



Plain English Version of Key Policies Policy & Procedure

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GETTING ASSISTANCE FROM ESTIA

WHAT CAN ESTIA DO FOR ME?

Estia could assist you in the following ways:

1. Help you to learn how to do your shopping, pay your bills, clean your house, go to your doctor, catch public transport or cook your meals.
2. Help you to learn about buying and eating food that is good for you and help you with personal hygiene.
3. Help you to save money and to manage your money so that you have enough to buy the things you need.
4. Help you to join groups or clubs, meet other people and find interesting things to do.
5. Help you to find other people that you could share a house with and help you to live where you want.
6. With your permission Estia staff members could help you to make your doctor's appointment and if you need assistance could organise for you to get there and also to the chemist if needed.
7. Help you speak up about issues that matter to you and have people listen to what you have to say.

WHO DOES ESTIA HELP?

1. Any person with an intellectual/developmental disability can request help from Estia and we will provide help to males and females regardless of their age, nationality, background or religious beliefs.
2. Estia will assess each person who asks for help and will either offer or decline a service based on the outcome of the assessment.
3. Most people assisted by Estia have received funding from the Government so that Estia can employ people to help them.
4. Where possible Estia will also help people who do not receive funding from the Government and who may not have a disability.

WILL I GET HELP IMMEDIATELY?

1. Estia always tries to help people as quickly as it can. This depends on how busy the staff are and how many people Estia is already helping. Help may not start as soon as you ask for it.

WILL I HAVE TO PAY FOR HELP FROM ESTIA?

1. Any people we support who are living in an Estia home and are receiving a pension or earning an income may need to pay some money for things such as rent, food, and other household costs. These arrangements will be discussed with you before you move into a home operated by Estia.
2. Those people who live in their own home will not need to pay for items such as rent.

HOW DO I LET ESTIA KNOW THAT I NEED HELP?

1. You or with your permission, your family or any other person can phone or call at the office of Estia and ask about receiving help.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I FIRST ASK ESTIA FOR HELP?

1. You will need to give Estia some information. Estia will need to know about the disability you have and the type of help that you think you may need. Estia will also need to know if you are able to receive any government funding. If Estia has the resources to help you, you will be asked to sign a consent form so that Estia can transfer your information from the organization that is currently assisting you. This is so that Estia can receive all the information it needs to help you.
2. To help Estia know what you want from it there will be a meeting with you, your family, advocate, and your current service provider to work out what assistance Estia will be required to provide for you.
3. When Estia is sure it has the best plan for you it will send you a letter telling you and/or your family what services it will be able to provide for you and which worker will be assisting you and when that assistance will begin.

WHAT IF ESTIA IS NOT ABLE TO HELP ME?

1. If Estia is not able to help you, a letter will be written to you that will tell you why it cannot help you at this time. It may also offer some information about other organizations that can help you.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE

WILL MY FAMILY BE ABLE TO HELP ME WHEN I AM RECEIVING HELP FROM ESTIA?

1. Yes. Estia encourages and will support families to maintain contact with the person receiving support. With your permission, your family is very welcome to contact Estia for information and support. Your family or advocate can be involved in planning the services that you will receive through your Individual Planning Meeting.

HOW CAN ESTIA HELP MY FAMILY?

1. Estia can help your family by:
 - Communicating in a way they can understand.
 - Providing information about available services including those provided by Estia and by other agencies.
 - Helping to build trust and respect between staff members, families and you.
 - Providing them with the opportunity to take part in the planning of service delivery.
 - Creating opportunities to develop links with families.
 - Providing assistance for them to access counselling and support services.
 - Providing them with access to effective complaint procedures.
 - Assisting them to access advocacy services where available.

ADVOCACY

WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

1. An advocate is a person who will listen to you, help you to make decisions about what should happen in your life and help you to make those decisions work by speaking on your behalf. An advocate makes sure that people that provide support to you, respect your rights and will speak out for you if your needs are not being met as has been agreed. An advocate will also make sure that services like Estia give you the best possible service.

WHO CAN BE AN ADVOCATE?

1. You can ask anyone you know well and trust to be your advocate. Normally an advocate is:
 - A friend you trust
 - A member of your family
 - A person from a formal advocacy service or government funded organization such as the Office of the Public Guardian.

HOW CAN ESTIA HELP ME WITH ADVOCACY?

1. If you want someone to act on or speak on your behalf, Estia will help you find an advocate.

WILL MY ADVOCATE BE A WORKER FROM ESTIA?

