



Participant and Family Handbook

V2.2 August 2023

Participant and Family Handbook

This is your handbook and guide to getting started with What Ability!

What is in this handbook?

Information about:

- ✓ Your rights
- ✓ Your information and privacy
- ✓ Your consent
- ✓ Your access to advocacy
- ✓ Our service
- ✓ Your support plan
- ✓ Your Service Agreement

...and much more!

Dedication:

This guide is dedicated to our What Ability participants and families.

Thank you for helping us make What Ability such a special place for all.

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Contact Us

Address	Head Office - 401/19 Roseby Street, Drummoyne NSW
Phone	1300 358 714
Email	info@whatability.com.au

For Onboarding and Administration - contact the National Head Office on 1300 358 714 or via email, info@whatability.com.au

QUEENSLAND:

Suite GD, 12 Short St
Southport, QLD 4215

WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

Shop 9,7-11 Hutton Street
Osborne Park, WA 6017

VICTORIA:

Office coming soon

Your Rights

Consent

What Ability gathers your consent so we can effectively:

- ✓ Collect information to develop tailored support plans
- ✓ Build assessments
- ✓ Communicate information about your support
- ✓ Administer medication
- ✓ Implement Behaviour Support Plans
- ✓ Write Behaviour Support Plans

In line with the Privacy Act 1988, including the Australian Privacy Principles, our policy ensures we meet our legal and ethical obligations that put your rights first!

What Ability captures your consent in the following steps:

- the Sign Up form
 - collects permission to gather and store information
 - store information to develop a support plan and make effective assessment on support needs
- the Consent form
 - outlines use of consent, privacy and personal information
 - collects permission to share information
 - collects third party consent for person/s or organisation/s who are approved to communicate with What Ability for specified purposes
- Social media publicity consent form
- Medication chart



We will aim to review your consent annually!

You can also withdraw or change your consent at any time.

If there is anyone you choose not to include in your support network, you can share those details and What Ability will document this on your profile.

Where the participant we support is unable to provide consent, we will obtain written consent from your nominated guardian. In some instances, verbal consent may be necessary and will be documented.

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How to Change your Information or Remove your Consent

What Ability's Support Squad is able to assist you in the process of changing your information or removing your consent at any time.

You can contact the Support Squad via phone (1300 358 714) or email (info@whatability.com.au) to discuss what you would like to happen.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality ensures that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access and is protected throughout its lifecycle. Confidential information may be marked as such because it includes your personal information or detail about your support.

Your safety comes first!

Our confidentiality policies are in place to protect your information and communication with What Ability and relevant stakeholders (eg Government bodies, approved third parties, approved family members, your support network).

We specify document retention periods in-line with NSW legislation. If you no longer have support from What Ability, after seven (7) years, due to auditing requirements, your information is destroyed in a secure manner such as shredding or deleted.

Money Handling

Part of your support plan involves money handling between yourself and your support worker. This could be paying for your ticket for bowling, purchasing food for lunch or topping up your transport card for the ferry. We have a policy in place to ensure you are safe. We have support worker training and internal audits to ensure these procedures are checked and audited regularly.

Under no circumstances are you to receive financial advice from your support worker. It is a criminal offense and you must report it if this happens.

On your booking we recommend you have a debit card that has funds accessible for the activities planned. Your support worker is required to provide receipts at the conclusion of your booking.

If you feel the policy is not being followed or could be improved, reach out to our support squad!

