

Fairholme Disability Support Group Inc.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION, CONSULTATION WITH FAMILIES AND/OR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS



Enriching the lives of people with disability, mental illness, families, significant others and carers.

DEFINITIONS – For the purposes of the Fairholme Disability Support Group Operational Guidelines for Effective Engagement, Communication and Consultation with Families and/or Significant Others [Stakeholders] the following definitions apply.

- **Engagement** – refers to engaging with those who share your visions, to achieve positive solutions for people with disabilities. It is acknowledging diversity and learning from others.
- **Communication** – refers to how one effectively conveys information and expresses thoughts and facts. Demonstrates effective use of listening skills and displays openness to other people's ideas and thoughts.
- **Consultation** – refers to formal structures and processes through which views are sought from stakeholders with the objective of informing decision-making.
- **Stakeholders** – refers to family members and/or significant others e.g. guardian, advocate, etc.

PURPOSE

Fairholme Disability Support Group Management Committee in accordance with its Constitution in particular its Objects is responsible for achieving the best possible service delivery outcomes for all who they represent in accordance with relevant legislation, acts, policies, procedures, guidelines and disability services standards. To achieve as far as practicable the best quality of life for all who they represent [stakeholders] it is important to listen to those who they represent and where assistance is required to help them to identify their goals and aspirations it is important to engage, communicate and consult with those who they represent that is family members and/or significant others [stakeholders]. In applying effective engagement, communication, consultation with stakeholders to generate best practice, the following principles will be applied.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

- **Disability Services Act – Schedules 1 & 2**
- **Disability Service Standard 3 – Decision Making and Choice:** Each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his/her daily life in relation to the services he/she receives.

In achieving the above it is acknowledged that all including but not limited to residents receiving services from organisations such as DSC, Workpower, Activ etc may require assistance in making decisions and may require the support of their stakeholder/s e.g. parents, family members, carers and significant others.

PRINCIPLES

- Respect the rights of all who they represent including their individual capacity to act and be involved directly in decision making that impacts on them focusing on achieving a good life.

- Establish and maintain positive relationships with all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure all communication with stakeholder/s is sensitive to each individual and stakeholders needs including but not limited to emotional, psychological, lifestyles and cultural backgrounds.
- Access to interpreters, translated materials and other resources will be provided as far as is practicable to achieve effective communications.
- Stakeholder/s are to be provided with information about services, its objectives and outcomes where applicable and as appropriate.
- Ensure consultation occurs with all who they represent and their stakeholder/s when developing programs and enhancement of opportunities through various mediums including but not limited to employment, cultural, spiritual, recreational, medical inclusive of behaviour management and financial matters.
- Ensure that least restrictive practices, as far as is practicable, are adopted.
- Ensure that all stakeholders are encouraged to contribute their suggestions regarding any aspect associated with the services provided through various mediums with, but not limited to line managers.
- Continue to develop strategies with stakeholders, which contribute to a partnership approach that enhances knowledge through information sharing to achieve the most positive outcomes for residents.
- Stakeholders will be provided with information (as applicable) regarding life changes at the earliest opportunity as well as planning for changes such as employment, health and retirement.
- Respect and practice confidentiality at all times.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Fairholme Disability Support Group's Management Committee assumes a delegated responsibility for overseeing service delivery for all who they represent [stakeholders] to ensure that all communication and information exchanges that occur between the stakeholder/s is appropriate and timely. This in no way detracts from what parents, family members, carers and significant others wish to pursue in their own right. However, where a co-ordinated approach can be facilitated it would be beneficial to all concerned.

Stakeholders are very much encouraged to participate/be involved in meaningful, useful and effective decision-making. Building of positive relationships and listening, and respecting each others point of view forms the basis of good collaboration and focuses on good outcomes for each resident.

Fairholme Disability Support Group Management Committee and stakeholders are mutually responsible for respecting each others point of view and it is important that each understands the parameters the service is required to operate within and the framework decisions can be made in. Where stakeholders are not satisfied with any aspect of service delivery they can refer the matter to the appropriate persons within the organization, which they are involved with.

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES AVAILABLE TO FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION [Examples]

Individual Lifestyle Plan and Reviews – This is one of the main tools used by DSC staff to identify areas specific to a resident during a twelve-month annual cycle and focuses on a holistic approach. An action plan is developed and monitored by the resident's Key-Worker¹

¹ The key-worker is a direct care staff member allocated to support a resident to meet the day-to-day needs and is not the sole decision maker; they are one of a number of key people involved in the resident's life. (Refer Key Worker document/guidelines).

and Local Area Supervisor during the annual cycle. This may be changed by agreement throughout the year.