1. The advocate would not normally work for Estia. There may be times when Estia will act as an advocate for you with other services. It is usually best however if the person you choose as an advocate does not work for Estia. This is to ensure that the advocate is independent and works in your best interests at all times.

HOW CAN ESTIA HELP MY ADVOCATE?

1. Estia will with your permission provide your advocate with all the information they need to ensure that Estia and any other service providers are acting in your best interest.
2. Estia will work closely with your advocate and involve that person in the planning of services that will be provided for you.
3. Estia will ensure that its staff members understand the role of an advocate and will also promote the use of advocates as a support person for people who receive services from our organization.
4. Estia will ensure that your advocate is invited to:

- Consultation meetings
- Individual planning meetings and reviews
- Any other relevant meetings or conferences.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF MY ADVOCATE AND ESTIA DISAGREE ABOUT SOMETHING?

1. Estia will always give the advocate the opportunity to discuss problems or concerns they may have. If your advocate still has concerns that cannot be resolved by Estia, your advocate will be informed of the complaint process and also of agencies that have a responsibility to make sure that Estia does its job properly. One such agency would be the funding agency such as the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency).

CONSENT

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GIVE CONSENT?

1. When you give consent, you are giving your permission or saying that it is OK for a particular thing to happen. This means that it is your choice if you want people to read your file or provide information to another person or agency. You must always fully understand what a person needs your consent for, and if you have any doubt you should ask your advocate for help.
2. You can withdraw your consent at any time. This means that if you have given consent to take part in a particular program as part of your Individual Plan and then discover that you do not like the program, you can say that you no longer want to participate in that program.

WHAT SORTS OF THINGS WILL CONSENT BE NEEDED FOR?

1. Estia will need your consent to:
 - Be able to read the information that service providers have about you and for Estia to provide any information about you to other service providers, your family or advocate.
 - Ask people to attend your Individual Planning Meeting.
 - To carry out any training programs or behaviour change programs that it may want to put in place for you.
 - Be able to assist you to see a doctor or a dentist.
 - Give you medication.

HOW DO I GIVE CONSENT?

1. Normally Estia will ask you to sign a consent form especially if this is consent for the release of your personal information. A staff member from Estia will always explain to you what they are asking your permission for. If you are at all unsure you should ask your advocate for assistance.
2. If you feel that you are unable to give consent about issues in your life then Estia can talk to your parents/family/advocate. If you do not have family that are able to make decisions for you, Estia will help you to make an application to the court or other statutory body for the appointment of a Guardian to help you make those decisions.

WHAT IS A GUARDIAN?

1. A Guardian is usually a person who has been legally appointed by a court to make decisions on your behalf. This person may be a friend, a family member, or a person from an organization such as the Office of the Public Guardian.

WOULD ESTIA GIVE OUT MY PERSONAL INFORMATION WITHOUT MY CONSENT?

1. The only time Estia would give out any of your personal information without your consent would be if it was unquestionably in your best interest. This would normally only be in emergency/life threatening situations and could include for example if you were very sick and needed a doctor to know about your medication and were not able to tell him or her yourself.

PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

HOW DOES ESTIA DEAL WITH MY PRIVACY?

1. Estia believes that you have the same rights to privacy, and confidentiality as all other people in society and to be treated with the same dignity and respect.

WILL ESTIA KEEP A RECORD OR FILE ABOUT ME?

1. Yes, there will be a file and records that will contain information about you. This file will only contain the information that Estia needs to assist you to live your life. The type of information could include things like:
 - Your name, address and contact telephone number
 - Some basic medical information that will help Estia to better meet your needs
 - Contact name and number for a close friend or family member that can be called in case of an emergency
 - Names and contact numbers of people you think are important in your life
 - Information from your Individual plan and any training programs so that Estia can help you in the way you want
 - Notes from your Estia support workers so that they can remember the sort of things that they have done with you and how well your Individual plan is working.
2. Nobody except Estia's support workers and you can see your file without your permission. Only Estia support workers that are assisting you are able to read your file or records.

CAN I SEE MY FILE?

1. You can read your file whenever you want to. All you have to do is tell your worker from Estia that you want to read your file and they will make arrangements for you to do so.

HOW WILL ESTIA USE INFORMATION THEY HAVE ABOUT ME?

1. Estia will only use your information to help you. The information about you is only used to plan such things as training and support for you.
2. General information that will come from your file, but that is not directly linked to your name, will be used to plan better services for all people who use Estia.

HOW WILL ESTIA STAFF TREAT ME?