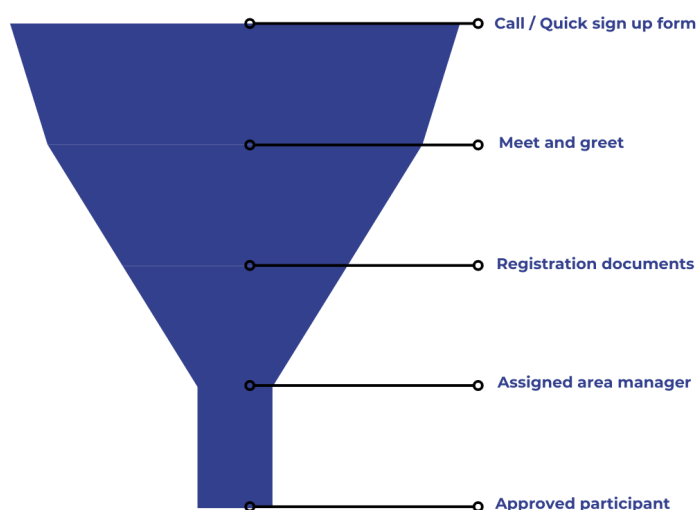
Eligibility and Registration

To see if What Ability can support you, you must fill out the Sign Up form (either online or over the phone) and attend a Meet & Greet with our Senior Team Lead.

Requests for support can be made in the following ways:

- Phone or email request
- On-site visit to What Ability
- A general enquiry via the Contacts page or Sign Up form through the What Ability website

Here is our onboarding process:



What Ability Onboarding Documentation:

- Participant Profile + Emergency Contact Details
- Consent Form
- Mealtime Management Form
- Social Media Publicity Consent Form
- Your Medication Information Form + Signed Medication Authority Form (If applicable)
- Behaviour Support Plan (If applicable)
- Asthma/Anaphylaxis/Epilepsy/Allergy Plan (If applicable)
- Service Agreement

Your Service Agreement

To finalise your onboarding process, you or your guardian need to complete and sign your Service Agreement.

At What Ability there's no lock in contracts!

We want you to get the support you need, when you need it.

What Ability requires to have a signed service agreement in order to be able to provide support.

If you're an NDIS participant, your Service Agreement renewal date should align with your NDIS plan dates.

- What Ability will require a renewal of your service agreement annually.

You can always call the Support Squad if your circumstances change.

Your support plan

After giving your consent to do so, What Ability will create your tailored support plan. Our support plans are built around community access and camps (if applicable). This document will also include your behavioural, medical, dietary, preferred activities and any other relevant information.

Referral to other organisations / Transition to other providers

If you are transitioning from a school or another service provider, we need your consent to contact that provider e.g. school, NDIA or other services. This will help us build out your support plan. The information also informs your support requirements, schedules, plans, and person-centered goals to assist in the transition.



If you no longer require What Ability support, we will ensure your exit occurs in a professional, planned and collaborative manner.

Exit planning is an integral part of the exit process and is conducted in close consultation with you, and where appropriate the family, carer and any other important people from the participant's support network.

About our services

What do we mean when we say happiness comes first? We facilitate fun in the safest possible way!



We provide community-based activities across Sydney:

- Day programs
- Weekend support
- Overnight camps

These activities are tailored to your goals and needs. Activities can look like swimming, bush walks, parks, beaches, recreation centers, and indoor activity facilities.

What Ability is able to Support all participants whether they are Self managed, Plan Managed or NDIA managed.

What Ability is also able to support participants who are not NDIS participants, however doctor/therapist referral is required and GST will be included in pricing in this circumstance.

Withdrawal of Support

What Ability may need to choose to withdraw or temporarily stop a participant's access to supports for the following reasons:

- Relocation to an area outside What Ability's area of service delivery
- Where the support schedule and service is no longer able to meet the participant's needs or will assist in achieving their chosen goals
- Transfer to another service provider
- The participant is unwilling to meet the reasonable conditions required in their support plan and thus affecting the safe delivery of a service to the participant and the work, health and safety of staff
- Approvals not being provided within an agreed timeframe by participant / person responsible e.g. consents, Support Plan confirmations etc. to enable safe supports to be provided
- Changes in the participant's status and/or condition results in the support they require exceeding the training, skills and/or expertise What Ability staff can provide

- There has been no contact between the participant and What Ability for a period of 3 months (following multiple prompts to do so by What Ability)
- The participant and/or family member/carer engages in behaviour that is unacceptable to What Ability such as violence, abuse, aggression, theft or property damage
- The participant has perpetrated a criminal or other act of a serious and reportable nature
- The death of the participant using the service

Dignity of Risk Choices

In accordance with Australian law, every person has the right to make their own choices. This means that everyone can choose to take certain risks, to learn from their mistakes, and to choose how they want to live.

