

Service User Support Policy

1. Purpose

Inala Community House (ICH) is committed to delivering high quality and effective services through the provision of responsive service delivery.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all Inala Community House policies, procedures and any relevant legislation. Services may also have policies and procedures which operate pursuant to this policy.

This policy operates pursuant to the ICH *Commitment to Community Policy* and in conjunction with the ICH *Service User Protection Policy*.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, Board members, volunteers, students, trainees and contractors. For the purposes of this policy, these persons shall be referred to as workers.

3. Policy

ICH seeks to provide services which are consistent with the mission, vision and values including:

- Focusing on People
- Providing Safe and Supportive Spaces
- Working Together
- Delivering Quality Services

This policy uses these values as a framework to develop principles of service delivery and service user rights when engaging with ICH services.

3.1 Service User Rights

Service users have the right to:

- Have their legal and human rights upheld
- Be treated with dignity and respect, and to receive services without exploitation, abuse or neglect
- Feel physically and emotionally safe, secure and valued
- Experience high quality responsive services from workers which maintain professional boundaries and consistent service delivery where possible
- Receive services which are appropriate to their needs where individual choice and control are promoted
- Maintain their personal independence. This includes a recognition of personal responsibility for their own actions and choices, even though some actions may involve an element of risk. Service users have the right to make decisions, while being fully informed of the risks, and to accept those risks. These decisions should not be prevented or restricted.

- Receive services without discrimination or victimisation
- Personal privacy and to have their confidential information safeguarded
- Provide feedback or make a complaint about services received
- Have a support person present

ICH will seek to maintain a service users' rights by having effective systems which seek to safeguard and recognise these rights.

ICH will seek to act and make decisions in a way that gives proper consideration and is compatible with human rights (see the ICH *Human Rights Policy*).

The ICH *Client Service Charter* outlines what service users can expect from ICH, this includes:

- Quality Responsive Services
- Courtesy and Respect
- Fair and Equal Services
- Accountability
- Confidentiality

3.2 Provision of Services

3.2.1 Access and Equity

ICH is committed to providing equitable and accessible services to stakeholders inclusive of culture, gender and disability.

ICH values diversity and aims to move beyond focusing on legislative responsibilities to an approach that focuses on recognising, respecting and valuing a range of social and cultural differences amongst service user groups which allows increased access, participation and achievement.

ICH believes that achieving access and equity requires an ongoing evaluation process which is responsive to community needs.

ICH will provide services based on the following principles:

- Access – services will be available to eligible participants and will be free from any form of discrimination irrespective of a person's country of birth, gender, age, language, culture, religion or sexual identity
- Equity – services will be delivered in a way which promotes fair treatment of all people
- Communication – effective communication between ICH and service users is essential and should be tailored as necessary to promote service user engagement
- Responsiveness – services will respond to the needs and preferences of service users and take into consideration their individual circumstances
- Effectiveness – services will be results orientated and focused on supporting and empowering service users to achieve their goals

If a service or program reaches maximum capacity, service users may be placed on a waitlist. Waitlisting shall occur only where the service user cannot or chooses not to be referred to another appropriate organisation. Service users who are waitlisted will be prioritised by consideration of any human rights issues or harm.

3.2.2 Implementation

ICH provides services which:

- Uphold the human and legal rights of all people
- Promote individual dignity and respect
- Focus on recognising each person as an individual
- Are responsive to service user strengths, needs and preferences
- Promote physical and emotional safety
- Promote individual choice and control

ICH services are tailored to the needs, goals and strengths of the service user and are committed to having systems which recognises these factors and ensure that services are delivered in a relevant and appropriate manner.

To effectively achieve this, an assessment process needs to be completed which may vary across different services. This assessment should seek to focus on identifying the needs and goals of individuals, groups or communities and any barriers in accessing or engaging with services.

ICH recognises that to achieve optimal outcomes for service users, professional and respectful relationships must be built with service users and, if applicable, their support network. This requires workers to create a safe and non-judgemental space where people do not feel judged.

ICH promotes a strengths based approach to providing services which focuses on the recognition of successes, strengths and achievements of the service user as a basis for building their capacity, particularly when dealing with challenging issues. A proper utilisation of the strengths based approach works towards a respectful and meaningful relationship between workers and service users.

The strengths based approach:

- Focuses on building trusting and professional relationships
- Empowers people to take the lead in service delivery
- Focuses on working collaboratively upon mutually agreed goals
- Envisions and acknowledges positive change and achievement of goals through the utilisation of individual strengths and achievements
- Creates sustainable change through learning and experiential growth

Supports will be provided based on the least intrusive options, in accordance with contemporary evidence-informed practices that meet service user needs and help achieve desired outcomes.

Communication with each service user about the services provided shall be responsive to their needs and be provided in the language, mode of communication and terms that the

service user is most likely to understand (in accordance with the *Working With Diverse Peoples Procedure*).

ICH will seek to make any reasonable adjustments to ensure responsive service delivery to ensure that service users' privacy, dignity, quality of life and independence is supported.

Throughout a service user's engagement with ICH, services delivered shall be periodically reviewed either at a pre-determined point, based upon changes in the service user's circumstances or upon organisational requirements. This review will determine if services delivered provide effective support to empower the individual to meet their goals/needs.

Throughout all stages of service engagement, workers must identify and respond to any risks to the individual. ICH recognises that individuals have the right to dignity of choice and to also be fully informed about different options that they may take even if that decision is not the recommended option.

3.2.3 *Working With Stakeholders*

ICH recognises and acknowledges the vital role that families, friends, support networks and chosen communities play in the life of the service user. Services will have processes which seek to engage, inform and consult all relevant persons in accordance with the wishes, needs and with the consent of the service user.

ICH will also support service users to have an independent advocate or support person at all stages of their engagement with the service. Where appropriate, ICH will provide information and contact details for support or advocacy services (as relevant/requested).

ICH is committed to collaborating with other relevant stakeholders which may include partnerships and linkages with other organisations and agencies who may be able to provide additional support or who are already providing support to the service user. Any engagement with or information shared with other organisations and agencies relating to a service user shall be in accordance with the service user's wishes and with their consent.

3.2.4 *Service User Protection*

ICH seeks to ensure the safety of all people accessing services. The *ICH Service User Protection Policy* outlines ICH's commitment to ensuring safety and includes information about mandatory reporting requirements. All workers must familiarise themselves with this policy in addition to any service reporting requirements.

3.2.5 *Evaluation*

All services will be reviewed to ensure that they are effective and meet the needs of individuals or groups. These reviews will form part of ICH's continuous improvement process.

Reviews may occur as a result of different processes such as:

- Monthly reports
- Review of feedback and complaints
- Audits
- Reviews, updates and implementation of policies, procedures and other relevant documents
- Incidents

3.2.6 *Feedback and Complaints*

ICH welcomes all feedback from service users and their support networks. The ICH *Feedback and Complaints Policy* provides information about how feedback and complaints are handled along with service user rights in making the complaint.

4. Review

This policy shall be reviewed every 2 years.

This policy remains in effect unless otherwise determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.

5. Related Documents

Policies

ICH Commitment to Community Policy
ICH Code of Conduct Policy
ICH Confidentiality Policy
ICH Human Rights Policy
ICH Service User Protection Policy
ICH Feedback and Complaints Policy
ICH Quality and Compliance Policy

Procedures

ICH Working With Diverse Peoples Procedure

Other Documents

ICH Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
ICH Client Service Charter