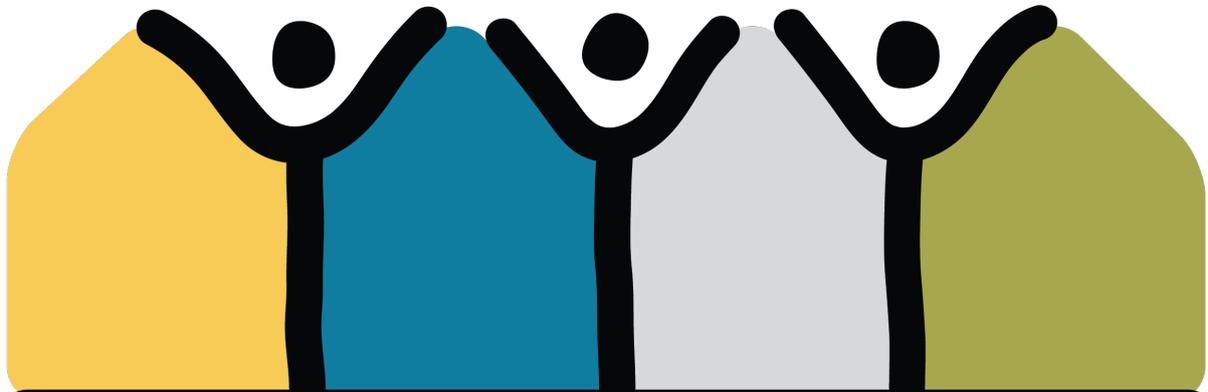


The Housing Connection Participant Manual



The Housing Connection

Together. Your choices. Your dreams.

THC Participant Manual v1 (With Practice Standard References)

Sep 2022

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MY PARTICIPANT MANUAL

My Participant Manual shares information about receiving support from The Housing Connection (THC).

This includes:

- How I can access THC supports
- How I can plan and agree the supports I need from THC
- How THC makes sure that I have choice and control
- How THC makes sure it follow relevant laws and policies
- How THC makes sure the staff I work with are well trained and supported
- How I can let THC know if I am happy or unhappy
- How THC will keep me safe and my information private

If I don't understand anything, I can ask a THC staff member to talk and explain it in a way and using language that makes sense to me.

Some of the THC supports I might find useful include:

- Support In My Home
- Support In My Community
- Supported Independent Living
- Finding A New Job
- Supported Holidays
- Accommodation and ongoing tenancy
- Support with individual tailored personal goals
- Managing behaviours that impact on quality of life
- Accessing and maintaining employment
- Support Coordination
- Plan Management
- Social Activities

I can find out about all of the supports THC offers by talking to someone from THC and by visiting their website:

www.thc.org.au

ABOUT THE HOUSING CONNECTION

The Housing Connection has been working to support people with disability since 1981.

Some people call The Housing Connection, “THC”. This is a nickname that stands for The Housing Connection. “THC” will be used in this manual.

THC’s aim has always been the same – to support people with disabilities to live as independently as possible with the best quality of life possible.

To achieve this, THC has focussed on supporting people around their ‘housing’ and their ‘connections’.

Housing

I have a right to live somewhere I feel safe and which meets my needs. THC can support me to feel safe and happy where I live.

THC can help me to find accommodation if I don’t have somewhere to live or if I want to move to someplace different. For example, THC can support me to:

- Apply to Link Wentworth Housing or Social and Community Housing NSW
- Apply through a real estate agent
- Find flat mates or a co-tenant.

THC can also support me to learn and develop skills to live more independently and to experience a good quality of life.

Some of the things THC can support me to do include:

- Paying my rent, and other bills
- Buying and preparing food
- Learning about local transport and how to get around the area I live in
- Accessing and working with other agencies like the NDIS, Centrelink, or Medicare
- Buying new stuff for my place
- Getting to know my neighbours and places near my home
- Keeping my place clean and safe
- Keeping in touch with neighbours and friends.
- Having friends and family over to visit

Everyone’s housing support needs are different. THC will work with me to find out what supports will be useful to me as an individual.

Connection

But wait, there's more; living in my home is one thing but being part of my community makes me feel like I belong and that I am important to other people.

Local shops and services are more than places to get things – they are about the relationships we have with people who work there and shop there.

Being part of the community also means doing things I like with other people who like doing these things as well – for example, I might connect with people to visit clubs, sing karaoke, practice line dancing, play sport, make art, or go for walks.

Connecting with others and with my community also gives me a chance to try and to learn new things – for example, I might want to work or volunteer, find out about different ways to stay healthy and well, or visit and travel to new places.

THC can support me to connect with other people and places in my community.

THE HOUSING CONNECTIONS VALUES AND CORE PRINCIPLES

When THC provides me with services it has **values** it follows. The THC values are:

- **Social Justice**
Promoting fair communities where I can access the things I need and opportunities to do things I want
- **Passion**
Working with enthusiasm and excitement for helping me to achieve my goals
- **Integrity**
Being trustworthy when they work, and and being honest with me whether things are going well or not
- **Social Inclusion**
Working in ways that help me to participate in community life by understanding what is important to me and helping me to overcome barriers to being included
- **Respect**
Working in ways that are fair to me and which support me to be the person I want to be
- **Effectiveness**
Working in ways that are based on good evidence, which respond to my individual needs and that will support me to achieve my goals

All of THC's work is based on these values.

