

	CLIENT RIGHTS AND SERVICE CHARTER
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Applies to: All Staff, Management Committee and Service Users
Specific responsibility: Director and Staff

Policy context: This policy relates to	
Standards or other external requirements	NSW Disability Service Standards
Legislation or other requirements	See Below
Contractual obligations	NSW Family and Community Services ADHC “Standards In Action” <i>Children(Education and care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2004.</i>

POLICY STATEMENT

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. is committed to developing an organisational culture that supports the legal and human rights of clients and ensures they are able to exercise those rights as outlined in relevant legislation including the:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. understands and supports the principles of fairness and human rights in all aspects of service delivery. It will ensure that services are provided in an environment free from discrimination, financial, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. will

- provide easily understood and accessible information to all clients at service commencement about what the organisation does, how clients can contact the organisation, clients rights, the service standards clients can expect and opportunities to provide feedback or make a complaint.
- ensure clients have access to a fair and transparent system for making complaints and for reporting any breach of their rights.
- support clients to exercise choice and participate in service delivery and direction
- involve clients in the development of policies and procedures that impact on their service.

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. client service charter outlines these rights and responsibilities in a way that is accessible and easily understood by clients.

The Charter

- The Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. is a service available to families in the Port Macquarie/Hastings Municipality who have a child with a disability or a significant delay in their development. Historically the age of children receiving services has been birth to school age but the scope has been extended to 8 years of age. The program provides both Special Education and Therapy Services, Assessments and also coordination of an individual family plan. The program offers a family-centred service that aims to meet the individual needs of each child and family. **The Program is funded by Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care with some supplementary funding from the Dept of Communities and Education. There is a small contribution fee of \$40 per school term. There is also an Assessment Fee of \$50 if children require an eligibility assessment. This fee covers the child's first term of enrolment if they are eligible**

Program Details and Services

- Service Users have a choice of service delivery options. On enrolment these options are outlined and possible service delivery discussed. Options are sometimes limited by funding and staffing constraints. The services available include:

Centre-Based Classes

Supported Playgroups

Home Visits

Outreach/Inclusion Support (Child supported in mainstream Early Childhood Centre)

Assessments

Advocacy

Transition to next setting support.

Individual Family Service Plans

Access to Resource Library

Parent/Caregiver Training Workshops

The program conducts all centre based services and administration from its premises in Munster Street Port Macquarie. The program operates weekdays in line with school terms from 8.30am - 4.00pm.

Contact Details

- Contact details are as follows
Phone: 02 65838238
Email: heipinc@midcoast.com.au
Website: www.heip.com.au

In line with our Referral Policy, clients can self-refer or can be referred from a number of

community agencies. Referral information is contained on our website and sent to stakeholders on request and at the beginning of each year.

Our Standards

The Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. adheres to the NSW Disability Service Standards. It aims to provide a high standard of service by incorporating the practices as set out in our funding body's (ADHC) publication "Standards in Action".

As the HEIP is licenced by the Department of Education and Communities we are also required to adhere to and maintain the building to the standards set out in the Children(Education and care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2004.

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. is committed to identifying and implementing current best practice. Professional development is budgeted for and prioritised to assist with this implementation. All staff employed have relevant qualifications as required by licensing and regulatory bodies. Staff undergo formal appraisals annually to identify areas for improvement and to set professional goals for themselves.

All staff read, sign and agree to comply with the Australasian Disability Professionals Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, **ADHC "Standards in Action" and the NSW Disability Service Standards. Staff and the Board of Management also undergo training in the principles of Human Rights.**

Networking and collaboration with other Early Intervention Programs and related community agencies are also standard practice.

All staff have both full Police Criminal Record Checks and Working with Children Checks on employment.

All staff have First Aid Training and Certificates.

Client Rights and Responsibilities

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. has a clear statements and policies on the rights of clients. These cover all aspects including Respect and Dignity, Access to Information, Refusal of a Service, Privacy and Confidentiality, use of Personal Information and Safety. These rights and identified responsibilities are clearly outlined in the our brochure "Clients Rights and Responsibilities" which is given to service users on commencement of service.

