

## Communications

### Policy and Procedures

At **Youth Matters (YM)** we aim to provide local youth with compassionate and comprehensive community services support, empowering individuals and promoting their physical, mental, and social well-being.

We strive to make a positive impact by delivering person-centered care, fostering inclusivity, and collaborating with stakeholders to enhance the overall health and quality of life of those aged 25 and under within our community.

#### Communication Policy Purpose

**YM** is committed to delivering exceptional communication within and beyond our organisation.

This policy outlines the principles and guidelines for effective communication within and beyond our organisation. It aims to ensure consistent, clear, and respectful communication across all interactions with clients, stakeholders, and team members.

The responsibility for adhering to this policy lies with all team members, supervisors, and managers. Violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

This Communications Policy and Procedure underscores our commitment to maintaining effective and respectful communication within the organisation, promoting transparency, professionalism, and positive relationships with clients, stakeholders, and team members.

#### Communication Procedures

##### 1. Privacy and Confidentiality

Communication involving sensitive or private information must adhere to strict privacy and confidentiality standards. Personal and confidential information should only be shared with authorised individuals in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

When supporting individuals under the legal age of 18 years old, it is a requirement that they be offered the opportunity to have a support person involved. For emails this would involve cc'ing them in all correspondence, or in meetings it would be inviting them to join the session and participate in support of our client.

The support person should be 18 year of age or older, however this is at the discretion of the client.

## 2. Style Guide

This below style guide serves as a compass, providing guidelines for language, tone, and formatting to ensure our communications are cohesive and respectful. This is achieved by following the language, grammar and representation elements below.

1. Language and Tone  
Use inclusive, respectful, and professional language. Maintain a positive and empathetic tone in all communication.
2. Grammar and Spelling  
Ensure proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation for accurate and professional communication. Use Grammarly as a check on all communication prior to sending.
3. Representation  
When communicating on behalf of the organisation, accurately represent its values, goals, and services. Avoid personal opinions or unauthorised statements.

## 3. Communication Methods and Channels

By employing various avenues of communication, we ensure that our messages are delivered clearly, efficiently, and in a manner that resonates with our diverse audience. This policy serves as a guide to selecting the most appropriate communication methods and channels for different contexts, ensuring that our messages reach their intended recipients with maximum impact and relevance.

1. Methods
  - a. Email:
    - i. Use for formal communication: Email is suitable for conveying official announcements, sharing detailed information, sending reports, and discussing complex matters that require a written record.
    - ii. Communication with external stakeholders: Email is appropriate for reaching out to clients, partners, or regulatory bodies, especially when providing detailed information or requesting documentation.
  - b. Instant messaging (i.e. MS Teams):
    - i. Quick inquiries: Use instant messaging for quick questions, brief updates, or clarifications that don't require lengthy explanations.
    - ii. Team collaboration: Instant messaging platforms are effective for real-time communication within teams, fostering quick problem-solving and sharing of information.
  - c. Phone calls:
    - i. Urgent matters: Phone calls are ideal for addressing time-sensitive issues, emergencies, or critical situations that require immediate attention.
    - ii. Personal connection: Phone calls can help build rapport and establish a personal connection, which might be important in cases where empathy and understanding are needed.
  - d. Official social media accounts:
    - i. Public announcements: Use official social media accounts to make public announcements, share news, events, and engage with the community.
    - ii. Information dissemination: Social media can be a powerful tool for sharing educational content, resources, and promoting community engagement.
  - e. Letters or manual written correspondence:
    - i. Formal communication: Written correspondence, such as letters or memos, is suitable for official communications, such as contracts, agreements, or legal matters.
    - ii. Professional documentation: Use written correspondence to provide clients, stakeholders, or partners with official documentation, summaries, or confirmations.

## 2. Emergency Situations

In urgent cases, use phone calls or instant messaging for swift communication.

## 3. Inclusive Communication

Ensure that communication methods are accessible to individuals with disabilities or different language preferences.

## 4. Managing Meetings

Meetings are used to bring together individuals with a common goal or objective to exchange information, share ideas, collaborate, make decisions, and work towards achieving specific outcomes. Meetings serve as a structured platform for communication and interaction, enabling participants to discuss matters of importance and move projects, initiatives, or tasks forward.

The 3 key processes around managing meetings include agenda's, facilitation and minutes.

### 1. Agendas: [A template can be found at APPENDIX A]

All meetings should have clear agendas shared in advance outlining:

- a. Purpose
- b. Topics
- c. Objectives
- d. Responsibilities
- e. Time allocations.

### 2. Facilitation:

Meetings will be facilitated by designated individuals to ensure discussions stay focused, respectful, and on track.

All meeting participants must perform in line with the guidelines below:

#### a. Communication Barriers:

- i. **Ensure Accessibility:** Address language barriers, hearing impairments, or other communication needs by providing interpreters or assistive devices.
- ii. **Repeat and Clarify:** Repeat key points, summarise discussions, and clarify information to ensure understanding.

#### b. Respect and Inclusion:

- i. **Acknowledge Individual Differences:** Recognise and respect diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds.
- ii. **Set Ground Rules:** Establish guidelines for respectful communication, active listening, and valuing each participant's input.
- iii. **Address Microaggressions:** Intervene if any comments or behaviours could be perceived as disrespectful or offensive.

#### c. Encourage engagement and Participation:

- i. **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Foster an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas.
- ii. **Use Interactive Methods:** Incorporate activities, ice-breakers, and brainstorming sessions to keep participants engaged.
- iii. **Rotate Roles:** Assign different roles (timekeeper, note-taker) to promote active involvement and shared responsibility.

#### d. Problem Identification and Conflict Resolution:

- i. **Create a Safe Space:** Foster an atmosphere where participants feel safe discussing challenges and conflicts.
- ii. **Identify Early Signs:** Recognise signs of tension or conflicts, and address them proactively to prevent escalation.
- iii. **Mediation Skills:** Use active listening, empathy, and neutral language to mediate conflicts and find common ground.

- e. Representation of the Organisation:
  - i. Uphold Values: Ensure that discussions and interactions reflect the organisation's mission, values, and professionalism.
  - ii. Positive Tone: Facilitate conversations with positivity, enthusiasm, and a focus on solutions and opportunities.
- f. Continuous Improvement:
  - i. Reflect and Adapt: After each meeting, evaluate what worked well and areas for improvement, and adjust future meetings accordingly.
  - ii. Adapt Strategies: Use feedback to refine facilitation techniques and address any challenges faced during the meeting

### 3. Meeting records:

All meetings require some form of record to capture the content and outcomes. There are multiple options for capturing this information.

#### a. Case Notes

All client interactions require documentation. This is captured as case notes and must include:

- i. Client details
- ii. Purpose of meeting
- iii. Client needs
- iv. Proposed recommendations and outcomes
- v. Detailed actions and responsibilities, complete with next steps.

#### b. Recordings

Meetings may be recorded for a range of reasons such as when some participants cannot attend in real time, so that you can review the session at a later date or where there is a potential conflict or issue to be managed.

When recording you must consider the following:

- i. Recording options – Face-to-face meetings can be recorded on your laptop, with virtual meetings able to be recorded using the meeting tool such as MS Teams or Zoom.
- ii. Consent – You must advise participants of your intention to record and gain their consent prior to doing so.
- iii. Sensitivity – make sure that you consider a clients personal point of view before recommending recording the session. It may not be appropriate to record if you plan to discuss private information.

#### c. Minutes: *[A template can be found at APPENDIX B]*

Detailed minutes should be taken during meetings and circulated to attendees promptly afterward.

Minutes should include:

- i. Action items
- ii. Decisions
- iii. Responsible parties
- iv. Timelines

## 5. Communication barriers

Some clients may experience barriers to communication including:

- Those with limited proficiency in English
- Those with disabilities impacting communication such as deafness, speech impairments etc.

In order to support clients impacted by these communication barriers, interpreter services may need to be engaged.

Interpreters are individuals who facilitate real-time communication between people who speak different languages. They convey spoken language from one language to another, ensuring that conversations, discussions, and interactions can take place smoothly.

Translation services involve converting written text from one language to another while maintaining the meaning, context, and cultural nuances of the original content.

