



Welcome to the Gabrielle Centre for Children

The Gabrielle Centre for Children was founded by Sarah Turner (Speech Pathologist) and Linda Collier (Occupational Therapist) in 2011, and has grown from a small partnership to a growing multidisciplinary consortium with over twenty allied health professionals and administrative staff.

The Gabrielle Centre for Children was established due to a need for skilled and passionate therapists in the lower Blue Mountains. The name *The Gabrielle Centre for Children*, was chosen to honour a good friend who was born and raised in the Blue Mountains, but whose life was tragically cut short. Gabrielle dedicated her career to the care and treatment of children. She worked in nursing children in paediatric oncology, neurology and disabilities. Her love and dedication to children and childhood development has inspired us as therapists.

The Gabrielle Centre for Children provides transdisciplinary services including Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Physiotherapy, Social Work, Music Therapy, Early Childhood Keyworker supports, and Diagnostics. In addition to weekly/fortnightly individual sessions we also provide therapy intensives, peer sessions and specialised groups that are tailored to the individual needs of our clients.

This manual has been prepared to assist both staff and clients in understanding The Gabrielle Centre for Children's policies, practices and ethics for service delivery. For more detailed copies of our working policies and procedures please see reception or contact service management and these will be provided.

A Person-centred Service

The Gabrielle Centre for Children (GCFC) is committed to delivering a person-centred approach across all stages of service delivery. The Gabrielle Centre for Children respects the right of each person accessing our service to be at the centre of all levels of decision making and are committed to empowering all individuals to be in control of their own decision making and choices.

GCFC staff work with individuals to identify their needs, goals and aspirations, and implement plans which recognise and build on their strengths. Person centred plans also demonstrate consideration of the broader family, cultural, social and community networks and communities that the individual is involved in. Similarly, planning will also promote meaningful participation in other communities and networks the individual would like to be included in.

The GCFC acknowledges and values the experience, knowledge and contributions of parents, carers, advocates, and other circles of support (both informal and formal).



The knowledge and wishes of parents/carers and professionals is respected and drawn on in the planning process and during service delivery, with the needs and preferences of the individual being paramount at all times.

Respecting Cultural Needs and Diversity

The GCFC recognises the importance of diversity and endeavours to ensure that all service provision and planning is respectful and inclusive of cultural identity, religious beliefs, disability, gender or sexuality. These needs are clarified on assessment, during planning, and feedback is sought throughout service delivery to ensure that individuals feel their needs are being respected and supported.

The GCFC recognises and respects that individuals and families from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds may have particular cultural needs. These individual needs are identified and discussed when assessment information is gathered and will be respected in service delivery. Where community connections are researched and facilitated on behalf of individuals and their families GCFC staff will ensure these connections are also respectful of cultural needs, with priority given to seeking specialist services and organisations catering to those from that individual's cultural community.

Communication

The GCFC utilises innovative and flexible methods and strategies to empower all individuals to make informed decisions for themselves to the best of their ability. This includes making all communications about service provision and goal setting accessible (e.g. use of augmentative and alternative communication systems and technology, using plain English). The GCFC welcomes individuals taking any time needed to consider their service options and discussing them with other circles of support.

Person-centred Collaboration

The GCFC fosters relationships and works closely with other service providers, schools, early childhood settings and community based social, cultural and religious organisations. GCFC staff work collaboratively with other organisations and professionals involved in an individual's life to ensure consistency and a person centred approach. GCFC staff also use these professional relationships and knowledge to make recommendations and referrals where external supports would be beneficial to individuals.

Where individuals and their circles of support may disagree GCFC staff will make every effort to support all parties to reach an agreement while ensuring the individual's wishes are heard and respected. Where external bodies (e.g. foster care agencies, FACS, Guardianship) have decision making authority for an individual



GCFC staff will support the individual and their parents/carers in advocating for the wishes of the individual in decision making. Individuals and their families will also be supported in assessing any potential risks and benefits of options they are considering, with GCFC endeavouring to safely support individual choice.

