

Participant Handbook



Need help to read?

The **National Relay Service** is a free Australia-wide phone service for people who are deaf or who have a hearing or speech impairment.

For **Voice or TTY (teletypewriter)** - call **133 677**

For **Speak and Listen** - call **1300 555 727**

For **SMS relay** – send a text to **0423 677 767**

The **Translation and Interpreting Services (TIS National)** is an interpreting service provided by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection for people who do not speak English and for agencies and businesses that need to communicate with their non-English speaking clients.

Phone **131 450**

Visit www.tisnational.gov.au/

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Welcome to Direct Focus Solutions!

Thank you for letting us help you with your goals.

At Direct Focus Solutions (DFS) we always work together with our clients to learn how to best help them and make them happy.

This handbook will give you and your family important information about your services here at DFS. You will learn about your rights and responsibilities as a client. You will also learn about the responsibilities that DFS has as your provider to support you in your services.

If you have any questions while reading this handbook you can speak to a representative from DFS at any time.

Our team is always happy to help you!

Dominic Fane De Salis, CEO

Our Values



Support clients across their lifespan.



Achieve improved health and wellbeing.



Maximise client potential.



Achieve the best outcomes possible.



Maintain effective communication with clients and stakeholders.



Utilise our multidisciplinary team of professionals.



Evidence-based service delivery.



Flexible and individually tailored service delivery.

Who are we?

- We delivery therapy and supports through disability and community support work, psychology, occupational therapy, speech pathology, and many other areas.
- We work with National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants and any other people who need help with their mental health and wellbeing.
- We provide behavioural and emotional support, assessments, life and social skills, and support for learning difficulties and behaviours of concern.
- We work with our clients, local businesses, and community groups to change the lives of people with disability and build better communities.
- We work with people with disability every day to achieve their health and wellbeing goals.
- We can meet our clients in person or through telehealth.
- Our clinics can be found in Kingsford and Norwest in Sydney, and Wollongong in the Illawarra.

What you can expect

We will provide you with:

- A Service Agreement or Individual Support Plan that we will build together with you to tell us your goals and the types of supports and help you need to reach them.
- Assessments or reports that you need.
- Information about our Feedback and Complaints Policy.
- Therapy and supports that meet your needs and that happen when you want.
- Respect, dignity, and privacy within your services as required by the National Standards for Disability Services.
- Therapy and supports in a way described by all relevant laws, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 and rules, as well as Australian Consumer Law.
- Opportunities to express yourself and your ideas about how therapy and supports are to be delivered to you.

Your Rights

- As an NDIS participant at DFS you have rights. Your rights are outlined in this handbook.
- We will explain your rights to you when we start working together. We will also talk about your rights with you as we deliver your therapy and supports.
- Your rights are protected by law. They are also set out in the National Standards.
- You can ask us for more information about your rights at any time.
- If you are ever unsure about your rights, please let us know. A member of the DFS team can help you to understand this information.
- On page 25, you can find further information. This includes details of who else you can talk to about your rights.

For example, you can talk to an independent advocate about your rights.

You have the right to:



Be treated respectfully at all times.



Be treated fairly regardless of your age, gender, religion, race or ethnicity, cultural background or disability.



Be helped by our team in a professional way.



Get help from us that is appropriate to your needs.



Intimacy and sexual expression.



Work with us to help build you plan and make decisions about you and your supports.



Have information stored privately, securely, and only shared when you ask it to be.



Accurate, relevant, and up-to-date information.



Be represented by an advocate of your choice.



Give DFS feedback or make a complaint.
We will make sure that you get a response back quickly.

Your Responsibilities

- As an NDIS participant at DFS you have certain responsibilities.
- These responsibilities are outlined in this handbook. You can also ask us for more information about your responsibilities at any time.
- We will help explain your responsibilities to you when we start working together. We will also talk about your responsibilities with you as we deliver your therapy and supports.
- If you are ever unsure about your responsibilities, please let us know. A member of the DFS team can help you to understand this information.
- On page 25, we have included links to further information. This includes details of who else you can talk to. For example, you can talk to an independent advocate about your responsibilities.