THC also follows some important *principles* when supporting me:

- Providing me with quality services and supports
- Supporting me to achieve a high quality of life based on my individual needs and goals
- Responding to my needs and goals, and building on my strengths and abilities
- Maximising the choice and control in my life
- Supporting me to live a life based on my needs, goals, and personality
- Developing respectful and supportive relationships with me

There are some important concepts and ways of working THC uses to support me. These include:

- Promoting my rights
- Increasing my quality of life
- Providing me with dignity and respect
- Communicating respectfully with me
- Respecting my family, relationships, friends, and culture

These are discussed in the following pages.

Link to NDIS Practice Standards

2. Provider Governance and Operational Management

- Governance and Operational Management
- Quality Management
- Feedback and Complaints Management
- Human Resource Management
- Continuity of Supports

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

PROMOTING MY RIGHTS

I have rights just like every other person, and THC must respect and understand my rights when they support me.

My rights as a person with disability are based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This agreement explains the rights that I and all people with disability are entitled to wherever we live in the world.

I can read the full agreement online at the following link:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html#Fulltext>

It is quite a long document, and it is sometimes quite complex. It might help to talk about it with a support person if I don't fully understand it. I can talk to staff at THC who can help me understand the agreement and what it might mean for my life.

The agreement is based on eight principles.:

- **Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons**

People have to respect my right to make choices and have independence.

- **Non-discrimination**

Nobody is allowed to treat me badly because I live with disability.

People can't deny me opportunities or stop me accessing things just because I live with disability.

- **Full and effective participation and inclusion in society**

I have the right to take part in my community and to be included in my community.

- **Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity**

I have the right to be respected for who I am as a person and accepted as a part of my community.

- **Equality of opportunity**

I have a right to have a fair chance to achieve the things that I want in life.

Sometimes people and organisations should adapt the ways things work to make sure they are fair for me.

- **Accessibility**

I have the right to not be prevented from doing things in my community or benefitting from services because I live with a disability.

- **Equality between men and women**

I have the right to be treated fairly whether I am a man or a woman.

- **Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities**

I have the right to be recognised for the things I am good at now and the things I am working to get better at.

I have a right to my own identity, such as the culture I belong to, the things I like to do, and the people I like to spend time with.

THC must also follow Australian laws when supporting me. Some of the important laws they follow are

- The National Disability Scheme Act 2013
- The Disability Inclusion Act 2014.
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- The NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009.
- The Guardianship Act 1987

If I want help to understand what these laws mean for me, I can talk to the staff at THC.

The Housing Connection must always act within the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework when providing me with support. This framework is based on the NDIS legislation and makes sure workers and organisations are following the NDIS Practice Standards and the NDIS Code of Conduct.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AT THE HOUSING CONNECTION?

THC has its own statement of rights explaining the things I should expect as one of their participants.

When I use The Housing Connection, I can expect to:

- Be respected and be supported to have the same legal and human rights as everyone else.
- Know that everyone is working for my best interests
- Be encouraged and supported to make my own choices and have control over my life and the supports that I use.
- Be supported to be involved in activities of my choosing
- Be supported to connect to organisations and with other people of my choosing
- Be encouraged and supported to try new things and take risks sometimes
- Be safe - no one is allowed to hurt, abuse, or neglect me and I will be supported to respect others' rights to be safe
- Be given the chance to speak up for what's right for me at THC and in my community
- Be involved in making decisions about THC
- Get help if I need it to understand my specific individual, cultural or language needs and rights
- Know that my information is kept private unless there are clear legal or safety reasons why THC has to share my private information
- Receive high quality services from THC

THC has developed policies and procedures explaining what staff are expected to do. Some of the important policies THC staff follow include:

- Advocacy and Information Services, Participant Rights, Participant Safety and Personal Records policies
- Participant Participation and Social Inclusion policies
- Planning, Decision Making and Choice, Cultural awareness, Service Coordination and Support

I have a right to read these policies if I want to. I also have a right to discuss what they mean with my staff to make sure I understand them. I can discuss them as many times as I like.

If I want to see these policies, or if I want them to be explained to me, I can ask a THC staff member, or visit the THC website:

<https://www.thc.org.au/about-us/resources/>

If I am ever worried my rights are not met or supported, I can talk to THC and together we can come up with a plan to set things right. If it is helpful to me, or if I want to, I can bring a support person or advocate with me to make sure all of the important things to me are spoken about and acted on.

INCREASING MY QUALITY OF LIFE

When I use THC services and supports, they are always trying to work in ways that increase my Quality of Life.

When I have a good Quality of Life it means that I am healthy and happy. Different things help different people feel healthy and happy, so THC will have to have a good understanding of what healthy and happy looks like for me.

There are some things we know are important for a person's Quality of Life:

Inclusion

Which might include thinking about:

- Do I feel a sense of belonging in my community?
- Do I have chances to participate in my community?
- Do I feel connected to people and things that are important to me?
- Do I feel like I am valued for the things I offer? (For example, being a good friend, or team member)

Wellbeing

Which might include thinking about:

- Am I physically safe and healthy?
- Can I maintain a safe healthy environment?
- Can I make healthy choices around food and eating?
- Do I have access to good medical care?
- Do I get to do take part in social activities I enjoy?
- Do I have capacity to go places I want to go and do things I want to do?
- Do I have the things I need to maintain my wellbeing? (For example, enough money, secure housing, access to transport, etc.)
- Do I feel happy?

Independence

Which might include thinking about:

- Do I have choice and control over my life?
- Am I able to express my feelings and view?
- Do I have chances to learn and develop new skills?
- Do I know what my rights are and are they being met?

THC will work to make sure I am supported to be as independent as possible, while also supporting my wellbeing.

PROVIDING ME WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

To be treated with dignity is to be treated with respect. Just like every other person I have a right to be treated with dignity and respected.

THC is committed to making sure I always feel respected when they support me.

Some of the ways THC will work to make sure I feel respected are:

- Supporting my right to express myself
- Supporting my right to make decisions about the things that matter in my life
- Supporting my right to connect to my culture
- Supporting my right to privacy

One important type of respect is 'dignity of risk'. Dignity of risk is about having the right to make choices and do things that have some level of risk involved. This doesn't mean I will be encouraged to do anything unsafe.

THC will support me to understand what the possible risks are and to find ways to do things as safely as possible. If it is not possible for me to do something safely THC can help me explore other options.

Whilst I am accessing THC's supports it is also important for me to treat others with dignity and respect including other participants and my support staff.

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Conversations and language with me and around me are important.

Respecting me is shown by people talking to me, not talking about me in front of me and not talking for me.

It is also important that people supporting me do this when we are out and about in the community so other people can see how I should be treated.

THC will make sure they learn about how I communicate and what communication support I might need.

RESPECT FOR MY FAMILY, MY RELATIONSHIPS, MY FRIENDS, MY LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

THC will support me to keep in touch with my family and friends. THC also helps me as much as it can in my own language and in ways that fit in with my culture.

Link to NDIS Practice Standards

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- Person – centred supports
- Individual values and beliefs
- Privacy and Dignity
- Independence and informed choice
- Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination

2. Provider Governance and Operational Management

- Feedback and Complaints Management

3. Provision of Supports

- Access to supports
- Support Planning
- Service Agreements with Participants
- Responsive Support Provision
- Transitions to or from a provider

4. Provision of Supports Environment

- Safe environment
- Participant Money and Property
- Management of Medication
- Mealtime Management
- Management of Waste

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

THE NDIS CODE OF CONDUCT

When supporting me THC and its workers must meet the standards of the NDIS Code of Conduct.

This means they must:

- Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making
- Respect the privacy of people living with disability
- Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner, and with care and skill
- Act with integrity, honesty and transparency
- Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people living with disability
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect and abuse of, people living with disability
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct

I can learn more about the NDIS Code of Conduct online at:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/ndis-code-conduct>

I can also ask one of my THC Support Staff to talk to me about the Code of Conduct and help me understand what it means for me.

NDIS PRACTICE STANDARDS

As a NDIS funded service, THC must make sure it works with me in ways that meet the requirements of the NDIS Practice Standards.

The NDIS Practice Standards help THC understand what is expected from them. They also helps me to understand what I can expect from THC. There are 'Core' and 'Supplementary' NDIS Practice Standards.

The 'Core' standards apply to all organisations providing NDIS funded services. The 'Core' standards explain:

- **The rights and responsibility for participants**
What I can expect and what I need to do
- **Expectations of governance and operational management**
How THC makes sure its systems and staff are able to respond to my needs
- **The provision of supports**
How THC provides me with supports

- **The support provision environment**

How THC makes sure the places it provides my supports in are suitable and safe

I can read all about the NDIS Practice Standards online at:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/ndis-practice-standards>

I can also ask a support person, such as a THC staff member, to help me understand these standards, and what they mean for me.

There are also 'Supplementary' standards that only apply for certain kinds of services. Whenever THC provides me one of those supports they will need to be sure they are meeting the relevant standards for that service.

The 'Supplementary' standards cover:

- High intensity daily personal activities
- Specialist behaviour support
- Implementing behaviour support plans
- Early childhood supports
- Specialised support co-ordination, and
- Specialist disability accommodation.

If I am ever worried THC is not meeting the requirements of the NDIS Practice Standards it is important I let someone know. I can start by talking with a staff member or support person.

ACCESS TO THE HOUSING CONNECTION

THC offers many kinds of services that could help me achieve my goals. These include:

- Support in my home (such as development of daily living and life skills, assistance with daily tasks)
- Support in my community (such as development of daily living and life skills, community participation)
- Supported independent living
- Support to take part in social activities
- Supported holidays
- Support coordination
- Support learning to use technology
- Plan Management
- Specialist disability accommodation (SDA)

If I think I might want to use a THC service, I may want to find out more about THC and the work it does. A really easy way I can do this is by visiting THC's website at:

<https://www.thc.org.au/our-services/>

If I want more information, I have questions, or can't use the website there are other ways I can find out about THC and its services:

- Use the online contact form - <https://www.thc.org.au/contact-us/>
- Call them on the phone - (02) 9415 2311
- Send them an email - thc@thc.org.au

When I contact THC, they can help me understand if their services are the right fit for me, and can let me know about any other important information that might help me decide. For example, they can tell me about how much a service will cost, let me know when activities take place and explain the next steps to me.

