



## Access to Services Policy

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## 1. Purpose

Valued Lives Foundation (VLF) is committed to maximising access to supports and services for people with disability and their representative/s and to ensure equity of access for all people accessing VLF supports and services. VLF will work within available resources, while endeavouring to optimise access for people to supports and services.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to enable Workers to support people and their representative/s when choosing to access and exit Valued Lives supports and services, including identifying barriers to access, ensuring physical and cultural access, promotion of VLF supports and services and monitoring of access strategies.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all VLF Workers, volunteers and contractors engaged by VLF (collectively referred to as 'Workers').

## 3. Policy

VLF will deliver supports and services based on allocation of funds and the category of supports and services in the individual's plan. During the assessment and intake stage, VLF will consider relevant mitigation strategies to ensure any physical and cultural barriers to access are addressed.

VLF will:

- determine what supports and services the individual is funded for.
- identify and address barriers to access to supports and services for people and take corrective action to reduce or eliminate the barriers.
- use service planning to maximise accessibility for people, ensuring that all supports, services, activities, facilities and premises are designed to maximise safe physical, emotional and cultural accessibility for people.
- provide accurate information to people considering accessing VLF supports and services to increase knowledge of, and understanding about the supports and services offered by VLF.
- regularly review how accessible supports and services are delivered and use this information to improve access wherever possible.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1. Service Plan and Allocation of Funds

- The VLF Worker to read, discuss and agree (with individual and/or family member) on a shared understanding of the supports and services, and the amount of time VLF can invest in delivering the supports and services.
- Create a clear shared understanding of what supports and services will be provided and how much time will be spent with the individual/family member.
- Articulate the Service Agreement so all parties (VLF Admin team, Advisors, Support Worker and individual/family) are fully informed under one or more of the VLF supports and services:
  - Direct Supports (including Home)

- Innovative Employment
- Peer Leadership
- Support Coordination.
- Allocate the individual to a VLF worker who is then responsible for delivering supports and services in line with the Service Agreement and VLF program of supports and services.

#### **4.2. Identifying barriers to access**

VLF provides supports and services to people with disability, their families, carers and representatives.

In order to identify barriers to access, VLF will:

- compare the profile of people accessing supports and services with available data and records to identify any groups who are underrepresented.
- review relevant literature and practice experience to enable the underrepresented groups to understand the supports and services being provided.
- consult with people accessing supports and services and/or their representatives/advocates, other agencies and staff to get information on other people's positive experience.
- seek advice from relevant community groups or members.

#### **4.3. Ensuring physical and cultural access**

VLF will ensure the following:

- Its premises, wherever possible, are located close to public transport
- Its premises and facilities are physically accessible to people with limited mobility or disability
- Its opening hours provide access to the full range of people accessing supports and services
- Supports and services are provided in as flexible a manner as possible to meet the needs of individuals, families and carers
- It maintains effective messaging systems for people accessing supports and services to contact the organisation
- Areas accessed by people are kept clean, comfortable and welcoming
- The cultural and language needs of people are identified and accommodated
- Advocates, support people, interpreters or bilingual staff are available for any person requiring this assistance.

#### **4.4. Promotion of service**

- VLF will produce information about its supports, services and activities in a range of formats suitable for the full range of people who may need to access them, including Easy Read versions of VLF documentation and publications.

- General information about VLF and its supports, services and activities will be made available via communication methods such as email, the VLF website and on VLF social media platforms.

#### **4.5. Monitoring access strategies**

- VLF Workers will be responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of physical and cultural access strategies at least annually, or as required.

### **5. Related documents**

Individual Transition or Exit Procedure