What Ability staff support and enable participants in their choice and decision makings, including their right to make dignity of risk choices. Access to supports available and provided by What Ability will not be withdrawn or denied solely on the basis of a dignity of risk choice made by the participant.

Service Provider Transition

A participant may choose to stop receiving supports provided by What Ability at any time, if he/she chooses to do so.

What Ability will support transition to another service provider, including the development of a risk assessment and Transition Plan, and speaking with the participant's new service provider to ensure the transition is efficient and effective.

Exit planning is an integral part of the process and is conducted in close consultation with the participant, and where appropriate their family, carer, person responsible (as appropriate), and any others the participant identifies from their support network.

Fees / Rates

We follow the NDIS guidelines for our pricing. We claim funding under Core Support within Social community and Participation and Daily Participation.

If you would like to discuss funding and your plan in detail please call the office 1300 358 714 and we can inform you of the current rates.

Camps

What Ability camps provide participants with 1:1 funding support in a relaxed environment. Participants are able to build meaningful friendships and develop independence through fun-filled social opportunities.

What Ability is an approved Specialized Substitute Residential Care (SSRC) provider and support participants in accordance with all relevant SSRC requirements (NSW applicable)

The unique experience we aimed at:

- Providing social opportunities
- Facilitating interactions and engagement with others of similar age and interest
- Supporting development of meaningful friendships
- Increasing independence in self care skills
- Exposing participants to new and different age appropriate activities they don't normally have the opportunity to access.

Independence

Choice and Decision making

Each participant at What Ability, will be given the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of their daily life, in relation to the services they receive.

Participants will be encouraged and supported to exercise their right to make informed decisions and choices about the individual services they receive, the activities they would like to participate in and the lifestyle they would like to follow.

Duty of care issues will be considered when supporting participants to make decisions to take risks. An informed decision is one made after the participant has all the relevant available information about the options, and about the risks involved. Staff members will support and respect informed decisions made by participants.

Dignity of Risk

Planning and service delivery takes into account the participant's right to the dignity of risk in decision-making. The participant is supported to make informed choices about the benefits and risks of the options under consideration. If required risks are appropriately managed using our risk management policy and framework.

Dignity of risk refers to the concept of affording a person the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks, and that the impeding of this right can limit personal growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life.

In Australian law, every person has the right to make their own choices. This means that everyone can choose to take certain risks, to learn from their mistakes, and to choose how they want to live.

What Ability staff support and enable participants in their choice and decision makings, including their right to make dignity of risk choices. Access to supports available and provided by What Ability will not be withdrawn or denied solely on the basis of a dignity of risk choice made by the participant.

Guardianship

The intention of What Ability is that the participants, their families, carers, guardians and advocates will have full opportunity for input over the development and review of this Support Guide, through representations to the What Ability's staff, management and through our documented communication channels.

What to do if you're not happy

Making a complaint (including complaining directly to external agencies e.g. directly to NDIS)

The purpose of this policy is to outline how people are able to provide feedback and make complaints about any aspect of What Ability and the process that we will take to address and/or respond to the complaint without prejudice.

What Ability is committed to managing complaints in an accountable, transparent, timely and meaningful way and in the most direct way possible.

What Ability supports and encourages the rights of our participants, their families/carers and stakeholders to lodge and pursue any complaint in relation to any aspect of What Ability or its operations.



Step 1:

- Contact the National Participant Manager (NPM) or a member of the Support Squad, if you are comfortable to do so on 0415 918 588 or 1300 358 714.
- You also have the right to contact the NDIS commission directly. Those contact details are provided below on page 12.
- If you wish to make a complaint and are uncomfortable talking to a manager at What Ability, you can access the complaint form on the What Ability website.

Step 2: What Ability will internally review the report. All relevant parties will be involved and updated accordingly.

Step 3: All stakeholders will be advised on the resolution of the complaint. Further steps may be taken if necessary.

