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Policy custodian:	Manager, Contracting & Sector Liaison Disability SA
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Confidentiality:	Level 1 Public Domain
DCSI strategic objective:	Support independence and participation
SA Strategic Plan:	Our health

Direct Health Support of People with Disability Policy

1 Intent

This policy provides a framework for the provision of direct health support to people with disability, including those people who have complex health support needs.

It aims to assist service providers to have clear processes for assessing the level of support required by people with disability, enable them to define what level of training their support workers will require, and to identify people who require a Registered Nurse (RN) involved in their care.

2 Context

- The provision of health support to people with disability requires access to skilled and experienced support workers who can readily provide supports.
- The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) aims to accommodate people with disability in community based settings, as opposed to institutional accommodation. This includes people with disability who have complex health issues and whose accommodation in the community may be at risk due to the complexity of their health support needs.
- This policy reinforces the Government's commitment to workforce training and competency based assessment in the provision of direct health support for people with disability.
- The policy aims to facilitate greater choice for people with disability with complex health needs by improving the standard of health care provided by a greater number of disability agencies.
- The policy also clarifies the RN role as one of support, training, assessment and consultancy. This reduces the need for RNs to provide a direct level of care to people with disabilities who have complex health support needs, which in the long term is a more effective usage of nursing resources.

3 Risk

This policy provides a risk management framework, outlining service provider requirements in meeting the direct health support needs of people with disability. Without this policy framework, support workers are at risk of providing inappropriate health support, or of not providing a suitable standard of care to people who have complex health support needs.

4 Reference Documents and Links

4.1 Directive Documents

- Disability Services Act 1993
- Disability Discrimination Act 1986
- National Standards for Disability Services

4.2 Supporting Documents

- Direct Health Support of People with Disability Guideline

4.3 Related Documents and Resources

- Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia, A National Framework for the development of decision-making tools for nursing and midwifery practices, August 2013
- Revised edition 2006 Health Support Planning in Education and Children's Services: Partnerships for health care and education, Department of Education & Children's Services

5 Scope

This policy applies to disability services provided by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) or by members of the Disability Services Provider Panel funded by DCSI through Disability SA. It applies in accommodation support settings, day options placements, centre based day activities, recreation activities, respite services and other settings where DCSI funding is utilised for the provision of direct health support.

This policy refers to the provision of direct health support to people with disability. It refers to situations where the support worker provides direct health support to or for a person with disability. Examples of direct health support include supporting a person with their medication, with emergency seizure management or with nutrition via a gastrostomy. There are other services related to health that a service provider may provide depending on its purview. For example an accommodation support service may provide practical support so a client can attend appointments e.g. transport and staff support, lobby for clients to access health services and encourage a client to live a healthy lifestyle. Such services, although important in meeting client health care needs, are not within the scope of this policy.

6 Definitions

Disability Services Provider Panel: A register of approved agencies providing support to people with a disability funded by DCSI. Approved agencies are required to meet specific minimum standards of service provision.

7 Policy Detail

7.1 General Principles

- **Community Living**

This policy is intended to promote the accommodation and integration of people with disability in community settings wherever possible. The model of health support detailed in this policy and the associated Direct Health Support of People with Disability Guideline are designed to assist in enabling people with disability to live in the community, even where they have complex health support needs.

- **Training and Competency Based Assessment**

A training and competency based assessment approach will be utilised in the provision of direct health support. This is to ensure that support workers receive appropriate training in the health support tasks they are required to undertake and are competent to perform these tasks.

- **Individualised Services**

Training and competency based assessment of support workers and the provision of such support covered by this policy will be client focused, with a commitment to flexible work practice in accommodating individual needs, while addressing risk for individual clients. This is consistent with the National Standards for Disability Services which underpin service provision, with individual decision making and choice being a primary focus.

- **Assessment of Health Support Needs**

All people with disability accessing services covered by this policy will have their level of health care needs assessed as per the Direct Health Support of People with Disability Guideline. This document provides detailed information regarding the assessment of health support levels and associated requirements for support workers and RNs providing health support to people with disability.

- **Risk Assessment**

Determination of the appropriate level of health support required will be undertaken within a risk assessment framework as described in the Direct Health Support of People with Disability Guideline. This approach aims to ensure the safety of clients by ensuring that an RN is consulted whenever specified risk factors are identified.

- **Professional Responsibilities**

There are shared professional accountabilities by the various stakeholders associated with the provision of direct health support for people with disability. The roles and responsibilities of the respective stakeholders are specified in the Health Support of People with Disability Guideline.

- **First Aid Training**

All support workers will have, as a minimum, appropriate First Aid training as described in the Direct Health Support of People with Disability Guideline.

- **Legal Requirements**

All parties involved in providing health support will have clearly documented policies and procedures to identify responsibilities in line with common law, duty of care, professional practice legislation and any other legal requirements pertinent to their area of practice.

7.2 Complex Health Support Needs

- **Health Needs Assessment**

A comprehensive Health Needs Assessment will be undertaken by an RN for all people with disability who have complex health support needs (ie as defined in the Direct Health Support of People with Disability Guideline). The Health Needs Assessment (as described in the Direct Health Support of People with Disability Guideline) will provide fully documented information regarding the physical, psychological, social and cultural aspects that influence the health status of the person.

- **Support Worker Training and Assessment**

Support workers who are required to provide complex health support (Level 3) to people with disability require specific health support training and competency based assessment based on the individual health support needs of the client. This must be provided by a suitably qualified RN, who will also provide ongoing training and support as required.

- **Duplication of Services**

If a client has complex health care needs and support is required in more than one setting, they will have an RN assigned to take the lead to negotiate and collaborate with other RNs and provider agencies on the their behalf. Duplication of services and the involvement of multiple RNs will be minimised to provide the least disruption to clients, families/carers.

8 Aboriginal Impact Statement Declaration

The needs and interests of Aboriginal people have been considered in the development of this policy. It has been assessed that there is no impact specific to Aboriginal people or an impact that could disproportionately affect Aboriginal people.

9 Approval

Content Author:	Policy Custodian:	Delegated Authority:
Date: 22 March 2016	Date: 1 April 2016	Date: 1 April 2016
Position: Team Leader, Policy & Consumer Engagement, Contracting & Sector Liaison, Disability SA	Position: Manager, Contracting & Sector Liaison, Disability SA	Position: Executive Director Disability SA