



homes west
ASSOCIATION INC.

Policies

2009

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**Disability
Sector
Program**



Policies 2009

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1. Introduction

1.1 Preamble

Homes West Association Inc (Homes West) is a non-profit organisation founded in the western suburbs of Brisbane. Homes West was established to provide accommodation support to people with a disability. A Management Committee is elected at an Annual General Meeting and is representative of individuals, family members and interested community members.

1.2 History

Homes West was started in 1990 by a small group of parents, led by Joan Hailstone and Jill Hole. Joan's experience in 1989 with the 'Quality Lifestyles' project for Queensland Parents for People with a Disability (QPPD) allowed her to meet with over 100 adults with a disability, their parents, family members and advocates across Queensland.

The key issue was the need for a home of their own, a very ordinary expectation but, at that time, a near impossibility. On the few occasions this had been achieved, it was by families in small community settings where people were known and supported in their desire for ordinary life. This guided Joan's and Jill's action.

In October 1990, fifteen people in the Western suburbs of Brisbane formed a committee and from those people came the first five families who were to use the new incorporated service. Submissions to the funding bodies in 1991 and 1992 were unsuccessful.

Pressure was exerted by the funding bodies to change Homes West's purpose, which was seen as "not possible for people with significant levels of support". The committee stood its ground and in October 1993, the State Government provided Homes West with limited one-off funding for a part-time co-ordinator and a few support hours for three people with a disability.

In March 1994, Homes West was granted recurrent funding to establish the service and employ a permanent part-time co-ordinator and Joan's daughter, Susan was the first person to move into a home of her own. By 1996, Homes West had made a long-term commitment to 10 people and their families and the decision was made that Homes West was now as large an organisation as it should be.

1.3 What Homes West families want

With the guidance of the Community Resource Unit (CRU), this small group of families clarified what they wanted and what they didn't want, outlined below:

They did not want their son or daughter living in group situations, where their home was nothing more than a bed in a house or institution.

The families wanted their son or daughter to have a real home, like their brothers and sisters in their local community and near people who cared about them.

They did not want the housing to be tied to the support service. Issues around one impinged on the other.

They wanted flexible supports in the home of their choice.

They did not want a service that focused on "care and control".

They wanted a service that assisted the person to have an ordinary life, with all the ups and downs that an ordinary life entailed.

They did not want a service where the one model fits all.

They wanted a focus on the life of each individual through learning to understand each person's situation, vision and plans.

They did not want the inevitability of an unchanging service. They did not want the service to replace or diminish family involvement.

They wanted the service to follow as the person changed and grew. They wanted the person and their family to plan and call on the service as needed.

They did not want a program to "fix" or train the person before entering the real world.

They wanted the service to acknowledge the person for whom he or she is and support the person through natural opportunities for change and growth.

They wanted their sons and daughters to have a home of their own and an ordinary life like their brothers and sisters.

1.4 Mission of Homes West

Homes West Association Incorporated (Homes West) works with families to support people with a disability to establish and to live in a home of their own and to be included as active and valued members in their local community.

1.5 Objectives

The Objectives of Homes West are:

1. to work with families to provide the support needed for individuals with a disability so that they can live in a home of their own;
2. to provide the support needed for each individual to engage in adult lifestyle activities in the community such as but not limited to:
 - Using gyms, sporting venues etc;
 - Voluntary work;
 - Recreation and social activities in clubs, hotels, etc
 - Going on holidays;
 - Attending church;
 - Having a community market stall; and
 - Shopping.
2. to provide a service that arranges the support and seeks the best possible options for each individual;
3. to provide a service that will support the person in the long term;
4. to provide a service that consults with and involves family and friends;
5. to provide the support needed for the development of support circles and other forms of informal networks of people around each individual with a disability; and
6. to provide advice and support to other families and Associations in developing their own supports.

1.6 Key Beliefs of the Homes West families

1. People with disability are entitled to a lifestyle which is based on the same rights and opportunities as other citizens, regardless of type or degree of disability.
2. Regardless of capacity or skill, families have a natural authority and are entitled to influence the direction of their son's or daughter's life, if they have remained faithful and committed to that person's development and wellbeing.
3. A home is much more than "bricks and mortar" – it should enhance a person's personal privacy and security, the development of relationships and intimacy, and expression of individuality through flexibility and choice.
4. Community inclusion is more than just living in a house in the suburbs. It gives rise to active and meaningful participation in community life and the development of broader networks.
5. Families, community and paid support staff can work together in a respectful ("right") relationship to support a person with a disability to live his or her life well.
6. Families do best when they work together, sharing their skills, experiences and capacities. With collaboration comes a synergy. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

1.7 Key Assumptions

1. Families want ongoing involvement and relationship with the person with a disability.
2. Families already have some established networks on which they can build.
3. A person with a disability will continue to grow, learn and change throughout his or her life.
4. Parents are likely to die before their children.
5. Little that is worthwhile happens without planning and thought.
6. There will not be funding available to meet every person's support needs.
7. People who have services dominating their lives are in danger of losing connections with family, friends, and others who would freely give their time, energy and commitment.

2. Families and enduring friendships

Families and enduring friends have a natural authority in a person's life and will assist the individual to choose the type, quality and level of support required.

2.1 Homes West's position

Homes West understands that the most valuable asset an individual can have is a loving and faithful family and enduring friendships. Unconditional friendship and love and an expectation of reciprocity and intimacy cannot be bought and are essential for a person to have a good life. Homes West will act only in a way which upholds, supports and encourages the development of freely given and enduring relationships.

2.2 Respect for the natural authority of families

Homes West respects the natural authority of each individual's family, understanding that the family:

- has its own customs, rituals and history;
- has the long-term knowledge of the individual;
- takes a holistic view of the individual's life;
- usually has the answers to day-to-day problems because of this knowledge;
- is likely to continue this commitment when the parents have died; and
- may provide support in lieu of the paid support of the service.

2.3 Respect for enduring friendships

Homes West also respects the friends of the individual, particularly those who are enduring. Homes West understands that friends:

- can provide important life experiences and opportunities which a service or family cannot;
- act as an important safeguard for the individual;
- may provide support in lieu of the paid support of the service;
- come and go, all having the potential to remain in the individual's life for the long-term;
- may not necessarily have the knowledge of how the service works and may inadvertently be insensitive to the support staff; and
- should be welcomed even if it is inconvenient for the support staff at the time
- can act for the family, with the family's permission through the Family Agreement.

2.4 Person-centred, family-governed service

With this in mind, Homes West will provide a service which is person-centred and family-governed. This means:

1. an individual's personal dreams, aspirations and plans are known (as best they can) and are respected. Similarly, the person's history, values and customs are also understood and respected;

2. each person's daily life and future is seen as unique and different, and the service supports the person to live his/her own life and to change and grow;
3. the family's knowledge and understanding of the person guides the service to interpret the person's needs and desires;
4. the service respects and values the presence of family and friends in the person's life and understands that they may also, at times, need to be supported; and
5. the service knows that, to earn the trust of the person and their families, it must be efficient, effective, trustworthy and moral in all it does.

2.5 The responsibilities of families

For the families of Homes West to achieve and maintain person-centred, family-governed service for their family member, they will:

1. **develop and regularly review a positive vision for their family member.** The more courageous and focused the vision is, the more likely the individual will have a rich and full life;
2. **be ready to govern.** Each family will be expected to contribute to the governance of Homes West at some time, within their capacities. They will attend the family days and participate in the regular reviews of the service;
3. **be conscious of any conflict of interest and do something about it.** There are times when the needs of the family are at odds with those of the individual. Everyone's needs are more likely to be met when families realise and address this conflict of interest;
4. **develop a good understanding and a robust framework for critical reflection and problem solving.** Families are encouraged to continue to learn and understand better about the service and social context in which we live and to improve their skills in critical reflection and problem-solving;
5. **be involved in the daily life of the individual.** Families are expected to have a thorough knowledge of the day-to-day issues in the individual's life;
6. **be available to be consulted or to resolve a problem.** Homes West aims to solve problems quickly, locally and creatively and does this best when families remain in immediate contact with Homes West;
7. **delegate responsibility** to another family member or friend if they are unable to be available for any period of time; and
8. **safeguard the health and well-being of the individual** and the history, culture, values and rituals of the family.

2.6 When parents are no longer around

Homes West will not take over the role of families or friends. It is therefore necessary for each family to plan for when parents are no longer around.

Homes West will support families to:

1. hand over the governance of the service to the next generation of family members;

2. develop a circle of friends around the individual to:
 - maintain the vision and plan for the future;
 - defend the individual's culture and history;
 - monitor the service provision;
 - assist with day to day problem solving; and
3. ensure that informal support and resources are adequate to replace the support presently provided by the parents.