Sometimes THC's services won't be the right fit for me. Maybe THC's services don't match my needs or maybe the THC service I want to use is currently full.

If I can't use a THC service, THC's Manager of Client Services will explain why and help me explore different options. For example, THC might put me in touch with other organisations that could support me, or add me to a waiting list so that I can use a service when space becomes available.

ENTRY AND ELIGIBILITY

THC only provides services to people it will be able to effectively support.

This means that if I want to use a THC service I must:

- Be over 18 years of age
- Be an NDIS participant with a plan containing relevant goals and funding, or be otherwise able to pay for the service
- Have support needs THC has the capacity to respond to

If I meet these requirements, I can begin my journey with THC by getting in touch with them to let them know I am interested in their services. I will have a chance to talk about what I need and ask any questions I might have before I make a final decision.

If I don't meet these requirements right now, I am always welcome to contact THC to discuss, or to use THC's services if my circumstances change.

WELCOME TO THE HOUSING CONNECTION

If it seems like THC can provide me the support I need, and I also meet THC's entry requirements then the next steps are:

- Meeting with a Manager of THC and other relevant people to discuss my options. Other people might be my family, an advocate, or anyone important to me.
- Letting THC know what support I need to achieve my goals. If I am an NDIS participant my goals will be listed in my NDIS plan.
- Allowing THC to get some more information about me by signing a consent form.

I don't have to share my personal information, but having access to it can help THC support me. I can talk to THC about the information they need and how it will be used.

- Letting THC know if I want or need other services to be involved.

For example, I might need a support coordinator, guardian, or financial manager.

- Developing a Service Agreement to be signed by me and The Housing Connection.

MY SERVICE AGREEMENT

A service agreement is a document that confirms that THC and I agree about the services I am going to receive.

If my supports are being funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) then my NDIS plan will say exactly what kinds or supports that funding can be used for.

My NDIS Plan will help me to develop my service agreement with THC. I might find it helpful to share my NDIS Plan with THC, so they fully understand it.

I don't need to share my plan if I don't want to – it is my choice.

If I don't want to share my plan, THC will still need some information to complete the agreement and book me in for services. THC will usually need at least my NDIS Number and the dates my plan starts and finishes, and my funding for the services. THC will tell me exactly what information they need and why.

WHAT'S IN MY SERVICE AGREEMENT?

Each participant's needs and goals are different. This means my Service Agreement will also be different from everyone else's. THC will work with me to make sure my agreement responds to my needs and circumstances.

Even though my Service Agreement will be different to other people's there are some things it is likely to include:

- What support I will receive
- When where and how I will receive this support
- How much the support will cost and how it will be paid
- How long I need the support for
- What is expected of me
- What I can expect of THC
- How I can end or change the service agreement
- What I can do if any problems occur

Once my Service Agreement is signed by me and THC I can start using the services and support.

Links to NDIS Practice Standards

3. Provision of Supports

- Access to Supports
- Support Planning
- Service Agreements with Participants

- Transitions to or from a provider

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

PLANNING MY SUPPORT FROM THC

I may already have a plan with the NDIS, but I will need to work out the details of my goals. I can do this with THC staff and other people that are important to me.

In the planning process a few things will happen:

- When I start getting support at THC, I will meet and talk with a THC Team Leader about my plan how they will provide me with the support I need to achieve my goals.

I can bring my family with me when I have this meeting. I could also bring a friend, an advocate or other person who is important to me.

- If I live in a supported accommodation, I will have a Personal Futures Plan developed (PFP).

I can invite anyone that I think is important in my life to help develop my plan.

- THC will help me explore and identify ways they can support me to achieve my goals.
- Unless there is a good reason why I cannot decide for myself, I will be the person making decisions about me.
- Sometimes people might help me to make decisions or make decisions for me. People can only make decisions for me if there is a very good reason why I cannot make them for myself.
- Even if someone else makes my decisions THC will still listen to my opinions and try to give me as much choice and control as possible.
- At the end of the planning process I will know who I am working with, when I am working with them, and what we will be doing.

I will also know what to do and who to speak to if I don't think my plan is working.

MY GOALS

My goals are the things I want to do or happen in my life. My goals are important to me and to THC.

When THC provides me with services and supports, they are always trying to help me work towards achieving my goals.

I might choose to use THC to support me achieve my goals in the following areas:

- Where I want to live and who I want to live with – For example, do I want to move home or find a flat mate?
- Participating in the community – For example, do I want to try new activities and make new friends?
- Working – For example, do I want to get a new job, or change my job or my hours of work?
- Capacity – Capacity, for example are there new skills I want to learn?
- Staying healthy; physically and emotionally – For example, would I like to do more exercise or take up a sport?
- Doing things on my own – For example, would I like to do more things with less support from others?

