



Sharnic Connect

Client Handbook

Legal Name: **D&M Connect Pty Ltd**

Business/Trading name: **Sharnic Connect**

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Introduction

The NDIS Commission aims to uphold the rights of people with disability, including the right to dignity and respect, and to live free from abuse, exploitation, and violence. This is in keeping with Australia's commitment to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

The Commission will achieve this through:

- empowering people with disability to exercise choice and control in the support services they receive, while ensuring appropriate protections are in place
- building the capacity of people with disability, their families, and their carers to make informed decisions about NDIS providers
- responding to and managing concerns and complaints
- supporting a strong and viable market for disability supports and services

Feedback and Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint about the quality or safety of services provided to an NDIS participant, you can make a complaint on behalf of a person with a disability to the [NDIS Commission](#).

If you have complaints or concerns about the way an NDIS providers treats its workers, you can contact the [Fair Work Commission](#).

More information:

- How to make a complaint;
 - <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/document/806>
- Make a complaint (Complaint Contact Form);
 - <https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF>
- NDIS Complaints Management and Resolution; Rules 2018
 - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00634>
- How to make a complaint about a provider
 - <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints>
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy V2.0 – June 2019
 - <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019-06/compliance-and-enforcement-policy-v2-june-2019-word.pdf>
- NDIS Complaints Management
 - <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/complaints-management>

You have the right to raise all your complaints or concerns in the unfortunate event of any incident occurring that did not meet your expectations of care. A formal investigation will commence once we receive a complaint or concern.

Each participant will be provided with information on incident management and investigation outcomes.

You may also complete our 'Complaints Management Form' that has been provided in the 'Welcome Pack' along with this handbook.

All suggestions and feedback are welcome to contribute to the governance of Sharnic Connect and have input into the development of our policies and processes relevant to the provision of services and supports and the protection of participant rights.

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Please feel free to contact us:

Phone: 1300 931 961

Email: hello@sharnicconnect.com.au

Address: PO Box 1302, Bakery Hill, VIC, 3354

Website: www.sharnicconnect.com.au

Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

Sharnic Connect is committed to implementing a system to ensure each participant will receive quality services and supports that respect and protect their dignity and right to privacy by complying with the [‘Privacy Act 1988’](#) and the [‘NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework’](#) requirements and other legal obligations.

To ensure privacy for the Participant when discussing sensitive or personal matters, Sharnic Connect will only collect personal information which is necessary for the quality of provision of services and supports, and given voluntarily to the Provider.

At Sharnic Connect, we will protect and uphold the dignity and right to privacy of the Participant for all personal and confidential information.

All our employees and workers are trained and committed to respect and protect the dignity and right to privacy of the Participant for all personal and confidential information.

Sharnic Connect will make sure that each participant understands and acknowledges to what type of personal information, including recorded material in audio and/or visual format, will be collected and for what reason.

We will provide an interpreter if required for communication with the participant and respect to work with the participant's interpreter or representatives.

All personal and confidential information will only be collected, used, retained and disclosed to other parties such as their advocate by obtaining the Participant’s consent.

We will inform the participant in what circumstances the information could be disclosed, including that the information could be provided without their consent if required or authorised by law.

Sharnic Connect ensures the information is appropriately prevented from misuse, loss, remove, change, unauthorised access and disclosure to, or used by, any other person or organisation.

Each participant can request to have access to the collected information by contacting us via email, mail or phone using the details provided in the ‘Provider Contact Details’ section of

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this 'Client Handbook' at any time to correct their information and withdraw or amend their prior consent.

At Sharnic Connect, we aim to collect and maintain participant information accurately. All documents are stored on a securely protected database with appropriate use, access, transfer, storage, security, retrieval, retention, destruction and disposal processes. As per our Paperless Office Policy, no hard copies of the participants' documents are retained.

The personal information that is no longer required or legally expired will be disposed of. Each participant can make a complaint about a breach of the privacy using the details provided in the 'Feedback and Complaints Policy' section of this 'Client Handbook' and/or complete our 'Complaints Management Form' that has been provided in the 'Welcome Pack'.

Participant Consent Policy

At Sharnic Connect we are committed to protecting participant information, and ensure it is identifiable, accurately recorded, current, confidential, easily accessible to the participant and appropriately utilised by relevant workers.

We only collect personal information which is necessary for the quality of provision of services and supports and given voluntarily to the Provider. This information will also be used to:

- Identify the Participant needs, support requirements, strengths, goals, culture, diversity, values and beliefs
- Manage and improve the process of planning and delivery of the services and supports
- Manage the administrative and financial requirements of the services and supports
- Disclose the information to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, NDIA or other authorities if required
- Disclose the information to health professionals if needed
- Disclose the information to other parties such as the Participant's advocate

Sharnic Connect will make sure that each participant understands and acknowledges what type of personal information, including recorded material in audio and/or visual format will be collected and for what reason.

All personal and confidential information will only be collected, used, retained and disclosed by obtaining the Participant's consent. Please refer to the 'Privacy & Confidentiality Policy' in this 'Client Handbook'.

We will provide an interpreter if required for communication with the participant and respect to work with the participant's interpreter or representatives.

Each participant has the right to gain access to the information we hold about them. Our Privacy & Confidentiality policy contains information on how you may request access to, and correction of, your personal information, and how you may complain about a breach of your privacy and how we will deal with such a complaint.

The Participant's written consent will be obtained through the 'Participant Consent Form' at the start of any new planned activities.

The participant is required to read and understand this 'Participant Consent Policy' and 'Privacy & Confidentiality Policy' and sign the 'Acknowledgement' section of the 'Client Handbook'.

Culture, Diversity, Values & Belief Policy

Sharnic Connect is committed to providing quality services and supports to each participant that respect their culture, diversity, values and beliefs in line with the [‘Cultural and Linguistic Diversity \(CALD\) Strategy 2018’](#) guidelines.

The [‘Cultural and Linguistic Diversity \(CALD\) Strategy 2018’](#) is the NDIA’s public statement of commitment to working alongside people with disability from CALD backgrounds to achieve access to, and outcomes from, their NDIS Plan on an equal basis with the broader population.

More than a quarter of Australians (26 per cent) were born overseas, and of these, two-thirds were born in non-English speaking countries. Historically, Australians from culturally diverse backgrounds have been underrepresented in the disability sector.

The NDIA recognises that people with disability from a CALD background can face additional challenges in terms of inclusion in their communities, and this extends to their ability to access the NDIS and supports.

At Sharnic Connect the participant’s right to practice their culture, values and beliefs while accessing supports is supported.

Our workers are inducted to recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds and allow participants to practice their culture, values and beliefs while accessing supports.

Participant needs, support requirements, strengths, goals, culture, diversity, values and beliefs specified by the participant including the inputs from their family/support network are identified during the Initial Assessment Process and documented in the ‘Initial Assessment & Intake Form’.

Participants preferences such as the same language, same culture or specific criteria will be considered, where possible.

Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation & Discrimination Policy

Sharnic Connect is committed to providing quality services and supports that are free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination, and has established a process to actively prevent these incidents.

Sharnic Connect recognises the right of the participant to feel safe and to live in an environment where they are protected from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination.

At Sharnic Connect we encourage and support any person to report any type of incident including violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination during the services and supports.

All participants and/or their representative must report any incidents including violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination by using the details provided in the 'Feedback and Complaints Policy' section of this 'Client Handbook' and/or complete our 'Complaints Management Form' that has been provided in the 'Welcome Pack'.

Where violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination has occurred, Sharnic Connect will respond promptly to protect the Participant from any further harm. Sharnic Connect will manage all incidents against the ['NDIS-Incident Management and Reportable Incidents-Rules 2018'](#) and organisational requirements of our 'Incident Management Policy & Procedure'.

Records are made of any details and outcomes of reviews and investigations (where applicable) and action is taken to prevent similar incidents occurring again.

We respect the participant's right to access an advocate. Please refer to the 'Right to access an Advocate Policy' in this 'Client Handbook'.

Decision Making Policy

Sharnic Connect is committed to delivering quality services and supports to each participant that provide informed choices, as well as exercise control to them, and maximise their independence relating to the supports provided.