2.7 Procedure to assist individuals and families to plan for the future

When adequate funds are available, Homes West will provide assistance to individuals and their families to plan for the future and to establish circles of support around the individual. This assistance will be provided only if requested and all information from the planning will be kept by the individuals and their families.

2.8 Procedure when parents are no longer around

Homes West will recognise the person nominated by the parents or, in their absence, by the circle or network of support to be the key person to:

1. sign the Family Agreement;
2. represent the individual and his or her best interests; and
3. work in partnership with Homes West.

If the parents die or leave the person with no circle or network, Homes West will:

1. continue to provide support for twelve (12) months;
2. assist the person to develop a circle or network of support;

If this is not successful within the twelve months, Homes West will notify DSQ of its inability to continue support in the long-term as it has done so in the past.

3. Right relationship

Families, community and paid support staff work respectfully together to support people with a disability to live their life well.

3.1 Homes West's position

Regardless of capacity or skill, families have a natural authority and are entitled to influence the direction of their family member's life, if they have remained faithful and committed to that person's development and wellbeing.

Homes West families, community and paid support staff will work together in right relationship to support family members with a disability to live their lives well. Homes West families do best when they work together, sharing their skills, experiences and capacities. With collaboration comes a synergy. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

For there to be right relationship between the people being supported, their families, Homes West and the paid support staff, there has to be clarity about what is "individual/family" business and what is "service business".

3.2 Individual/Family Business

Individuals with their families will:

1. develop and hold a positive vision and plan for the future;
2. uphold their values, customs and story and defend their privacy and integrity, health and well-being;
3. direct the level and type of support service needed;
4. be responsible for legal, financial and health security;
5. find appropriate housing, transport, employment and other services.
6. **remain vigilant** to ensure the work of support staff is carried out, the home of the person with a disability is well maintained, efficiently managed and welcoming to all family and friends who are now an integral part of the individual's life;
7. **be ready for change** - never assuming that things will stay the same forever;
8. **continue to evaluate** what has been done and plan for the future, particularly for when the parents are no longer around, so that the individual's life can improve;
9. **be open to challenge by people who know the individual well and has their best interest at heart;** and
10. **be open to advice from supportive people who respect their role as family members.**

3.3 Service Business

Homes West will:

1. keep the support needs of the individuals central to all activity;
2. ensure support staff have the safety and welfare of the individual as their sole priority;
3. work respectfully with informal supports that are naturally there;

4. protect the individual and their family from intrusive bureaucratic processes;
5. actively seek funds through submissions to funding bodies and make alliances with other services upon request from individuals or family members;
6. provide accountability for the expenditure of funds to the families and the funding bodies;
7. protect the service, including taxation and insurances;
8. employ, train and support staff;
9. challenge anyone who compromises the health and well-being of the individual; and
10. support and encourage the families now and in the long term.

Families vary in their involvement in their family member's life. This depends on the abilities of the individual and the capacity and culture of the family. The risk of the individual's needs not being met increases the more "family business" is taken over by the service.

3.4 Homes West's Business

The members of Homes West together will:

1. appoint a committee to govern and direct the business of Homes West to ensure the service does the best for the people they serve;
2. set the policy direction; for example, what is negotiable, when to compromise, what is possible and what is the purview of the organisation;
3. nurture and safeguard the spirit and culture of Homes West, in particular, commit to work together for the common good of the families; and
4. reach out to the broader community to reflect on how it is going, renew itself as an organisation, and find future supporters and leadership.

3.5 Homes West's expectations of funding authorities

An important aspect of right relationship is a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations Homes West families have for the various funding authorities.

Homes West will:

1. establish and maintain transparent and lawful financial processes;
2. report within given timelines; and
3. abide with all requests for reporting and accountability.

In turn Homes West will ask from the funding authorities for:

1. staff who are knowledgeable and experienced;
2. respect for the natural authority of families and the willingness to work collaboratively with families towards the most effective and cost efficient service for the individual;
3. correspondence to be answered promptly;
4. meetings to be held at the least cost to the person with the disability and the family;
5. communication to be helpful, direct and relevant; and
6. reasonable accountability processes in relation to the size of the organisation.

3.6 Families' expectations of support staff

Individuals and their families choose staff typically for their values, attitude, energy and interests. Homes West prefers people who have not been employed by large conservative services. However, this experience does not preclude employment. Homes West families expect:

1. **acceptance of the person and the family.** Families expect staff to accept the person and his or her family unconditionally. This does not include illegal, unsafe or immoral behaviour. Support staff understand the importance of the family and friends in the person's life and work alongside them. If this relationship breaks down, this is reason enough to discontinue employment;
2. **honesty, reliability and integrity.** Families invest a high level of trust in staff and expect honesty, reliability and integrity. If this trust is betrayed, staff are asked to leave. Staff typically rise to this challenge; staff who know they are trusted for their honesty, integrity and reliability are proud of it and will rarely, if ever, take it for granted;
3. **the person's safety and welfare to be the first priority.** Families understand that support workers may have commitments (e.g. to their own family, to study, or to other employment) which could conflict with their responsibilities when working with an individual for Homes West. While working with an individual, support staff are expected to make the individual's support needs their sole priority.
4. **willingness to work in a team.** Each person has his or her own team and its success is dependent on the staff pulling together;
5. **capacity for creative problem solving.** Staff are also encouraged to problem-solve creatively. There is a risk here. However, once a team understands the family culture and is trusted, they will be well equipped to deal with an unexpected situation.

3.7 Support staff's expectations of Homes West families

In right relationship, Homes West staff have expectations of the committee of management and the families. Staff can expect that:

1. **their rights are respected and conditions as outlined in the award are met,** unless agreed to;
2. **the families understand the day to day issues of supporting the individual** and be readily available and willing to problem-solve at short notice;
3. **there are clear written guidelines** on how the family wishes the service to be provided. **Relevant directions, customs and routines should be clearly documented** for support staff to consult. What can be in writing should be in writing and readily available;
4. **requests are reasonable and the consequences are understood.** Homes West families will work with staff so that working arrangements and household routines meet the changing needs of the individual. Families are expected to be reasonable and lawful in their requests and to understand the consequences of their directions for support staff;
5. **there are regular meetings with the coordinator and the family** where open and honest discussion can be had on how the service is going. If the families expect support staff to understand, support and respect the family

culture and history, they need to spend the time sharing information with them;

6. **there are occasional meetings without the family** to allow them to express their feelings and to clear the air. This would only occur with the permission of the family;
7. **there is a supportive and positive culture where it is OK to admit you were wrong**, or you forgot to do something. If everyone can admit their fallibility without fear or retribution, support staff are more likely to own up to their mistakes; and
8. **they are able contribute their ideas about how to improve aspects of the individual's life**. Experienced support staff know the individual well and are in a good position to make significant contributions.

3.8 Homes West families' expectations of the Co-ordinator

The relationship between the families and the co-ordinator is also critical to the quality of the service to the person. The Homes West committee will consult with all Homes West families on the employment of the co-ordinator, so all families have an opportunity to ensure they have the right person for the job.

Homes West families can expect that:

1. **the co-ordinator will show fidelity to the individuals and their families.**
Homes West families expect the co-ordinator not to make judgements about the person or their family, to speak positively about them at all times, and to defend their good name in any conflict or external review;
2. **the co-ordinator will respect the uniqueness of each person and their families and will respond to their individual needs.**
Each Homes West family will communicate differently with the co-ordinator and expect different levels of support. They expect this level of flexibility and the capacity to "do what it takes" to ensure the best possible service is provided;
3. **the co-ordinator, with the committee, will protect the individual and the family from intrusive bureaucratic processes** as much as possible. The co-ordinator will relieve the individuals and their families from the intrusion and stress of formal accountability and review processes;
4. **the co-ordinator facilitates only the paid service element of a person's life;** and
5. **the co-ordinator will make a long-term commitment to Homes West.**
For this to work, the families are expected to reciprocate their commitment to work through any issues from time to time.

3.9 Co-ordinator's expectations of the Homes West Committee

The Co-ordinator can expect that the Homes West Committee will:

1. **delegate** the responsibility of the employment, supervision and termination of support staff to the Co-ordinator;
2. **offer support** and advice on issues pertaining to his or her employment;
3. **build a trusting relationship** through open and honest communication and a willingness to solve problems quickly, locally and creatively.

4. Service access

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 1

Each person with a disability seeking a service has access to the service on the basis of relative need and within available resources.

