

Policy: 3.1	Service Access, Demand and Capacity Management
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Policy Statement:

ODEEP is committed to maximising access to the organisation’s services for everyone within the agreed target client group and to ensuring equity of access across eligible service users. ODEEP will work within its available resources while endeavouring to optimise access for people to services and activities.

ODEEP will:

- Identify and address barriers to access for people in the target group/s.
- Use service planning to maximise accessibility for people in the target group/s, ensuring that all services, activities, facilities and premises are designed to maximise physical and cultural accessibility for service users.
- Use proactive information strategies for potential service user groups to increase knowledge of and understanding about the organisation and the services offered.
- Regularly review how accessible services are and use this information to improve access wherever possible.

ODEEP effectively manages service access and demand for services, including high demand periods to reduce stress on staff and resources, while ensuring the provision of high quality services.

The policy outlines procedures to predict, prepare for, and effectively manage client numbers to ensure that clients access quality services as quickly as possible, and that those most in need are prioritised.

The demand management system will be reviewed regularly and as a component of strategic planning and will include the identification of actions that may need to be taken to improve the system. All demand management systems will be monitored and evaluated.

Responsibilities and delegations	
This policy applies to	ODEEP management staff and all families seeking enrolment who meet entry criteria at ODEEP as well as referring organisations.
Specific responsibilities	This policy is developed, reviewed and communicated to staff by the ODEEP CEO. It is available to the community and implemented by the ODEEP CEO and ODEEP Practice Manager.
Policy approval	ODEEP CEO

Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	NDIS Quality Standards and Indicators 2018

Legislation	<p>NDIS Act 2013</p> <p>Disability (Access to Premises) Standards 2010 (Commonwealth)</p> <p>Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)</p> <p>Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 (NSW)</p>
Organisation policies	<p>1.1 Client Rights and Service Charter Policy</p> <p>1.2 Decision Making and Choice Policy</p> <p>1.3 Equity, Social Justice and Social Inclusion Policy</p> <p>1.4 Valued Status Policy</p> <p>1.5 Diversity and Cultural Inclusion</p> <p>1.6 Privacy Policy</p> <p>2.5 Conflict of Interest Policy</p> <p>3.4 Interagency Service Co-ordination Policy</p> <p>4.2 Family Centred Practice</p> <p>4.3 Client Participation and Social Inclusion</p> <p>4.4 Parent/Carer Engagement Policy</p> <p>4.5 Informed Practice and Best Practice Early Intervention</p> <p>2 HR 1 Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Staff</p> <p>2 HR 2 Staff Support and Supervision</p>
Forms, record keeping, other documents	<p>Waiting List Priority Table</p> <p>Referral Form</p> <p>Enrolment Form</p> <p>ODEEP Services and Supports document</p> <p>NDIS price guide</p> <p>ODEEP Strategic Plan</p> <p>ODEEP Marketing Plan</p>

Definitions:

Demand: the number of potential clients in need of services from the organisation.

Capacity: the number of clients the organisation can service at any given time.

Procedures

Identifying barriers to access

ODEEP provides early childhood intervention services to children aged 0-12 years, their family and community. In Order to identify barriers to access, the organisation will:

- Compare the profile of service users with local population data and past service records on a regular basis to identify any groups who are underrepresented.
- Review relevant literature and practice experience.
- Consult with service users and/or their advocates, other agencies and staff.
- Seek advice from relevant community group or members.

The CEO and Practice Manager are responsible for co-ordinating this process and reviewing research outcomes as part of planning processes.

Ensuring physical and cultural access

- Its premises are accessible by car/public transport.
- Its premises and facilities are physical accessible to people with limited mobility or disability.
- Its opening hours provide access to the full range of service users.
- Services are provided in as flexible manner as possible to meet the needs of each individual.
- It maintains effective messaging systems for service users to contact the organisation.
- Client areas are kept clean, comfortable and welcoming.
- The cultural and language needs of people within target group/s are identified and accommodated.
- Interpreters or bilingual staff are available for any person requiring this service.