Employment Individual Plan and Reviews – This is the main tool used by Workpower staff to identify areas specific to a person [employed] with a disability or mental illness during a twelve month annual cycle and focuses on a holistic approach. An action plan is developed and monitored by the person's xxxxxxxx and xxxxxxxxSupervisor during the annual cycle. This may be changed by agreement throughout the year.

ONGOING REQUESTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS FOR INFORMATION

Fairholme Disability Support Group representatives e.g. Management Committee have no authority to acquire any personal information unless provided specifically given to act and then conveyed to a third party.

Notwithstanding this as an example is the manner how DSC conducts its business. When line managers receive requests for information from stakeholder/s the following applies.

- A copy of daily recording sheets can be provided as agreed. All reference to other residents will be removed;
- Behaviour Support and Therapy Team reports (e.g. psychologist, speech pathologist) require the permission of the author or the author's Supervisor before they can be released;
- Reports from other agencies or private practitioners cannot be released. These requests shall be directed to the author or the author's agency; and
- Financial details (e.g. weekly expenditure sheets) may be released once signed off by the Local Area Manager.

This information will be collated and distributed by the line manager as agreed in accordance with stakeholder requirements, which will be determined from time to time and reviewed at each resident Individual Lifestyle Plan and Review meeting. The agreement as to what is expected by each stakeholder/s will be clearly articulated and signed off accordingly. Whilst every endeavor is made to provide the requested information in a timely manner other operational matters may impact on the capacity to meet the specified timelines.

- Requests by stakeholders for specific staff members to support a resident at appointments etc will where possible, be accommodated so long as the staff member is on shift at the time of the appointment and has no other previous commitments related to the operations of the house; and
- Meeting requests will be arranged through the relevant Local Area Supervisor and/or Local Area Manager.

It is important to note that all written documents are the property of the Commission and are required to be maintained, held and archived in accordance with the Commission's Record Keeping Standards and the State Records Act 2000. This Act defines what is a record as well as covering how, why and how long those records should be retained; confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

Any request for information in addition to what has been referenced above will be directed to the relevant person e.g. Manager Accommodation Services via the relevant Local Area Manager.

CORRESPONDENCE (INCLUDING COMPLAINTS)

Response timeframes for verbal and written correspondence

- Written correspondence (e-mails, letters, faxes) to Fairholme Disability Support Group Management Committee from stakeholders, where practicable, will be acknowledged verbally or written within 5 working days and should give an approximate time as to when a full response will be sent;
- Detailed responses to contents of all correspondence will be forwarded within 2 weeks of receipt unless extra time is required to gather information; however, responses should not exceed 6 weeks. Advice of any delay will be communicated;
- Verbal correspondence, where a message is left on voice mail (mobile or landline) will be responded to within 48 hours except where the matter is of an urgent nature; and
- All stakeholders are encouraged depending upon the nature of the concern to raise the matter in the first instance with those most familiar with the issue, that is e.g. in DSC Local Area Supervisor, Local Area Manager, Manager Accommodation Services or Workpower, Activ etc etc.

Complaints

- Written and/or verbal complaints will be addressed according to Fairholme Disability Support Group's Complaints Policy; and
- As an example with respect to DSC all concerns / complaints where practicable will be addressed in the first instance at a local level. However, where this is not able to occur there is a mechanism in place, which is dedicated to addressing complaints, which cannot be addressed locally. The Consumer Liaison Officer's role is to handle complaints and can be contacted via the Commission's West Perth Office on 9426 9200.
- It is understood that all of the key organisations, which undertake activities for people with disability have appropriate complaint handling mechanisms.

RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FOR THESE ARRANGEMENTS

It is usual procedural practice that the relevant Manager of the service provision will initiate any meetings with the stakeholder/s to discuss appropriate immediate and subsequent action.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES THAT MAY IMPACT ON STAKEHOLDERS REQUIRING INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

It is important to note that sometimes decisions are made external to Fairholme Disability Support Group that may have an impact on a persons life such as resident e.g. employment, alternatives to employment. It is the external agency or an organisation making the changes primary responsibility for informing the person and at the same time their family and/or significant other as well as other stakeholders of the changes. However, in acknowledging that these changes may have a significant impact on the individual, representatives, as determined by Fairholme Disability Support Group's Management Committee, will liaise with the appropriate stakeholders as soon as it becomes aware of the change/s and the outcome being sought. As stated earlier the Group will be seeking to ensure that the best outcome for all who they represent is achieved.