4.1 Homes West's position

Homes West will work with families to support individuals with a disability to establish and to live in a home of their own and to be included as active and valued members in their local community. The Coordinator will have the capacity to know the people who use the service, their families and friends and broader support networks very well.

Homes West has made a long-term commitment to support individuals in homes of their own and recognises that the individual's support needs may change over time.

4.2 Size of Service

Homes West will work with around **ten (10) families only** to support individuals with a disability to have the opportunity to establish and to live in a home of their own and to be included as active and valued members in their local community.

4.3 Assistance to other organisations

Within its resources, Homes West will:

1. share information about the establishment and daily practices of Homes West (for example: policies, procedures, agreements);
2. work collaboratively with like-minded organisations to improve service practice and wisdom;
3. provide information to families about a family-governed, person-centred service; and
4. support families and individuals living in the Homes West area who have small administrative requirements to manage services themselves.

4.4 Procedure for assisting other organisations:

Requests for support will be brought to an ordinary Management Committee meeting and an appropriate response will be made.

4.5 Procedure for offering the services of Homes West

Homes West will offer a family support on the condition that:

1. there is a vacancy;
2. they and the individual live within an area which can be efficiently administered by Homes West;
3. they support the beliefs and assumptions of Homes West;
4. they trial the service for 12 months and both the family, the individual and Homes West agree to the relationship continuing;
5. they attend the family days and contribute to the governance of Homes West within their capacities; and
6. they understand that Homes West can only provide services if there is

adequate funding.

When the Committee of Management are able to offer services to another family, they will:

1. advertise in the area serviced by Homes West for expressions of interest;
2. interview those families who meet the conditions above; and
3. offer service to the family who best meets those conditions.

4.6 Terminating the Services of Homes West

An individual, for a variety of reasons, may choose no longer to use the services of Homes West.

An individual may choose to leave the service for a number of reasons including:

1. relocation to a place where Homes West is unable to provide a good service;
2. transfer to another service provider;
3. dissatisfaction with Homes West's service; and
4. no ongoing requirement of a service.

Homes West may decide to terminate a service for an individual as a result of factors, such as:

1. irreconcilable differences between the individual or the family and Homes West which place Homes West at an unacceptable risk of breaking the law or of compromising the delivery of services to other individuals; and
2. all avenues of paid and unpaid support have been exhausted.

4.7 Procedure for Terminating the Services of Homes West

1. If an individual's reason for leaving is due to dissatisfaction with the service, the Committee of Management will ensure that the Complaints System has been effectively used prior to any decision being made.
2. Upon leaving the service, the individual or the family will receive from the Coordinator, all files and records about that individual, if they wish to have them.
3. The Coordinator will negotiate with the funding body regarding the transfer of the hours of support and administrative component.
4. In the event of a person leaving the service permanently and relinquishing the funds for the support, the Committee of Management, with permission of the funding body will allocate the available support hours to the individual or individuals in greatest need.
5. In the case of irreconcilable differences, the Committee of Management will take the necessary action to avoid a similar occurrence.

5. Individual needs

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 2

Individual needs and personal goals are met in the least restrictive way possible and within available resources.

5.1 Homes West's position

Homes West believes that a home is much more than “bricks and mortar”. It should enhance a person's personal privacy and security, the development of relationships and intimacy, and expression of individuality through flexibility and choice.

People with a disability will continue to grow, learn and change throughout their lives. However, little that is worthwhile happens without planning.

Homes West aims for all individuals with complex communication needs to receive the best available support to develop a communication system that allows the person to communicate as freely as possible in as many situations as possible to the maximum number of people. Homes West also aims to provide an environment where all people, in particular individuals with complex communication needs are truly heard and participate in every aspect of daily life.

Homes West understands that some families may need time and information before they are ready to accept communication assistance for their family member.

5.2 Responding to the individual

Homes West will:

1. provide the paid support needed for each individual to establish a home of their own and to be included as active and valued members in their local community;
2. seek out the best possible options for each individual;
3. support the person in the long term;
4. promote the image, competencies and relationships of the person with a disability; and
5. work respectfully with and welcome the contribution of the individual's family and friends.

It is understood by all families that Homes West can only provide services if the funds are available.

5.3 Communication assistance

At the request of the individual or his or her family and friends, Homes West will:

1. provide training and support to staff and families to assist individuals with complex communication needs who are supported by Homes West to communicate to their optimum;

2. ensure all training and ongoing support complies with the standards set by Disability Services Queensland; and
3. appropriately manage any controversial information received from individuals once they have communication assistance.

5.4 Individual staff teams

Homes West will ensure that:

1. Each individual has his or her own team of support staff;
2. No support staff will support other individuals in Homes West; and
3. Each individual's daily, weekly, monthly and long-term plans are implemented.

5.5 Temporary sharing of staff

Families may share staff when:

1. both families agree to the arrangement;
2. there is a time limit on the arrangement;
3. the staff agree to the arrangement; and
4. there is no other solution available at the time.

The Co-ordinator will ensure both families are informed when the agreement has ceased.

5.6 Procedure for individual planning

Each individual has a monthly meeting for staff, family and others of their choosing to:

1. plan a calendar of activities based on his or her needs and liking;
2. review the events of the last month;
3. identify any change in needs or desires; and
4. discuss how the individual's life could be improved.

6 Decision making and choice

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 3

The person with a disability participates as fully as possible, in decision making, choice of activities and events in daily life in relation to the services received.

6.1 Homes West's position

Homes West works with families to support people with a disability to establish and to live in a home of their own and to be included as active and valued members in their local community. Homes West understands that the individual's wishes may differ at times from the family. Homes West will ensure the individual participates as fully as possible in decision making, choice of activities and events in daily life in relation to the services received.

6.2 Individual's Rights and Responsibilities

Individuals supported by Homes West have a right to:

1. **a home of their own**, on their own or with others of their choice, with tenure that suits their individual needs;
2. **change their mind** and change their home as circumstances change.
3. **accommodation costs** that are within their means;
4. **a place where relatives or friends can visit** and enjoy their hospitality.
5. **help** with practical arrangements, making and sustaining relationships, doing ordinary things and taking advantages of opportunities that arise, **for as long as needed**;
6. **make as many decisions as possible** (including selection of staff) for themselves and to do as much as is possible for themselves;
7. **back up systems** in cases where support staff are unavailable or in emergency situations;
8. have assurance that **access to advocacy** and a grievance procedure will be their right and will be available;
9. **be informed and consulted about the financial status, policies and operation of the service**;
10. where necessary, **be informed and assisted with legal and financial implications concerned with establishing and maintaining a home of their own** (e.g. home ownership);
11. **have their paid support reviewed** if their needs change. This could mean more or fewer hours depending on the nature of the change needed;
12. **use their support hours if they go away** from their local area (e.g. holidays); and
13. **a service agreement** that documents the hours of service to be provided, assessment of support needs and other information that is necessary to the service they receive.

7 Privacy, dignity and confidentiality

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 4

The right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of life is recognised.

7.1 Homes West's position

Homes West understands how services can overlook and even disregard the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of individuals and their families. To prevent this, Homes West will implement service practice and a culture of respecting the private lives of the Homes West families.

7.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

The privacy, dignity and confidentiality of individuals will be respected in line with the 11 Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) in the Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988*. and the Principles and Objectives of the Disability Services Act 1992.

7.3 Procedure for maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

Homes West Committee of Management, Coordinator and staff will:

1. not discuss service issues, personal affairs of consumers or staff disputes with anyone other than those directly affected;
2. only collect personal information directly related to its activities and only by fair means. The collection of this information will not unreasonably intrude upon the privacy of the individual concerned;
3. advise the individual and his or her family why the information is being collected; and to whom the information is normally disclosed;
4. take reasonable steps to ensure that personal information collected is relevant, up-to-date and complete;
5. return to families all documents holding personal information when they are no longer in current use by the Co-ordinator, or if not needed, destroy it;
6. use individual password security on computers in the Homes West office;
7. ensure the filing cabinets and Office are locked when not in use and only those with authority to access the information held to be in possession of a key;
8. give individuals access to all records containing their personal information and to alter those records if they are inaccurate, subject to Queensland laws;
9. use personal information only for the purpose for which it was collected and disclose personal information only if the individual concerned is aware of, or has consented to that disclosure; and
10. use or disclose personal information if it is authorised by law or if it is necessary for certain types of law enforcement.

Homes West asks families to:

1. maintain relevant personal information on the individual's needs; and
2. identify who will continue to do this when the parents no longer are able to do so.