Feedback and Participation

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. welcomes feedback from and participation by all stakeholders and interested members of the community. This can be in the form of:

- Informal requests/suggestions given to staff or placed in the Suggestion Box
- Formal complaints through our Complaints Procedure.
- Completion of our Annual Service User's Questionnaire **or Stakeholders Survey**
- Contributing to new policies being developed or those under review.
- Serving on the program's Management Committee that is elected each year at the AGM.
- Participation in Individual Family Service Plans meetings

We Welcome Complaints

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. has a Complaints Procedure in place that outlines the steps that will be taken to deal with a complaint. This information is summarised in the Compliments and Complaints Brochure "Help Us Improve Our Service" which is given to service users on commencement of service. This process, as stated below, is also outlined in the newsletters throughout the year and **documented on our website.**

How to Make a Complaint

You can make a complaint :

Verbally - by speaking to a staff member or the Director in person or by phone

In Writing - on the *Compliments and Complaints Form* (found next to the Suggestion Box and place it in box or hand it to a staff member), in a letter or via email heipinc@midcoast.com.au

What we will do

We will respond to your complaint within 1-5 days.

We will :

- Record the complaint on our form.
- Seek clarification and investigate the complaint.
- Work with you to identify solutions.
- Record these outcomes.
- Provide you with a copy of this documentation
- Review your satisfaction with the outcomes after 10 days.

It will be decided at this review whether the complaint has been resolved to your satisfaction or if we need to seek other solutions or have the complaint reviewed by the Management Committee.

Support For You/Advocacy

If you would like support during this process we encourage you to use either a family member/friend or other interested person to advocate for you. Please ask us to arrange access to professional advocacy services if you need this support. We can also arrange interpreter services if necessary. Brochures containing links to professional advocacy services are available in the foyer and links are on our website.

External complaint mechanisms

If you do not feel comfortable raising a complaint directly with us or continue to be dissatisfied after raising your concern with us, assistance is available.

Please contact the NSW Ombudsman (02) 9286 1000 or toll free 1800 451 524 where they can assist you further

Choice and Decision making

Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc. encourages the clients to exercise choice and be involved in service/program decisions

These opportunities are listed below:

- To be actively involved in choice for service delivery for their child. (Written choices outlined)
- To identify priorities for goals and contribute information to Individual Family Service Plans.
- To contribute to policy making and reviews. (Posted on website and on notice boards).
- To consent to or refuse any service delivery.
- To nominate to be a Member of the Association or for the Board of Management and take an active role in service management and decision making.
- To make a complaint or compliment about the service.
- To provide information to be included in newsletters

Support In Choice and Decision Making

Service users are given an information pack on enrolment or commencement of service. This pack outlines their right to exercise choice and have their say in both service delivery and service decisions.

Information is provided on the program website www.heip.com.au and links to various publications are posted here.

Newsletters are distributed once per term. Information on choice and decision making are placed in these newsletters regularly. The first term newsletter carries a section dedicated to this topic including the choice to use an advocate and information on advocacy services.

Similar information is included in the Hastings Early Intervention Program Inc Information Booklet which is sent out to all families on referral.

Interpreter services are used when the need arises. These include both signing (Local signers) and hearing impaired (National Relay Service NRS 133677) and multicultural language interpreters. The Translating and Interpreters Service (TIS 131450) is used to assist in this process. The need for this service has been very limited in the Port Macquarie/Hastings region because of the demographics of the area. HEIP accepts the costs associated with these services.

This charter will be posted on the Programs website. Information about our website and all information brochures are included in the Information Pack that is given to families on enrolment.

DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	Complaints and Grievance Policy Advocacy Policy Decision Making and Choice Policy Access to Confidential Information Policy
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	HEIP Information Booklet. Brochure "Help us Improve Our Service" Brochure "Client Rights and Responsibilities" Brochure "Your Information – It's Private" Staff Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Yearly	Director	Management Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	8-4-14	Management Committee	April 2015
2			
3			