What Ability expects that most complaints/feedback will be able to be addressed and responded to by the people directly involved or at a support worker/middle management level, with only the most serious or unresolved complaints being dealt with by the National Supports Manager and/or State Manager. However, where complaints require investigation or a more formal review, we will ensure that sufficient resources are allocated as a means to ensure that complaints are proficiently managed and investigated and will only allocate suitably skilled and qualified employees to investigate and manage complaints of that nature. If required, What Ability will refer to, or seek guidance from external agencies, such as the NDIS Commission or the NSW or Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Useful Contacts and Services

Individuals or parties with a complaint may make contact with the following bodies should the complaints remain unresolved or at any time in the complaints process. These may include:

The NDIS Commission

Ph: 1800 035 544

Email: contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au

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

National Ombudsman

Free call: 1300 362 072

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (CTH)

Complaints Infoline: 1300 656 419

National Information Service: : 1300 656 419

TTY: 1800 620 241

Website: www.hreoc.gov.au

Email: infoservice@humanrights.gov.au

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline

A hotline for reporting or complaining about the abuse or neglect of a person with a disability at home, in the community, or in any other location. The hotline will refer a complainant to a relevant state or local agency where necessary.

Free call: 1800 880 052

TTY: 1800 301 130

National relay service: 1800 555 677

Fax: 02 9318 1372

Website: www.disabilityhotline.org

Email: hotline@workfocus.com

Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)

A community legal centre specializing in legal and rights issues for people with a disability.

2C/199 Regent St REDFERN NSW 2016

Free call: 1300 665 908

Website: www.idrs.org.au

Email: intakejas@idrs.or.au

People with Disability Incorporated

For people with a disability who wish to make a complaint about their rights being infringed.

Free call: 1800 422 015

TTY: (02) 9318 2138

TTY: 1800 422 016 free call

Website: www.pwd.org.au

Email: pwd@pwd.org.au

Australian Federation Of Disability Organisation

Free call: 1800 219 969

Website: www.afdo.org.au

Email: office@afdo.org.au

National Disability Advocacy Program

Website: www.dss.gov.au

Free call: 1800 643 787

Email: disabilityadvocacy@dss.gov.au

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association

MDAA Head Office

Free call: 1800 629 072

Address: 10-12 Hutchinson Street, Granville NSW 2142

Postal: PO Box 884, Granville NSW 2142

Email: mdaa@mdaa.org.au

Advocacy (inc. advocacy external to What Ability)

Definitions

Advocate: An advocate is a person who supports a participant to protect and promote their rights and interests, and can, with the service user's permission, negotiate on a consumer's behalf or support the consumer to negotiate for him or herself.

An advocate:

- does not conciliate or arbitrate between an organisation and service user
- 'stands beside' a service user to support them to make their own decisions
- is an important resource for a participant/service user in situations where a consumer feels confused, overwhelmed, intimidated or under confident
- can be a family member, friend or an outside organisation.

Supporting and Enabling Advocacy for Participants

What Ability acknowledges that any participant has the right to seek support of an advocate or advocacy agency to help with all aspects of services provided by What Ability or from any other service providers.

Whenever possible participants will be supported and encouraged to self-advocate, but whenever required, we will facilitate access to an advocate for any participant should they wish us to do so.

It is understood that the level of support from participants will vary and be dependent upon the needs and approval of each participant. The role of advocate may be undertaken by more than one individual/organisation.

What Ability will ensure that advocates are identified and included within the individual record of each participant.

Any communication with the nominated advocate will be undertaken in a timely, open and transparent manner and consistent with the approval of each participant. Information on the role and services offered by advocacy agencies will be readily available and supported by the organisation to enable access by participants or their families if required or requested.

Consistent with ethical practice, staff of What Ability should not be identified as an advocate for any participant of What Ability in any aspects of service delivery between the participant, What Ability or any third-party person/organisation.

It is acknowledged that at times What Ability staff will be asked to attend meetings in a professional capacity to present information on behalf of the participant or organisation. In these circumstances it is expected that this representation will be restricted to the management team positions and

be undertaken consistent with the scope of their position within the organisation.

We will not disclose any information about the participant to an advocate when the person is not present, unless we have the participant's expressed permission to do so. If a participant wishes us to disclose information to an advocate, they will be required to disclose this information and instructions in writing.

Participants may use an advocate:

- any time they wish to communicate with us
- at initial consultation
- during interviews and reviews

An advocate is a person, who with the agreement and authority of the participant represents their interests. An advocate may be a family member, a friend, another professional or a formal advocacy service.

