



# South West Allied Therapies (SWAT)

# Client Handbook

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OUR TERMS

Table with 2 columns: Term and Definition. Rows include Staff or worker, Client, Workplace or environment, Service, and We, us and our.



## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to our program and services.

In this Handbook, you will find information that will help you understand how we can support you. It contains answers to some common questions that you may have and outlines your rights and responsibilities when partnering with South West Allied Therapies

## **ABOUT US**

### **Contact Details**

South West Allied Therapies (SWAT)  
Address: 1/9 Cassowary Bend, Eaton WA 6232  
Phone: 0406 447 373  
Email: [admin@youralliedtherapy.com](mailto:admin@youralliedtherapy.com)  
Website: [www.youralliedtherapy.com](http://www.youralliedtherapy.com)

### **Our Vision Statement:**

We believe that access to therapy should be a right and not a luxury. We want to give you a service that we would want for ourselves. We want to build relationships, not client lists. The most powerful therapy is the therapy that includes and empowers you. Therapy that helps you play, create, communicate, work and feel safe. We don't design therapy plans for people. We design therapy plans with people. Your goals are our priority.

### **Our Mission Statement:**

To be holistic therapy team that is universally accessible to individuals, families and communities, allowing them to live fulfilling and meaningful lives.

### **Our Values and beliefs:**

- You deserve a high quality and effective health service regardless of where you live or your financial situation.
- An effective therapy team empowers you to build your support and social networks while striving towards living independently.
- You are the expert of your life, we provide therapy based on best practice principles to support the areas you prioritise.

### **Our Commitment to Person-Centred Care:**

South West Allied Therapies takes a strengths-based holistic approach to support and care where the client or their advocate is primary to any decisions being made.

SWAT is a local Bunbury therapy team, with over 100 years of combined experience.

We provide comprehensive therapy services to children, teens and adults in the areas of Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychiatry, Dietetics and Education.



We are happy to come to you and we currently travel throughout the Greater Bunbury region. We work together as a team to achieve the best outcomes for you and save you time, effort and money in the process.

### **Organisational Structure**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>
Principal Partner	Michelle Benjamin
Principal Partner	Reece Wright

### **SERVICES**

South West Allied Therapies offers Disability Services (under NDIS) including:

- Personal Mobility Equipment
- Assist Prod-Pers Care/Safety
- Comms & Info Equipment
- Assistive Prod-Household Task
- Home Modification
- Assistive Equip-recreation

### **YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As an individual using our support services you have many rights that you should be aware of. These are detailed in the Client Service Charter of Rights. We recognise your rights and are here to support and assist you to exercise these rights and to achieve your goals.

South West Allied Therapies adopts a policy of non-discrimination regarding eligibility and entry to services, and in the provision of our support services to individuals.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

As an individual using our support services there are a few things that we ask of you. The information below explains the responsibilities you have when using our services. We ask that you:

- Respect the rights of our staff, ensuring their workplace is safe and healthy and free from harassment. We have a Work Health and Safety (WHS) policy for more information.
- Give us enough information to develop, deliver and review your support plan and understand that your needs may change and with this, your services may need to change to meet your needs.
- Care for your own health and wellbeing as much as you are able and accept responsibility for your own actions and choices even though some choices may involve risk.
- Tell us about any problems with the services you are receiving.
- Provide us with a minimum 24 hours' notice when you will not be home for your service.
- Pay the agreed amount for the services provided by our staff.
- Abide by the terms of your agreement with us.
- Tell us in writing (where able) and give us notice prior to the day you intend to stop receiving services from us.



### **A safe environment for all**

South West Allied Therapies recognises the right of clients to feel safe and to live in an environment where they are protected from assault, neglect, exploitation or any other form of abuse.

We will encourage and support any person who has witnessed abuse of a client or, who suspects that abuse has occurred, to make a report and be confident of doing so without fear of retribution. This includes any kind of abuse such as: financial, emotional, social, psychological, sexual, physical abuse or neglect.

Reports from witnesses and clients can be made immediately to whoever you wish to report to including: a staff member, a family member, a friend, the Practice Manager or the Principal Partners. If you would like to speak with anyone outside of South West Allied Therapies, you can also contact the Departments listed below under “Complaints”.

South West Allied Therapies acknowledges that prevention is the best protection from abuse and neglect and recognises its duty of care obligations to implement prevention strategies that include suitable recruitment and screening protocols for identifying potential risks.

We recognise that prevention strategies will include the employment of skilled staff who respect the rights of clients and who are aware of current legislation and policies pertaining to abuse and neglect. Such staff will assist clients, their families, advocates or guardians to access complaints mechanisms and to raise any concerns they have about service provision.

Where abuse, harm or neglect has occurred, South West Allied Therapies will respond quickly, considerately and effectively to protect the client from any further harm, ensuring they have access to any required counselling, and medical, and/or legal assistance.