Support staff will:

1. not give phone numbers or addresses of the people for whom they work to anyone without authority from the individual or their family;
2. restrict personal phone calls at and visits by people to individual's homes unless the visitors have come to visit the individual receiving support;
3. not use any language or gestures which devalue, belittle or blame the person;
4. show respect and care when carrying out personal care duties;
5. not display any personal information where it can be read by anyone other than those authorised by the person they support; and
6. respect the relationships and private business of the individual with his family and friends.

8 Participation and Integration

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 5

Support and encouragement is given to the person with a disability to participate and be included in the life of the community.

8.1 Homes West's position

Homes West has identified four natural phases for support to assist an individual to establish and live in a home of their own and to be included as active and valued members in their local community. This standard includes the first two phases, namely:

- Phase 1 - Planning for a home of their own; and
- Phase 2 - Establishing a home of their own.

8.2 Procedure for Phase 1 - Planning for a home of their own

Homes West will assist each individual and their family to explore and establish the necessary supports for each person to move towards the goal of a home of their own.

The Coordinator will work closely with each individual and their family to identify:

1. who the individual wishes to live with;
2. where the person wants to live; and
3. the formal and informal support networks required to achieve a home of their own including:
 - i. defining and redefining relationships with family;.
 - ii. linking and liaising with other formal support services; and
 - iii. exploring and developing membership within the local community (e.g. local clubs, associations, church groups).

The Coordinator and the individual's support staff work with the individual's family and friends to:

1. promote and develop friendships;
2. assist the person develop relationships;
3. create opportunities for outings with friends; and
4. build on the existing capabilities and links of the individual and his or her family.

The family will:

1. develop informal supports around the individual; and
2. find appropriate housing and transport if required.

8.3 Procedure for Phase 2 - Establishing a home of their own.

The Coordinator and the individual's support staff will work with the individual's family and friends to:

1. assist each individual to 'experience' living in a home of their own;
2. understand that each individual will move at their own pace from Phase 1 into Phase 2 and can return to Phase 1 if they desire;

3. will arrange all available supports to enable the person to live in a home of their own. This support will be provided in collaboration with the individual's family and friends;
4. provide support flexibly so that it adapts around other components of the individual's life (e.g. when family takes holidays; when other people come in and out of the person's life; when an individual goes to work or uses a day service); and
5. support the individual to continue to grow in relationships, widen their community memberships, enter into new relationships and develop their competencies and skills.

9 Valued Status

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 6

Opportunities are provided to develop skills to participate in and achieve valued roles within the community.

9.1 Homes West's position

Once established in a home of their own, individuals will need to establish routines and on-going relationships. Homes West will assist individuals through the next two phases, namely:

- Phase 3 - Anchoring in the community; and
- Phase 4 - When parents are no longer around.

9.2 Procedure for Phase 3 – Anchoring in the community.

Once an individual is established in his or her own home, the Coordinator and the individual's support staff will work with the individual's family and friends to:

1. ensure the individual feels safe and content;
2. employ new support staff who genuinely like the individual and understand and respect the individual's needs, desires and level of satisfaction;
3. assist the individual to be known, have a positive image in his or her local community, and have important and regular activities to do;
4. support the individual to welcome family and friends who come to visit, and, in turn, to visit their friends and family;
5. contribute towards a cohesive team of family members, friends and support staff who come together to support the individual to plan a lifestyle of his or her own choosing; and
6. respond positively and flexibly to spontaneous opportunities.

9.3 Procedure for Phase 4 – When parents are no longer around.

Homes West families will:

1. safeguard the tenure of their family member's home;
2. shore up the funds needed for paid support;
3. identify key people to safeguard family values and beliefs, and provide ongoing support to the individual, including support circles;
4. set in place legal mechanisms to safeguard and manage funding and assets (wills, trusts etc); and
5. record vital information including family values and customs, medical history, routines, values, capacities and concerns.

Homes West will:

1. provide assistance within available resources to guide families with these tasks; and
2. continue providing a support service to the individual in the same manner as before the death of the parents, working with other family members and friends who have been identified to take over the parents' role.

10 Complaints and disputes

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 7

There is a proactive approach to complaints and disputes management that safeguards individuals, families and support staff from retributive action when raising complaints.

10.1 Homes West's position

Without adequate safeguards in place, Homes West is as likely as any other organisation to harbour abusive or neglectful treatment of individuals and their families. Homes West will remain open and receptive to complaints and will act to ensure transgressions are not repeated.

10.2 General Feedback

The Co-ordinator will:

1. provide feedback forms to each individual to keep in their homes. These can be used by anyone who has a concern, or comment on Homes West services.
2. table these comments at the next Committee of Management Meeting for their response.

10.3 Complaints by Individuals or their families and friends

Homes West acknowledges that the individual or any person in an individual's life can identify a problem and may raise a complaint. Complaint handling often uncovers policy and procedural issues that need to be reviewed and changed. The complaint procedure is an important check on the performance of Homes West. However, it is only as strong as the commitment of its members to identify the mistakes, remedy the damage, and learn the lessons for the future.

The Coordinator will actively listen for concerns or signs of dissatisfaction. This is particularly important for individuals and their families who are unable or may not wish to make a complaint.

Homes West will ensure that all complaints raised will be acknowledged and resolved to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint or to the capacity of the organisation to do so.

Homes West believes complaints are best resolved **quickly, locally and creatively**. Therefore, Homes West encourages people to:

1. own the problem and identify a possible solution, if they can;
2. let someone know as soon as possible; and
3. be prepared to make reasonable changes which will improve the situation.

10.4 Procedure for individuals and families

An individual and/or their family and friends can take any of the following action:

a. Tell someone you trust

1. The individual is encouraged to involve a friend whom he or she trusts to support or advocate for them. The Coordinator may assist in this process.

2. The individual who has the concern or makes the complaint is encouraged to resolve it directly with the person, if it is appropriate and safe to do so. Friends and advocates can help in this process.
3. The parties resolve the concern or complaint between themselves and the matter is closed.

b. Tell the Management Committee

1. The person can approach the Coordinator or any member of the Committee of Management, who then must document the concern or complaint.
2. The concern or complaint will be raised with the Management Committee by requesting the Coordinator or a Committee Member involved to raise the matter in General Business at an ordinary Committee Meeting or the Committee Executive at a Special Meeting.
3. The Management Committee or Executive will nominate a sub-committee of at least one person to investigate the complaint. Members of the sub-committee will need to remain impartial to the nature of the concern or complaint.
4. The sub-committee has the responsibility to bring the parties together, if appropriate, in an endeavour to resolve the matter. All parties have the right to ask an advocate or friend to be present with them at these meetings.
5. The sub-committee has the responsibility to make recommendations to the Chairman and, if appropriate, the Chairman will resolve the concern or complaint.
6. The parties resolve the concern or complaint and the matter is closed.

c. Tell someone outside of Homes West

The person can contact the funding body, a union, a lawyer or an advocacy organisation.

10.5 Complaints by support staff

If the complaint is of an administrative nature, for example, overdue wages, an employee should contact the Coordinator or Treasurer to have the matter rectified.

If the complaint is about an individual or a family, the Coordinator will act on it informally as soon as possible. If a formal process is required, the Coordinator will accompany the person making the complaint to discuss the complaint with the individual and/or the family if this is appropriate.

The Coordinator will notify the individual or the family about the nature of the complaint and offer appropriate support to the individual or the family in resolving the matter. The employee has the right to an advocate in resolving the matter.

11 Service Management

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 8

There is effective corporate governance through sound and visible management systems and practice.

11.1 Homes West's position

Homes West will manage the service in line with the Constitution and the philosophy of the service, and will meet financial and legal obligations.

Homes West has a commitment to ongoing evaluation, planning and renewal to ensure services continue to meet the needs of the individuals and their families in the most cost effective and efficient manner.

11.2 Procedure for Planning Evaluation and Renewal

Homes West will ensure the **Individual** has:

1. an annual family agreement which outlines what will be achieved by the service, family and community working together;
2. an annual budget with quarterly reports on expenditure;
3. individual Submissions for funding when required; and
4. a review of the family agreement on an annual basis.

Homes West will ensure each **employee** has:

1. a regular performance review by the family; and
2. adequate training for the work required.

Homes West will ensure the **Coordinator** has:

1. an annual work plan and performance review;
2. a weekly work plan
3. a Monthly Report for the Committee of Management; and
4. a Professional development plan, including professional supervision

Homes West will ensure the **Homes West families** have:

1. at least four (4) family days including the Annual General Meeting; and
2. opportunities to participate in all audits and reviews.