RESPECTING MY CHOICES

I have the right to make my own choices in life wherever possible. This includes choices about the supports I get from THC.

Unless there is a good reason why I cannot decide for myself, I will be the person making decisions and choices about the things that affect me. This is an important part of me developing skills and independence.

I might make different choices for myself than others would make for me. That is fine if my choices are 'informed choices'.

When I make an informed choice, it means that I understand the decision I am making and what might happen because of that decision. I might need THC to share information with me to help me make choices. I will need THC to share information in a way that responds to my communication needs.

To support me to make choices THC can help me by:

- Supporting me to try out options
- Giving me time to think things through and to ask more questions so I don't feel pressured
- Discussing my options with me
- Helping me identify what might happen because of my decisions or choices

- Adapting the way they provide me with information (e.g., in smaller chunks of information, in pictures or videos)
- Not making assumptions about what choices I want to make or what is best for me

Sometimes people might help me to make decisions or make decisions for me. People can only make decisions for me if there is a very good reason why I cannot make them for myself. This might be I cannot understand the decisions I make, or if the decisions I make are dangerous to me or someone else.

If THC are worried I am not able to make informed choices, they will talk about it with me and the important people in my life. If I can't make informed decisions somebody might be appointed to make some or all decisions for me. This might be a family member or someone else.

My opinion is still important if someone else makes decisions for me and THC will still listen to my opinions and try to give me as much choice and control as possible.

My right to decide may be limited if:

- There is serious and imminent danger to me, others, or property.
- There is a negative effect on the rights of others.
- If I am not able to understand the consequences and the risks to me.
- The act is illegal (in which case I will be strongly advised against it and informed of the likely consequences).

In these circumstances THC will be guided by relevant policies and legislation, including THC's Restricted Practice Policy.

Links to NDIS Practice Standards

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- Person – centred supports
- Individual values and beliefs
- Independence and informed choice

3. Provision of Supports

- Access to supports
- Support Planning
- Responsive Support Provision:

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

MY SUPPORT NETWORK

My support network includes all of the people who are important to me and who help me live the life I want to live.

My THC Support Staff are part of my support network. Other people who might be in my support network include:

- My family
- My friends
- Workers from my other service providers
- My advocate
- My Guardian
- My doctors
- My employers
- People from my faith (e.g., people who support me to practice my religion; people who I go to church, synagogue or mosque with)
- The specialists who support me (e.g., my behaviour specialist, psychologist, speech pathologist or occupational therapist)

Sometimes THC will work as a team with other parts of my support network if it helps address one of my needs or helps me to achieve a goal.

For example, THC might:

- Work with my behavioural specialist to help me develop my skills and capacity
- Share information with other providers so that they can support me well
- Support me to visit my doctor
- Meet with me and my family to plan my supports

I can talk to THC about who the important people in my support network are so that THC understands who is important to me and how I would like them to be involved in my life.

MY SUPPORT STAFF

The people who work at THC are here to support me to achieve my goals. They are my 'Support Staff'.

The different staff at THC have different responsibilities and roles, but they are all here to:

- Work with me in ways that are respectful and inclusive
- Support me to make informed choices about my life and the things that are important to me
- Support me to learn new skills that help me live the life I want to live
- Support me to feel a sense of belonging in my community
- Support me to overcome the obstacles that make it hard to live the life I want to live
- Support me to access and understand information about the opportunities and options available to me
- Support me to remain safe, including from abuse and neglect
- Support me to understand and enjoy my rights

My THC Support Staff are given training and other support from THC to make sure they have the skills and knowledge they need to support me.

HOW THC IS MANAGED

THC's Board and Managers work together to run the organisation. This helps to make sure that the services I receive of a high quality and that THC will still be here for people in the future.

Some of the things THC's managers do to make sure my supports are effective:

- Making sure THC complies with all laws and standards
- Making sure THC Participants know what's going on and their views are included when decisions are made
- Making sure THC is effectively managing staff, money, property, safety, and risks
- Making sure everyone at THC puts in the effort to improve all the time

TYPES OF WORKERS AT THC

There are lots of people who work with THC. They all have the same aim – to support me to feel safe and happy and to develop my skills – but they do different things depending on what job they have.

Some of the different jobs at THC include:

- The Board of Directors

People who volunteer their time to meet every second month to make decisions about the organisation's strategic direction and help management run the service. They don't get paid for their work.

- Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for delivering the organisation's strategic direction –making sure it can offer quality supports and that THC runs effectively

- Manager of Client Services

The Manager of Client Services oversees the team leaders and social educators who provide the day-to-day activities of the supports I receive. She is there for me to talk to if I ever have questions or issues.

- Operations Manager

The Operations Manager makes sure the systems and processes at THC work well and help THC staff to support me well

- NDIS and Support Coordination Lead

The NDIS and Support Coordination Lead uses her detailed knowledge of the NDIS and the disability sector to help participants access and navigate the system

- Team Leaders

The Team Leaders look after staff and rosters and make sure my support is well matched to my needs.