CONTACT WITH THE GROUP

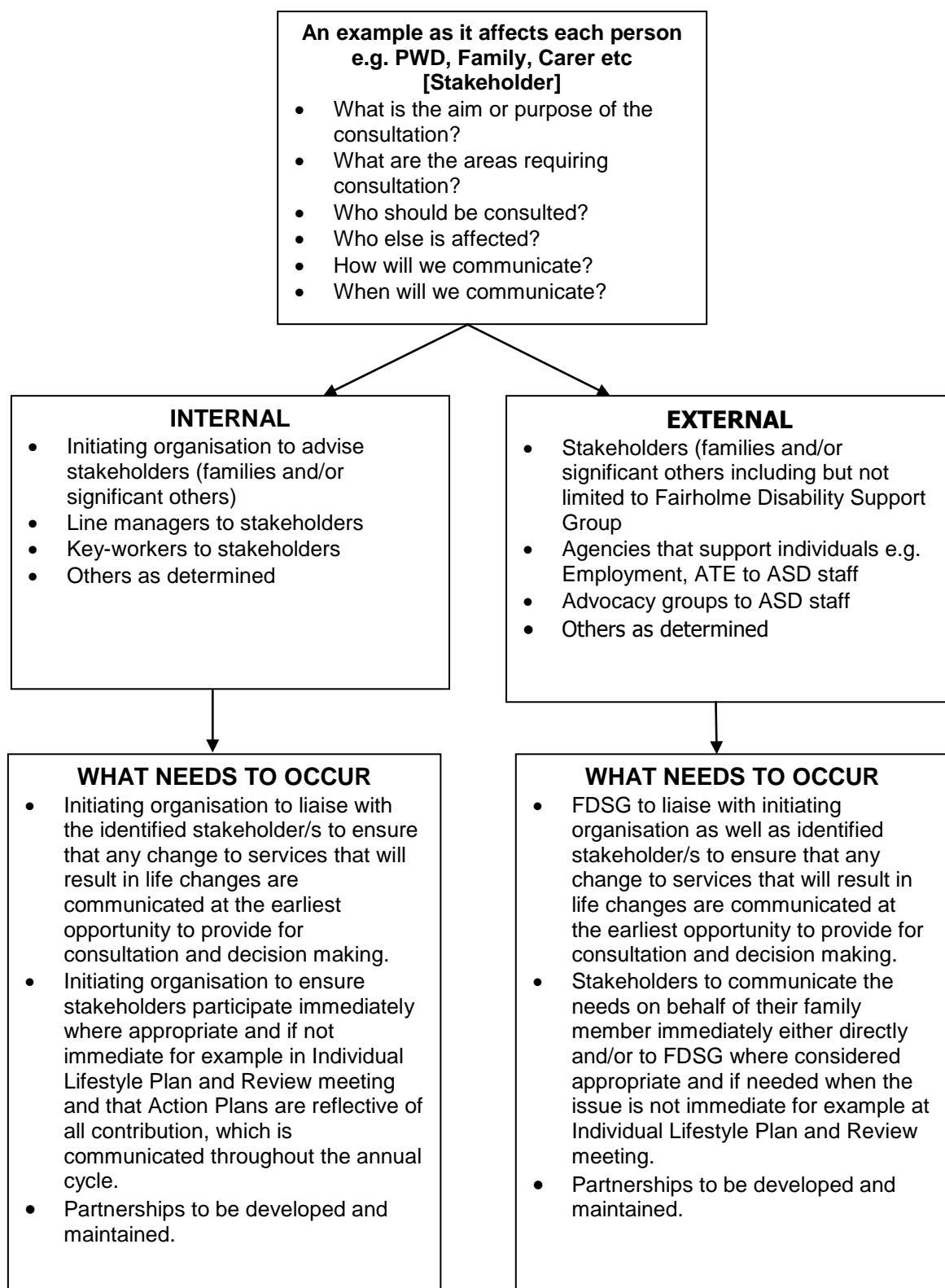
All are encouraged and welcome at any time to make contact with the Management Committee to seek assistance, advice etc on any matter that affects any person with disability, family, carer or significant other.

Acknowledgement

These operational procedures were developed in consultation with representatives of the Fairholme Disability Support Group and representatives from the Disability Services Commission Accommodation Directorate. Disability Services Commission is thanked for allowing the Group to mirror, where applicable, their guidelines etc to ensure as far as practical a consistency of approach and delivery of the best possible outcome.