You and your advocate / trusted decision maker and/or family members will agree to:



Be involved in the development of your Service Agreement or Support Plan, informing DFS how you wish your Services / Supports to be delivered.



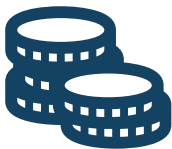
Give DFS the information we need to help you. You will keep us informed of any changes to your personal information.



Tell us if you are receiving any other services or Supports.



Treat DFS staff with courtesy, respect and dignity.



Make sure there is enough funding available for DFS to claim for services that have been booked and provided for you. If we are unable to make a claim to the NDIA because of there is not enough funding, you will be responsible for payment.



Give DFS more than 24 hours of notice if you cannot make a scheduled appointment. If you do not provide us with at least 24 hours notice, the DFS Cancellation Policy will apply.



Talk to us if you have any concerns about the supports being provided to you.



Send us a feedback or complaint form if you are not happy with the services or supports we are giving you.



Talk to us about anything that is a risk to you or may stop you from getting your services or supports.



Tell us right away if you need a copy of any DFS policies or would like more information.



Let us know right away if you would like to make changes to or end your Service Agreement or Support Plan.



Let us know right away if your NDIS plan is suspended, is replaced by a new NDIS plan, or you stop being an NDIS Participant.

Our Responsibilities

Direct Focus Solutions agrees to:

- Help you to access an advocate if needed by referring you to an appropriate service such as Disability Advocacy Finder, or Disability Advocacy NSW.
- Work with you to write down your goals, needs, preferences, and rights. This will be used to help create your Service Agreement or Support Plan.
- Work with you, your advocate / trusted decision maker and/or family members to help you make your own choices, take control over your services, and have your voice heard.
- Regularly review your services and supports with you and your advocate / trusted decision maker.
- Respect you and your cultural values and beliefs.
- Talk with you honestly, openly, and in a timely manner.
- Talk with you in a way that lets us best understand each other. This may involve using an interpreter or translator if needed.
- Tell you all costs involved in your services and supports, including the cost of cancelling an appointment.
- Protect your privacy and confidential information.

- Keep your information online in a safe and secure environment that stops others from seeing it if they are not meant to.
- Show you how to make a complaint if needed. We will also treat you fairly and impartially if you do decide to make a complaint.
- Give you at least 48 hours' notice (where possible) if we have to change when your appointment happens.
- Keep accurate records of the supports and services given to you.
- Send you regular invoices for the supports and services given to you.
- Tell you about all possible risks and benefits that relate to meeting your goals.
- Investigate any incidents that happen and will follow NDIS Incident Management and Reportable Incidents Rules. This includes involving you in the investigation and working with you to decide upon actions and outcomes.
- Not provide you with any financial advice during the delivery of your services or supports.

Quality of Services

Direct Focus Solutions follows the six **National Standards for Disability Services**. These Standards are explained below:



Rights

You have the right to be treated fairly whenever you use disability services.



Participation and inclusion

You can be part of the community and will feel included when you use disability services.



Individual outcomes

We support you to make important choices about what you want to do.



Feedback and complaints

You are allowed to tell people what you think about the services you receive at DFS at any time.



Service access

You have the right to find and use disability services.



Service management

DFS agrees that its disability services must be managed well.

Cancellation Policy

Direct Focus Solutions uses the NDIS cancellation policy, which can be found inside the NDIA Price Guide. We also show this information in our DFS Cancellation Policy.

- You agree to be given your supports and services at the agreed-upon time and place. If you are not where you agreed to be and at the right time to receive your services or supports, this is a missed appointment.
- If you have missed an appointment, we will charge you 100% of the fee for the support or service.
- If it is more than 24 hours before your appointment is to happen and you tell us that you cannot be at your appointment, you will not need to be charged.
- If it is less than 24 hours before your appointment is to happen and you tell us that you cannot be at your appointment, we will charge you 100% of the fee for the support or service.

