Epilepsy management

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| **Policy number** | MM003 |
| **Effective from** | March 2024 |

AIM

1. FLINTWOOD recognises the principles of legal and human rights found in the NDIS rules (2018). In particular, the policy and procedures seek to ensure that:
2. Each Participant receives a service that promotes and respects their legal and human rights and enables them to exercise choice like everyone else in the community.
3. Each Participant can expect FLINTWOOD to support and encourage self-protective strategies and behaviours which consider their individual and cultural needs.
4. Each Participant can expect FLINTWOOD to uphold their right to make decisions, including medical treatments and interventions, and when this is not possible, any assisted or alternative decision making is in line with the Participant’s expressed wishes, if known, and if not known, in the best interests of the Participant concerned.

sCOPE

1. This policy applies to all FLINTWOOD stakeholders.
2. DEFINITION

**Epilepsy** - a neurological disorder marked by sudden recurrent episodes of sensory disturbance, loss of consciousness, or convulsions, associated with abnormal electrical activity in the brain.

**Seizure (or convulsions)** - a temporary abnormal electrophysiological phenomena of the brain, resulting in abnormal synchronization of electrical neuronal activity. They can manifest as an alteration in mental state, tonic clonic movements, and various other symptoms. They are due to temporary abnormal electrical activity of a group of brain cells. The medical syndrome of recurrent, unprovoked seizures is called epilepsy, but some seizures may occur in Participant’s who do not have epilepsy.

**Participant with epilepsy** - is a Participant who has either had a seizure within the past 10 years or is on medication for epilepsy.

**Active Epilepsy** - If the Participant has had a seizure during the past 2 years, despite taking medication for seizures.

**Epilepsy Management Plan (EMP) -** The EMP is a health care plan and a risk management document thattells employees how to respond to a usual seizure and includes an emergency response plan for an unusual seizure.

**Duty of care** - the obligation to take reasonable care to avoid injury to a Participant who the employee may foresee might be injured by an act or omission.

**Dignity of risk** - the belief that each Participant with a disability is entitled to experience and learn from life situations, even if these, on occasion, may be a threat to their wellbeing.

**Supported Independent Living (SIL)** - it is help with and / or supervision of daily tasks to develop the skills of an individual to live as independently as possible. These are the supports provided to a participant in their home, regardless of property ownership, and can be in a shared or individual arrangement.

**Short Term Accommodation (STA)** - it describes supports provided for a limited period of time, typically delivered in a group-based facility.

1. POLICY

4.1 FLINTWOOD Participants with epilepsy will be supported to access quality health care, to have full involvement in decision making and be able to exercise choice about support and treatment.

4.2 Each Participant with epilepsy has an Epilepsy plan which records the type of epilepsy, seizure description, treatments, management, and risks associated with the condition, and is reviewed during regular health assessments. The minimum review period will be annually.

4.3 All employees must have general epilepsy training as well as specific training for each Participant who has active epilepsy. All employees must be deemed competent in being able to support the Participant.

4.4 Management of chronic health conditions such as epilepsy requires regular auditing of environmental and other risks to the Participant with epilepsy, and identification of triggers that can prompt a seizure.

1. Procedures

5.5 Participants using FLINTWOOD SIL or STA services will be supported by the employees of that service to attend the required medical appointments and to ensure they have the most up to date paperwork and treatment for their epilepsy.

5.6 Persons Responsible must provide FLINTWOOD with current and updated paperwork and treatment plans for the management of the Participant’s epilepsy.

5.7 A Participant with epilepsy with ongoing seizures is supported to understand how their duty of care is considered before dignity of risk around activities involving water.

5.8 any Participant who has epilepsy must have A Swimming Risk Assessment before accessing the water

5.9 Attempts to reduce risk for the Participant with epilepsy should avoid compromising other aspects of safety and dignity, or impairing quality of life, as much as possible.

5.10 Monitoring and supervision of the Participant with epilepsy is as discreet as possible, minimising disturbance to the Participant, and promoting their health and wellbeing.

5.11 FLINTWOOD recognises that all Medical / Health Management Plans must be reviewed annually or whenever changes occur.

5.12 It is an acceptable practice to accept other Service Providers’ Management Plans for a Participant.

**Planning and assessment**

5.13 Planning for the management of epilepsy is based on the Participant’s individual needs and Participant history.

5.14 The EMP contains information specifically about the Participant and how to support the Participant if they had a seizure

5.15 The Participant may purchase an Epilepsy Mat if they choose to; this can be purchased with their NDIS funding. This is an individual preference, and the Participant may choose not to have a mat. Consent for a mat should be provided and documented if the Participant cannot make an informed choice.

5.16 The treating health professional is either the Participant’s GP or a medical specialist, such as a neurologist.

5.17 Employees will accompany the Participant to consultations with the treating doctor. Attendance by the person responsible is also encouraged.

5.18 All medical reports are to be filed permanently and be available to other health professionals as needed.

**Developing an epilepsy management plan or EMP**

5.19 A Participant diagnosed with epilepsy, must have a current and complete EMP in place.

5.20 The EMP is a risk management document that tells employees how to respond to a usual seizure and includes an emergency response plan for an unusual seizure.