- Social Educators

These are the people who support me in my home and in the community. I might have one or more Social Educators to support me

- Administration Staff

These people help THC run smoothly by organising the files, answering the phones, typing minutes and reports, paying the staff, managing the finances and lots of other important duties.

- Support Coordination Team

Support Coordinators support participants to implement the supports funded in their NDIS plan and mainstream services in the community.

Links to NDIS Practice Standards

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- Person – centred supports
- Individual values and beliefs
- Independence and informed choice

2. Provider Governance and Operational Management

- Governance and Operational Management
- Risk Management
- Quality Management
- Information Management
- Feedback and Complaints Management
- Incident Management
- Human Resource Management
- Continuity of Supports
- Emergency and Disaster Management

3. Provision of Supports

- Access to supports
- Support Planning
- Responsive Support Provision

4. Provision of Supports Environment

- Safe environment

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

MY INFORMATION – PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Respecting My Privacy

THC will need to know some information to support me. This can include some information I would usually keep private.

When I share my private information with THC, they have a responsibility to make sure it is kept safe and not shared unless there is a really good reason.

THC takes my privacy very seriously. They will only ask me for private information that will help them to support me and will only share my information with my permission, or if the law says they must share it.

Depending on my support needs THC will also need have access to parts of my life I would usually keep private. They might come into my home or support me with my personal care. THC will only do these things with my permission and when they are required to effectively support me.

Some of the things I have a right to privacy over include:

- My story is private – no one can make me share things about myself I don't want to share
- My body is private – no one can touch me or see the private parts of my body unless it is necessary and they have consent
- My phone number is private – no one can give it to anyone else
- My home is private – no one can come in without asking me
- My money is private – no one can touch my money unless I say it's OK
- My letters and conversations are private – no one can read my letters or tell other people things about me unless I say it is OK.

Respecting my Confidentiality

Sometimes THC will ask me to share my personal information with them or might need to share my information with others.

The main reasons why THC might collect or share my information are:

- To provide me with the support I need
- To keep me or someone else safe

THC will be careful with my information and will make sure it is kept confidential. This means THC will make sure it is safe and secure, and only people with permission can access it.

THC takes my confidentiality very seriously. They will only collect and share information that helps support me.

THC will only share my information when they have my permission, unless the law says they have to share it anyway. This might be when sharing that information would help keep someone safe.

THC may ask me if I agree to other people having or seeing information about me. THC may also ask if I am happy to have photos taken of me and used in stories and newsletters.

I will have to sign forms if I agree for that my personal information can be shared or used. I have the right to change my mind about what information I agree to share. If I change my mind, I will need to let THC know.

I also have the right to see the information the THC has about me. I can ask one of my THC workers if I want to see my information so they can help arrange for this to take place.

Link to NDIS Practice Standards

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- Privacy and Dignity

2. Provider Governance and Operational Management

- Information Management

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

SAFETY

THC and its workers have a 'Duty of Care' to keep me safe whilst supporting me. This means they will take all reasonable steps to prevent anything harmful happening to me.

Sometimes they will talk to me about safety and how we can all keep each other safe.

THC will always work in ways that try to prevent harm, but I need to know what to do if something unsafe does happen.

If I have an accident or somebody, I am with has an accident I should:

- Call the ambulance, police, or fire on 000
- If I have an emergency that THC can help me with, I should call their on-call phone number: 0412 037 719

Things I can call THC about include:

- if I am locked out of my home
- if the power goes out
- if I'm sick, hurt, or worried
- If I've lost something important
- If my THC Support Staff haven't turned up for an appointment

If I want help to put the on-call number into my phone or want to know more about these rules, I can speak with my THC Support Staff.

There may be other reasons I feel unsafe. My safety is the most important thing to THC so I should let them know if I feel unsafe for any reason.

If there is an incident involving me, the person who is working with me will write an incident report saying what happened. My team leader will have access to the incident report and it will be reviewed and used to learn lessons to prevent future incidents. I will be kept informed about the outcome.

KEEPING ME SAFE FROM ABUSE

Abuse is when somebody does something to me that makes me feel bad or causes me harm.

I have a right to live my life free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. When THC provides me with supports it will work in ways to keep me safe from these things.

If I ever do experience abuse it is important to tell someone I trust so they can help to keep me safe in the future and make sure I have support to deal with any of the effects of being abused.

There is no rule about who I should tell.

At THC I can talk to any worker I trust, like the Client Services Manager or my Social Educator.

Outside of THC there are lots of people and organisations that can help me. Some of these are listed on pages 34 and 35 of this manual.

If THC learns I have experienced abuse, they will support me by helping me find the right people to talk to about what has happened. They might help me make a complaint, tell the police or find a counsellor to talk to.

