

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT AND CONSENT

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

Contents

Introduction	1
Definitions	1
Procedures.....	2
Policies.....	3
Monitoring, Review, and Evaluation	6
Breaches of the Participant Agreement and Consent Procedure and Policy	7
References and Related Documents	7

Introduction

This policy ensures that each participant understands their rights, the supports they have chosen, how their personal information is managed, and how informed consent is obtained and documented.

It combines the Service Agreement Policy, Access to Personal Information and Consent Policy, and Medication Administration Consent Form to provide a consistent and transparent framework for participant intake and consent management at Cahoots.

This policy applies to all participants, their representatives, staff, and volunteers.

The Community Engagement Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Definitions

Participant	Any individual receiving supports or services from Cahoots.
Participant's Representative	A parent, guardian, nominee, or authorised representative acting on behalf of a participant.
Service Agreement	A written agreement outlining the supports to be provided by Cahoots and the terms of the arrangement.
Consent	The permission provided by a participant (or their representative) for Cahoots to collect, use, and share their personal and sensitive information.
Personal Information	Information that identifies or could identify an individual.
Sensitive Information	Information about a participant's health, disability, cultural background, or support needs.
FRO	Family Relationship Officer, responsible for facilitating the service intake and agreement process.

Procedures

1. Participant Agreement and Consent Pack Preparation

The FRO works collaboratively with the participant (or their representative) to develop and finalise the Participant Agreement and Consent Pack prior to the commencement of supports.

This includes:

- Using the Cahoots Participant Agreement and Consent Pack Template to ensure all required documents are included and compliant.
- Arranging a Service Intake Appointment to discuss the agreement, consents, and expectations.
- Explaining to the participant the purpose and content of each document, including the Service Agreement, Access to Personal Information Consent, and Medication Administration Consent forms.
- Informing participants from a CALD background that interpreter services can be utilised.
- Ensuring the participant understands the scope of supports, funding arrangements, rights, and responsibilities.
- Confirming that Cahoots can meet the participant's support needs before proceeding with the signing process.
- Obtaining informed consent to collect, store, and share personal information as required to provide supports.

2. Information Review and Document Preparation

- Once the participant's supports have been confirmed, prepare and send the following documents for review and signing:
 - **Participant Agreement and Consent Pack**, including, Service Agreement, Access to Personal Information Consent Form, Medication Administration Consent Form
 - **Support Plan, Risk Assessment & Action Plan**
- Ensure all details, including participant information, funding source, service dates, and fee schedule are accurate and consistent across all documents.
- Record key notes and any special conditions discussed during the intake in the Cahoots Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System.

3. Discussion and Participant Understanding

- Provide the participant or representative with an opportunity to review each document thoroughly.
- Discuss:
 - The purpose and terms of the Service Agreement, including cancellation policy, fee structure, and support delivery process.
 - The participant's rights to privacy, confidentiality, and informed decision-making.
 - The meaning of each consent form and how consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- Encourage the participant to ask questions and seek clarification before signing.
- If required, allow time for external review by a guardian, plan nominee, or support coordinator.

4. Signing and Distribution

- Once both parties have signed the Participant Agreement and Consent Pack:
 - A digital copy is automatically generated and securely stored in the CRM.
 - A copy is shared with the participant (or representative).
- The FRO confirms receipt and ensures all related documents (Support Plan, Risk Assessment & Action Plan, etc.) are correctly filed under the participant's electronic record.
- If the participant opts not to have a written agreement, this decision and the rationale are documented on the participant's file, with verbal consent recorded where applicable.
- All agreements and consents are valid for 12 months and are monitored through the CRM system, unless updated earlier due to changes in support needs, funding, or circumstances.

5. Ongoing Review and Updates

- The FRO reviews the Participant Agreement and Consent Pack annually, or earlier if:
 - There are changes to the participant's supports, funding, or goals.
 - A new plan (e.g., updated NDIS Plan or health plan) is introduced.
 - Feedback or incidents highlight a need for review.
- Updates must be made collaboratively with the participant or representative, signed by both parties, and saved in the CRM with the previous version archived.
- The participant is provided with a copy of any updated document for their records.

