

# Decision Making and Choice

## *Policy and Procedure*

### 1. Policy Statement

1.1. Hartley Lifecare (Hartley) is committed to empowering people with disability to make informed decisions about their lives, supports, and services. We believe that every individual has the right to exercise choice and control in accordance with their rights, preferences, and goals. Our approach to decision-making and choice is grounded in respect, dignity, and the principles of person-centred care.

### 2. Purpose

2.1. This policy outlines Hartley’s commitment to empowering people with disability to make informed decisions and choice about their lives, supports and services.

### 3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all Hartley staff, volunteers and board members involved in service delivery, planning or governance.

### 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Supported Decision-Making	A process of providing support to individuals with disability to enable them to make their own decisions. This includes assistance in understanding information, exploring options, and expressing preferences.
Person-Centred Approach	A way of prioritising the individual's needs, preferences, and goals, treating them as the expert in their own life and empowering them to make choices and control their support
Choice and Control	The right of individuals to make decisions about their own lives, including the supports and services they receive. It emphasizes autonomy and self-determination.
Safeguards	Measures put in place to protect individuals from abuse, neglect, or exploitation while ensuring their dignity and autonomy are preserved

### 5. Principles

5.1. Hartley adopts the following principles, aligned with national standards:

- 5.1.1. Equal Right to Decide: Every adult has the right to make decisions that affect their life and to have those decisions respected.
- 5.1.2. Support Where Needed: People with disability will be provided with the support they need to understand, communicate and make decisions.
- 5.1.3. Will and Preferences First: Decisions must reflect the person’s own will, preferences and rights—not those of others.
- 5.1.4. Safeguards and Dignity: Appropriate safeguards will be in place to protect individuals from abuse, neglect, or exploitation while preserving dignity and autonomy.

### 6. Procedures

6.1. Identifying Decision-Making Needs

- 6.1.1. Upon intake or review, staff will assess each individual’s decision-making capacity and preferences.
- 6.1.2. A supported decision-making plan will be developed where needed, outlining the types of decisions the person wants support with and who they trust to assist.

6.2. Providing Decision-Making Support

- 6.2.1. Staff will use communication aids, visual supports, and plain language to explain options and consequences.
- 6.2.2. Individuals will be given adequate time and space to consider their choices.

- 6.2.3. Supporters must not influence or override the person’s preferences.
- 6.3. Documenting Decisions
  - 6.3.1. All significant decisions and the support provided must be documented in the individual’s file or care plan.
  - 6.3.2. Documentation should include:
    - The decision made
    - The options presented
    - The support provided
    - The individual’s expressed preference
- 6.4. Involving Families and Advocates
  - 6.4.1. With consent, families, guardians or advocates may be involved in decision-making discussions.
  - 6.4.2. Their role is to support the individual’s voice.
- 6.5. Responding to Risk and Safeguards
  - 6.5.1. If a decision poses a risk to the individual or others, staff must:
    - Conduct a risk assessment
    - Explore safer alternatives with the individual
    - Escalate concerns to a manager if necessary
  - 6.5.2. Safeguards must be proportionate and the least restrictive option.
- 6.6. Staff Training and Supervision
  - 6.6.1. All staff will receive training on supported decision-making, person-centred practice, and ethical support.
  - 6.6.2. Supervisors will monitor practice through regular check-ins, regular supervision and audits.
- 6.7. Feedback and Complaints
  - 6.7.1. Individuals and their families will be informed of their right to provide feedback or make complaints about decision-making support.
  - 6.7.2. Complaints will be handled in line with Hartley’s Compliments and Complaints Policy.

**7. Review Procedures**

- 7.1. Hartley Lifecare may make future changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operation and ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Feedback on this policy can be directed to the Quality Manager at any time. Whilst feedback is welcome, it may not necessarily lead to a change in the policy.

**8. References and Acknowledgements**

- National Disability Services (NDS) Guide: People with Disability and Supported Decision-Making and the NDIS <https://nds.org.au/resources/all-resources/people-with-disability-and-supported-decision-making-in-the-ndis-a-guide-for-nsw-providers>
- NDIS Supported Decision-Making Policy <https://www.ndis.gov.au/policies/supported-decision-making-policy>

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