Homes West will ensure the **Committee of Management** has:

1. regular meetings according to the Constitution;
2. sub-committees and working groups as needed; and
3. a 5-yearly external review of Homes West.
4. a work plan from the outcomes of the 5-yearly review.
5. complied with the Disability Sector Quality System audit requirements; and
6. an annual review of the policies and procedures.

11.3 The Committee of Management

A Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary and ordinary members of the Committee of Management will be elected annually from the membership of Homes West.

11.4 The Homes West Families

The families will meet regularly at Family Days to:

1. develop and approve the policy of the organisation through consultation with individuals; and
2. contribute to the processes for planning, evaluation and renewal of Homes West.

The chairman may invite people other than family members to attend Family Days to provide advice and information if it is thought advantageous to the families.

11.5 Procedures for the Committee of Management:

The Committee of Management:

1. understands and abides by its Constitution, the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* and the Rules of Incorporation;
2. manages the organisation and oversees all aspects of financial accountability of Homes West;
3. keeps records of Management Committee Meetings and Annual General Meeting;
4. ratifies policy created by the Homes West families and directs the organisation with the interests of all the families at heart;
5. selects the Coordinator;
6. ensures the Coordinator is able to carry out his or her duties;
7. delegates decision-making authority to the Coordinator;
8. monitors and plans for the changing needs of the service;
9. initiates and directs major negotiations with Government Departments, funding bodies and political representatives; and
10. handles complaints and grievances.

The Chairman

The Chairman will:

1. chair all meetings;
2. liaise with the Secretary and Treasurer to conduct the formal business of the Executive Committee;
3. fulfil the duties of the Public Officer of the Association;
4. co-opt Committee of Management members to implement day to day procedures;
5. Take a personal interest in the lives of all the people supported by Homes West and respect each family's journey;
6. Advise the Co-ordinator in his or her dealings with the families and support him or her on a day-to-day basis;
7. Have a thorough understanding of and commitment to the Policies and Procedures of Homes West, in particular, the mission, beliefs and assumptions which underpin its work; and
8. be a panel member for selection of the Coordinator.

The Secretary

The Secretary will:

1. be responsible for the legal requirements of the organisation;
2. manage the correspondence;

3. take minutes at each meeting;
4. in consultation with the Chairman, call meetings and provide an agenda to Committee Members prior to the meeting;
5. oversee the Annual Report, proxies and notices of Annual General Meeting; and
6. upon request from the Chairman, arrange venues for meetings and prepare any other documents pertinent to that meeting.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer will be responsible for all financial matters pertaining to the Association. These include:

1. payment of wages;
2. payment of all other accounts and insurance premiums;
3. maintaining Superannuation Guarantee Charge accounts and making payments thereto;
4. all financial dealings with funding bodies, including the formulation and submission of quarterly financial reconciliations;
5. all correspondence with the Australian Taxation Office;
6. in collaboration with the Coordinator, the preparation of accounts for each financial year and all matters relating to our statutory audit;
7. assistance to the Committee with the formulation of submissions for grants and other financial assistance;
8. the establishment and reconciliation of a petty cash float maintained by the Coordinator;
9. oversee reimbursement payments for travel and other out-of-pocket expenses; and
10. issue of group certificates at the end of each financial year, as appropriate.

The Treasurer will ensure suitable systems are maintained to account for all finances provided by funding bodies. These include:

1. maintaining up-to-date Worker Declaration forms and Superannuation Guarantee Charge account forms;
2. keeping a record of all wage payments together with details of how each wage payment was calculated;
3. submitting quarterly group and Goods and Services tax payments to the Australian Taxation Office;
4. receiving reconciliation statements on all bank statements and balanced monthly as presented by the Coordinator;
5. submitting a detailed report to each Management Committee meeting and at Annual General Meetings;
6. obtaining ratification of all payments in the preceding period of each Management Committee meeting;
7. making employees' Super Guarantee Charge payments into the respective accounts on a quarterly or annual basis as may be appropriate; and
8. ensuring all insurances are current by paying all premiums.

The Treasurer, together with the Chairman, will meet with the Coordinator **fortnightly** to oversee the financial management of Homes West.

11.6 Stewardship Group

The Stewardship Group of Homes West is an open committee which meets **once a month** to:

- 1 plan and organise the **four** Family Days each year;
- 2 advise the Management Committee on policy issues and changes;
- 3 review Homes West policy **annually** and formulate new policy as required for approval by the families and ratified by the committee; and
- 4 provide assistance to other organisations.

The Chairman of the Stewardship Committee will report to Chairman of the Management Committee.

11.7 Procedure for Funding

Individual funding applications

The individuals or their families can prepare applications for funding or elect to have Homes West prepare them.

Emergency Funds

1. Homes West will identify a pool of emergency funds budgeted at the start of each new financial year. The source of these funds will be initially generated by accumulated money and maintained by bank interest and from donations.
2. If hours available are not enough to meet existing need, then the Coordinator will:
 - I. recommend to the COM short-term assistance from this fund;
 - II. approach funding bodies for increased ongoing funding;
 - III. suggest ways in which the number of hours can be reduced.

Funding provided for individuals

1. Homes West checks expenditure each fortnight to ensure individuals are within budget.
2. Individuals and their families receive 3-monthly statement of income and expenditure.
3. Homes West families (and friends) can elect to fund hours on a billing system.
4. Individuals can elect to use their yearly allocation of hours over a shorter period. This would reduce the support available in the remainder of the financial year.
5. Homes West will make application to alternative funding sources (for example, Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund) on behalf of individuals if appropriate. Funding from these sources is non-recurrent.
6. At least yearly, the Co-ordinator and the family will review how funds are spent and identify possible improvements and efficiencies.

Donations to the Gift fund

Homes West will use any monies donated by Homes West families or friends to enhance service delivery generally.

Accumulated Funds

On occasions there are accumulated funds available. These funds will be allocated to individuals supported by Homes West who are in need of extra support.

The Co-ordinator, the Treasurer and one committee member without a conflict of interest will recommend to the Committee of Management how these funds should be allocated.

11.8 Communication

Homes West will implement means for all stakeholders to communicate their ideas, concerns and issues so that each individual can have the best opportunity to achieve their individual goals. (See 10.2 General Feedback)

11.9 Procedure for Communication with Families

Homes West will:

1. consult with each individual and his or her family to establish lines of communication which reflect the expressed needs of the individual and best suit his or her family;
2. provide opportunities for Homes West families and friends to come together at both formal meetings and informal gatherings i.e. Annual General Meeting, Christmas Party, community gatherings; and
3. involve individuals and their families in meeting with Government Departments, Funding Bodies and other community organisations.

11.10 Criteria for Membership of Homes West

Prospective members are required to support the beliefs and philosophy of Homes West as outlined in this document.

11.11 Procedure for Membership of Homes West

1. Membership renewal forms will be forwarded to all members prior to the Annual General Meeting;
2. No payment will be required.

11.12 Procedure for continuous improvement within the DSQS

Homes West will:

1. Complete an internal audit prior to the external audit required by the Disability Sector Quality System (DSQS). This will entail two committee members to review the policy document against the DSQS standards and the daily practice of Homes West staff and families, and to identify any non-compliance with the Standards;
2. Include any changes in the Policies after each audit. (See 11.2).

11.13 Procedure for Management of Homes West information

The Co-ordinator will develop and implement a management plan for all Homes West electronic and hardcopy documents. (Note 7.3.5 regarding information on individuals and families.) All financial files will be backed-up and stored off site at least once a week.

12 Protection of legal and human rights and freedom from abuse and neglect

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 9

The legal and human rights of each person with a disability will be upheld and action will be taken to prevent and/or respond to allegations of abuse and neglect.

12.1 Homes West's Position

Homes West will not tolerate any form of abuse, particularly of individuals or their families. Identified categories of abuse include:

1. physical abuse;
2. sexual abuse;
3. psychological abuse;
4. material and financial abuse;
5. deprivation of human rights such as privacy and freedom of worship; and
6. passive and active neglect.