6. Link to Support Plan Process

The Participant Agreement and Consent Pack underpins the development of the Support Plan, Risk Assessment & Action Plan by formalising:

The participant's agreement to engage with Cahoots supports.

- The collection and sharing of information necessary to build a comprehensive understanding of the participant's needs and goals.
- The expectations, responsibilities, and boundaries for both Cahoots and the participant prior to service delivery.

Policies

1. Service Agreement

Individualised, person centred care for participants is pivotal to the provision of high-quality supports and services. We aim to provide excellent service outcomes for all participants, and a harmonious and safe workplace.

Cahoots collaborates with each participant during the intake process to develop a Service Agreement that outlines the participant's support expectations, conditions of delivery, and emergency arrangements. The Agreement is explained using the participant's preferred language and communication method.

The Service Agreement also outlines arrangements for support delivery in the event of an emergency or disaster.

The participant will be supported to understand their service agreement and conditions using the language, mode of communication and terms that the participant is most likely to understand.

Prior to attending a Cahoots service, a written Service Agreement between the participant and Cahoots will be agreed to and signed by both parties. Where this is not practical, or the participant chooses not to have an agreement, a record will be made on the participant's file of the circumstances under which the participant did not receive a copy of the agreement.

2. Access to Personal Information and Consent

The purpose of collection, use and disclosure of a participant's personal information will be outlined in the Access to Personal Information Consent Form.

Cahoots seeks written consent for collecting and sharing personal information. The Access to Personal Information Consent Form will be used to confirm with the Participant's Representative that the participant has given permission for Cahoots to talk to and share information about them.

Where the participant (or the Participant's Representative) is unable or unwilling to provide written consent, Cahoots will explain in a way that suits each participant the contents of the Access to Personal Information Consent Policy, and the Access to Personal Information Consent Form.

Where Cahoots is satisfied that the participant (or the Participant's Representative) understands the contents and has given or declined oral consent voluntarily, Cahoots will record this on the participant's electronic record including details of date and time, the Cahoots staff member and whether oral consent was given or declined.

2.1 Purposes for which we collect, use, store, disclose and share personal information

Cahoots collects information directly from participants or their representatives via forms, interviews, emails, or calls.

With consent, information may also be collected from other providers (e.g. Behaviour Support Practitioners, Therapists, Medical Practitioners).

Personal information is used to:

- Determine eligibility and develop Support Plans
- Deliver safe and effective supports
- Monitor and evaluate services
- Respond to queries, feedback, or complaints
- Meet reporting obligations to government and funding bodies
- Capture photos or videos for promotion (only with consent)

Cahoots may need to collect information from and share information with other service providers used by the participant. Examples of information that might be collected are:

- Health and medical reports: This may include medication information, Seizure Management Plans, Asthma Action Plans, Mealtime Management Plans etc.
- Information from other service providers that work with the participant: This may include: Behaviour Support Practitioners, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapist, etc.

There may be times when information is shared without a participant's consent. This is

usually when the law requires it, or in an emergency.

This includes when Cahoots:

- is obligated to report incidents (or suspected incidents) to the NDIS Commission, police or other government agencies for incidents of serious injury, abuse, neglect, assault, sexual misconduct, and the unauthorised use of restrictive practice.
- is required or authorised by or under an Australian law or a court/tribunal order to provide the information; or
 - has reason to believe the disclosure is required to lessen or prevent a serious threat to life, health, or safety of an individual or to public health and safety.
 - has reason to suspect an individual may have done something unlawful or engaged in serious misconduct that relates to Cahoots services or activities.

2.2 How we collect personal information

Cahoots staff generally collect personal and sensitive information directly from the participant through the use of our standard forms, interviews, via email or through a telephone conversation.

Only with the participant's consent, will we collect personal and sensitive information from third party contractors or agents, and government instrumentalities that are involved in the provision of our services.

2.3 Access to personal information

In accordance with the Cahoots Privacy Policy, a participant may request details of their personal information that we store about them. If a participant believes that any information, we store about them is inaccurate, out of date, incomplete, irrelevant, or misleading, then we strongly encourage the participant to contact us. We will take all reasonable steps to correct any information found to be inaccurate, incomplete, misleading or out of date.