### **Advocacy**

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

You can ask anyone you know well and trust to be your advocate. Normally an advocate is:

- a friend you trust
- a member of your family
- a person from a formal advocacy service or government funded such as the Office of the Public Advocate and/or NDIS Commission Website; via the Disability Advocacy Finder.

If you want someone to act on or speak on your behalf, that is be your advocate, South West Allied Therapies will:

- ensure their details are recorded in your Service Agreement and Support Plan



- with your permission, provide your advocate with all the information they need to ensure that we and any other service providers are acting in your best interest.
- work closely with your advocate and involve that person in the planning of services that will be provided for you. For example, we will ensure that your advocate is invited to:
  - consultation meetings
  - person centred planning meetings and reviews
  - any other relevant meetings or conferences.

South West Allied Therapies will ensure that its staff members understand the role of an advocate and will also promote the use of advocates as a support person for people who receive services from us.

South West Allied Therapies will always give the advocate the opportunity to discuss problems or concerns they may have. If your advocate still has concerns that cannot be resolved by us, your advocate will be informed of the complaint process and also of agencies that have a responsibility to make sure that we do our job properly. One such agency would be the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission, another would be the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Their information is under the “Complaints” in this handbook.

### **What is a Guardian?**

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

### **Consent**

When you give consent you are giving your permission or saying that it is ‘OK’ for a particular thing to happen. This means that it is your choice if you want people to read your file or provide information to another person or agency. You must always fully understand what a person needs your consent for, and if you have any doubt you should ask us or your advocate for help.

You can withdraw your consent at any time. This means that if you have given consent to take part in a particular program as part of your person-centred plan and then discover that you do not like the program, you can say that you no longer want to participate in that program.

South West Allied Therapies will need your consent to:

- be able to read the information that service providers have about you and for us to provide any information about you to other service providers, your family or nominated advocate
- ask people to attend your person-centred planning meeting
- carry out any training programs or behaviour change programs that it may want to put in place for you

If you feel that you are unable to give consent about issues in your life, then we can talk to your family or advocate. If you do not have family that is able to make decisions for you, we will help you to make an application to the court or other statutory body for the appointment of a Guardian to help you make those decisions.

## **Complaints and Feedback**

You always have the right to expect the best possible standard of service from us and we will treat any concern or complaint as a serious issue.

No matter what happens, South West Allied Therapies staff members are not allowed to react badly to your complaint, this means they are not allowed to retaliate or hurt you in any way.

You, as a client, can make a complaint if you are not happy with a staff member or the services offered by South West Allied Therapies.

There are a number of people who may be able to raise a concern or make a complaint on your behalf. These could include:

- your advocate
- a family member
- a close friend
- your support worker
- a person you know and trust

Once a complaint has been received a staff member at South West Allied Therapies will be appointed to investigate and find a resolution to the complaint.

The Principal Partner/s will write a letter to you to let you know that the complaint has been received. This letter will give you a date by which South West Allied Therapies expects to have the complaint resolved.

The complaint will then be investigated and a plan to resolve it will be developed. You will be told about this plan and will be able to tell us what you are feeling about it. You can let us know if you are happy, if you no longer have a complaint or that you are not satisfied with the outcome.

If you are not happy with the response from South West Allied Therapies about your complaint, you can take it to another agency such as:

**NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission**

Telephone: 1800 035 544

Website: [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)

**Western Australia Consumer Protection**

Telephone: 08 6552 9596, or 1300 304 054

Email: [consumer@dmirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:consumer@dmirs.wa.gov.au)

Website: [commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection](http://commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection)

**Commonwealth Ombudsman**

Telephone: 1300 362 072

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: [ombudsman.gov.au](http://ombudsman.gov.au) Family Assistance



**NDIA (NDIS Plans or Funding)**

Telephone: 1800 800 110

Website: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

South West Allied Therapies encourages and will support families to maintain contact with you. With your permission, your family is very welcome to contact us for information and support. Your family or advocate can be involved in planning the services that you will receive through your person-centred planning meeting.

We can help your family by:

- communicating in a way they can understand
- providing information about available services including those provided by us and other agencies
- helping to build trust and respect between staff members, families and you
- providing them with the opportunity to take part in the planning of service delivery
- creating opportunities to develop links with families
- providing assistance for them to access counselling and support services
- providing them with access to effective complaint procedures
- assisting them to access advocacy services where available.

**Work Health and Safety**

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 you have a duty under the law to make sure that our staff can work with you in a healthy and safe environment. Some things you can do include:

- notifying our staff of any unsafe conditions in your home
- helping with fixing any hazards found in your home through our safety assessment
- ensuring your pets are controlled during service provision
- providing a smoke-free working environment
- providing a workplace for staff that is free of racial, sexual, physical or emotional abuse
- treating our staff with dignity and respect
- telling our staff if you are unwell or cannot do things the way you usually do them
- telling our staff if your doctor has diagnosed you with a short-term infectious illness
- ensuring your personal mobility equipment and the other items you need to live independently in your home are available, well maintained to enable us to provide services safely.