12.2 Code of Conduct

Homes West families and staff will abide by its Code of Conduct which is based on Six Principles as follows:

1. Respect for the Law

a. Legislation

- i. The Coordinator will have an understanding of the legislation relevant to the operation of Homes West, and will explain to support staff their obligations during the induction process.
- ii. Support staff will respect the law in the general sense including but not limited to their responsibility in regard to the property and money of individuals they support, the families of those people, and Homes West driving regulations and road rules; physical, emotional and sexual assault; etc.
- iii. Any alleged illegal activity in regard to their carrying out the duties as an employee of Homes West Association will be investigated and, if necessary, reported to the police and action will be taken.

b. Following instructions

- i. Support staff are expected to carry out all reasonable and lawful instructions related to their work.
- ii. Where the instruction is, or appears to be, unlawful, support staff may refuse to comply and report the matter to the Coordinator or the Management Committee.
- iii. Where the instruction appears to be unreasonable, support staff should communicate this to the person giving the instruction.
- iv. Where the matter cannot be resolved through discussion, support staff may raise the issue through the Grievance Procedure.

c. Workplace Health and Safety

Support staff have an obligation to comply with Homes West's Workplace Health and Safety Manual and other instructions as issued. Support staff also have an obligation not to wilfully place themselves

and others at risk.

d. Criminal Charges and Convictions

Support staff should notify the Coordinator of any charges occurring during the course of their employment. Charges and/or convictions will not necessarily have an impact on their employment but will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

2. Respect for the Aims and Philosophy of Homes West

Support staff will respect the aims and philosophy of Homes West as outlined in this policy document.

3. Respect for persons

- a. Support staff will respect the rights, dignity and views of others. This will extend from individuals with a disability and their families to colleagues and members of the public. Support staff are expected to demonstrate their respect for the person they are supporting and others by:
- i. wearing appropriate clothing—ie clothing that enables lifting, bending, stretching etc with comfort and dignity;
 - ii. always being punctual;
 - iii. not smoking while on duty;
 - iv. not swearing or using any form of verbal abuse;
 - v. respecting and acting within the culture of the family; and
 - vi. not using subtle forms of abuse such as ‘bullying’ eg hurrying in assisting a person to eat, refusing to make eye contact if support staff are annoyed, emotional blackmail, for example, “I like you when you don’t (do a certain thing)”.
- b. No form of abuse will be tolerated including, but not limited to:
- i. Physical Abuse/Assault*
This occurs when a person suffers a physical injury, which is inflicted non-accidentally, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of body functioning or severe bodily harm. Non-accidental physical injury can include beating, shaking, burns, bites, grab marks or strangulation.
 - ii. Verbal/Emotional Assault*
This occurs when a person is subjected to yelling, demeaning remarks, sarcasm or terrorisation that causes emotional damage evident by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or untoward aggressive behaviour. It can be a single incident or part of a continuous pattern.
 - iii. Sexual Abuse*
This occurs when a person is used by another person for their own sexual gratification. This includes a wide range of behaviours including verbal stimulation, obscene phone calls, exposure, voyeurism or the showing of pornographic pictures. It becomes sexual assault when it involves physical contact that is not requested or agreed to. This can take the form of touching of genitals (even through clothing), oral intercourse, vaginal or anal intercourse.

4. Integrity

Support staff have a duty to Homes West and the person they support to:

- a. put the interests of that person before their own interests in regard to helping the person to choose activities;
- b. declare a personal interest in any decision making to the Coordinator, for example, rostering, employment of others etc;
- c. report a lack of integrity by others, for example, any abuse or neglect of that person by any other person, stealing money or property belonging to the person being supported, instances of an employee using 'community access' for their own needs, or fraudulent recording of activities; and
- d. perform a 'fair day's work'.

5. Diligence, Care and Attention

Support staff have a duty to apply themselves consistently to the aims and objectives of Homes West and the role they play as outlined in the job description and the employment contract.

a. Duty of Care

- i. Working with vulnerable people means support staff should exercise a high level of care, diligence and professional competency.
- ii. Support staff have an obligation not to wilfully place themselves and others at risk.
- iii. Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to meet a consumer's basic need or allows a physical injury which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of bodily function or severe bodily harm as a result of uncorrected conditions or inadequate supervision.
- iv. This does not include an activity the individual decides to participate in after weighing the risk involved.
- v. Support staff should avoid negligent conduct by giving sufficient consideration to their actions and decisions, and by obtaining direction and advice from the Coordinator.
- vi. Support staff must be familiar with all manuals, procedures, guidelines and practice frameworks (current, and as developed) and ensure they follow these in carrying out their duties.
- vii. Homes West will ensure that staff members are made aware of new manuals, procedures, guidelines and practice frameworks as they are applied.

b. Alcohol and Drug Use

- i. Support staff are expected to report for work and remain at work in a condition to perform assigned duties free from the effects of alcohol and drugs.
- ii. Any involvement with alcohol/drugs which adversely affects the individual, their home or their family will not be tolerated.
- iii. Alcohol/illegal drug use and its physiological effects represent a threat to the well-being and security of individuals, their families, other employees, and could cause extensive damage to the organisation's reputation, liability exposure, and community standing.

- iv. Off-the-job illegal drug activity or alcohol abuse which could have an adverse effect on an employee's job performance or which could jeopardise the safety of individuals and their families, other employees, the public, or the organisation's relations with the public will not be tolerated.
- v. The organisation considers alcoholism and other drug addictions to be treatable illnesses. Absences directly or indirectly caused by the use of alcohol/drugs, for the specific purpose of organisation-approved treatment, will be excused.
- vi. Illegal drugs are those drugs defined as illegal under federal or state laws which include, but are not limited to:
 1. Marijuana; Heroin; Hashish;
 2. Amphetamines; Cocaine; Hallucinogens; and
 3. Depressants and stimulants not prescribed for current personal treatment by an accredited physician.

6. Economy and Efficiency

- a. The individual is on a limited income. Budgeting is therefore an important tool to use in assisting people to best use their resources and support staff need to use common sense in shopping.
- b. Likewise every dollar spent in salaries has to be counted in providing a quality service that will be ongoing and improved. Money is provided for individual outcomes, and Homes West will be reporting against performance indicators based on individual outcomes for the people being supported – not staff satisfaction.
- c. Homes West has a commitment to supporting staff in carrying out their duties and in encouraging and fostering their talents.
- d. High turnover of staff is detrimental to all: the service, the person being supported and their families, staff morale and the budget. All staff members are highly valued and are not to be used for a purpose other than that for which they are employed. Homes West is committed to providing a workplace that embraces all – staff, individuals and their families alike – in an atmosphere of harmony, justice and equality.

12.3 Media Statements/Publicity

1. Only the Management Committee is able to authorise/release media statements about the organisation.
2. Only the Management Committee is able to authorise publicity events on behalf of the organisation. In the case of the possibility of an individual being photographed whilst involved in community activities, support staff will need to have informed themselves beforehand of the wishes of the person and/or their family.

12.4 Procedure for the Code of Conduct

Employees will agree with and sign the Code of Conduct before commencing employment.

All injuries to the individual or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct must be reported immediately to the Co-ordinator or the family.

12.5 Allegations of Abuse

Homes West considers any allegation of abuse or neglect as very serious and will act immediately to protect the individual, redress any physical, psychological or emotional damage and prevent a reoccurrence.

12.6 Procedure for Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

Homes West requests that whoever identifies or witnesses an incident which may be considered as abuse or neglect or may lead to abuse or neglect to contact either, the co-ordinator and the family immediately.

Immediately on being notified, the co-ordinator will:

1. ensure the person is safe and act to redress any hurt to the person and the family; and
2. take action to ensure the incident is not repeated.

As soon as possible thereafter, the co-ordinator will meet with the person and their family to:

1. confirm any changes to the service;
2. identify the lessons for Homes West and report to the Chairman of the Management Committee;
3. document the incident and Homes West's response for the next Management Committee Meeting; and
4. check with the person and their family that the action taken has been satisfactory and, if not, plan/ take further action.

If the person and/or the family are not satisfied with the outcomes of this procedure, they are requested to follow the complaints procedure (see p 26).

12.7 Assistance with Medication and other Procedures

Homes West will ensure support staff will assist individuals responsibly and correctly to take medication and with other daily procedures prescribed for them.

12.8 Procedure for Assistance with Medication

Homes West asks families to:

1. supply current medication in a Webster Pack;
2. if this is not possible, supply current medication in its original containers with dosage clearly displayed;
3. provide safe storage for medication within the person's home; and
4. explain to support staff any changes that are being made to current prescribed medication and/or other procedures, and to document such changes in writing with an authorising signature and date.

12.9 Restrictive Practices

Homes West will comply with the requirements of the *Disability Services and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2008* to safeguard the rights of adults with a cognitive or intellectual disability who have 'challenging behaviour' and where restrictive practices may be required to manage their behaviour.