2.4 Media Use (Photographs and Recordings)

Cahoots may capture photographs and recordings during supports to highlight participant experiences and promote inclusion. These images and recordings may be featured across Cahoots digital and printed platforms, including our website, social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), advertisements, displays, and publications.

By providing consent, participants authorise Cahoots to use these materials for promotional purposes across digital and printed platforms. This consent may remain valid after a participant discontinues our services unless the participant or their representative withdraws consent in writing.

We prioritise participants' privacy and will respect any decision to withdraw consent at any time. Upon withdrawal, we will take reasonable steps to stop using the participant's images or recordings in future promotional materials. Digital media will be removed from our website and social media platforms where possible. Printed materials already in circulation will continue to be used until current stock is exhausted. However, no new printed materials featuring the participant will be produced after consent is withdrawn.

Please note, Cahoots will not use images or recordings of any participant who is under the care of child protection services.

3. Medication Administration Consent Form

Written consent must be provided by the participant's parent, guardian, or representative

before any medication, including prescription, PRN, over-the-counter, or complementary products, is administered.

All medications must be correctly packaged and labelled by a pharmacy, and accompanied by a pharmacy-generated signing sheet.

Cahoots staff are not permitted to alter medication labels, change dosages, or administer expired or incorrectly labelled medications.

Any alternative methods of administration (e.g., crushed or dissolved medication) require a signed instruction from the participant's GP.

Only trained and authorised Facilitators may administer medication, following the participant's management plans and documented procedures.

All medications and consent documentation are stored securely and handled according to Cahoots' Medication Management Policy and relevant legislation.

4. Change or withdrawal of pack

Cahoots will review each active participant's Agreement and Consent Pack at least annually.

A participant may, in writing, change or withdraw their consent to share information, their permission for a third party to act on their behalf, or their consent for medication administration or participation in Cahoots' services at any time.

5. Communication

This policy will be communicated to participants, their support networks, staff, and volunteers through the Cahoots website, intake process, easy-read materials, inductions, training sessions, meetings, and internal communications.

Concise Summary of Key Changes Made in This Review of Document

- Combined Service Agreement Policy and Access to Personal Information Consent Policy into a single comprehensive document
- Updated terminology to reflect supports and services instead of programs/camps
- Clarified procedures for oral consent and digital signature automation
- Added annual consent review and explicit media consent management process
- Strengthened reference to NDIS Practice Standards and Privacy Act compliance

Monitoring, Review, and Evaluation

This procedure document will be reviewed every two years. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that this document is no longer appropriate in its current form, the document shall be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly. This process will include:

- Ad hoc review and evaluation of current practices
- Periodic self-assessment
- Internal Audits

- External Audits

Cahoots will record and monitor progress of any improvements identified and feed into service planning and delivery processes. Feedback from participants, representatives, and staff will be used to inform future updates.

Breaches of the Participant Agreement and Consent Procedure and Policy

Any breaches of the Participant Agreement and Consent Procedure and Policy could constitute a possible act of misconduct. Reference is accordingly made to Cahoots Employee Discipline and Termination Policy which outlines the relevant processes that may be followed if misconduct is suspected.

References and Related Documents

Legislation and Standards

- Privacy Act 1988
- Australian Privacy Principles
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

Cahoots Policies and Procedures

- Cahoots Privacy Policy
- Cahoots Privacy and Confidentiality Procedure
- Cahoots Support Plan, Risk Assessment and Action Plan Policy and Procedure
- Cahoots Service Access and Exit Policy and Procedure
- Cahoots Learning Outcomes
- Cahoots Complex Care Needs Policy
- Cahoots Formal and Informal Supports Policy
- Cahoots Medication Management Policy
- Cahoots Mealtime Management Policy and Procedure
- Cahoots Behaviour Support Policy and Procedure
- Cahoots Restrictive Practices Policy
- Cahoots Emergency and Disaster Management Policy
- Cahoots Individual Values and Beliefs Policy
- Cahoots Early Childhood Supports Policy

Supporting Documents and Forms

- Participant Agreement and Consent Pack
- Code of Conduct – Adult Participants
- Code of Conduct – Kids and Teens

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