



Telecare

Introduction

Telecare is a form of care delivered remotely rather than face-to-face. Telecare can be delivered synchronously through video-calling and telephone calls or asynchronously through methods such as recorded videos, or patient monitoring

Telecare enables providers to offer support and care to people with disability in rural and remote areas or when it is not possible or practical to offer it in person. There is a growing body of evidence to support the outcomes of telecare, particularly among allied health workers, and the benefits are argued to be comparable to traditional forms of care. However, it is fundamental that telecare is provided in a suitable, practical and safe way for both the participant and the support worker.

We recognise that telecare support must be established using the same principles and rights as outlined in the Support provision policy. In addition to these rights, this policy considers three elements:

- Evidence based research
- Workers' knowledge and skills
- Participants' values, goals, and circumstances.

Applicability

When

- Applies to supports and services provided to all participants via telecare.

Who

- Applies to all employees including key management personnel, full time workers, casual workers, contractors and volunteers.

Benefits of telecare

Research into telehealth has several applicable findings that can be translated into telecare. It provides participants the opportunity to maintain support continuity and offers a more flexible and adaptable service deliverance compared to face-to-face services.

Identified benefits include:

- Removal of travel time and travel costs
- NDIS funding support for telecare practices
- Consistency of support for participants and workers
- Knowledge of ongoing support leading to a stronger sense of safety, and
- Natural and comfortable environment for participants to receive support in.

We recognise that not all supports and services are capable of being delivered via telecare, however, when services are adaptable, we will seek to facilitate this with the knowledge that the outcomes and support are equally beneficial to the participant as traditional means.



Workers' knowledge and skills

Delivering telecare to participants requires workers to adaptably apply skills and knowledge from face-to-face care into a telecommunication method. For telecare to be implemented and delivered successfully, workers must be able to:

- Clearly communicate with participants through the participants preferred communication method
- Develop rapport and engagement
- Be flexible and adaptable to the participants requirements.

In addition to these skills, support workers should also actively communicate with participants ways in which goals and lifestyle choices can be facilitated and achieved through telecare. This means support workers must have adequate knowledge of the technology that will be used to support the participant. Workers providing telecare should have an understanding of:

- Clearly communicate with participants through the participants preferred communication method
 - Videoconferencing platforms (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype)
 - Connecting webcams
 - Microphones and sound settings
 - Keyboards
 - Assistive computer technology used by the participant they are supporting.
- Response plans when monitoring technology indicates a problem, such as a fall or change in blood pressure etc.
- How to program specialised assistive technology used in the deliverance of telecare (e.g. timed pill dispensary within a participants' home).

Not all telecare will require technical knowledge of all forms of technology available. However, we will seek to train and educate workers to best support participants when there is a requirement to do so.

Supporting participants

We will support participants via telecare by:

- Following the principals and rights outlined in our Support provision policy, including a person-centred practice including a participants' right to exercise control and choice over their life and the establishment of goals, values, and expectations
- Develop innovative and continuous supports through available technology.

In the event that we are unable to support a participant's goal or lifestyle choice via telecare, we will thoroughly discuss potential alternatives including goal variation, incorporation of secondary supports or intercommunity collaboration. If these do not offer the participant their desired outcome, we will outline and discuss why we are unable to support them in this endeavour.