GCFC staff will ensure that individuals and their circles of support understand what is involved in service delivery, how tasks and activities during service activity will contribute towards the achievement of their goals, what strategies will be used to overcome barriers, and the rationale behind different practices in working towards their individual outcomes. Goals and service delivery arrangements will be clearly documented and made available to individuals and their families via their Service Agreement, and will be consistent with the individual's identified person centred goals as specified in their NDIS plan. Reporting will address individual outcomes and evaluate progress towards the person's goals.

Conflict of Interest

As the GCFC offers many types of supports, all potential conflicts of interest are clearly identified by therapists to participants at the commencement of services and when recommendations are made, both internally and externally. This may need to be made using augmentative forms of communication to support this understanding. It is also important to explain the difference between types of funded supports (e.g. Therapeutic supports v Support Coordination v Early Childhood Supports), particularly when staff may also work across different types of supports. Participants will need clear explanations of the differences between roles when they may have accessed supports of a different type with that staff member before (e.g. transitioning from an Early Childhood Keyworker to a Support Coordination role)

Preference is not given to GCFC services when making recommendations and referrals, and relationships are maintained with other service providers in the local area, and supports recommended based on individual needs, specialist clinical skills and knowledge, and the capacity of services to meet complex needs. If at any time a personal interest may arise connected with a service recommendation the Support Coordinator will disclose this information to ensure transparency.

Continued service is also not assumed at review, and if the participant is funded for this Support Co-ordination again they are provided with options of alternative services, and transition is documented and supported if they feel another service would better suit their needs. Similarly, at times referrals may be made to the service where a different Support Coordinator may be known with more specialised skills to suit that individual (e.g. a Support Coordinator who is Aboriginal when this is the cultural identity and preference of the participant). In those cases, recommendations



are made and support is provided to access that provider and to provide information to support the transition when consent is given.

Service Access

Our administrative staff manage our wait list and are knowledgeable about other service options in the local area and will make recommendations for other providers so families are aware of their options.

All new clients to the GCFC are provided with a welcome pack containing information about services offered at the clinic, including details of our responsibilities as a provider, costs and funding options of services, information regarding complaints and accountability and some information about what they can expect when they commence service. The responsibilities of participants are also detailed, and any breaches of those responsibilities are addressed with the goal of resolving any issues without disruption to the participant's service. Where supports need to be withdrawn efforts are made to refer the individual to another suitable service. As a service we have never withdrawn supports, instead choosing to work through the issues with the child/family.

Before commencement of services all participants are provided with their service agreement (see attached) which they are supported to understand in the mode of communication that they prefer. Participants have the right to negotiate the provisions of their service agreement, which are renewed each school term to enable participants as much flexibility and choice with their supports as possible.

The clinic has two floors of therapy rooms to ensure accessibility for all participants. Clinical spaces are designed and set up to be safe, private, designed for all abilities and enjoyable to attend. Parents are encouraged to be present in their child's session so that they too can increase their capacity, however where the participant chooses not to have their parent/carer present there is a comfortable waiting room on each floor with amenities and activities for siblings.

Support Planning

All GCFC participants and their families are involved in the development of their service plan, which is prepared at commencement of the service when assessment and information gathering is used to assess relevant approaches and strategies to support the individual to progress towards their goals. During this process information gathered is also used to identify risks that may need to be addressed and planned for during the service. Feedback is given and obtained informally with each session and the support plan is reviewed with the participant and their family at the recommencement of each service agreement to ensure that the participant is satisfied with their service and working towards their desired outcomes.



As most participants are young children, communication and collaboration with families is generally involved, particularly to ensure that the family are also learning and improving in their capacity to support their child/young person at home and in the community. With the participant's permission, this may also include working with schools, other services or community groups to improve outcomes outside of the service also.

Where progress is different from the goals and outcomes identified at the beginning of the service plan, GCFC staff collaborate with the participant and their family to amend the service plan to be more suitable. At times this can prove a challenge when the NDIS Goals of the participant, or their support budgets have not been adequate, but the individual has not had access to a timely review due to NDIA delays.

Service Agreements with Participants

All participants have a Service Agreement which must be agreed to and signed before services commence. The GCFC renews service agreements at the beginning of each school term rather than annually for all supports where the participant may be accessing multiple services (e.g. Therapeutic Supports, Early Childhood Supports) to allow for maximum flexibility, choice and control for participants over the course of their plan. All participants and their representatives are supported to understand their service agreement's provisions, including the rights and responsibilities of all parties, complaints procedures, and the financial details of service provision. GCFC Service Agreements are designed using the recommended template provided by the NDIA. See Sample Service Agreement.

