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**Participant Money and Property Policy and Procedure**

**Purpose**

This policy is designed to ensure that participants have control over their funding and finances, including the management of their NDIS funding and the spending of their personal money. CAPS will assist participants by informing them of the price and payment process for the services they provide and by providing them with assistance in learning to direct their supports and how to self-manage.

**Scope**

Staff will be trained to understand when to provide participants with financial advice.

Staff handling participant’s money will abide by the procedure outline below to ensure the participant is not subjected to financial abuse.

**Policy**

All financial transaction and procedures will abide by the requirements outlined in relevant legislation and contracts.

For the safety of participants and staff, CAPS require the policy and procedure outline to be strictly followed.

Participant’s money or other assets are only to be used with the consent of the participant in the manner that they intended.

Participants are not to be given financial advice or information, unless approved by the participant in a signed Service Agreement and a Consent Form. Documents concerning financial assistance must be signed by a witness (i.e., family member). All documents will be stored in the participant’s personal file.

Regular review and audits will be completed, and all required documentation will be provided to the participant and other required parties. The organisation will be held accountable and will ensure that the participant is fully informed of all costs and payment procedures.

**Procedure**

Home visits

When in a participant’s home, workers are only to use or touch property needed to deliver the services or support. Workers should not be allowed access to participant’s money.

If the worker is given money belonging to the participant for the purpose of buying an item or taking the participant out of the home (e.g., to a café) then the workers manager should be informed, and a note should be made in the participant’s file. The participants parent/carer must be fully aware that the money has been received, what it is intended to be spent on, and the cost (if applicable).

If a worker is asked to provide financial assistance for the participant, then management must be contacted immediately, and the required approval and/or documentation will be completed before assistance can be provided.

The participants Service Agreement and Support Plan must detail any financial handling that is to be completed on the participant’s behalf.

Financial management guidelines

Participants may require financial assistance (e.g., shopping), during which workers must follow the below guidelines:

* Workers must never have access to a participant PIN number or use an ATM on behalf of a participant
* Financial assistance is only allowed when the required documentation has been completed and is only to be carried out by authorized staff
* If financial assistance is required by the participant by it has not been outlined in their support plan, management must be contacted so that the required approval and/or documentation is completed
* Documentation and receipts must outline the money received, money spent, and money returned
* Staff must ensure that the participant and/or the participants parent/carer is aware of how much money has been received and how much has been returned
* Workers must ensure that all transactions undertaken on behalf of a participant are recorded in the participant’s personal file. Records must be completed efficiently and will be precise and clear
* Workers cannot act as a witness for legal documents associated with the participant
* Workers must not provide unauthorized financial advice
* Staff cannot accept gifts or money from a participant

Worker procedure

1. Upon receiving money, the worker must immediately record the amount. If financial assistance has been agreed upon prior, this will be recorded in the participants financial transaction register. If not, a record of the amount is to be sent to the workers manager. This record is to be stored in the participant’s personal file
2. The worker must either count the cash in front of the participant and/or the participants parent/carer or show evidence of the amount that has been received
3. The participant and/or their parent/carer must provide confirmation that the details are correct by either signing the register or sending confirmation to the relevant manager.
4. The worker is to complete only the authorized transaction and obtain a transaction receipt
5. When returning the money, the worker must either count the cash in front of the participant and/or their parent/carer or show evidence of the remaining amount. They must also provide transaction receipts

Financial assistance procedure

If the participant requests financial assistance that is not outline in their support plan, the following procedure is followed:

1. If services are being carried out through another provider, approval must be obtained from the authorized personnel from that agency
2. Otherwise, authorization will be based on:
   1. Participant consent
   2. Urgency
   3. Participant safety
   4. Available time
3. All details of the request and decisions must be recorded and stored in the participant’s personal file

Suspected financial abuse

Staff must be aware of signs of financial abuse. For more information on the signs refer to Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure.

Preventative measures that staff can discuss with participants are:

* Informing participants of their rights regarding privacy and confidentiality
* Encouraging participants to engage with people outside of their family/home residence
* Encouraging them to maintain control of their finance in they are confidently able to manage them
* Advising them against making significant financial decision after a major event or when in a highly emotional state
* Ensuring that participants are informed about their right to deny an individual access to their finances
* Encouraging participants to engage in financial planning
* Promoting a safe environment where participants feel able to ask for help if they feel overwhelmed, confused or that they are being taken advantage of

If an employee suspects that a participant is being financially abused, they must refer to the Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure for direction.

Participant fees and payments

*Payments and pricing (NDIS)*

* CAPS will adhere to the NDIS Price Guide
* CAPS supply be transparent and clear when informing parties of prices, notice periods, and cancellation terms
* CAPS will only request payment after the support or service has been supplied
* There will be no added charges to the cost of supports, such as surcharges, or additional fees, such as late fees.
* Invoices will be sent within a reasonable time
* No cancellation fees will be enforced, unless it is outlined in the NDIS Price Guide
* If there are differences between the Service Agreement and the Price Guide, what is stated in the Price Guide will be enforced
* Quotes will be provided to participants as required for them to approve

Monitoring, evaluating, and reporting

For information on this topic please refer to the Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure.