

PURPOSE

Nextt aims to uphold the right of clients make decisions and choices around their support needs and balance this with dignity of risk. This document aims to provide direction to key employees on support clients to make informed choices and have their supports reflect their wishes and a safe and empowering manner

SCOPE

This policy applies to all roles involved in the onboarding or ongoing supports for clients

DEFINITIONS

Key Term	Definition
Guardian/Substitute decision maker	A person who is deemed to legally be able to make decisions on behalf on an individual. This may be a court appointment independent person or a family member or close person as defined in relevant state based legislation
Clinician/Practitioner	Any professional who is involved with the person about decisions that impact on the support that they receive. For example, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech pathologist, psychologist, registered nurse, doctor, etc
Dignity of Risk	The concept of affording a person the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks, and that the impeding of this right can limit or impact on personal growth, skill development, self-esteem and their overall quality of life
Duty of care	legal responsibility set up to ensure people are not harmed by the services an organisation and its employees provide.
Record	Any form or statement of procedure by which Nextt directs its employees to deliver service to a client in accordance with their stated choices and wishes of the customer or a substitute decision maker

POLICY STATEMENT

Every person has the right to experience and learn from life, to take advantage of opportunities, develop skills and independence, even when these situations may pose a risk to their wellbeing.

Nextt's vision is to support all clients through quality services, with the aim of empowering individuals to get more out of life. This means ensuring clients voice is central to planning the way their supports are delivered and that Nextt understands what is important to the individual and their goals. Central to this vision and mission is the right of persons to exercise choice and control.

Balancing dignity of risk with duty of care is a key element to service delivery within a human rights framework and defines our service approach.

Nextt recognises duty of care is required to prevent or minimise harm to the client and their supports. The safety of the client and their workers are considered in conjunction with risk taking and if required takes priority over risk taking, privacy and confidentiality.

Shared and Supported decision making

Shared decision making involves the integration of a client's values, goals and concerns with the best available evidence about benefits, risks and uncertainties of the outcome, in order to achieve the best possible outcome for the client, with consideration to safety and quality of life

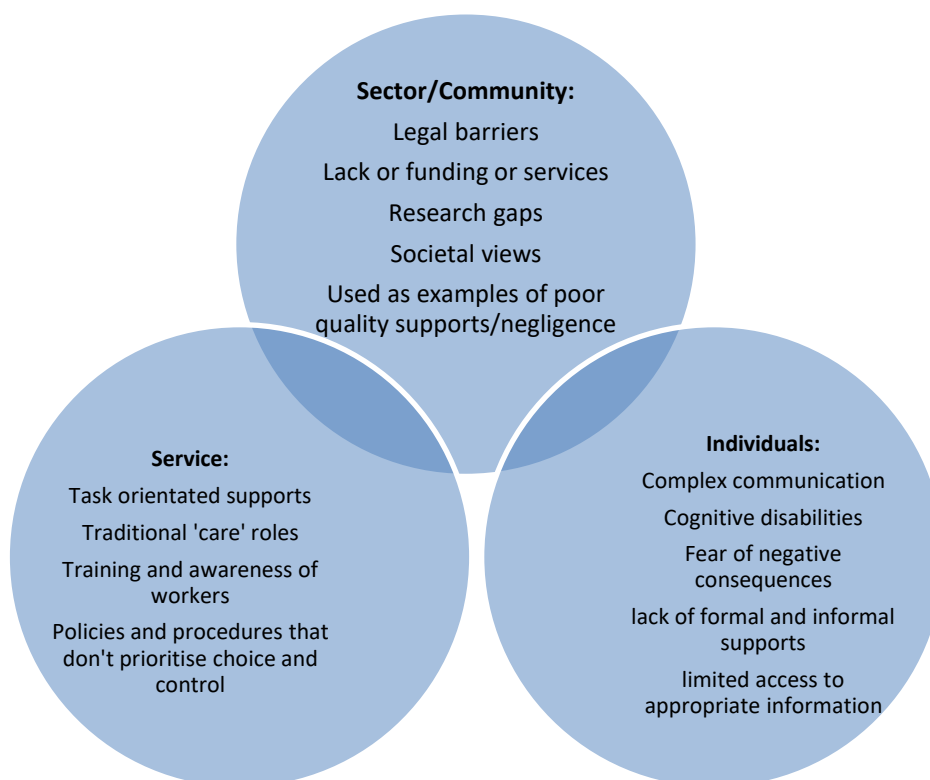
Supported decision-making is a framework within which a person with disability can be assisted to make valid decisions. It is based on the premise that everyone has the right to make their own decisions and to receive whatever support they require to do so. Supported decision-making aims to be an alternative to substituted decision making. Substituted decision-making, where other people make decisions on behalf of a person with disability, takes away people's rights to make their own decisions and control their own lives.

Nextt aims to empower clients through these approaches and encourages and/or facilitated clients to access supports such as clinicians and practitioners or advocates to ensure that they are able to make informed choices about their supports.

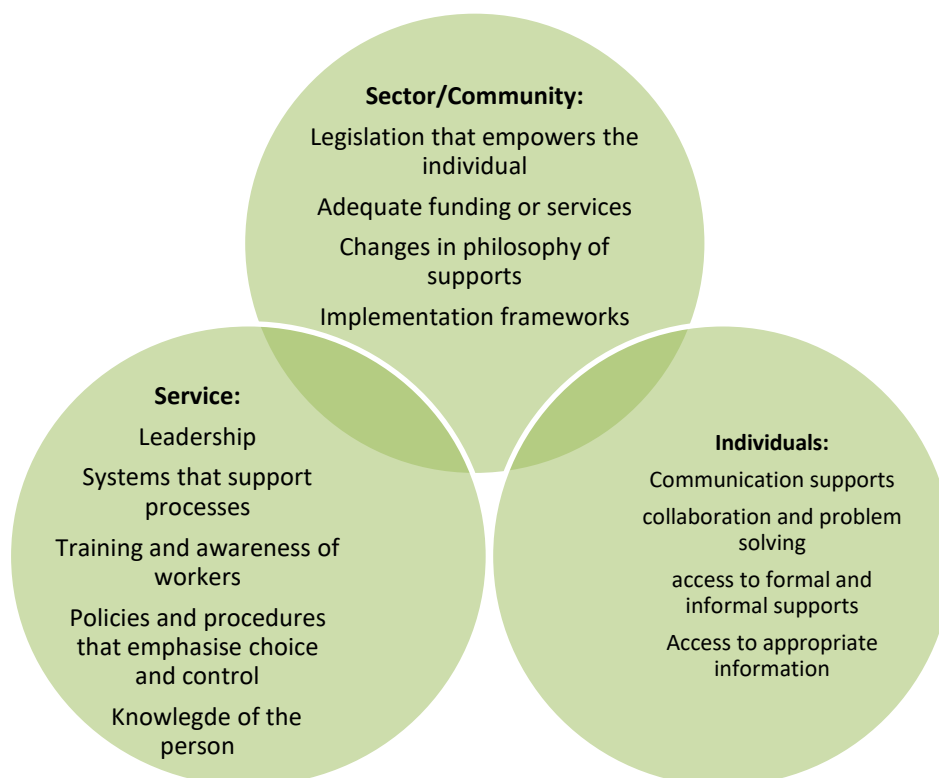
PROCEDURE

When exercising choice and control, people with disabilities face many barriers. Therefore, Nextt aims to supports the client by implementing as many facilitators as possible.

Barriers



Facilitators



Nextt implements a framework to enable facilitators, which includes:

- Policies and procedures that describe clients rights to make their own decisions
- Recruitment, training and supervision systems for all workers that focus on respecting clients rights'
- Detailed, client led support plans that provide workers information on a person's preferences, skills and any strategies and tools to support the clients own decision-making

Choice and control

Clients should be supported to exercise choice and control in all areas of their lives. Some key points may include:

- Personal activities of daily living, such as what clothing to wear, whether they prefer a bath or shower etc
- When and what to eat and drink
- What to do during the day, including work
- Who to spend time with, such as friends and family
- How to spend leisure time, including travel
- Daily routines such as when to go to bed
- Where they live and who they live with
- What services they receive (including, but not limited to, NDIS)
- Consenting to medical and dental treatment
- What healthcare they receive and whether they choose to implement recommendations
- How their finances are managed
- Personal relationships, sex and sexuality

Additional communication and cultural supports

Some people will require additional supports to exercise choice and control. This could be through informal supports, allied health, advocacy, guardians, interpreters etc

- People who are non-verbal, or use specific communication devices or methods
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, who have different languages or cultural needs
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people, who may have different cultural and language needs
- People with cognitive impairments, or fluctuating psychosocial disability, who may sometimes have difficulty understanding some concepts

Considerations when supporting someone who may be choosing supports that present a risk to themselves or others

- People should have access to appropriate supports, who can establish capacity and provide sufficient and appropriate information for informed consent. This is often done by a medical practitioner, legal guardian, allied health practitioner etc
- Nextt should work with the person to understand the decision, supports to be provided, any risk mitigation strategies etc and ensure detailed support plans and goals are in place
- A client risk assessment should be completed/updated
- Ensure all support workers have adequate training to support the client in relation to the specific need
- Consider the need for consent declaration

When is a consent declaration required?

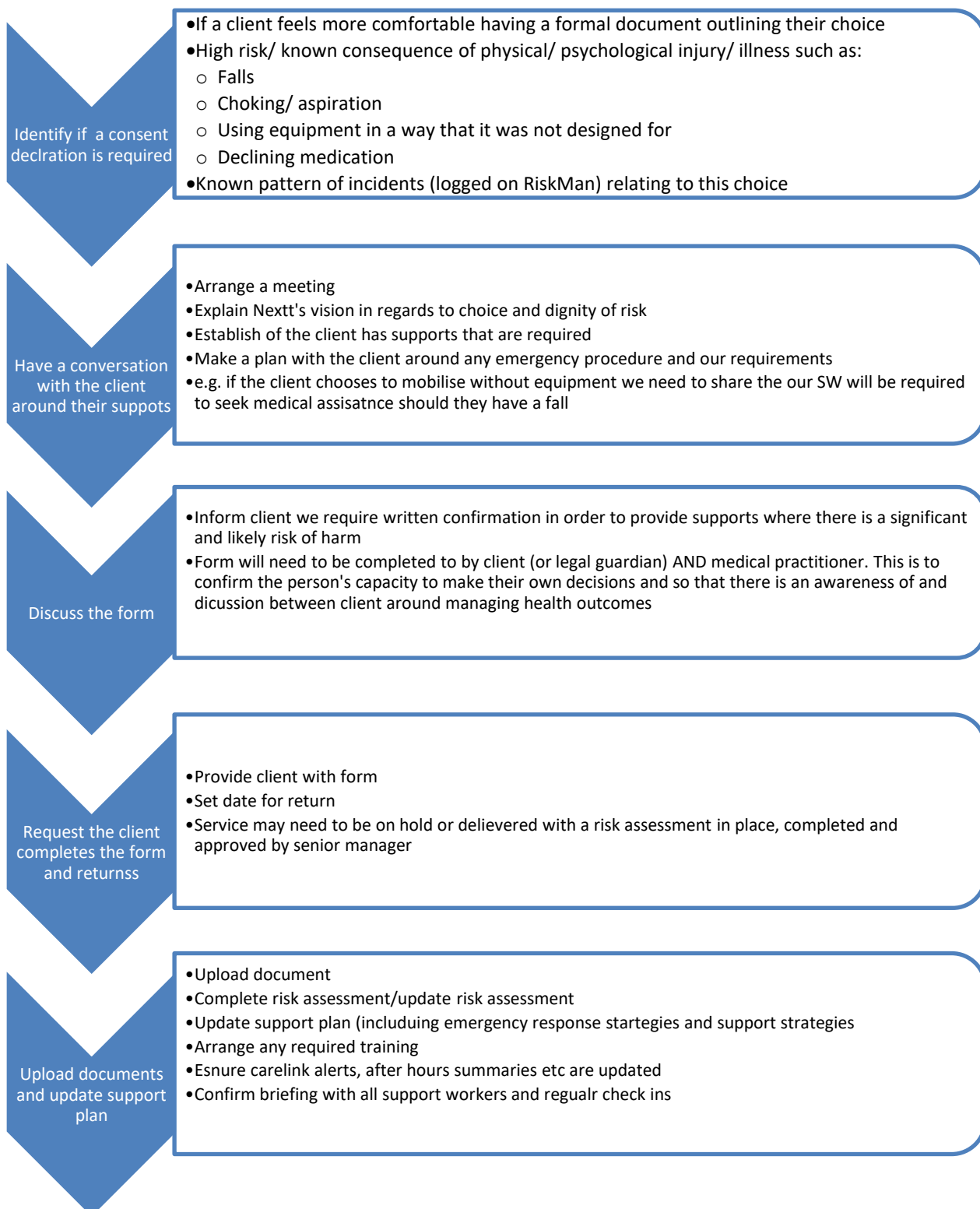
A Consent Declaration is a document outlining the agreement that is made by the person about how they are supported. This tool allows for ease of communicating the choice that the person has made in a sustainable and strengths-based way.

This document may describe supports which are further outlined in a person's supporting document (ie dysphagia support plan, mobility support plan). There are a number of instances where a Consent Declaration may be appropriate to use:

- If a client feels more comfortable having a formal document outlining their choice
- High risk/ known consequence of physical/ psychological injury/ illness such as:
 - Falls
 - Choking/ aspiration
 - Using equipment in a way that it was not designed for
 - Declining medication
- Known pattern of incidents (logged on RiskMan) relating to this choice

These documents will need to be completed with the client and/or their guardian and signed off by an registered medical professional and an independent witness (not Nextt employee or person completing form).

Guidelines for completing Consent Declaration



RESPONSIBILITY

Role of support staff

- Read and understand the policy/procedure. This may be achieved through discussion with line manager or through a team meeting.
- Follow the support strategies outlined in the agreement to which the client has consented.
- Incident reports may still be relevant in circumstances where the client has had an adverse reaction/injury/requires medical support.
- To alert the relevant internal or external health practitioners if things change for the person, and the agreement no longer reflects the person's abilities or preferences.

Role of the Service Manager

- Read and understand the policy/procedure and supporting documents as it applies to you and your service. This may be achieved through discussion with your line manager or with a member of the Quality and Risk Team
- Have a discussion with the client/guardian and provide any relevant supporting documents requires as detailed in the related procedure. Ensure all completed documentation is on Carelink
- Determine if additional support may be required and if appropriate (and with the client's consent) liaise with the treating clinician/s
- Set regular check ins, with initial reviews date for one and three months to review what's working / not working, areas of improvement. Annual review as a minimum.
- Ensure that the support team are fully aware of the support requirements and the changes to recording and reporting information. Use the supporting documents and policy to aid discussion
- Review and follow up any relevant incident reports

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Strategies to ensure continuous improvement in regard to support client to exercise choose with dignity of risk are:

- The monitor and review of any developed plans or strategies through agreed documented approach and engagement with relevant stakeholders;
- Review and analysis of aggregated related incident data and trends to identify policy and practice improvement opportunities; and
- Continue to evaluate processes through a client engagement framework

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

This policy and procedure will remain subject to continuous improvement through feedback from employees, clients, and external stakeholders, and with reference to any new legislative guidance or relevant empirical research, or best practice.

Document owner:	Service Delivery	Policy Area	Human Rights and Responsibilities
Approved By	GM Q&R	Date Approved:	27/01/2023
Date of distribution:	27/01/2023	Next Scheduled Review Date:	27/01/2025

REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision Description Summary
27/01/2023	V2	Updated template and expansion of content on supported decision making