“People with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to be able to determine their own best interests, including the right to exercise choice and control, and to engage as equal partners in decisions that will affect their lives, to the full extent of their capacity.” *

“People with disability should be involved in decision-making processes that affect them, and where possible, make decisions for themselves.” *

[* National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#)

At Sharnic Connect we will support the Participant to:

- understand relevant information
- retain or remember relevant information
- use or weigh up relevant information
- communicate the decision in words, gestures or by other means.

Sharnic Connect facilitates the environmental factors, such as the quality of support relationships, and the availability of someone willing to provide support, to shape the Participant’s ability to make a decision.

Participant’s representatives can assist the participant in making a decision where there is no conflict about it, and where it does not jeopardise the wellbeing of the participant. This decision should be based on the participant’s wishes and preferences.

An advocate can promote the wishes and preferences of the participant and seek to enable them to access services and support.

At Sharnic Connect, the participant’s autonomy to make their individual choices, as well as their right to intimacy and sexual expression, is respected.

The benefits and risks of the participant’s options and decisions will be advised to the participant.

We will allow sufficient time to the participant to consider and review their options and seek advice at any time.

We respect the participant's right to access an advocate. Please refer to the 'Right to access an advocate Policy' in this 'Client Handbook'.

We will provide an interpreter if required for communication with the participant and respect to work with the participant's interpreter or representatives.

Right to Access and Advocate Policy

At Sharnic Connect, we respect the participant's right to access and engage an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf.

One of the purposes of the NDIS is to provide funding for reasonable and necessary supports to enable eligible individuals to:

- make decisions that will affect their lives, to the extent of their ability
- achieve their goals, objectives and aspirations
- maximise their independence
- increase their social and economic participation
- develop their capacity to take part in the community actively *

* [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#)

Advocacy for people with disability can be defined as speaking, acting or writing with minimal conflict of interest on behalf of the interests of a disadvantaged person or group, to promote, protect and defend the welfare of and justice for either the person or group by:

- Acting in a partisan manner (i.e. being on their side and no one else's);
- Being primarily concerned with their fundamental needs;
- Remaining loyal and accountable to them in a way which is empathic and vigorous (whilst respecting the rights of others); and
- Ensuring the duty of care at all times. **

** [National Disability Advocacy Program \(NDAP\)](#)

The Participant may use an advocate:

- during the initial assessment and planning as well as review process
- once an incident including violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination occurs
- to provide feedback or make a complaint
- for any communication between the Participant and Sharnic Connect.

We will allow sufficient time to the participant to consider and review their options and seek advice at any time. The benefits and risks of the options will be advised to the participant.

We will provide the information in written or verbal to the Participant about the use of an advocate (including an independent advocate) and access to an advocate is facilitated

where allegations of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination have been made, as well as information on how to give feedback or make a complaint.

At Sharnic Connect, we aim to create a supportive environment for any person who provides feedback and/or makes complaints.

We will support the Participant where they request assistance, by providing the information on the types of individual advocacy.

A confirmation will be obtained from the Participant / Participant's representative to authorise the advocate to act on behalf of the participant. 'Authority to engage an advocate' form will be signed by the Participant.

The [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#) defines an independent advocate, in relation to a person with a disability, to mean a person who:

- is independent of the Agency, the Commission and any NDIS providers providing supports or services to the person with a disability
- provides independent advocacy for the person with a disability, to assist the person with a disability to exercise choice and control and to have their voice heard in matters that affect them
- acts at the direction of the person with a disability, reflecting the person with a disability's expressed wishes, will, preferences and rights
- is free of relevant conflicts of interest.

The Act acknowledges the important role of advocates (including independent advocates) and other representatives of persons with disability; and requires registered NDIS providers to cooperate with, and facilitate arrangements for, advocates (including independent advocates) and other representatives of persons with disability who are affected by complaints or incidents and who wish to be independently supported in that process by an advocate or other representative.

For further information on disability advocacy and finding a disability advocate, see: the [Disability Advocacy Finder](#).

Conflict of Interest Policy

Sharnic Connect is committed to managing conflicts of interest in an open and transparent manner at all levels in the organisation, and to complying with NDIS rules and other obligations.

“Conflict of interest occurs when an individual or an NDIS provider is in a position to exploit their own professional or official capacity for a personal or corporate benefit (other than in the usual course of charging fees for services or supports rendered).” *

[*The NDIS Code of Conduct - 2018](#)

A conflict of interest may affect the way a person acts, decisions they make, or the way they vote on group decisions.

We will ensure that each participant will be treated equally, and no participant will be given preferential treatment above another in the receipt or provision of supports.

Sharnic Connect will act proactively to manage perceived and actual conflicts of interest through development and maintenance of organisational policies to ensure that personal or individual interests do not impact on the organisation's services, activities or decisions.

We also will:

- ensure our organisational or ethical values do not impede a participant’s right to choice and control
- manage, document and report on individual conflicts as they arise
- ensure that advice to a participant about support options (including those not delivered directly by the Provider) is transparent and promotes choice and control.

Declaration and management of conflicts of interest are specifically required for management members as part of their legal responsibilities as management members.

Our management team, employees, and workers:

- are always required to act in the interests of the organisation, and to notify the organisation when this conflicts with other interests or commitments
- will present each participant with a range of choices about providers of supports and not only Sharnic Connect
- will not seek to influence the customer to select Sharnic Connect
- will never accept any offer of money, gifts, services or benefits that would cause them to act in a manner contrary to the interests of an NDIS participant

- must have no financial or other personal interest that could directly or indirectly influence or compromise the choice of Sharnic Connect or provision of supports to the Participant
- may accept meals, drinks, or entertainment only if such courtesies are unsolicited, infrequently provided, and reasonable in amount.

Sharnic Connect will ensure that when providing services and supports to the Participant under the NDIS, any conflict of interest is declared and any risks to the Participant are mitigated.

Emergency and Disaster Policy

This Policy outlines the structures and processes in place for the management of emergencies and disasters that Sharnic Connect has in place. This is designed to identify, manage and mitigate risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of participants that may arise in an emergency or disaster. This includes ensuring that measures are in place to ensure continuity of supports.

As Sharnic Connect provides a mobile-only service (no central office that staff work from or that participants attend), this policy addresses the responses to emergency and disasters that will impact on the remote delivery of Support Coordination and Plan Management services.

In the event of an identified emergency or disaster, the responsible person/s, as noted in the Delegated Authority Policy, activates the Emergency and Disaster Action Plan.

Participants are able to this policy through the Sharnic Connect Client Handbook, and the Service Agreement.

Employees, contractors and volunteers have access via the Sharnic Connect Staff Handbook. They are required to review the policy and associated plans as part of the employee induction process.

The Emergency and Disaster Action plan is reviewed as part of the regular Audit Cycle.

In the event of a declared Emergency or Disaster, participants can expect that their Support Coordinator, Plan Manager or Client Manager will be in touch to review their situation and ensure that their supports are still actively in place. As part of the intake process, all Sharnic Connect clients are risk assessed, and this is reviewed during an active emergency.

During the intake process, each participant will be provide with the contact details for their allocated Support Coordinator or Plan Manager, and are also provided with general contact details if they cannot reach their assigned contact. These details are included in Sharnic Connect's Service Agreement and in the last page of this document.

Related Documents:

- Access and Continuity of Supports Policy
- Service Agreement.

Provider Contact Details

Contact name:	Nicole Gadd
Phone:	1300 931 961
Email:	hello@sharnicconnect.com.au
Website:	www.sharnicconnect.com.au
Address:	49 Keilor Park Drive, Keilor Park, VIC, 3042
Postal Address:	PO Box 1302, Bakery Hill, VIC, 3354
Alternative Contact Person (name and number):	Sharron Ward; 0402 202 431; sharon@sharnicconnect.com.au

At Sharnic Connect, we will provide an interpreter if required for communication with the participant and respect to work with participant's interpreter or representatives.

Acknowledgment

I, _____ (Participant / Participant's representative) have read and understood the information provided in this 'Client Handbook'.

Participant

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Participant's representative (if applicable):

Name:

Date:

Signature: