

UP!CLUB POLICY AND PROCEDURES

PARTICIPATION POLICY

What is UP!Club

UP!Club is one of Down Syndrome NSW's flagship programs to provide social connections for adults aged over 18 years with Down syndrome. UP!Club is a successful way for people with Down Syndrome to come together socially to support each other and build their practical life skills.

UP!Clubs run in a variety of geographical locations. The social activities are themed around Speak Up, Healthy Me, Participate, Give Back, Create, and Independent Living. Down Syndrome NSW also aims to hold 1-2 camps a year for UP!Club participants. UP!Club is funded as a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) service (see later section on pages 3-6).

The UP!Club is a program of Down Syndrome NSW and will be under its general control and management in the administration of its funds and activities.

Membership

The target group for UP!Club is adults over 18 years of age who have Down syndrome. Participants must be a member of Down Syndrome NSW and registered to participate in activities. This information is required to ensure adequate support is provided.

Membership rules will be provided to all new members (see Appendix 1).

A meeting, either by phone or face to face, with the UP!Club Group Coordinator will be organised for new members. At the conclusion of this meeting, participants will be asked to sign their acceptance of the group rules. Parents/carers may also be asked to join in this meeting. Meetings can be organised prior to a group activity.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to participate, participants need to exhibit self-managing behaviour and have a reasonable degree of independence. "Self-managing behaviour", in this context, represents a person with Down syndrome who can look after their personal care, stay with the group (i.e. not wander off), and whose behaviour fits within the UP! Club rules.

Down Syndrome NSW asks that parents/carers do not attend UP!Club activities unless under exceptional circumstances. Anyone attending UP!Club in a support capacity should be properly inducted and registered with Down Syndrome NSW.

Down Syndrome NSW provides support within its own staffing resources, and generally ensures there is a participant to staff/volunteer ratio of 1 to 3 or 1 to 4, depending on the nature of the activity.

UP!Club is not a respite service. Down Syndrome NSW is not obligated to support those persons who do not fit the eligibility criteria for UP!Club or who do not abide by the membership rules. Down Syndrome NSW will refer applicants to other services as appropriate if they do not fit the eligibility criteria.

Individual Needs

The UP!Club will meet the individual needs of its participants within the limits of its resources. For participants with individual dietary and medication needs, it is important that the participants (and their families/carers) let Down Syndrome NSW know of these special needs. Down Syndrome NSW staff and volunteers cannot provide medication assistance, however arrangements for medications will need to occur at UP!Club Camps, where participants stay overnight.

If participants display any inappropriate behaviour, an individual plan will be formed by the Group Coordinator to enable staff and volunteers to support that participant so as he/she can participate independently in the group. Support may also be obtained from Behaviour Support staff.

Participants will be encouraged to contact Down Syndrome NSW for information about support for all aspects of their lives.

NDIS Service

The advent of the NDIS has led to changes in UP!Club. The Board of Directors of Down Syndrome NSW agreed in early 2018 that the best way to ensure the long term sustainability of UP!Club was to register as an NDIS Service Provider and ask participants to contribute to the cost of operating UP!Club. Down Syndrome NSW has endeavoured to minimise the impact of these changes by ensuring our service fees are set lower than the NDIS Price Guide.

Down Syndrome NSW is a registered provider under the following classes:

- Participation in community, social and civic activities (*relevant to UP!Club*)
- Group and centre-based activities
- Developing life skills

NDIS Service Principles

As a service provider funded under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the NDIS Code of Conduct applies to our work, and therefore Down Syndrome NSW will:

- Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions.
- Respect the privacy of people with disability.
- Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill.
- Act with integrity, honesty, and transparency.
- Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual misconduct.

NDIS Service Delivery Costs

Each UP!Club generally runs activities three times per month, however this varies between UP!Club groups. Down Syndrome NSW will send details of activities run throughout the year via a program. The program, available on the UP!Club website, lists the activities that Down Syndrome NSW proposes it will run during the following calendar months.

If the participant wishes to attend an UP!Club activity, they must make a booking with Down Syndrome NSW by the closing date for bookings. Bookings can be made with Down Syndrome NSW by phone or via the online booking form on the UP!Club website. The participant may choose to participate in as few or as many activities as they like.

The cost to attend UP!Club activities is a service cost claimable under the NDIS. Down Syndrome NSW requires all participants to have in place an NDIS Service Agreement with Down Syndrome NSW, and pay a service cost to attend UP!Club which provides for the sustainability of the entire operation and is shared equally amongst participants. The focus is not so much on who needs more or less support, rather the service cost covers delivery of the service as a whole. The service cost covers a broad range of direct service delivery costs that includes staffing and administrative expenses. Participants are expected to pay for additional ticket costs not covered by NDIS.

The cost of each UP!Club activity depends on the duration of the activity. Hourly rates for the UP!Club activities are set out in the Service Agreements. All prices are GST inclusive (if applicable) and include the staff costs for running the activity. Down Syndrome NSW provides fund allocation guidelines which will help participants to consider the costs of participating in 12, 24 or 36 UP! Club activities and/or an UP! Club camp during a 12 month period. Participants will be charged a minimum of three hours attendance whether they choose to arrive late or leave early.

Additional activity costs must be met by the participant and are not included in the hourly rates. Examples of these activity costs include entrance fees, event tickets, meals, travel etc.

UP!Club participants are asked to provide their NDIS plan goals, and Down Syndrome NSW provides an annual summary of how the UP!Club activities contribute to an individual's NDIS plan goals.

Cancellation Policy

Some activities require payment during the registration process. All payments are to be made to Down Syndrome NSW via the website.

In the case of a member booking to attend a ticketed activity and cancelling prior to making payment, the member will still be required to pay for the activity unless the ticket is sold to another attendee.

In the case of a member being unable to attend an activity they have booked for, a minimum of 48 hours' notice is required. Members who do not give sufficient notice may be charged the service cost for the activity.

Priority of Access

Priority will be given to participants who book first for any activity. If there is a demand, and an activity is overbooked, a similar activity may be organised for those who were unable to attend the first activity.

Attendance at Camps

Ideally, a member must participate in at least two activities prior to attending an UP!Club camp. For participants outside the Sydney metropolitan area, a telephone interview will be conducted with the person and their carer to determine eligibility.

Exiting the Up Club

Participants in UP!Club can opt in for as many activities on the program as they choose to attend. Members may leave the UP! Club in the event that:

- they choose to exit the UP! Club.
- they are no longer exhibiting self-managing behaviour and choose not to take the recommended actions to assist them.

Where it is deemed that a person is no longer self-managing, the person can request a meeting with the Group Coordinator or the UP!Club Manager to explore opportunities for remaining in the UP! Club.

In such cases where members are unable to remain in the UP! Club, they and their parents/carers will be referred to Down Syndrome NSW Information and Support team for other appropriate services.

Suspension

A member may be asked to leave an activity if they disregard group rules. Three spoken warnings will be given. Following this the member will be asked to return home. Parents/carers will be contacted and will be required to collect members or pay for suitable transport.

DECISION MAKING AND CHOICE

The UP!Club supports an individual's right to participate in decisions about the service they access. Participants can be involved in making decisions about group activities by:

- Participating in planning meetings (held twice/year)
- Suggesting ideas
- Voting on other members ideas

Participants are strongly encouraged to be involved in deciding group activities by attending planning meetings.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to support participant's individual choices providing they are reasonable in the group context. Participants have a right to make their own decisions whilst participating in the UP! Club.

Staff/volunteers have a responsibility and duty of care to discuss any decision that may result in a participant getting hurt or being asked to leave the activity. Staff/volunteers must warn members about the potential consequences of their decisions, rather than making decisions on behalf of participants.

PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION

The UP! Club promotes meaningful participation and integration with the community through the organisation of group activities for its members.

The UP! Club provides opportunities for its members to develop independence through gaining experience in accessing community services e.g. using public transport, accessing entertainment venues.

The UP! Club aims to bring together people with a shared experience to promote social connections, self-esteem, friendships and a sense of belonging.

The UP! Club aims to provide its members with the opportunity to experience new activities in the community which are age appropriate. The UP! Club will respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of its members as needed.

To ensure a diverse range of activities are included in the UP!Club program, a range of themes have been created that cater for a broad range of interests and skill development. These are;
Speak Up: Activities focused on improving communication skills such as public speaking and leadership workshops.

Healthy Me: Participants learn about healthy food choices, how to cook and get involved in a range of physical activities.

Participate: Social activities that involve getting out and about in the community. Activities are wide ranging and include eating at restaurants, going to the movies and singing Karaoke.

Give Back: Activities are purpose based allowing participants to actively contribute to their community. Volunteering brings a tremendous sense of satisfaction and purpose.

Create: Participants are encouraged to unleash their creative genius through painting, photography, music, drama, pottery, craftwork and dance. Creating builds confidence and gives a sense of accomplishment.

Independent Living: Assisting those who have goals to live more independently. Activities include grocery shopping, use of public transport and learning money management skills. Practical activities help participants learn and build confidence.

VALUED STATUS

The UP!Club aims to promote the acceptance of people with Down syndrome as valued members of an inclusive society. The UP!Club focuses on increasing independence and integration into the community by providing regular opportunities for social activities.

The UP!Club will aim to create a positive image and promote the abilities of people with Down syndrome by educating its members to participate confidently in a range of social settings.

The UP!Club encourages its members to access age appropriate mainstream activities and programs.

The UP!Club will promote images that confer the positive and valued status of its participants in all its publications and activities.

PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The UP!Club respects its members' right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all their dealings with the UP!Club.

Maintaining confidentiality

Staff and volunteers will respect the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of their involvement with the UP!Club. This relates to their present involvement and also extends to when their involvement with the UP!Club has ceased.

Any personal information staff or volunteers learn about a member through their involvement with the UP!Club is confidential. Permission must be given by the participant before any information is disclosed except in a situation of abuse.

The Group Coordinator is required to report any serious incidents (see examples of reportable incidents described below) that occur before, during or after an UP!Club activity. In managing these incidents, Down Syndrome NSW will do its utmost to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants involved, unless there is a duty for Down Syndrome NSW to report the incident to the relevant authorities.

Volunteers will be provided with information about specific support strategies for individuals on a need to know basis. If a volunteer is unsure how to respond to a situation, they are to discuss it with the Group Coordinator or Down Syndrome NSW Behaviour Support specialist.

Personal contact details will not be passed on to other participants without permission.

Record Keeping

The UP! Club will only hold information recorded on participant forms, and statistics on participation in activities. Further information may be gathered to collect data and/or information regarding outcomes measurement, via surveys or other methods, with prior consent from the participants.

All items on registration forms must be completed to determine an applicant's eligibility for membership.

In the event of an accident or incident, a report will be written and held by Down Syndrome NSW as per the incident reporting policy.

Reports pertaining to an individual may be accessed by that individual, the Group Coordinator, and management staff. Any other person wishing to gain access to an individual's report must gain the individual's permission, as well as permission of the CEO.

Gaining Consent

In order to pass on any personal information, consent must be given by the individual participant, except where required as part of mandatory reporting. Consent means that the individual fully understands any consequences of the information being passed on. The individual needs to understand that they may withhold consent. There must be no pressure placed on the person to consent. There must be an indicator (verbal or written) that consent has been given.

DUTY OF CARE / RISK ASSESSMENT

Down Syndrome NSW has an ethical commitment and legal obligation to ensure Duty of Care to all participants at UP!Club events. Group Coordinators and volunteers have an obligation to provide care in a safe and appropriate manner.

Duty of Care is the responsibility of all Group Coordinator's and supervising volunteers for avoiding unreasonable risks that may cause injury or harm to an UP!Club participant, volunteer, or person of the general community. This means using common sense to judge situations and/or any potential issues that may arise during the course of an activity. It is the responsibility of the Group Coordinator and volunteers to exercise appropriate care towards the participants.

Whilst a Duty of Care exists for all UP!Club activities, there may be certain activities whereby it is deemed a Risk Assessment report should be completed prior to the activity. Such instances may include an activity that is new to the members or an activity that involves

higher risk factors than general activities, for example a theme park visit or an UP! Club camp. It is the responsibility of the Group Coordinator and UP!Club Manager to evaluate the risk, complete an UP!Club Risk Assessment report prior to the activity, and make a plan to mitigate risks if they deem necessary. It is the responsibility of the CEO to sign off on risk management plans.

Incident Reporting

Accidents or incidents will be managed in a professional manner, in accordance with Down Syndrome NSW policies. Incidents will be reported in accordance with Down Syndrome NSW Incident Investigation, via the Up!Club specific Incident Report form. Group Coordinators are required to immediately report incidents relating to medical, behavioural, injury or other events that have potential to cause harm to participants, staff or members of the public. Examples of such incidents include members refusing to follow direction, injury due to uneven walking surfaces, illness that requires a member to leave an activity early.

Group Coordinators are also encouraged to report minor events that, if properly addressed, may improve the quality of activities. Examples of this include members arriving without adequate money or equipment, miscommunication regarding meeting points, unexpected issues that arise.