Promotion of service

ODEEP will be responsible for developing and reviewing an organisational marketing plan. This plan will include information about service promotion and information strategy.

ODEEP will produce information about its services and activities in a range of formats suitable for the full range of people who may need to access them.

The ODEEP CEO will be responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of physical and cultural access strategies.

Criteria for Entry

Referral to ODEEP can be made by a parent, other third parties or professionals such as GP, Paediatrician, Early Childhood Teacher or allied health staff. If the referring party is a third-party or an external service provider the family must have given prior approval for the referral to take place.

Upon request of service provision from ODEEP, either by phone or in person, the referring party will be required to provide information regarding the child and family. This information will be documented on the ODEEP Referral Form. A family and child seeking services from ODEEP must:

- Be an infant, pre-schooler or primary school aged child (0-12 years).
- Have a diagnosed or suspected disability and/or a developmental delay in 2 or more areas of development.
- Have a funded NDIS plan, medicare enhanced primary health care plan (requires a gap payment) or is willing to fully fund the service provision out of pocket.

Priority system

Priority of access to ODEEP is determined by the following:

- Children with the most severe disabilities/developmental delays.
- Young children.
- Families who have more than one child with a disability.
- Families where one or more parents have an intellectual disability.
- Families from ATSI and CALD background.

When a referral is made, and the child is deemed not to be eligible for ODEEP services all attempts will be made to provide referral pathways to the most appropriate community service such as community health centres, private providers etc. Where a referral is made and ODEEP is not able to meet the current needs of the child, ODEEP will make all attempts to provide referral pathways to other community services. This may be due to a long waiting list or lack of service provision in an area of support identified by the family. Referral will also be made to relevant NDIS partners/planners for appropriate referral pathway information.

Where a referral is made and the child's needs may be met through a NDIS pathway, and the family is not accessing this pathway, a referral will be made to the Early Childhood Approach Pathway provider to assist the family through this approach.

Once a referral is taken the information is transferred to the ODEEP Waiting List/Priority of Access document. This waiting list is managed by the ODEEP Practice Manager in consultation with the ODEEP CEO. Access is not influenced by any other factor (eg. Gender, race or socio-economic background).

All referral and waiting list decisions are conducted in compliance with the relevant anti-discrimination legislation as well as priority of access as outlined above.

Waiting list procedures

Where demand exceeds capacity, the ODEEP Practice Manager is responsible for keeping an accurate record of waiting lists.

This includes recording:

- Date commenced on waiting list.
- All relevant information about a potential client, including their eligibility and areas of priority.
- Types of services requested.
- Date that the client exited the waiting list, and reason for exiting.

Clients will be advised that they are on the waiting list, their position on the list and an estimate of the approximate waiting time before services can be provided. If lengthy delays are expected, the client is informed and advised of alternative options including referrals to another service provider.

Developing a demand management strategy

The demand management strategy forms part of ODEEP's quality management system. ODEEP is dedicated to continual monitoring, review, and evaluation of demand management strategies to inform continuous improvement activities.

Principles of demand management

The ODEEP CEO is responsible for the establishment and monitoring of a demand management strategy which aims to align capacity and demand. The demand management strategy:

- Is client-focused and treats each case individually.
- Prioritises at-risk clients.
- Predicts high-demand periods before they happen.
- Will decrease excess demand and increase capacity where possible; and
- Is regularly reviewed and informed by data.

Data Collection

The organisation will review the data on the waiting list/priority of access document to inform demand and capacity management systems. The data which is used may include:

- Number of clients who have been waitlisted.
- The types of services clients are requesting.
- Average time on the waitlist before receiving service.

Review data and identify appropriate strategies

The ODEEP CEO is responsible for reviewing data and staff feedback on previous high demand periods in order to map trends and, where possible, recommend strategies to assist in meeting demand. The ODEEP CEO will review the data and report to the ODEEP Board on a regular basis as well as utilise this data for strategic planning purposes.

To predict demand the organisation needs to determine:

- The client demographic to which it provides services.
- Capacity of services.
- The types of services requested; and
- External factors contributing to demand such as political, economic, social forces and demographic changes in the area where the service operates and other external environmental changes.

Implement strategies to manage demand

Strategies to decrease excess demand include:

- Ensuring that the service is as complete as possible with appropriate follow-up and exit planning.
- Will refer to external services as required.

Strategies to increase capacity include:

- Identifying and managing factors impacting client flow through.
- Streamlining administrative and client intake processes to ensure that they are efficient, reduce duplication of work, and time spent on paperwork. This may be done through improvements to software and IT systems, and through information sharing agreements with other service providers.
- Managing planned staff leave to ensure that there are sufficient staff during predicted high demand periods.
- Training staff to develop adaptive abilities and manage resources in high demand periods; and
- Measures such as recruiting additional staff, flexible hours for delivery of services etc.
- Identify ways to increase capacity through effective strategic planning and operational policies and processes.

Reviewing the demand management strategy/ies

The implementation and outcomes of the demand management strategy/ies will be reviewed regularly by the CEO, and strategies amended as necessary.

After each review, a report on demand management activities and outcomes will be prepared and provided to the Board of Management. Demand management is integrated in both ODEEP's quality management and risk management policies and procedures.

Business Interruptions

ODEEP will put into place effective business arrangements to ensure timely and appropriate support to minimise the risk of business and service delivery interruptions. These arrangements and strategies may include:

- Efficient and effective day to date operational management to ensure continuity of supports.
- Supports are planned with each participant to meet their specific needs and preferences and these arrangements are flexible to meet the day to day individual needs of the child and family.
- Managing planned staff leave to ensure that there are sufficient staff to provide ongoing services.
- Implementing effective and timely staff recruitment processes.
- Rescheduling cancelled appointments as soon as it is possible.
- Providing administrative staff to assist service provision staff to make appointments with families.

Service Agreements:

Upon initial service delivery for families accessing ODEEP services, the ODEEP Practice Manager or other staff members as delegated by the Practice Manager, will meet with the family to discuss service provision options. Information appropriate to the persons needs will be given, which can be provided in a number of formats depending on the individual needs of each family. During this meeting a quote for services will be given to the family, outlining the types of services that they have requested and the costs of the service (e.g. as per the NDIS price guide), the cost of travel for these services, the number of hours and relevant staffing allocations.

If the family is in agreeance with this quote for services a service agreement will be developed. This agreement is in accordance with NDIS legislation and outlines information such as:

- Family/child details.
- NDIS reference number.
- Agreement start and end dates.
- Total annual funding.
- ODEEP responsibilities.
- Parent/Carer responsibilities.
- Payments and claiming.
- Changes to and/or end of service agreement.
- Travel.
- Cancellations.
- Feedback and Complaints.
- GST.
- Insurance and workers compensation and business insurance.
- Working with children checks, NDIS worker screening checks and child protection legislation.
- Approval signatures.

Once the quote and the service agreement have been signed by both parties a copy will be kept and filed by ODEEP and a copy will be provided to the family. Service provision allocation will be documented and staff informed to begin service provision. A service booking will be made in the Dept of Human Services "Proda" system will be made if NDIS managed or a copy of the service agreement is sent to the plan manager by either ODEEP or the family.

Participant Money and Property

ODEEP does not have access to a participant's money or property, nor does any ODEEP staff provide financial advice or information other than that which would reasonably be required under the participant's plan.

Record of policy development		
Version	Date approved	Date for review
Version 2	August 2020	August 2021
Version 3	November 2021	November 2022
Version 4	November 2022	November 2023