1. Estia staff will never talk about you or your problems with anyone that is not part of your individual planning process unless you give Estia permission to do so.
2. Estia staff will never talk about your needs in front of you unless you are included in the conversation.
3. Estia will never discuss issues about you in public.
4. You will always be included in any Individual Planning Meetings or other meetings that involve delivering services to you.
5. Estia staff members will always treat you with dignity and respect. That means that Estia will treat you as you would like to be treated by your friends and family.

HOW WILL ESTIA HELP ME WITH MY PARTNER AND FRIENDS?

1. Estia knows that you have the right to choose your own friends and partners.
2. Estia can help you to learn how to know if a person is likely to treat you well or not.
3. Estia can help you learn the skills that will help you make and keep good friends.
4. Estia will help and support you to live the lifestyle of your choice. This means that Estia will help you live your life the way you want.

HOW WILL ESTIA HELP ME WITH MY PERSONAL PROPERTY?

1. Estia will help you look after your personal property by showing you how to use it properly, how to care for it and what to do if something goes wrong.

INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL PLAN?

1. Your individual plan is a way for you to tell your service providers, like Estia, how you want them to help you.
2. Your individual plan will have in it the things that you want to learn, the things that you would like to do, and the places that you would like to visit.
3. Your individual plan will have in it a plan that will:
 - Explain to service providers how they will help you learn new skills and how they will help you to reach the other goals in your individual plan
 - Explain what your responsibilities are and what you will have to do to reach your individual plan goals
 - Explain who will be assisting you to reach your individual plan goals
 - Explain to you when you can expect to have gained the new skill or finished what you set out to do.

DO ALL PEOPLE HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL PLAN?

1. Yes. This is so that all people who are helped by Estia can have their own programs which assist them to address their individual needs. This also ensures that Estia has enough staff and time to allocate to each person.

HOW SOON WILL I HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL PLAN?

1. Once Estia has agreed to provide you with assistance, the individual plan will be the next step in the process. This is because the individual plan tells Estia how to help you and what sort of services you think you'll need. You will be able to hold your first planning meeting within 60 days of Estia starting to help you.

WHAT IS MEANT BY AN INDIVIDUAL PLANNING MEETING?

1. The individual planning meeting is where you, your advocate, workers from Estia and anyone else that you think should be invited come together to discuss the things you want to learn and achieve that help you to live in the community.
2. You will be able to talk about the things you want to do, what things you want to learn and where you would like to live and who you would like to live with.
3. You can also talk about the things that you do not want to happen. If there is some activity you don't like, the meeting is one of the opportunities you have to let people know. This will ensure that it is not included as part of your program.

4. At the end of the meeting a plan is developed that will tell people what you want and how they can help you to achieve it. The plan will also tell you who is responsible for making sure that all the jobs in the plan are done. The plan will also tell you what you have to do to reach the goals that you have set.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T ATTEND THE INDIVIDUAL PLANNING MEETING?

1. If you are unable to attend your planning meeting your key worker or Manager/Team Leader will try to find another time for the meeting to take place. If it is very important that this meeting take place and you are unable to attend, your support worker will attend and tell the people at the meeting what it is that you want to happen. The support worker will listen to the other people to get their opinions and comments.
2. The support worker will then tell you what happened at the meeting and let you know what the other people suggested. You can then agree to the plan or you can ask that the worker help you to make changes that you want and then take it back to the other people who were at the meeting so that they also know what you want changed.
3. Before an individual plan can be put into action you have to agree that it is what you want. This may be something you will need to discuss with your advocate.

WHAT WILL THE INDIVIDUAL PLAN TELL ME?

1. The individual plan will tell you the type of help that you will get from Estia and who will be providing that help. It will also tell you how that help will be provided and when you can expect to have gained the new skill or achieved what you had wanted to do.
2. The plan will also set a date for review. The plan is reviewed at a meeting similar to your first meeting to make sure that everyone is following the plan properly and that you are happy with how it is going.

HOW OFTEN WILL I HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL PLANNING MEETING?

1. The meeting will normally take place every 12 months after your first meeting. A review meeting however can take place as often as required.

CAN MY INDIVIDUAL PLAN BE CHANGED WITHOUT MY CONSENT?

1. No. The individual plan is your personal plan and if it is to be changed, you must be involved in the process. No changes can take place without your permission.

COMMUNICATION

WHAT DOES ESTIA MEAN BY COMMUNICATION?

1. Communication is the way we get our message across to other people. It is the way we let people know what we want in a way that they can understand. It is also the way other people let us know what they want in a way we can understand.
2. Normally we communicate by:
 - Talking and listening.
 - Using our hands and body movement.
 - The expressions on our face.
 - The use of special equipment like the number/letter boards and computers.