FAIRHOLME DISABILITY SUPPORT GROUP FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

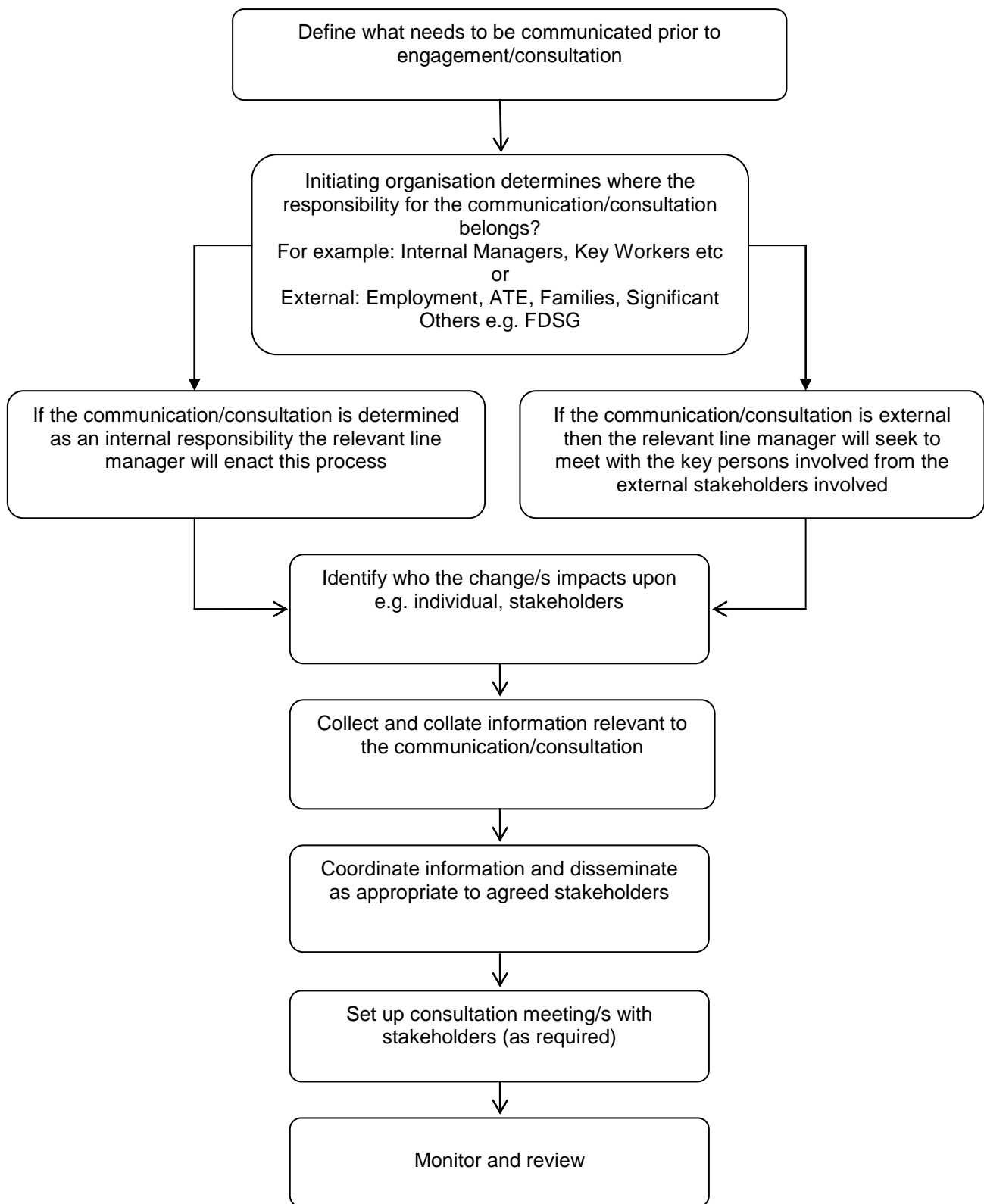
EMPOWER



NB:

- This process does not replace other arrangements and/or agreements reached with stakeholders
- In achieving the above it is acknowledged that residents receiving services from the Commission's Fairholme Disability Support Group may require assistance in making decisions and may require the support of their stakeholder/s.

FAIRHOLME DISABILITY SUPPORT GROUP FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION



Note: The primary initiating organisation/s will ensure that agreed actions are progressed in accordance with the overall stated outcome/s.