

Lifetime Care - Employment of a participant's family member or friend as a support worker

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1. Introduction

Lifetime Care acknowledges the vital role that families have in the lives of our participants. Our model of service delivery is participant centered, with participants and families being involved in developing their goals and decisions about living in the community and the services they receive.

This policy supports the independence, dignity, and privacy of the participant.

Lifetime Care has appointed a panel of approved attendant care providers to deliver attendant care services to Lifetime Care participants. The panel providers have quality standards in place and the requisite skills to deliver services to meet the injury related needs of these participants.

Attendant care services are delivered by attendant care workers, also known as support workers. For the purpose of this policy, the term “support worker” will be used in place of “attendant care worker”. Support Workers provide participants with assistance to complete day-to-day activities that are difficult to manage because of their injury. This can include personal care, managing medication, home rehabilitation programs, and participating in community activities.

Attendant care services should be provided by support workers with no familial or social relationship to the participant. These workers are specifically trained to meet the participant’s needs and assist in achieving their personal goals whilst supporting the integrity of family and social relationships.

2. Family as Support Worker

Lifetime Care will not, in general, approve the engagement of a participant’s family member or friend as a paid support worker. For the purposes of this policy, the term “family member” will be used to represent either family member or friend. Engagement of a family member as a support worker may create an unintended financial relationship between the participant and family member which can have unintended consequences on their existing relationship and on the independence of both persons in the longer term.

In exceptional circumstances, where no other options are available to meet a participant's needs, Lifetime Care may consider exploring the potential for engagement of a family member as a support worker. Requirements for this to be approved are:

- all attempts to find a suitable provider of supports from Lifetime Care approved panel providers, off-panel providers, and alternative types of support to meet their specific needs have been unsuccessful
- the family member is employed through, and trained by, an attendant care provider
- the arrangement is for a fixed and limited period

A family member's need for employment or an income source is not considered an appropriate justification for them to become a paid support worker.

A family member engaged as a support worker is required to be employed through an approved attendant care provider so that they have the appropriate support, skills, and training to meet the participant's specific care requirements. This minimises risks to the participant and to the family member, while also ensuring the appropriate insurance coverage is in place at all times.

3. Requirements

Lifetime Care considers a range of factors when a participant applies for a family member to be engaged as a support worker. These include but are not limited to:

- the circumstances surrounding the request
- any potential risks to the participant or others
- what strategies can be adopted to mitigate the identified risks

A participant must also have an approved care need and current care needs assessment when applying.

If Lifetime Care considers that there are exceptional circumstances and the risks are appropriately identified and managed, Lifetime Care will seek an approved panel attendant care provider to employ the family member and advise the provider that Lifetime Care has endorsed the request. The provider will then assess whether the family member meets their

requirements to become a paid support worker. This endorsement will be for a limited period and include conditions on the employment of the family member.

The attendant care provider is not required to consider employing a family member if their own policies do not support this type of engagement, or to progress with recruitment if they consider that the family member does not meet their employment requirements. If they elect to do so, the provider must engage the family member in accordance with their organisation's employment policies and procedures and afford the family member the same rights and responsibilities as other employees for the duration of their employment.

4. Monitoring

Lifetime Care in conjunction with the attendant care provider will undertake ongoing monitoring of any engagement of a family member as a support worker.

The engagement can be reviewed by Lifetime Care and the attendant care provider at any time. It will be reviewed at the end of any approved care period and where the circumstances of the participant or the care program have changed. The engagement shall not extend beyond an approved care period without review.

5. Version Control and Document History

Version	Author	Change Summary	Approval Date
v0923	Jeff Tonge		22/09/2023