There are different kinds of abuse THC will work to keep me safe from:

1. Emotional or Psychological Abuse

For example:

- Swearing at me
- Calling me names
- Ignoring me or isolating me
- Threatening me (e.g., threatening to take my things, to deny me services or to get me in trouble)
- Saying things to me that make me feel scared

2. Physical Abuse

For example:

- Pinching me
- Hitting me
- Handling me roughly
- Giving me medication that is not for me or that I don't need
- Restraining me so I cannot move

- Hurting my body in any way

3. Sexual Abuse

For example:

- Someone touches me in a sexual way, and I don't want them to.
- If someone says I must touch, look, or listen to anything about sex
- If someone says keep this a secret and I feel bad because of how we touch each other
- If someone tells me that I will be in trouble if I don't touch them in a sexual way
- Telling me sexual jokes when I don't want to hear them
- Someone asking me to go out with them all the time when I've said I don't want to
- Someone trying to kiss or cuddle me when I've asked them not to

4. Economic/financial abuse:

For example:

- If someone controls my money and finances without my permission
- If someone keeps my money from me
- If someone stops me from working or accessing other opportunities to earn my own money
- If someone stops me accessing financial benefits I'm entitled to
- If someone takes my money without permission or tricks me into giving it to them

5. Neglect

For example:

- If somebody who supports me does not provide the things I need or doesn't take action to keep me safe
- If somebody who supports me doesn't help me access needed food, care, or necessary medication.
- If somebody who supports me doesn't stop me from being abused when they could have
- If I'm not provided appropriate or personal care
- If somebody leaves my medical needs unattended

If I experience any of these things, or anything else that makes me feel unsafe It is important to say something straight away so that I can get some help. I can talk to anyone at THC.

The person I talk to might need to share what I tell them with other people who can investigate and make sure the abuse stops and doesn't happen again. They will let me know what will happen next and let me know if they need to share what I have told them.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

Work health and safety is about THC making sure that the staff and the participants are as safe as possible all the time.

THC has a range of things it will do to help keep me and others safe. For example:

- THC staff may assess the places where I receive support (my home and the places in the community we go to) to make sure they are safe.
- THC may explore ways to make things safer for me so I don't miss out on opportunities – for example they might adapt an activity or make changes to an environment so I can be included
- THC may talk to me about things I might do that could hurt people and the best way for us to make sure people don't get hurt.
- THC may follow the guidance in my Behaviour Support Plan, so they know how best to keep me safe if I feel upset or overwhelmed
- THC may work with me to plan ways to stay safe
- THC may talk to me about things I can do to keep my environment safe (e.g., put my things away so nobody trips over them)
- THC may talk to me about ways to stay safe when big events happen – for example during an event like the Covid 19 pandemic they may help me to make sure I am doing the things that will stop me getting sick (e.g., washing my hands, social distancing, getting vaccinated), and plan ways with me to make sure I still can still safely access the support I need
- THC may adapt the way they provide me with services so that they can always continue to provide services – if THC needs to make a change to keep me safe they will always talk to me about the change and consider my opinion and any suggestions I might have

I should also do my part to make sure I am keeping everyone safe. For example:

- I should try to keep my home clean and safe when workers provide me with supports at home
- If I feel unwell I should let THC know in case I need medical help or if I might be infectious

If I notice something is unsafe or if I am worried about my safety, I should talk to one of my THC Support Staff.

Links to NDIS Practice Standards

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- Privacy and Dignity
- Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination

2. Provider Governance and Operational Management

- Information Management
- Risk Management
- Incident Management
- Emergency and Disaster Management

4. Provision of Supports Environment

- Safe environment
- Participant Money and Property
- Management of Medication
- Mealtime Management
- Management of Waste

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

TELLING YOU WHAT I THINK

THC believes my opinion is really important, and they want to hear what I think about things.

I can always talk to my THC Support Staff about how I feel about things, whether I think things are going well or not.

Some of the opportunities I have to talk about how I feel and what I think include:

- When I take part in planning for the support I will receive at THC
- When I develop a Personal Futures Plan
- By helping to choose new staff
- By telling the staff what I think about the way I am treated
- By asking to talk to a Team Leader or the Client Service Manager
- By completing surveys and feedback form about how I feel about THC
- By becoming a member of THC and having a say about what happens at THC.
- By asking questions at the Annual General Meeting
- When I take part in social gatherings and informal meetings likes BBQ parties, walking club, Boot Camp, Swan Club and The Yarn Circle
- By taking part in strategic planning events
- By making complaints if things are not going well or I have been treated badly

COMPLAINTS – WHAT TO DO IF I HAVE A PROBLEM

If I have a problem at THC, I have a right to complain and let them know I am unhappy.

THC wants to know if I have a problem so they can make the situation better for me now and stop similar problems happening in the future. I will never be treated badly by THC because I make a complaint.

If I do want to make a complaint about THC:

- THC will treat me fairly and give me all the support I need so that they understand my complaint and what I want to see happen to make it better.
- THC will help me feel safe by taking my problems seriously and by not talking about my complaints with anyone unless I want them to.
- THC can help me get in contact with other people and places that might also help me with any problems I have.
- THC will tell me what to expect while my complaint is being reviewed (e.g., what is going to happen next and how long will it take)
- THC will explain the reasons for decisions made about the complaint

HOW CAN I COMPLAIN?

If I need to make a complaint about THC, I can do it in a way that I am comfortable.