Responsive Service Provision

GCFC staff strive to provide service that is responsive, timely, competent and appropriate so that all participants are supported to meet their needs, goals and desired outcomes.

GCFC staff use evidence-based practices which are directed by individual needs, strengths, abilities and goals. Participants are empowered to direct their own service as much as is possible and staff strive to be flexible and responsive to the needs of those they are supporting, particularly given that many of our clients face large challenges in their everyday lives which impact how they present to their sessions on any given day. Staff ask questions about school, home and family life, etc. to gain and understanding of how an individual might be feeling on that day and ascertains that the participant is comfortable with what they have planned for the session (and throughout the session also).

Where appropriate and where consent is given, GCFC collaborate with families, schools, services and other stakeholders to ensure that outcomes across all of daily



life are also being addressed, rather than simply focusing on what is happening for the individual in a clinical setting.

The GCFC strives to ensure that individual needs and preferences are taken into account when allocating therapists (e.g. gender, cultural background, specialised training/experience/skills of the therapist) to promote a good therapeutic rapport, and to support more successful outcomes. Where a therapist is not the right “fit” for a participant they are able to request another clinician and all efforts will be made to support this.

Continuity of Supports

The GCFC is currently operating at full capacity, and recruitment is an ongoing process due to the extremely high demand for services in the Nepean/Blue Mountains area. There is a large wait list for services which the GCFC endeavours to reduce as much as possible.

Where scheduled services need to change all effort is made to find a mutually convenient time for the participant, their family and their therapist. Where this cannot be arranged, or when a therapist is taking leave or moving on from the service all effort is made to provide a transfer to another therapist with a transition plan to reduce disruption to the participant. In a service which operates at capacity it may not be possible for alternative arrangements to be made. In these cases, the participant may be offered a place at the top of wait list, or may be referred on to another suitable service provider to ensure continuity of service.

Each participant’s service is individualised with thorough information gathered regarding the individual’s support needs, strengths, challenges and preferences. Our therapists use evidence-based interventions and practice in a person-centred framework. Informal feedback is given and received at each session to ensure that the service is meeting the needs and expectations of the individual; and case notes are made after each session in order to monitor and support ongoing progress.

The GCFC follows the cancellation policy as prescribed in the NDIS Price Guide, however when there are complexities relating to the participant’s health, disability or family situation GCFC staff do their best to offer flexibility and to work with families to overcome barriers to them attending service regularly. During periods of crisis GCFC staff are often called on to assist more frequently than the participant’s regular sessions.



Transitions to or from the GCFC

When participants move on from our service a transition plan is planned and implemented with the consent and involvement of the participant. GCFC therapists strive to hand over the same information they would like to receive on beginning service with a new participant to ensure a smooth transition. Consent is checked with the participant before any information is shared.

Intake to the service involves assessment and information gathering by the therapist as to needs, goals, preferences, strengths, any reports they might have, a full history, discussion of what has and hasn't been helpful in the past and risk assessment. This is undertaken by the participant's therapist within the context of their discipline.

GCFC staff are aware that new participants to the service may have had difficult experiences elsewhere, or have not undertaken the type of service they are commencing before. Full information is provided via the welcome pack, and the therapist will communicate clearly with the participant and their family as to what they are doing in therapy, as well as the reasons why. This involves discussing any risks and also ascertaining if there are any difficulties for the individual with this approach.

Feedback and Complaints

GCFC staff will continuously seek feedback from individuals and their families to ensure that service delivery continues to stay relevant to the individual's needs and goals and that they are comfortable and satisfied with the direction of service in working towards their goals. Service delivery plans will also be adjusted to accommodate changes in needs, goals and individual circumstances as required.

The GCFC has a clear and accessible complaints procedure and welcomes feedback in evaluating and improving service delivery. The GCFC also maintains a continuous improvement system to ensure ongoing evaluation of service delivery and improvement which incorporates feedback from those using the service. See *Complaints Policy and Forms*.