Useful Contacts and Services

Disability Advocacy (DA)

Find your local advocate: www.dana.org.au/find-an-advocate

Telephone contact: 1300 365 085

Provide individual advocacy services to people with a disability who have serious and urgent problems.

Indigenous Disability Advocacy Service (IDAS)

Telephone Contact: 1300 114 327

Provide individual advocacy services to Indigenous people with disabilities, their families and carers who have serious and urgent problems.

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA)

Telephone Contact: 1800 629 072 Provide individual advocacy services to people with disabilities, their families and carers from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)

Telephone Contact: 1800 666 611

The IDRS provides telephone advice on a range of legal issues and representation in priority areas such as criminal law, care and protection and guardianship

Ensuring you have Support

Cancellations

A cancellation policy is a standard and necessary policy in the health industry. In the case of lack of attendance, the following procedure will be followed.

Endeavour to give us more than 24 hours' notice if you have to cancel or change a scheduled appointment. Please note: that our current 'Cancellation Policy' (provided with these Terms and Conditions) will provide specific information regarding your obligations in relation to cancellation/rescheduling of appointments. This allows us to manage our team effectively.

If the participant is feeling unwell

If the participant is unwell and will not be able to attend the scheduled booking, you are required to contact a What Ability Senior Team Lead (STL) to advise of this with reasonable notice and we can cancel/reschedule your booking at your request.

If your support worker does not arrive

If the scheduled support workers do not arrive for the booking, please go onto the Supportmate app, click on company contacts and call your designated Senior Team Lead. If they are unavailable, please call the relevant State Manager.

If What Ability needs to cancel your booking?

What Ability will do our best to contact you as soon as possible if there are any changes or cancellations to any bookings. What Ability will endeavor to find an appropriate support worker to fulfill the booking, ensure they have read the support plan and receive a proper hand over from previous support workers.

However, What Ability will not sacrifice participant safety and unfortunately in some circumstances a cancellation may occur. Participant will not be charged in this circumstance.

Booking Circumstances change

If there is a change of circumstances for an activity, or change of pick up/drop off.

E.g Property is lost during a booking.

Support Workers or What Ability will contact you regarding any changes and to discuss how to best move forward.

If your NDIS funding circumstances change

If you find yourself in a situation where your funding is effected, What Ability can provide the following documentation to help with a change of circumstance or early review etc.

- Supporting Letter - What Ability has an “inhouse” OT who can write a supporting letter explaining how What Ability is helping participant reach Community Access/Social related goals
- Carer’s impact statement (Template) - A carer’s impact statement is a powerful way to explain how What Ability Supports are important for parent/guardian respite
- Quote: What Ability can provide a quote for evidence of the funds needed to help participant’s reach social and community access goals

Incident Management

What Ability is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants, personnel, contractors and visitors. What Ability is committed to establishing a formal process to report and investigate all workplace accidents/incidents and near miss occurrences. This includes all participants, staff and visitors. The process includes identifying contributing factors of the accident/incident or near miss and making the necessary recommendations to prevent a recurrence.

When an incident occurs during a booking What Ability’s Support Squad will be informed immediately and will take any immediate actions that may be required. What Ability's Support Squad Manager will contact the Participants relevant contact to inform them of the incident.

What Ability investigates all incidents to document all of the factual information about what has occurred. What Ability’s Support Workers will be supported through the incident process.

The Support Squad is responsible for all incident management. What Ability is invested in Support Worker training to encourage all Support Workers to confidently manage any crisis situation.

Please reach out if you have any questions in relation to incident management.

The process is also outlined within the Policies and Procedure.

Improving Your Services

What Ability strives to be the best and most compliant community access and camps disability support provider.

Feedback provides us with an opportunity to improve.

What Ability encourages our staff and participants to fill out a feedback form after bookings and camps to ensure we are doing the best we can in supporting our participants.

These forms are on our website and also available via the link below:

<https://whatability.com.au/services/need-support/feedback-and-complaints/>

All feedback is valuable and valid and is passed on to the What Ability Leadership Team as we strive to improve our services every day.