We will conduct a Risk Assessment of your home during our first visits with you.

The safety of the service will be reviewed with you on an ongoing basis in accordance with occupational health and safety legislation.

**ABOUT THE SERVICE**

**Archiving clients Files**

All client files are kept for a period of seven (7) years. Files for clients from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island background must be kept indefinitely.



### **Client Access to Leave**

Services may be suspended at the request of the client for any reason and at any time, with notice, as detailed in the Service Agreement. You may request suspension of services in accordance with the terms of the Client Agreement. Clients who are funded under the NDIS program who leave Australia have up to six weeks “grace period” prior to NDIS reviewing their need to continue the service.

### **Client Access to Personal Records**

You or your appointed advocate/guardian can access personal information we hold about you. You can do this verbally or in writing. South West Allied Therapies will provide you with such information as soon as possible and usually within 7 days.

### **Support Plan**

Our Support Plans consist of our Social History Form that gathers information about you and your support network. This is updated as information changes.

We use Halaxy for clinical notes and detail your ongoing therapy noting down progress with your goals.

The therapists meet fortnightly to discuss clients at our client meeting with all Team Members for updates and information.

Every 12 months, your key worker will complete a Therapy Review Summary that is shared with you and key stakeholders including NDIS. The information included in this summary includes your goals, the therapy supports required to work to meet your goals, recommendations and future considerations for future planning.

### **Communicating with clients**

Following our initial assessment of your communication needs we will offer written, verbal and translated options for communication with you.

### **Gifts**

The Management Team recognises that clients on occasion, like to give gifts to staff. If a client wishes to give a gift, it is preferred that it is something that can be shared by all staff, for example flowers or chocolates.

Money is not to be offered to staff under any circumstances.

### **Interpreter Services**

If you are from a non-English speaking background, we will engage an interpreter should you require translation services. This is done only with your permission.

The interpreter is required to document in your notes stating that they were present for any meetings with you. Telephone interpreter services will be used in crisis/emergency situations.



## **Privacy Policy and Statement**

The privacy and dignity of clients will be maintained at all times. South West Allied Therapies complies with the applicable privacy legislation and has systems for the collection, use and disclosure, quality, security, accuracy and correction of personal information relating to you as our client.

This information is in our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and is detailed within a section in the Client Service Agreement.

Your Privacy Officer is: **Michelle Benjamin**

The Privacy Officer can be contacted in a number of ways:

Address: 1/9 Cassowary Bend, Eaton  
Phone: 0406 447 373  
Email: [admin@youralliedtherapy.com](mailto:admin@youralliedtherapy.com)

Requests for access to the personal information we hold should be made in writing to the Privacy Officer.

Where a person believes that a breach of this policy or the Privacy Act has occurred, a written complaint should be made to the Privacy Officer.

If you do not receive a response from the Privacy Officer within 30 days, or you are dissatisfied with the response, you may complain to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) through:

- the online Privacy Complaint form
- by mail: GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001
- by fax: +61 2 9284 9666
- by e-mail: [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au).

## **Re-negotiating a Service Agreement**

When your needs or circumstances (including those of your carer or representative) change, or where you request an increase or decrease in the number or type of services, a re-negotiation of your Service Agreement with us may be required.

## **Smoking**

South West Allied Therapies is committed to a safe workplace for everyone. It is requested that clients who smoke, refrain from doing so whilst support staff are performing their duties.

## **Participant Money and Valuables**

When supporting a client with social skills or dietetics requirements, to help facilitate their NDIS goals we may provide therapy in a coffee shop or in the supermarket.

- At all times, the client has complete control of their money or debit card.



- This understanding protects our service from any risks associated with money and also supports the client to understand the value of their money or their card and the risks they could face if sharing it with others.
- This protects our clients, SWAT and our staff whilst still allowing learning opportunities for building capacity.

There are clients within our service who often seek financial advice or information on paying bills, saving and daily/weekly spending.

- We assist clients with money recognition and understanding the value of money as part of a therapy program if identified as a goal in their NDIS plan
- We do not breach the client's privacy in regards to personal finances.
- We direct and support the client to access necessary financial management supports through organisations that specialise in assisting in this area.

### **Withdrawal from Services**

Should you wish to cease services please contact South West Allied Therapies immediately to discuss your situation.

South West Allied Therapies may stop providing services to you where you have not met your client responsibilities. In all cases, South West Allied Therapies will speak with you and discuss the reasons for any withdrawal of service. Where you are in agreement, South West Allied Therapies will support you to find another service provider.