Engaging an Interpreter or Translator:

- a. Assessment of language needs:
  - i. Identify the language spoken by the client and determine if an interpreter or translator is required for effective communication.
  - ii. Confirm need to engage an interpreter or translator with the Support Services Manager for your Region by emailing them requesting approval to proceed.
- b. Selection of qualified service:
  - i. Choose a qualified service proficient in both the client's language and the language used by the organisation. *[See the link below for appropriate services]*
  - ii. Ensure the service is knowledgeable about the cultural context to facilitate accurate communication.
- c. Engaging interpreters:
  - i. Coordination and scheduling of interpreters:
    - Contact the client to determine the inclusion of an interpreter for sessions going forward to improve communication and ask them to approve this change and identify appropriate scheduling options (at least 2) for the next meeting.
    - Contact the chosen interpreter to confirm availability in relation to the scheduling options.
    - Share relevant details about the meeting's time, date, agenda, location, and any specific subject matter with both parties ahead of the session to allow for preparation as needed.
  - ii. Meeting facilitation:
    - Introduce the interpreter to all participants at the beginning of the meeting.
    - Facilitate the conversation by speaking clearly and allowing adequate time for interpretation.
    - Encourage direct interaction between the client and the interpreter to ensure accurate communication.
- c. Engaging translators:
  - i. Content preparation and sharing:
    - Provide the translator with any documents, presentations, or materials that require translation along with a deadline/timeline for completion.
    - Clarify the purpose and context of the translation where appropriate to help the translator maintain accuracy and coherence.
  - ii. Content collection and recording:
    - Collect translated correspondence and/or documents and provide these to the client for review and/or action as appropriate.
    - Reengage the translator to interpret written replies and completed forms as appropriate.

NSW Health provide a list of vetted interpreter services for engagement in NSW Health Care needs. Review this list at [NSW Health Care Interpreting Services](#) in order to identify an appropriate interpreter as needed,

## Revisions:

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its alignment with organisational goals and industry best practices. Any necessary updates or revisions will be made to reflect changes in communication methods or requirements.

Author: Beth Wheeler

Role: Human Resources Manager

Effective Date: 23 August 2023


Review Date: 23 August 2025

This meeting agenda template should be completed and saved as a word document for distribution ahead of all planned meetings.

To complete this form complete the following information:

1. Meeting *title*
2. Meeting *date*
3. Meeting *time*
4. Meeting *location* – Identify physical location (including how to access for external parties if appropriate) or virtual room details (including link to log in).
5. Meeting *attendees* – Include all invited parties (including yourself if you are facilitating or attending the session), their positions and email addresses.
6. Facilitator details in the Agenda *Introduction, Recap and Closing*
7. *Discussion Points, Presenter and Time* for each of the topics to be presented/discussed - You may add lines to the discussion section of the template as needed.
8. *Minutes prepared by* to capture the minute takers name
9. *Time* the meeting was adjourned

This completed form should be emailed to all meeting participants within the meeting invitation or immediately following distribution where appropriate.

<b> MEETING AGENDA</b>			
Meeting Title:	[Insert Meeting Title]		
Date:	[Insert Date]		
Time:	[Insert Time]		
Location:	[Insert Location or Virtual Platform]		
Attendees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Insert a list of the attendees invited to the meeting - include titles and email addresses]</li> </ul>		
<b>AGENDA</b>			
1.	Welcome and Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome</li> <li>Table meeting purpose</li> <li>Introduction of attendees</li> <li>Review previous minutes if appropriate (brief summary and adjustments/approval)</li> <li>Present agenda</li> </ul>	[Insert Facilitator]	10 minutes
2.	[Insert Discussion Point 1]	[Insert Presenter]	[Insert Time]
3.	[Insert Discussion Point 2]	[Insert Presenter]	[Insert Time]

4.	[Insert Discussion Point 3]	[Insert Presenter]	[Insert Time]
<<Add lines to agenda for discussion points as needed.>>			
5.	Recap of action items from the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide attendees an opportunity to raise any additional topics or concerns if appropriate</li> <li>• Summarise key takeaways</li> <li>• Confirm agreed action items</li> <li>• Confirm agreed responsibilities for each</li> </ul>	[Insert Facilitator]	5 minutes
6.	Closing remarks and adjournment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mention team announcements, upcoming meetings or important events if appropriate</li> <li>• Closing remarks (Thank attendees for their participation, confirm next meeting if appropriate)</li> <li>• Adjourn meeting</li> </ul>	[Insert Facilitator]	5 minutes
Minutes prepared by:	[Insert Facilitator/Minute taker]		
Meeting adjourned:	[Insert Time meeting adjourned]		




This meeting minutes template should be completed and saved as a word document for distribution following completion of each meeting.