Costs

- The cost of our services are the same as what is written in the NDIS Price Schedule and the NDIS Support Catalogue for the current year.
- You can see these prices online by visiting this page:

www.ndis.gov.au/providers/pricing-arrangements
- We will tell you how much your supports and services will cost within your Service Agreement or Support Plan.
- If you would like to know more about our prices, you can talk to us at any time.

Payments

DFS will ask for payment after we have given you the supports or services that you have asked for. How we ask for payment is different based on how your NDIS Plan is managed.

Self Managed

- DFS will send you or your representative an invoice for those supports and services that need to be paid. You or your representative will need to pay the invoice within 14 days.
- You can pay the invoice by direct bank transfer, credit card, or online.

NDIA Managed

- DFS will send an invoice for those supports and services that need to be paid to the NDIA. The NDIA will then pay for the service or support if you have enough funding.

Plan Managed

- DFS will send an invoice for those supports and services that need to be paid to your nominated Plan Manager. They will then pay for the service or support if you have enough funding. Your Service Agreement or Support Plan will list who your nominated Plan Manager is.

Privacy

- You can give consent for other people to give DFS your information. We will only collect this information to help us deliver the supports or services you need.
- Consent means that you say “yes.”
- You do not have to give us all of your personal information. You can give us as much information as you want. But if you do not give consent or allow us to have certain information, we might not be able to give you the supports and services you need.
- Your personal information is confidential. This means that we will keep the things we know about you private.
- Private means that we will not tell people about your information unless we have to.
- There are laws DFS must follow to help protect your personal and sensitive information.
- Personal and sensitive information could be about:
 - Your name and date of birth
 - Where you live
 - Your health and disability information
- We can get your personal and sensitive information from:
 - You
 - Someone who helps you

- We can use your personal and sensitive information to help us:
 - Give you services and supports
 - Contact you
- We may tell other people your personal and sensitive information because they help give you the supports and services that you need.
- We may also need to tell other people about your personal and sensitive information without your consent:
 - If you tell us that you plan to hurt yourself or someone else
 - If your information is required by the law
 - To review our service to you
- There are other important times we will need to share your personal and sensitive information. These may include:
 - The death of a person with disability
 - Serious injury of a person with disability
 - Abuse or neglect of a person with disability
 - Unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, a person with disability
 - Sexual misconduct, committed against, or in the presence of, a person with disability, including grooming of a person with disability for sexual activity
 - Unauthorised use of restrictive practices relating to a person with disability
- DFS will always follow the guidelines set by the NDIS.

Feedback and Complaints

Your feedback matters to us. Sharing your feedback, complaints, or compliments with us helps DFS better support you and other NDIS participants.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint, you or your advocate / trusted decision maker can contact us using this information:



Talk

You can speak to any DFS team member, such as a support worker, or ask to talk with their manager.



Phone

You can call our phone number on **1300 197 949** at any time and we will do our best to help you.



Email

You can send an email to us at **contact@directfocussolutions.com.au**



Write

You can ask any DFS team member for a paper copy of a Feedback Form or a Complaint Form.

You can also fill in these forms online below:

Feedback Form:

<https://directfocussolutions.snapforms.com.au/form/clients---client-feedback-form>

Complaint Form:

<https://directfocussolutions.snapforms.com.au/form/clients---client-complaint-form>

You can also help us by filling in a quick two-minute feedback form that can be found at this link:

<https://directfocussolutions.snapforms.com.au/form/service-feedback>

Or by visiting the link using your phone camera using the QR code below:



What happens when I make a complaint?

1

Once you make a complaint, one of our friendly team members will respond as soon as possible.

2

If it is not a complaint of a serious nature, one of our team members will help you in person to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

3

If the complaint is of a more serious nature, it will be sent to our Quality Assurance Manager to review.

4

The Quality Assurance Manager and DFS Upper Management will investigate your complaint and may contact you or your representative / advocate to discuss it in greater detail.

5

Appropriate responses to resolve the issue will be decided within 7 days of your complaint being made. We will contact you or your representative / advocate about them.



DFS will then try to resolve the issue for you as soon as possible. You or your representative / advocate will be asked if what we did to resolve the issue was successful.



DFS will always try to use your complaint to make changes to how our services and supports are given to NDIS Participants and make them better in future.

Who else can I speak with?

If you are not happy with how your complaint was resolved, or you feel that you cannot talk to DFS about your feedback or complaint, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission can help you.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission



Phone
1800 035 544



Email
contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au



Online Complaint Form
<https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF>

For further information on how you can make a complaint, please ask to see the DFS Client Complaint Policy. You can also read the NDIS Commission's Fact Sheet on How to Make a Complaint. A link to this sheet can be found below:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/making-complaint>

Transfer Policy

- DFS will discuss any potential transfer with you or your representative / trusted decision maker to make sure you know all of the options to are available to you.
- We will also discuss the transfer with your new team member or service provider. We will agree to a start date and end date for a compliant handover of records to ensure a seamless transfer.
- DFS will fully support all participants who wish to change provider to be able to do so as smoothly as possible with minimal interruption to services.
- How this happens is written within our Client Discharge and Offboarding Policy and Procedure.
- Whenever DFS receives a new NDIS participant from an existing provider, we will request as much information as possible from the provider.
- DFS will request to have a three-way handover meeting and offer alternate communication methods to help the participant feel as supported as possible during the transition.
- We will spend time with the participant to better understand the reasons why they moved from their previous provider. If it was because of a complaint or conflict, we will ensure the participants service delivery has mitigations in place to avoid this.

- Where a participant has requested to transfer from DFS to another provider, we will make sure the transition process is as seamless as possible for the participant by:
 - Securely handing over relevant notes
 - Speaking directly to the new provider
 - Offering to support a three-way handover appointment if the participant or advocate have completed the appropriate privacy forms and given their consent to do so
- As part of this process, DFS will also collect and record any relevant feedback on the service received to inform future delivery.
- This feedback will be documented, analysed, and existing processes and procedures adjusted appropriately to ensure the risk of the event occurring again is reduced, if not mitigated.
- Reading an outline of this process will be mandatory within the DFS onboarding and induction training for new NDIS staff.
- All participant transfer documentation will be securely recorded within DFS's internal systems where privacy and compliance guidelines are maintained and upheld to high standards.
- Risk analyses will be conducted and the documents at each transfer in or out from DFS reviewed. Findings will be reportable to DFS Board of Directors for review during their regular meetings.

For More Information

The NDIS website has many useful resources:

- www.ndis.gov.au/

To find an NDIS Advocate in your area, visit:

- www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/disability-advocacy

A helpful NDIS Glossary of words can be found here:

- www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/glossary

For a guide to understanding the NDIS, visit:

- <https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding>

For more information about NDIS processes, visit:

- <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants>

For more information about Making Service Agreements:

- <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/working-providers/making-service-agreement>

The **National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline** is a free, independent and confidential service for reporting abuse and neglect of people with disability.

To make a report, contact the Hotline on **1800 880 052** or send an email to: **hotline@workfocus.com**

How You Can Contact Us

Direct Focus Solutions



Phone
1300 197 949



Email
contact@directfocussolutions.com.au



Website
www.directfocussolutions.com.au



In Person

DFS Kingsford

- 42 Gardeners Road, Kingsford, NSW 2032

DFS Norwest

- 3.05/29-31 Solent Circuit, Norwest, NSW 2153

DFS Wollongong

- 116 Kembla Street, Wollongong, NSW 2500