**National Disability Services**

**Learning and Development Community of Practice**

Terms of Reference

June 2020

# Background:

NDS has established a number of professional Communities of Practices (CoPs) supporting members and non-members across the disability sector nationally; which bring together professionals to support one another and leverage each other’s knowledge and skills.

Whilst those responsible for the learning and development component at disability service organisations have not been excluded from other CoPs, they have not had a tailored forum to steer, collaborate and corroborate around specific topics relating to the training and learning space.

This community of practice is complimentary to state based advisory groups and where applicable key intel will be shared across the various groups.

The NDS Learning and Development Community of Practice will be for training/learning professionals who work for organisations that provide disability services and open to both NDS members, non-members and appropriate NDS staff.

# Aim and purpose:

The aim of this CoP is to reduce fragmentation in the training/learning space by providing a forum and support for service providers across the sector; facilitate the exchange of practices and strategies amongst different organisations; and strengthen professional relationships across the sector.

This will also be invaluable during the scheduled rollout of the NDIS Capability Framework in order to inform the areas of focus that NDS should work on.

Input from the CoP will help NDS to gather data and identify where the Learn and Develop team can add value in the learning/training space, and, can also assist with other NDS projects and CoPs by being able to share and feed information across groups.

# Objectives:

* To foster peer support across the disability sector
* To provide a forum for sharing of good practice, knowledge and resources
* To identify shared issues of concern, and discuss and consider strategies to address these issues
* To identify issues for NDS to raise in its representations to government and the NDIA.

All attendees agree to maintain confidentiality of information shared during the meetings.

# Format and frequency of meetings:

The group will meet quarterly with the frequency increased/decreased in consultation with the group.

Attendees can participate by teleconference or videoconference using the (free) Zoom app, for Windows, macOS, iPhone, iPad or Android. When practicable, in person/face to face will also be considered as an option.

# Themes for discussion:

Themes for the meeting agendas will be drawn from the below, however the intention is for the agenda to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the group.

CoP participants will be encouraged to suggest agenda topics for further meetings, which may result in guest speakers/specialists in certain areas.

Some themes for discussion by this group include:

**Induction Training**: There are inconsistencies in the approach to inducting frontline staff depending on the structure, size, available resources, funding, and level of previous experience and specifics of the role. What are some of the issues that you are facing, and/or strategies that you are using to assist with this?

**Upskilling**: Support workers often require a broad skillset in their roles to best assist the people they support. Training and upskilling is essential to ensure that this level of support is of consistent high quality, however this is not always a simple thing to coordinate, and, some training may have happened outside of your organisation so it is hard to determine its relevance. How have you been managing upskilling of staff, and/or, fast tracking of training from those who have prior experience?

**Career progression:** An investment in further training not only aims to upskill and maintain quality however also has the benefits or retaining skilled workers, many of which may have ambitions for career progression. Depending on the needs of the business and the people they support it can be challenging to balance retention, career progression, and ‘currency’ of skills. How have you managed these priorities and what issues are you facing when doing so?

**Quality of training:** It can be difficult to determine what ‘products’ are best suited to your organisation’s needs due to the sheer amount of offerings on the market. Also, when developing training ‘in-house’ there can also be some level of apprehension as whilst it may be targeted specifically to your own organisation it may be challenging to know if the content is using current best practice models or contains the correct key features and requirements

Have these things been challenging for your organisation to manage, and do you think that the NDIS Framework will solve these issues?

**Types of learning:** Balancing “day to day business” and training is always a challenge for organisations, and often the chosen method of delivery may not always be best method depending on the topic(s). Whilst online and eLearning has its practical benefits of speed and efficiency of delivering content and generally being a more cost effective alternative to face to face, it can also be a barrier to those who have a low level of digital literacy, are not comfortable with this format, or, have different preferred learning style.

How do you choose which method to use, have you found a balance, and what are the inherit risks when selecting one method over another?

**Technology:** In the learning space there is an ever changing market of Learning Management Systems, providers, and offerings designed to assist with managing and keeping training and learning records. What have you found works best for you, and, what technological barriers are you facing when it comes to compatibility?

# Coordination

## Note taking

There will not be formal minutes taken during meetings, however, an NDS staff person will document the issues discussed and action items and circulate to the group afterwards.

Agendas will be issued a week before the meeting date and members will be invited to submit agenda requests.

## Chair

Chris Kane from NDS Learn and Develop will moderate the group. Duties include keeping the group on schedule with the agenda and ensuring that all people in attendance have opportunities to contribute to discussions. The Chair will be required to actively engage those who attend via tele- and videoconferencing.

## Evaluation and review

Terms of Reference to be discussed at the first meeting, and amended and confirmed at the second meeting.

After 6-8 months, there will be a review of the group to assess the progress and outcomes based on the expectations as written in the Terms of Reference.