12.10 Definition of restrictive practices

Containment	is physically preventing the free exit of the adult from premises where the adult receives disability services, other than by secluding the adult. Note: it is not regarded as containment if the adult has a skills deficit (e.g., lack of road safety skills) and the adult's free exit from the premises is prevented by the locking of gates, doors or windows to prevent him or her from being subject to harm.
Seclusion	is where an adult is physically confined alone, at any time of the day or night, in a room or area from which free exit is prevented.
Chemical restraint	is the use of medication for the primary purpose of controlling the adult's behaviour. However, the use of medication for the proper treatment of a diagnosed mental illness or physical condition is not chemical restraint. An intellectual or cognitive disability is not considered a physical condition.
Physical restraint	is the use, for the primary purpose of controlling the adult's behaviour, of any part of another person's body to restrict the free movement of the adult.
Mechanical restraint	is the use, for the primary purpose of behavioural control, of a device to either restrict the free movement of an adult or to prevent or reduce self injurious behaviour.
Restricting access	is restricting the adult's access, at a place where the adult receives disability services, to an object to prevent the adult using the object to cause harm to the adult or others. For example: restricting access to a particular cupboard or part of a fridge to prevent the adult eating in a way that is likely to cause harm to the adult or restricting access to a drawer in which knives are kept to prevent an adult using the knives to cause harm.

12.11 Authorisation of restrictive practices

The following approvals are required by Homes West staff to carry out restrictive practices.

RESTRICTIVE PRACTICE	APPROVAL REQUIRED BY
Containment * Seclusion *	Guardianship and Administration Tribunal (GAAT)
Chemical restraint Mechanical restraint Physical restraint	Guardian for restrictive practice (general) appointed by GAAT unless being used in conjunction with containment or seclusion, in which case GAAT approval will be required
Restricting access to an object	Guardian for restrictive practice (general) appointed by GAAT or an informal decision maker
Any form of restrictive practice plus containment and seclusion	GAAT

** Applications for containment or seclusion can only be lodged by DSQ or jointly by DSQ and the relevant service provider.*

12.12 Procedure for managing restrictive practices

This policy does not apply to the informal support provided to people with an intellectual or cognitive disability by family and friends.

If a staff member anticipates or is directed to perform any restrictive practice, he or she will contact the Co-ordinator for direction.

13 Staff recruitment, employment and development

Disability Sector Quality System Standard 10

Recruitment, selection and development of support staff that ensures they have the relevant values, skills, knowledge and competencies to support service delivery to individuals.

13.1 Homes West's Position

Homes West employs staff on the understanding that families, community and paid support staff will work together in right relationship to support people with a disability to live their lives well.

13.2 Staff Recruitment

Homes West will perform as many functions in the employment and dismissal of support staff as requested by the individual and their family. Homes West has a role in supporting the individual to employ support staff. This includes placing advertisements, receiving phone inquiries, receiving employment applications, sitting in on interviews or in dismissing support staff.

13.3 Procedure for Recruitment

5. The Co-ordinator with the family and/or the individual will develop the selection criteria for the position.
6. Recruitment avenues are explored, for example, newspaper, Internet, word of mouth, and a decision made about how to advertise.
7. The Coordinator takes responses to the advertisement by phone at which time he/she asks questions in relation to the selection criteria, for example, where they live, experience, interests.
8. The Coordinator may send out a Support Staff Application form, depending on the number of applicants.
9. The Coordinator eliminates any applicants who do not meet the selection criteria.
10. The Coordinator informs the individual and/or family of the applicants who meet the selection criteria.
11. The individual and/or family, with the Coordinator, short list the applicants to be interviewed.
12. The Coordinator contacts the applicants and arranges interviews.
13. The interview takes place in the home of the individual or other venue suitable to the individual. The people present at the interview may include the individual, family members or friends, support staff and Coordinator.
14. The interview takes the form that is most suitable to the individual, for example, while engaged in daily activities or by asking set questions.
15. Discussion is held about the applicants. Other members of the interview panel remind the individual of the different attributes of the people who were interviewed. A decision is made.
16. The Coordinator performs a referee check on the applicant.
17. The Coordinator informs the applicants of the decision made and arranges for the induction process to commence.
18. The applicant signs the Homes West Contract and Code of Conduct.
19. Homes West will ensure that all criminal history checks as required by law are carried out.

13.4 Induction and Training

Homes West will ensure that support staff are adequately trained in the needs of the individual they are supporting. Some families will train support staff themselves and experienced support staff will have the opportunity to be a mentor for the new employee.

Homes West will record the method and type of training given to each staff member over and above that training given by the family at the monthly meetings.

13.5 Procedure for Induction and Training

- 13 All new support staff will receive an "Information for Support Staff" package.
- 14 The individual and the family, with the help of an experienced support staff member, will train the new employee in what is required. At least three training sessions will take place.
- 15 The individual will be asked how they feel about the new employee supporting them on their own. If the individual is happy to proceed, the new employee will be designated hours to work. If the individual is not happy to proceed, more training will be negotiated or the induction will be terminated.
- 16 If the employee is employed on a permanent part time basis he or she will be subject to up to 3 months probation and will be monitored closely during this time. This probation period can not be extended if the Co-ordinator or the family is not satisfied with the employee's performance and the employment will be terminated.
- 17 If the employee is employed on a casual basis no formal probationary period exists but the person will be monitored closely and can be dismissed at any time within 12 months.
- 18 The employee will attend monthly meetings at which the training will continue.

13.1 Confirmation of Employment

When the Co-ordinator, family and individual are satisfied the employee has successfully completed probation, the employment agreement between Homes West and the employee will be finalised.

13.2 Termination of Employment

Employment will be terminated for the following reasons:

1. The services of the employee are no longer required by the individual for whom he or she worked.
2. There is an irretrievable communication breakdown between the employee and the individual or the family.
3. The employee has breached the Code of Conduct, the Contract of Employment or Job Description.

13.3 Procedure for Termination of Employment

The Dismissal Procedure documented in the Social and Community Services

Award will be implemented.

Refer to Contract of Employment for 'termination of employment'.

The Coordinator has a responsibility to use and enforce disciplinary procedures when necessary to ensure Homes West Association fulfils its duty of care to individuals.

1. In the **first** instance of breach of the Code of Conduct, their Contract of Employment or Job Description, a verbal warning will be issued unless the action warrants summary dismissal and this action is taken.
2. On the **second** instance of a breach of this Code of Conduct, their Contract of Employment or Job Description, a first written letter of warning will be issued.
3. On the **third** instance of a breach of the Code of Conduct, their Contract of Employment or Job Description, they will be dismissed.

13.4 Workplace Health and Safety

Workplace Health and Safety applies to:

1. everyone who may affect the health and safety of others because of workplaces and workplace activities;
2. everyone whose health and safety may be affected by workplaces and workplace activities.

Homes West will comply with the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*.

This means:

1. Homes West has an obligation to ensure the workplace health and safety of the individuals and each of the support staff at work;
2. Homes West has an obligation to ensure that the health and safety of the committee of Management or the members of Homes West are not affected by the way the Homes West conducts its activities;
3. a work place is deemed by Homes West as any place where work is carried out for an individual. This could mean a private home, in a vehicle, or in a community setting;
4. workplace health and safety is the responsibility of all persons - employer, employee, and the individual and his or her family and friends;
5. support staff and volunteers of Homes West and the family and friends of the individual are not expected to carry out work which is unsafe;
6. Individuals who use the services of Homes West are not expected to tolerate assistance that is unsafe;
7. individuals who use the services are expected to support Homes West's commitment to workplace health and safety by becoming aware of safe work practices and assisting support staff and volunteers to carry out their tasks in a safe manner; and
8. it is the joint responsibility of staff, families and individuals to ensure safe working practices are followed at all times.

13.5 Definitions

Work injury or work-caused illness: is an injury or illness that happens during or because of the work that requires First Aid or medical treatment; or a recurrence, aggravation, acceleration, exacerbation or

deterioration of an injury or illness that support staff already have, that happened during or because of the work that requires First Aid or medical treatment.

Dangerous event: "

is an incident that causes damage to other people, equipment or property or one that came very close to causing damage (near misses).

Serious bodily injury:

is an injury that causes death or causes the employee to be admitted to a hospital as an in-patient (overnight).

13.6 Procedure to ensure workplace health and safety

Homes West requests families keep the individual's home and vehicle in safe, good condition. If required, Homes West will provide a checklist for families to review the safety and good working order of the home and the vehicle.

Where there is a potential workplace health and safety issue, the Coordinator with the assistance of support staff and family members will:

- a. identify the hazard;
- b. assess the risks that may result because of the hazards;
- c. decide on control measures to prevent, or minimise the level of the risks;
- d. implement control measures; and
- e. monitor and review the effectiveness of the measures.

Homes West will inform support staff of their health and safety responsibilities in accordance with the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, including the following areas, as appropriate for each individual:

- a. safe lifting techniques;
- b. fire safety;
- c. use of equipment;
- d. healthy and safe work practices; and
- e. First Aid.

Staff will report injuries to the individual, themselves or other people immediately in writing. Forms are available in the individual's home or from the Co-ordinator.

12.13 Employee's Compensation Insurance Cover

All employees must:

1. record the actual time they start and finish work, for Workers Compensation Insurance purposes;
2. report to the Coordinator any injury to themselves during the course of working, or when travelling to or from work in order to be entitled to make a claim under the *Workers Compensation Insurance Act*;
3. provide a written statement of the injury, how and when it occurred, signed by the employee and witnesses and be forwarded to the office as soon as possible;
4. complete a "Workers Compensation Claim form" along with necessary documents to be filled out by the injured employee and immediately return

- to the Coordinator who will ensure all necessary documents are forwarded to the Worker's Compensation Board; and
5. before returning to work, obtain a medical clearance from an appropriate medical officer and forward this to the Coordinator.

12.14 Employees' vehicles:

1. Employees must have a current valid driver's licence and a registered vehicle if they are to use their personal vehicle to, from and during their work.
2. Employees will be reimbursed for the use of their vehicle as per the appropriate award or as negotiated between the employee, the Coordinator, and the individual and his or her family.

14 DSQS Standards and Indicators

Standard 1: Service access

Each person with a disability seeking a service has access to the service on the basis of relative need and within available resources.

Service standard indicator 1.1.

The service provider has eligibility criteria and entry rules in place for potential users to access the service, based on capacity, available resources and funding.

Service standard indicator 1.2

The service provider adopts and applies non discriminatory eligibility criteria and entry rules with respect to age, gender, race, culture, religion and disability, consistent with the funding obligations, applicable legislation and purpose of the service.

Service standard indicator 1.3

The service provider's entry and exit procedures are fair, equitable and consistently applied.

Service standard indicator 1.4

Service users are provided with information and support to access a family member, an independent advocate, or other support person of their choice, to assist them when entering or exiting a service.

Service standard indicator 1.5

The service provider, in situations where it cannot provide a service to people with a disability, provides information and/or referral to alternative services where these exist and might be accessed.

Standard 2: Individual needs

Individual needs and personal goals are met in the least restrictive way possible and within available resources.

Service standard indicator 2.1

A personalised plan is developed with each service user

Service standard indicator 2.2

The personalised plan for each service user includes a clear articulation of what support will be provided and how the support will be delivered.

Service standard indicator 2.3

The service provider provides opportunities for service users to engage the support of people of their choice in the development of their personalised plans.

Service standard indicator 2.4

Each service user and/or their nominated support person is provided with a copy of his/her personalised plan in appropriate formats.

Service standard indicator 2.5

The personalised plan of each service user is reviewed within an agreed timeframe.

Service standard indicator 2.6

The health and wellbeing needs of each service user are considered in the development of their personalised plans

Standard 3: Decision making and choice

Participation as fully as possible in decision making and choice of activities and events in daily life in relation to the services received.

Service standard indicator 3.1

The service provider demonstrates responsiveness to the changing needs, aspirations and choices of service users.

Service standard indicator 3.2

The service provider communicates with service users in appropriate formats, to facilitate their informed decision making and choice.

Service standard indicator 3.3

Service users are provided with information and support to access an independent support person of their choice, to assist them in their decisions, choices and aspirations.

Service standard indicator 3.4

The service provider demonstrates that reasonable care is taken to avoid risks, without unduly limiting the ability of service users to take responsibility for their own decisions and choices.

Service standard indicator 3.5

The service provider demonstrates that, when limiting a service users ability to act on an individual decision or choice, the least restrictive alternative is adopted whenever practicable

Standard 4: Privacy, dignity and confidentiality

Recognition of the right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of life.

Service standard indicator 4.1

The service provider has a privacy and confidentiality policy that is consistent with relevant privacy legislation and principles.

Service standard indicator 4.2

The service provider has pro-active practices to ensure that the dignity of service users in relation to their individual needs and circumstances is respected.

Service standard indicator 4.3

Service users are provided with information regarding the collection, storage, disposal and accessibility of personal information.

Service standard indicator 4.4

Service users are provided with access to an independent support person of their choice, to assist them in all matters relating to the collection, storage, disposal and accessibility of personal information.

Service standard indicator 4.5

The service provider does not disclose personal information about service users without their informed consent.

Service standard indicator 4.6

The service provider has safeguards to ensure that only information, which is relevant to the services provided, is collected and stored.

Standard 5: Participation and integration

Support and encouragement to participate and be included in the life of the community.

Service standard indicator 5.1

The service provider develops, implements and reviews support services that progressively build opportunities for inclusion in the life of the local community.

Service standard indicator 5.2

The service provider promotes the use of social networks and informal supports for service users.

Service standard indicator 5.3

The service user promotes service users use of local or alternative community services.

Standard 6: Valued status

Providing opportunities to develop skills to participate in and achieve valued roles within the community.

Service standard indicator 6.1

The service provider promotes a belief in the ability of people with a disability to fulfil valued roles in the community.

Service standard indicator 6.2

The service provider develops and maintains the skills of service users relevant to their roles in the community.

Service standard indicator 6.3

The service provider promotes opportunities for service users to fulfil valued community roles.

Standard 7: Complaints and disputes

A proactive approach to complaints and disputes management that safeguards service users/supports from retributive action when raising complaints.

Service standard indicator 7.1

The service provider encourages the raising of complaints by service users/supports regarding any areas of dissatisfaction with service delivery.

Service standard indicator 7.2

Service users/supports have no fear of retributive action in raising complaints.

Service standard indicator 7.3

The service provider has a complaints management process that is accessible, transparent and provided in appropriate formats.

Service standard indicator 7.4

Service users are provided with information and support to access an independent person of their choice to assist them through a complaint process.

Service standard indicator 7.5

The service provider facilitates the resolution of complaints in a timely manner and in accordance with current policies and procedures.

Service standard indicator 7.6

The service provider demonstrates that the process for complaints handling leads to consideration of improvements within the service.

Standard 8: Service management

Effective corporate governance through sound and visible management systems and practices.

Service standard indicator 8.1

The service outlet's corporate governance structure, values, strategies, objectives and practices demonstrate effective compliance with all relevant legislative, financial, administrative, service performance and delivery requirements.

Service standard indicator 8.2

The service outlet demonstrates effective compliance with human resource management systems and practices, that include, but may not be limited to, relevant industrial relations, and workplace health and safety legislation, agreements or awards.

Service standard indicator 8.3

The service outlet's information management system, for documents and records in both electronic and hard-copy form is established, implemented and maintained in a manner that meets legislative and Australian standards requirements.

Service standard indicator 8.4

The service outlet demonstrates effective service compliance, performance and delivery outcomes, based on decisions from internal monitoring, review and assessment practices.

Service standard indicator 8.5

The service outlet demonstrates effective service performance and delivery through a continuous improvement model.

Standard 9: Protection of legal and human rights and freedom from abuse and neglect

Upholding the legal and human rights of each person with a disability and taking action to prevent and/or respond to allegations of abuse and neglect.

Service standard indicator 9.1

The service provider has current policies and practices protecting the rights of service users, that are consistent with Commonwealth and State legislation and relevant human rights instruments.

Service standard indicator 9.2

The service provider supports service users/supports in exercising their legal and human rights.

Service standard indicator 9.3

The service provider has effective policies and practices in place that demonstrate prevention of any form of sexual, financial, physical, mental and verbal abuse or neglect.

Service standard indicator 9.4

The service provider has procedures in place for critical incident reporting that respond in a timely and effective manner, to allegations of abuse and neglect.

Service standard indicator 9.5

The service provider has a documented improvement plan detailing strategies for protecting service users from abuse or neglect.

Standard 10: Staff recruitment, employment and development

Recruitment, selection and development of paid and unpaid staff that ensures they have the relevant values, skills, knowledge and competencies to support service delivery to service users.

Service standard indicator 10.1

The service provider carries out transparent, accountable and robust recruitment and selection policies and procedures for all applicants (permanent, temporary and voluntary) which meet the specified regulatory requirements.

Service standard indicator 10.2

The service provider ensures there are documented position descriptions that are current and consistent with the roles and responsibilities of all paid and unpaid staff.

Service standard indicator 10.3

The service provider provides appropriate and relevant induction to all staff (paid, volunteer, temporary or permanent) to ensure service delivery meets required standards.

Service standard indicator 10.4

The service provider has an ongoing program that identifies the values, skills, knowledge and competencies of each staff member and provides ongoing development opportunities.

15 References

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