For example:

- I can write my complaint down in an email or a letter
- I can phone the THC office and talk to them
- I can have a face-to-face talk with someone I trust
- I can talk to the THC Support Staff I see regularly
- I can ask to talk to a Team Leader or the Client Services Manager
- I can get the support of a THC worker or other person to make my complaint

If I feel comfortable, THC suggest talking first to the person I am feeling unhappy with. This is often the best way to quickly resolve the issue and to clear up any misunderstandings.

If talking to the person doesn't help, or I don't feel comfortable talking to them I might find it helpful to talk to one of the other workers at THC instead. For example, I might feel better talking to my Social Educator, my Team Leader or the Client Service Manager.

If the person I speak to can't fix my problem straight away they might need to talk to other people who can help me with my complaint. THC might ask me to make a record of my complaint and can help me do this if needed.

If I don't feel like THC are doing a good job responding to my complaint there are other people outside of THC who might be able to help. I can also go directly to these people if there is a reason I don't want to talk to THC.

Some of the other people who can help me with complaints are:

- **The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**

Website: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints>

Phone: 1800 035 544

Email: contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au

Complaint Contact Form:

<https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF>

- **The Health Care Complaints Commission**

Website: <https://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au/>

Phone: 1800 043 159

Email: hccc@hccc.nsw.gov.au

Online Complaint Form:

<https://ecomplaints.hccc.nsw.gov.au/myComplaint>

- **The NSW Ombudsman**

Website: <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints>

Phone: 1800 451 524

Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au

Online Complaint Form:

<https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint>

- **The Complaints Resolution and Referral Service**

Website: <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/crrs>

Phone: 1800 880 052

Online Complaint Form:

<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/contacts/online-complaint-form>

- **The National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline**

Website: <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/hotline>

Phone: 1800 880 052

Email: hotline@workfocus.com

- **The Australian Human Rights Commission**

Website: <https://humanrights.gov.au/complaints>

Phone: 1300 656 419

Email: infoservice@humanrights.gov.au

Online Complaint Form:

<https://humanrights.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint>

- **Intellectual Disability Rights Service**

Website: <https://idrs.org.au/>

Phone: (02) 9265 6350

Email: <https://idrs.org.au/contact-us/> (complete online contact form)

There are even more organisations that can help me listed on the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations website:

<https://www.afdo.org.au/resource-disability-advocacy-organisations/>

COMPLIMENTS

THC is also very interested to hear from me if when I am happy with the services they provide and the support I receive. This is important because it helps THC to understand what people like and find useful about the service. It helps THC to:

- Understand if they are providing me with a valuable and useful service
- Understand what parts of their service are most helpful and important
- Do more of the things that I find valuable, useful, helpful and important when they work
- Let my support staff know that they are making a difference

If I want to give a compliment about THC, I can do it in a way that I am comfortable. For example:

- I can write my compliment down in an email or a letter
- I can talk to the THC Support Staff I see regularly
- I can ask to talk to a Team Leader or the Client Services Manager
- I can get the support of a THC worker or other person to give my compliment

When I give a compliment at THC they will make sure it gets passed on to the right person, let me know how my compliment might be used and who the compliment will be shared with.

Links to NDIS Practice Standards

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- Person – centred supports
- Privacy and Dignity:
- Independence and informed choice

2. Provider Governance and Operational Management

- Feedback and Complaints Management

3. Provision of Supports

- Support Planning
- Service Agreements with Participants
- Responsive Support Provision

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

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WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO KEEP USING THE HOUSING CONNECTION SERVICES?

The NDIS is all about choice and control. It is my life, so I get to decide how I live it.

I get to make the decisions about which people and organisations I want to support me. This includes the right to stop using a service if I want or need to.

One day I might decide I don't want to use THC's services anymore. This might be because:

- My needs or circumstances have changed

For example:

- I have less funding in my plan
- My disability has progressed and the support I need is different

- I want to use a different service for supports

For example:

- There is a service I think matches my needs more closely
- If THC are not able to meet my support needs

If I decide I don't want or need support from THC anymore it is important to let someone at THC know. I will have a chance to meet with THC's Client Services Manager who can talk with me about:

- Whether THC can provide me with a different service to meet my needs
- What other services I might be able to use
- Whether THC needs to do anything to help me change providers (for example, maybe I would like THC to share some information with my new provider)

If I do choose to change to a different provider THC will make sure the provider receives all the information and documents they need for a smooth transition. THC will let me know what information they are sharing and get my permission to share it first.

One important piece of information they will share is my Risk Profile so that my new provider understands what they need to do to help keep me safe.

THC will never try to pressure me to keep using their services and I am always welcome to use their supports again in the future.

Links to NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

3. Provision of Supports

- Access to supports
- Service Agreements with Participants
- Transitions to or from a provider

For further information and to see standards in full visit:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/ndis-practice-standards-and-quality-indicatorsfinal1.pdf>

GET IN TOUCH

If I want to talk about anything in this document, or I have other questions about THC I can always get in touch.

I can:

- Call: 02 9415 2311
- Email: thc@thc.org.au
- Visit their website: www.thc.org.au

The Housing Connection
31 Albert Avenue, Chatswood
NSW 2067
ABN 77 144 980 898