDIS funding?

At Aspect, we believe a team oriented, holistic approach has greater benefits now and in the longer term for our participants. This is a core part of Aspect Choose and Connect and Aspect Capable’s philosophy and one that we are committed to.

For Aspect to maintain our person-centred, family-focussed approach, and to always deliver best practice and meet our service compliance requirements, there are many things we do ‘behind the scenes’. Some of these are the mandatory requirements we have to complete reports on behalf of participants.
06 - Frequently Asked Questions

General

What if I am not sure about whether Aspect is able to meet my needs?

When you make initial contact with us the Aspect Support Worker or Aspect Mentor will discuss your needs to determine if Aspect Choose and Connect or Aspect Capable is the best fit for you.

Aspect Choose and Connect and Aspect Capable provide a range of services to people with autism and we have conversations with you about this. If we agree that Aspect is not the best fit, we will assist by referring you to the most suitable provider.

I can get the same service ‘around the corner’ for less... so why choose you?

There are many providers with different skills and experience. Rates will vary according to the duration and type of service you require.

Our evidence informed, autism specific framework is built around knowledge and world wide research and best practice of over 50 years.

Our Aspect Choose and Connect and Aspect Capable staff work alongside Aspect Practice that supports and guides us in our everyday work.
Who can I contact about my service?

Once assigned, your Support Worker or Mentor is your main point of contact throughout the provision of your service.

You are also be assigned a Team Leader and a Regional Coordinator who can be contacted in cases that require additional information.

For general enquiries regarding our services you can contact our information line on **1800 227 328**

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If we give you all of our funding package, can we have a discount?

Unfortunately we can not offer a discount as we are not paid in advance by the NDIA, and we only claim funding after an appointment has been delivered.

Aspect Choose and Connect and Aspect Capable do not earn any additional income or manage your funds in a way that could be returned to you as a discount.
06 – Frequently Asked Questions

General

NDIS says there is no need to share my plan... So do I need to show it to you? What if I get a new NDIS plan?

There is no mandatory requirement to show us your plan or to tell us when you get a new plan.

However, for us to deliver an optimal service to you, it is useful for us to view your plan and be aware of any updates.

It allows us to ensure we are meeting your NDIS goals.

Can Aspect exit me?

Yes, as per the NDIS guidelines and outlined in your Service Agreement, should either Party wish to end the service relationship, we would prefer one months’ notice to support with transition to another service.

If either Party seriously breaches the Service Agreement, the requirement of notice is waived.
Although Aspect has a high demand for our service, we do our best to allocate you an Aspect Support Worker or Aspect Mentor as quickly as possible. We understand that wait times can feel lengthy and we are committed to expanding our Aspect workforce to ensure that you can access the service with minimal delay.

Aspect Choose and Connect invoices once we have completed a session with you. If you choose to cease working with us at any time, we will release the remaining funds from the NDIS portal. These funds are then available for you to use with any another provider.

If you cancel an appointment up to 48 hours prior to the agreed meeting time, or if you are not present at the agreed meeting time, cancellations rates apply. Aspect cancellation rates are outlined in your Service Agreement.
**06 - Frequently Asked Questions**

**Aspect Choose and Connect**

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**Will I always have the same Support Workers?**  
**Can I be involved in selecting my Support Workers?**

At Aspect Choose and Connect we are committed to building strong relationships with our participants, families, carers and guardians. We believe that working with a small team of workers helps to achieve this. Having a small team of workers to build your capacity also gives us flexibility to support your requests as we have more workers available to complete shifts. As part of our onboarding process, we make a strong effort to match you with right staff. However, there are times when the match does not work. In this instance, if you wish to change, we recommend you contact your assigned Team Leader or Regional Coordinator.

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**How do I pay?**  
**Will I be able to keep track of the use of my funding?**

All information related to your NDIS funding can be accessed through the NDIS portal. This includes statements for services provided. Further information on the NDIS portal is outlined in your Service Agreement. You are invoiced directly by Aspect for all fee-for-service, non NDIS services.
How can I be sure the Aspect Choose and Connect programs are right for me?

We provide Individualised services based on the interest and needs of our participants. We work with you to tailor a range of programs and supports to help you achieve specific planning and life goals.

Our tailored programs are informed by research and best practice and are designed to provide you with the most current and innovative support solution for people with autism.

What information will I receive at the end of the service? How will I know if the service has been successful?

Throughout the support service we conduct regular meetings with you. As the service comes to an end, we meet to review the outcomes achieved from the service and to plan the next steps.

If evidence for further funding or additional support is needed, we can provide a letter that documents which outcomes were met.
06 – Frequently Asked Questions

**Aspect Choose and Connect**

**Do I have to pay for the Support Worker to pick me up?**

Yes. As per the NDIS travel guidelines, travel charges are applied to each session where the Support Worker travels to home, community or education settings. All details related to travel are outlined on page 5 of the NDIS Fees Guide Travel.

To access the NDIS Fees Guide go to: [https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/how-can-we-help/social-community-support](https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/how-can-we-help/social-community-support)

**Why do I have to pay for out of pocket expenses such as my lunch and some of the activities?**

NDIS funding does not cover out of pocket expenses. NDIS states that any additional expenses are the responsibility of the Individual or their Representative and are not included in the cost of supports (e.g. entrance fees, event tickets). This is highlighted in your Service Agreement.

For further information on NDIS funding, go to [https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis)
The type of work you will pursue and find will be based on the work we do together to explore what best suits your individual interests and capabilities.

Our Employment Mentors are experienced in offering specialist employment support, so we understand your unique strengths and the barriers faced when making the transition into employment.

We work with you to uncover your untapped capabilities to fulfil your potential in the workplace and find meaningful employment.

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**How long will it take me to get a job?**

Every participant’s needs are different and the plan for assisting each participant’s transition to employment will be different. The timeline from beginning of service to employment will also vary. While there are no guarantees of employment, Aspect Capable has a very high success rate of placing our participants into internships and employment.

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**What type of job will I be able to get?**

The type of work you will pursue and find will be based on the work we do together to explore what best suits your individual interests and capabilities.

Our Employment Mentors are experienced in offering specialist employment support, so we understand your unique strengths and the barriers faced when making the transition into employment.

We work with you to uncover your untapped capabilities to fulfil your potential in the workplace and find meaningful employment.
06 - Frequently Asked Questions

Aspect Capable

Can my Aspect Mentor support me in my interview and in my workplace if needed?

Your Aspect Mentor supports you throughout the process, both pre-employment and following your placement with an employer. The type of support will vary and depend on how you choose to be supported.

The support may include interview preparation and/or assisting you with issues or challenges that may arise when you are in the workplace.

Once our service agreement with you has ended, you can re-engage at any time.

Can I access both Choose and Connect and Capable services at the same time?

Yes. You may be enrolled to receive services from Aspect Choose and Connect and Aspect Capable at the same time.
Are you able to educate my employer about autism?

Yes. Aspect Capable provides a number of employer workshops and support programs to help managers and teams within organisations understand the contribution employees on the autism spectrum can make to their workplace, and to learn best practice strategies for managing and supporting our participants once they begin employment.

If I get a job, can you help me with travel?

Yes, travel assistance and support is included in your service. The type of service and the level of support required is dependent on the participant’s requirement and wishes.

For further information on travel, please go to page 17 of the NDIS Fees Guide: https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/how-can-we-help/getting-a-job
We thank you for taking the time to read this guide and look forward to working with you...