HOW WILL ESTIA COMMUNICATE WITH ME?

1. Estia will never talk to, or behave towards you in a way that will make you frightened or uncomfortable.
2. Estia will always ensure that the way you are communicated with is effective. That means that when Estia staff members need to pass on information that is important to you, they will do it in the best way possible.
3. Estia will always communicate with you in a way that you will understand. Estia will train its staff to use any communication system that you may need or use. Your individual plan will also be discussed with you in a way that you can understand.

WHAT IF I HAVE COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES?

1. Estia will help you to find people who are trained to assist you to improve your communication skills. Estia will help you to obtain and learn to use any special communication devices or equipment that you may need.

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

DO I HAVE A RIGHT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT A PERSON WHO WORKS FOR ESTIA?

1. Yes. You always have the right to expect the best possible standard of service from Estia. Estia will treat any concern or complaint as a serious issue.
2. No matter what happens, Estia staff members are not allowed to hit you or hurt you in any way. The staff members are not allowed to yell, scream or swear at you or use your personal property without your permission. Estia staff members are not to touch you in any way that may hurt you or make you feel uncomfortable.

WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

1. You as a person we support can make a complaint if you are not happy with a staff member or the services offered by Estia.
2. There are several people who may be able to raise a concern or make a complaint on your behalf. These could include:
 - Your advocate
 - A family member
 - A close friend
 - Your support/key worker or Manager/Team Leader
 - A person you know and trust

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT A PERSON WHO WORKS FOR ESTIA OR ABOUT THE SERVICE I RECEIVE?

1. The first thing to do is tell an Estia staff member that that you are not happy and tell them what it is you are not happy about.
2. If you feel that you are not able to talk about your problem with the staff members that are directly assisting you, you can talk to your family/advocate for help and put your complaint in writing. You should then send your letter to the Managing Director.
3. If you do not have family or an advocate, Estia will assist you to find an independent external agency that will be able to help. If you need an interpreter or translator, Estia can ensure that you have access to an independent service.

WHAT WILL ESTIA DO WITH THE COMPLAINT?

1. Once a complaint has been received a staff member at Estia will be appointed to investigate and find a resolution to the complaint. The Manager/Team Leader will write a letter to you to let you know that the complaint has been received. This letter will give you a date by which Estia expects to have the complaint resolved.
2. The complaint will then be investigated and a plan to resolve it will be developed. You will be told about this plan and will be able to tell Estia what you are feeling about it. You can let Estia know if you are happy, or if you no longer have a complaint or that you are not satisfied with the outcome.

WHAT WILL I DO IF I THINK THE COMPLAINT HAS NOT BEEN HANDLED PROPERLY?

1. If you are not happy with the response from Estia about your complaint, you can take it to another agency such as the NSW Ombudsman's Office.

STOPPING OR REFUSING SERVICES FROM ESTIA

CAN I REFUSE OR STOP A SERVICE THAT I GET FROM ESTIA?

1. Yes. You can refuse or stop a service that you receive from Estia. You might do this if you think that you no longer need the service or if you can receive a more appropriate service from another agency.
2. The decision to stop a service provided by Estia will not mean that Estia will not provide you a service in future. However, this will depend on there being a vacancy and appropriate staff available to provide you with a service.

CAN ESTIA STOP PROVIDING ME WITH A SERVICE?

1. Yes, Estia can refuse or stop a service that it is providing to you. This would only happen however after discussion with you and if necessary with your family/guardian/advocate. This withdrawal of services may also be done through the individual plan review meeting.
2. Estia may decide to stop or refuse a service because you have refused to take part in some programs. Other reasons may include:
 - You have refused a service on a number of previous occasions.
 - Estia feels that the service is no longer needed.
 - The service can be provided more effectively by another organization.
 - If you wish to move out of the areas that are serviced by Estia.
 - Your actions place the staff of Estia at risk and that risk cannot be reduced within the resources of Estia or when the additional necessary resources are unavailable.

IF I DO STOP SERVICES WITH ESTIA CAN I ACCESS THEM AGAIN?

1. Yes, you can access the services of Estia again if either your referral to another agency is unsuccessful or if at some time in the future you need assistance from Estia and there are staff members available and appropriate vacancies available.
2. Estia has a full set of Policies and Procedures that can be read by any person who would like to receive or stop a service.
3. Estia encourages all people we support and their families, guardians or advocates to read the Policies and Procedures and to ask any questions that they have about services or these documents.