To complete this form complete the following information:

1. Meeting *title*
2. Meeting *date*
3. Meeting *time*
4. Meeting *location* – Identify physical location (including how to access for external parties if appropriate) or virtual room details (including link to log in).
5. Meeting *attendees* – Include all invited parties, their positions and email addresses. Tick the check box if they attended the meeting.
6. Additional content in *Introduction*, including *purpose of meeting*, *previous minutes review* and *Facilitator name*
7. Overview of *discussion points* including:
  - a. *Who presented?*
  - b. *What was discussed/ agreed?*
  - c. *What actions need to be taken?*
  - d. *Who is responsible for them?*
  - e. *When are they due?*

You may add lines to the discussion section of the template as needed.
8. Additional content in *Recap of action items*, including *additional topics*, *key takeaways*, and *confirmation of action*.
9. Additional content in *Closing remarks and adjournment*, including *team announcements*, details of *next meeting* and *adjourned meeting time*.
10. *Minutes prepared by* to capture the minute takers name
11. *Minutes circulated* to capture the date and time the minute were circulated

This completed form should be emailed to all meeting participants, attendees and/or stakeholders as soon as practicable following the meetings conclusion.

 MEETING MINUTES	
Meeting Title:	[Insert Meeting Title]
Date:	[Insert Date]
Time:	[Insert Time]
Location:	[Insert Location or Virtual Platform]
Attendees: (Tick box if attended)	[Insert Facilitators name] <input type="checkbox"/>
	[Insert Attendees 1 name, position and email] <input type="checkbox"/>
	[Insert Attendees 2 name, position and email] <input type="checkbox"/>
	[Insert Attendees 3 name, position and email] <input type="checkbox"/>
	[Insert Attendees 4 name, position and email] <input type="checkbox"/>

(Insert Attendees 5 name, position and email)



<<Add lines to Attendees as needed.>>

MINUTES

1.	Welcome and Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitator welcomed the group to the meeting.</li><li>Facilitator outlined the purpose of the meeting as [summarise purpose of the meeting].</li><li>Facilitator introduced attendees as listed above.</li><li>Facilitator reviewed previous minutes (and all were accepted as true and accurate) OR (and the following adjustments were made...)</li><li>Facilitator presented the agenda and opened the meeting.</li></ul>	(Insert Facilitator)	10 minutes	
2.	[Insert Overview of discussion point 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Who presented?</li><li>What was discussed/ agreed?</li><li>What actions need to be taken?</li><li>Who is responsible for them?</li><li>When are they due?</li></ul>	[Action to be taken]	[Person responsible]	[Deadline]
3.	[Insert Overview of discussion point 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Who presented?</li><li>What was discussed/ agreed?</li><li>What actions need to be taken?</li><li>Who is responsible for them?</li><li>When are they due?</li></ul>	[Action to be taken]	[Person responsible]	[Deadline]
4.	[Insert Overview of discussion point 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Who presented?</li><li>What was discussed/ agreed?</li><li>What actions need to be taken?</li><li>Who is responsible for them?</li><li>When are they due?</li></ul>	[Action to be taken]	[Person responsible]	[Deadline]

<<Add lines to agenda for discussion points as needed.>>

5.	Recap of action items from the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>[Additional topics/ discussion raised if any]</li><li>Key takeaways:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>[Summarise key takeaways not reflected above]</li></ul></li><li>Confirmed agreed action items as captured above with each party.</li></ul>	(Insert Facilitator)	10 minutes	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirmed agreed responsibilities for each action item as captured above.</li> </ul>		
6.	<p>Closing remarks and adjournment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[No new team announcements] OR (Team announcements): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[List team announcements if any]</li> </ul> </li> <li>Thanked attendees for their participation</li> <li>Confirmed the next meeting scheduled for [Insert next meeting scheduled if any]</li> <li>Adjourned meeting at [Time meeting adjourned]</li> </ul>	[Insert Facilitator]	5 minutes
Minutes prepared by:		[Insert Facilitator/Minute taker]	
Minutes circulated:		[Insert Date and Time the meeting minutes were circulated]	