



AWEN Case Management & Advocacy Conflict of Interest Policy (NDIS)

1. Purpose

This policy outlines AWEN Case Management & Advocacy's commitment to identifying, declaring, and managing conflicts of interest. It ensures that our practices align with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Code of Conduct and Practice Standards, prioritising the safety, goals, and independence of our participants at all times.

2. Definition

A **conflict of interest** occurs when a person or organisation has an opportunity to put what will benefit them (their own interests) ahead of the interests of the person they are supporting.

Conflicts can be:

- **Actual:** A direct conflict exists between current duties and personal/organisational interests.
- **Potential:** A situation that may develop into a conflict in the future.
- **Perceived:** A situation where it could appear to a reasonable person that a conflict exists, even if it does not.

3. Risks to the Participant and the NDIS

Conflicts of interest that are not managed effectively can pose risks to a participant's safety and limit their choice and control. Furthermore, unmanaged conflicts can pose a risk to providers and the broader sustainability and integrity of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

4. Service Separation and Management

AWEN Case Management & Advocacy offers a range of supports, specifically:

- Social Worker services
- Therapy Assistant services
- Support Coordination services
- Behaviour Support Services (coming soon)

Delivering multiple supports to a single participant creates an inherent risk of a conflict of interest, particularly when providing Support Coordination alongside capacity-building or core services.

To safeguard participant choice and control, AWEN enforces the following strict separation of duties:

When both Social Work and Support Coordination funding are available in a participant's NDIS plan, the role of a Social Worker and that of the Support Coordinator will be carried out by different people within the organisation.

This mandatory separation ensures AWEN avoids any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, and prevents a single staff member from having undue influence over a participant's funding utilisation.

5. Participant Choice and Control

In addition to the internal separation of roles, AWEN guarantees the following rights to all participants:

- **Transparent Options:** When a participant is receiving Support Coordination from AWEN, they will always be presented with a range of external service providers.
- **No Obligation:** Participants are never required, pressured, or incentivised to use AWEN for their other funded supports.
- **Advocacy:** Our Support Coordinators will act solely in the best interest of the participant, ensuring they find the provider that best meets their specific needs, whether that is AWEN or an external organisation.

6. Staff Responsibilities

All employees, contractors, and management at AWEN Case Management & Advocacy must:

1. Act strictly in the best interests of the NDIS participants they support.
2. Ensure personal, financial, or organisational interests do not influence the advice or support provided.
3. Proactively declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest to AWEN management immediately upon identification.
4. Document all declared conflicts and the agreed-upon mitigation strategies in the participant's file and the organisation's Conflict of Interest Register.

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