



## Emergency and Disaster Support Policy for NDIS Participants

### 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the commitment of AWEN Case Management & Advocacy to providing effective, person-centred, and ethical support to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants in the event of an emergency or disaster, within the scope of an online-only business model. It is developed in alignment with the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013, the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, and the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Code of Ethics and Code of Practice.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the safety, well-being, and continuity of essential supports for NDIS participants during and after emergencies or disasters.
- Provide clear guidelines for staff and management on their roles and responsibilities in emergency preparedness and response.
- Uphold the rights and dignity of NDIS participants, ensuring their voices are heard and their individual needs are prioritised in emergency planning and response.
- Maintain compliance with relevant legislative and ethical frameworks, including the NDIS and AASW.

### 3. Scope

AWEN Case Management & Advocacy ***is not*** an emergency service provider and is only contactable Monday to Friday during normal office hours.

In the event, or aftermath, of an emergency or disaster, AWEN Case Management & Advocacy will endeavour to provide any assistance required within the scope of an online-only business.

After an emergency or disaster, AWEN Case Management & Advocacy will assist participants in a recovery phase, if requested, and where possible, including:

- Assessing ongoing support needs.
- Connecting participants with relevant recovery services and community resources.
- Providing emotional and practical support to re-establish routines and well-being.

## 4. Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles:

### 4.1 NDIS Principles

- **Participant Choice and Control:** Participants have the right to make decisions about their supports, including during emergencies, to the maximum extent possible.
- **Individualised Support:** Emergency plans and responses must be tailored to the unique needs, preferences, and circumstances of each participant.
- **Reasonable and Necessary Supports:** Supports provided during emergencies must be reasonable and necessary to ensure participant safety and well-being.
- **Continuity of Support:** Efforts will be made to minimise disruption to essential supports and services.
- **Safeguarding:** Protecting participants from harm, abuse, and neglect is paramount.

### 4.2 AASW Code of Ethics and Code of Practice

- **Respect for Persons:** Upholding the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals, ensuring non-discrimination and cultural responsiveness.
- **Social Justice:** Advocating for equitable access to resources and supports for participants, particularly those who may be more vulnerable during emergencies.
- **Professional Integrity:** Acting honestly, transparently, and accountably in all emergency-related activities.
- **Competence:** Ensuring staff are adequately trained and equipped to respond effectively and ethically in emergency situations.
- **Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy and sensitive information of participants, while balancing the need for information sharing to ensure safety.
- **Duty of Care:** Taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm and ensure the safety of participants.
- **Self-Determination:** Supporting participants to exercise their right to self-determination, even in challenging circumstances.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 Management

- Develop, implement, and regularly review this policy and associated procedures.
- Allocate necessary resources for emergency preparedness and response.
- If required, ensure staff receive appropriate training.
- Establish and maintain communication protocols with relevant emergency services and stakeholders during or after an emergency.
- Oversee incident management and reporting.

## 5.2 Staff

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and emergency procedures.
- Actively participate in any required training.
- If requested, assist participants in developing individual emergency plans (IEPPs).
- Implement emergency response procedures as directed.
- Report incidents and concerns promptly.
- Maintain professional boundaries and ethical conduct during emergencies.

## 5.3 NDIS Participants (and their families/carers)

- If requested, help develop an individual emergency plan (IEPPs).
- Communicate their needs, preferences, and emergency contacts.
- Understand and follow emergency instructions to ensure their safety.

## 6. Emergency and Disaster Planning (Preparedness)

### 6.1 Individual Emergency Preparedness Plans (IEPPs)

- For NDIS participants who have requested one, an IEPPs will be developed in collaboration with the participant and their family/carers using the “AWEN Individual Emergency Preparedness Plan\_v1.0.pdf”
- IEPPs will be reviewed at least annually, or following any significant change in the participant's circumstances or local emergency risks.

## 7. Emergency and Disaster Response Procedures

### 7.1 Activation

- The emergency plan will be activated upon notification of an impending or active emergency/disaster that may impact participants or staff.
- Notification sources may include official warnings (e.g., Bureau of Meteorology, State Emergency Service), local authorities, or direct observation.

### 7.2 Communication

- **Initial Contact:** Staff will attempt to contact all impacted participants who have requested an IEPPs, and their emergency contacts to ascertain their safety and needs. For participants who have not requested an IEPPs, staff will endeavour to contact participants to ascertain their safety and needs in the course of their normal daily duties.
- **Information Sharing:** Clear, timely, and accessible information will be provided to participants about the emergency, safety measures, and available supports. This will consider diverse communication needs.

- **External Liaison:** The designated emergency coordinator will liaise with emergency services, local authorities, and the NDIS Commission as required.

### 7.3 Support Provision

- **Prioritisation:** Support will be prioritised based on immediate safety risks and the critical needs identified in an IEPPs if one has been requested by the participant.
- **Delivery:** Online or phone support only, Monday to Friday during normal office hours.
- **Essential Needs:** Focus will be on ensuring access to food, water, shelter, medical care, medication, and essential personal care within the scope of an online-only business.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Recognising the potential trauma of emergencies, psychosocial support will be offered to participants and staff, either directly or through referral to specialist services.
- **Documentation:** All actions taken, communications, and support provided will be accurately documented.

## 8. Recovery and Debriefing

### 8.1 Post-Emergency Support

- AWEN Case Management & Advocacy will assist participants in the recovery phase, including:
  - Assessing ongoing support needs and assisting in adjusting NDIS plans if possible.
  - Connecting participants with relevant recovery services and community resources.
  - Providing emotional and practical support to re-establish routines and well-being.

### 8.2 Debriefing and Review

- Following an emergency or disaster, a debriefing will be conducted with relevant staff to review the effectiveness of the responses.
- Feedback from participants and their families/carers will be actively sought to identify areas for improvement.
- Lessons learned will be incorporated into revisions of this policy and any IEPPs.

## 9. Training and Continuous Improvement

- All staff will receive training on this policy and their ethical obligations in emergency contexts.

- Regular reviews of this policy and associated procedures will be conducted, at least annually, or after any significant incident or change in legislation/best practice.

## 10. Documentation and Reporting

- All emergency-related incidents, actions, communications, and support provided will be documented.
- Incidents requiring notification to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission will be reported in accordance with their requirements.
- Records will be maintained in a secure and accessible manner.

## 11. Compliance

This policy is designed to ensure compliance with:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, including the NDIS Practice Standards
- Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (2020)
- Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Practice (2020)
- Relevant state and territory emergency management legislation and guidelines.

## 12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by AWEN Case Management & Advocacy annually or earlier if there are significant changes in legislation, NDIS requirements, AASW guidelines, or organisational practices.

AWEN Case Management & Advocacy  
0434 151 864  
[support@awencma.com.au](mailto:support@awencma.com.au)  
[www.awencma.com.au](http://www.awencma.com.au)

---

### Document Control:

- **Policy Number:** 036
- **Version:** 2.0
- **Date of Issue:** 26/09/2025
- **Next Review Date:** 26/09/2026
- **Approved by:** AWEN Case Management & Advocacy