5.21 Joint management of the Participant’s epilepsy includes regular medical reviews and accurate documentation of seizures in the seizure record of the EMP.

5.22 Participants using SIL have an EMP developed in consultation with the Participant, person responsible, FLINTWOOD and the Participant’s treating doctor.

5.23 In SIL, the Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that the EMP is reviewed and dated by the Participant’s treating doctor annually, or more frequently if the Participant’s medical condition changes.

**Minimising environmental risks to the Participant**

5.24 Any environmental risks to the Participant must be identified and recorded in the Participant’s profile e.g. hot temperatures during summer.

**Water safety and the participant**

5.25 Activities involving water are an elevated risk for people with epilepsy. Constant vigilance must be a primary focus for the employee and manager when the Participant with epilepsy and ongoing seizures is involved in any water-based activity.

5.26 Whether a Participant with epilepsy and ongoing seizures chooses to have a bath, shower, or participate in water-based activities, the employee must be able to always observe the Participant, and this must be identified on the Participants Risk Profile and EMP.

5.27 If a Participant has active epilepsy has a bath, it is a requirement to have a long chord on the plug, which would sit outside the bath. This is to empty the water quickly, if needed.

5.28 If a Participant has active epilepsy, the employee must not leave the bathroom for any reason while the Participant is showering or bathing.

5.29 Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees understand and can implement the procedure for responding to seizures that occur while a Participant is in the bath, shower or whilst swimming as documented within the EMP.

5.30 If a Participant has active epilepsy chooses to go swimming, a Swimming Risk Assessment must be completed, and the Participant must be accompanied by two employees. One employee must be in the water and remain within arm’s length of and facing the Participant. The second attending employee must be out of the water and observing the participant from near pool side at all times.

5.31 The employee observing the Participant must be capable and confident to enter the water and assist a Participant who has a seizure whilst swimming if needed. Pool attendants or lifeguards should be notified of any potential risk of seizures and made aware when the Participant has entered the pool with the employee.

5.32 An assessment of risk to the Participant while swimming should consider the Participant’s history of seizure activity, the possibility of having other support at the pool, for example, the pool attendant agrees to watch the Participant from the poolside, or any circumstances that would reduce risk and support the Participant to exercise choice.

**Inducting and training employees**

5.33 All employees must hold a current first aid certificate.

**Monitoring and auditing**

5.34 The EMP must be reviewed at least annually by treating health professionals, or more frequently if there are any changes in the Participant’s health and wellbeing.

5.35 Reviews and discussions of the Participant’s EMP are recorded in the team meeting minutes.

5.36 All employees are responsible for observing changes in the Participant’s health and wellbeing, and for notifying their Service Manager when they occur.

5.37 The Service Manager is responsible for monitoring employee practices on all shifts ensuring full compliance with risk and safety procedures.

**Communication and reporting**

5.38 In accordance with the Participant’s wishes and if the parent/ Carer/ person responsible wants to be advised, the Service Manager will ensure that employees know who to contact when the Participant with epilepsy has a seizure.

5.39 Employees will:

* + - Immediately advise the Service Manager of any / all seizures requiring transportation to hospital. Outside of business hours the On-Call manager must be contacted.
		- An employee is to accompany the Participant to the hospital via ambulance, where possible.
		- Advise the parent / Carer / person responsible of all seizures in accordance with FLINTWOOD policy and the Participant’s wishes.
		- An incident report must be completed
1. RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee

* Read and Sign Epilepsy Policy
* Is responsible for ensuring that all monitoring is undertaken and reported as per policy and procedure
* Ask Service Manager if unsure

Service Manager

* Read Policy
* Must ensure all paperwork is current at the Intake/ booking stage. All Individual Risk Profiles and EMPs are completed with all risks identified and action to mitigate the risk clearly defined
* Ensure EMPs are current and signed off by all employees
* Ensure EMPs are filed correctly
* Ensure all EMPSs are updated on an annual basis, or as needed
* Service Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees, have read and understood the Participant’s EMP, particularly the first aid information about seizures. Service Managers must ensure that employees sign all EMPS.
* When Participants in SIL use other regular services outside of FLINTWOOD, the Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Participant’s EMP is provided to that service with the consent of the Participant, person responsible, family, Carer, or guardian.

General Manager

* Read and review policy accordingly
* Adhere to Policy and Procedures
* Audit EMP plan dates sporadically to ensure all plans are up to date

**CEO**

* Read and review policy whilst attending policy committee

CHANGE HISTORY

| Version | Release / Review date | Author / Reviewer | Change details |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0.1 | 04/08/16 | Racheal Neal / Gerry Connolly | New policy |
| 0.2 | August 2019 | Temp | Formatting |
| 0.3 | August 2020 | Kay McPartland | Reformatting and inclusion of plug in bath and epilepsy mat and swimming with a person who has Active Epilepsy |
| 0.4 | March 2024 | Kay McPartland | Review of policy |