



Personal and Health Information Collection Statement

This statement outlines how AWEN Case Management & Advocacy (referred to as "we", "us", or "our") collects, uses, stores, and discloses your personal and health information in the course of providing services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We are committed to protecting your privacy and handling your information in accordance with Australian privacy laws, including the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, the *NDIS Act 2013 (Cth)*, and the ethical guidelines of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Code of Ethics.

As a Social Worker and NDIS service provider, we understand the sensitive nature of the information you share with us and are dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality and ethical practice.

1. What Information Do We Collect?

We collect personal and health information that is reasonably necessary for us to provide you with safe, effective, and tailored NDIS supports and services. This may include:

- **Personal Identification Information:** Your name, address, date of birth, contact details (phone, email), gender, NDIS participant number.
- **Health Information:** Relevant medical history, diagnoses, disabilities, medications, allied health reports, treatment plans, and health goals.
- **Support Needs and Goals:** Information related to your disability, your NDIS plan, your support needs, goals, aspirations, and preferences.
- **Social and Family Information:** Details about your family, support networks, living arrangements, cultural background, and social circumstances, as relevant to your support needs.
- **Financial Information:** Limited financial details required for invoicing, payment processing, or NDIS plan management, where applicable.
- **Service Delivery Records:** Case notes, support plans, progress reports, communication records, incident reports, and feedback.

- **Emergency Contact Details:** Names and contact information of nominated emergency contacts.

2. How Do We Collect Your Information?

We collect information in various ways, primarily directly from you or your authorised representative (e.g., family member, guardian, advocate). This may occur when you:

- Complete intake forms or consent forms.
- Participate in assessments or planning meetings.
- Engage with us during service delivery (e.g., in-person, by phone, email, or video call).
- Provide feedback or make a complaint.

We may also collect information from third parties with your explicit consent, or where legally required or permitted. This could include:

- The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).
- Other NDIS service providers involved in your care (e.g., therapists, support coordinators).
- Healthcare professionals (e.g., doctors, hospitals).
- Family members or guardians, where they are your authorised representative.

3. Why Do We Collect Your Information (Purposes of Collection)?

We collect your personal and health information for the following primary purposes:

- To identify you and verify your eligibility for NDIS services.
- To understand your disability, needs, goals, and preferences to provide person-centred supports.
- To develop, implement, and review your individualised support plans.
- To facilitate the safe and effective delivery of NDIS services and supports.
- To communicate with you, your authorised representatives, and other relevant parties (with your consent).
- To manage our services, including scheduling, administration, and record-keeping.

- To comply with our obligations under the *NDIS Act 2013 (Cth)*, NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, and other relevant laws and regulations.
- To facilitate invoicing and payment for services, including claiming from your NDIS plan.
- For internal quality improvement, service evaluation, and training purposes.
- To respond to your inquiries, feedback, or complaints.
- To ensure your safety and well-being, and the safety of our staff.

4. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Ethical Obligations

We are committed to upholding your privacy and the confidentiality of your information. We adhere strictly to:

- **Australian Privacy Principles (APPs):** As outlined in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, which govern the collection, use, disclosure, storage, and access to personal information.
- **NDIS Act 2013 (Cth):** Particularly provisions relating to the privacy and protection of NDIS participants' information.
- **AASW Code of Ethics:** As professional Social Workers, we are bound by the AASW Code of Ethics, which includes strict principles around confidentiality, informed consent, and professional boundaries. This means we will:
 - Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of information shared with us.
 - Seek your informed consent for the collection and disclosure of your information.
 - Protect your information from unauthorised access, use, or disclosure.
 - Use your information only for the purposes for which it was collected, or for directly related purposes that you would reasonably expect.

5. Storage and Security of Your Information

Your personal and health information is stored securely in both electronic and, in some cases, physical formats. We implement robust measures to protect your information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure, including:

- **Electronic Records:** Stored on secure, password-protected systems with restricted access, regular backups, and encryption where appropriate.
- **Physical Records:** Any physical records are scanned or manually entered into our database and then shredded to a P5 security level, suitable for high-security documents.
- **Access Control:** Only authorised personnel who require access to your information for service delivery or administrative purposes are granted access. All staff are trained on privacy and confidentiality obligations.

We retain your information for as long as necessary to provide services to you and to comply with legal and professional obligations, after which it is securely destroyed or de-identified.

6. Disclosure of Your Information

We will only disclose your personal and health information when it is necessary for the purposes for which it was collected, or as required or permitted by law. We will always seek your explicit consent before disclosing your information to third parties, unless:

- **Required by Law:** Such as a court order, subpoena, or mandatory reporting obligations (e.g., suspected abuse or neglect).
- **Duty of Care:** Where there is an immediate and serious threat to your life, health, or safety, or to the life, health, or safety of another person.
- **NDIS Related:** To the NDIA for funding and compliance purposes, or to NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission for regulatory oversight and investigations.
- **Referrals:** To other service providers or healthcare professionals, with your informed consent, to ensure coordinated and holistic support.

When disclosing your information, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the recipient is bound by similar privacy and confidentiality obligations.

7. Accessing and Correcting Your Information

You have the right to request access to the personal and health information we hold about you. You also have the right to request that any information that you believe is inaccurate, incomplete, irrelevant, or misleading be corrected.

To request access to or correction of your information, please contact us using the details provided below. We will respond to your request within a reasonable timeframe and in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*. We may charge a reasonable fee for providing access, particularly if the request is complex or requires extensive retrieval.

8. Making a Complaint

If you have a concern or believe that your privacy has been breached, or if you are dissatisfied with how your personal or health information has been handled, please contact us immediately using the details below. We take all complaints seriously and will investigate them promptly and fairly.

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can make a complaint to:

- **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC):**
 - Phone: 1300 363 992
 - Website: www.oaic.gov.au
- **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:**
 - Phone: 1800 035 544
 - Website: www.ndiscommission.gov.au

9. Contact Us

If you have any questions about this Personal and Health Information Collection Statement, or how we manage your privacy, please contact:

AWEN Case Management & Advocacy
0434 151 864
support@awencma.com.au
www.awencma.com.au

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