Registered NDIS providers, such as Down Syndrome NSW, are required to notify the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission of the following incidents (including allegations) affecting NDIS participants in connection with the provision of NDIS supports and services. Reportable incidents include:

- the death of an NDIS participant
- serious injury of an NDIS participant
- abuse or neglect of an NDIS participant
- unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, an NDIS participant
- sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, an NDIS participant, including grooming of the NDIS participant for sexual activity
- the unauthorised use of a restrictive practice in relation to an NDIS participant.

COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

Members of the UP! Club are free to raise any complaints or disputes regarding the UP!Club

without fear of discrimination or retribution.

Complaints by members, staff and volunteers will be dealt with according to the guidelines of Down Syndrome NSW Managing External Feedback and Complaints Policy.

ROLE BEARERS

The UP!Club is a peer support group for adults with Down syndrome. On a bi-annual basis, its membership will nominate candidates and vote to elect a President and Vice President.

The President and Vice President are responsible for carrying out the duties laid out in their respective position descriptions. Upon the conclusion of a term, a President and Vice President may not be nominated for either role in a consecutive term.

USE OF VOLUNTEERS

Recruitment

The UP! Club will engage volunteers that are suitable to attend UP!Club activities and support Group Coordinators and participants.

Volunteers may be approved to attend UP!Club activities after satisfying all criteria included in the Volunteer Eligibility Checklist:

- Volunteer application form
- Interview and Down Syndrome NSW overview
- Criminal Record Check, Working With Children Check and Photo ID provided
- Volunteer induction training manual, including Code of Conduct and Client Protection Policy
- Reference check

Volunteers must provide a National Police Record Check and Working with Children Check before participating in the group activities. Volunteers will be reimbursed for the cost of providing the check by Down Syndrome NSW after attending three events.

An interview will be held with potential volunteers by the Group Coordinator and/or UP!Club Manager.

Volunteers will undergo an induction which includes an overview of the policies by which

they must operate.

Follow up and evaluation communications will be conducted after the first event.

Transport of UP!Club Participants

Down Syndrome NSW staff and volunteers may only transport UP!Club participants in a personal vehicle in the case of an emergency, unless express permission is granted by Down Syndrome NSW CEO (or delegate) or the parent/carer prior to travel.

Managing Medication

Participants attending UP!Club events and camps may be on regular or one-off medication prescribed by a medical doctor or bought over the counter.

Down Syndrome NSW has established Eligibility Criteria for participation in UP!Club. These Eligibility Criteria are that participants need to exhibit self-managing behaviour and have a reasonable degree of independence. “Self-managing behaviour”, in this context, represents a person with Down syndrome who can look after their personal care, stay with the group (i.e. not wander off), and whose behaviour fits within the UP!Club rules. UP!Club is not a respite service. Down Syndrome NSW is not obligated to support those persons who do not fit the eligibility criteria for UP!Club. Being on medication and having specific health conditions are not usually considered as barriers to participation.

However, the issue of an individual’s medication, does require Down Syndrome NSW to have the following management procedures in place to ensure the well being of participants:

- When a new participant registers to join UP!Club, they are asked if they are on medication, and if so to specify name, dosage and frequency. This information is noted in their Raisers Edge constituent file.

- Prior to any overnight stays, such as camps, the parent or carer is asked about medication needs of each participant. The following information is recorded on a medication form
 - (i) name of the medication
 - (ii) reason for taking the medication
 - (iii) timing and amount of medication (e.g. morning or evening dose)
 - (iv) if the participant is able to self-administer their own medication

- It is a requirement for those attending a camp that all participants need to be responsible for administering their own medication. However staff at Down Syndrome NSW will endeavour to check in with each participant and remind them to take their medication (i.e. each morning and evening). This information is recorded on a chart which is made available to all supervising staff who attend the camp.
- For those who have more complex health conditions requiring specific medication regimes, e.g. diabetes or asthma, the participant (via their family or carer) is asked to provide a written management plan. This management plan is shared with all relevant supervising staff and volunteers at the camp. If the management plan for a particular health condition is complex (e.g. requiring injections), the participant is asked to bring their own support worker.

Policy Review

This UP!Club Policy and Procedures will be reviewed bi-annually

DATE	Approved by the Board
2017	First created
July 2019	Revised and updated
December 2019	Revised and updated

