

## GUIDE TO SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY TEMPLATE

### ABOUT THIS POLICY AREA

This policy guides how the organisation delivers its services to clients.

A written service delivery policy is required as part of meeting Standard 2 (Responding to individuals, families and communities).

#### **Standard 2 — responding to individuals, families and communities**

*The organisation develops, implements and reviews policies and procedures to involve clients in an assessment of their needs; plans and delivers services to meet these needs; and regularly reviews these needs.*

#### **Policy checklist**

The following checklist will help you check that an existing policy covers this area adequately:

The policy should:

- guide the planning and delivery of culturally sensitive, competent, responsive and inclusive services
- describe how an initial assessment of needs is made, and how initial and ongoing assessments are recorded
- describe how individual plans are established, recorded, implemented and reviewed
- describe how input from external agencies is taken into account, if appropriate
- explain how continuity of service is delivered in the event of significant change
- contain clear procedures and actions
- indicate the timing of any actions
- show when it was approved
- show when it was last reviewed.

### COMPLETING YOUR SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY

#### **Using the policy template**

The template provides some example statements. You may adapt these statements and include them in your policy or write your own statements to better suit operations and services of your organisation.

To customise the policy template, click on the shaded sections <<Insert text>> and insert the information that is specific to your organisation.

When you have completed the policy template, delete the shaded instruction sections such as: [Refer to the service delivery policy template guide for questions and/or examples to consider when customising this section.](#)

For further information on using the policy guides, refer to the information in *Using the policy templates and guides*.

## **Guidelines for each section of your policy**

### **1. Purpose**

When identifying the purpose of the policy, consider how it might apply to your client group/s and other agencies you work with. Do you need to make specific statements to ensure you are inclusive of particular groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australian South Sea Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability?

### **2. Scope**

To determine the scope of the policy, consider the following questions:

- Does this policy apply to all your organisation's services, and to all clients and stakeholders?
- Are there particular external requirements for specific service types that affect your service delivery policies?
- Which staff will be involved in assessing client needs and providing culturally sensitive, competent, responsive and inclusive services?

### **3. Policy statement**

If you are adopting the policy statement in the template, consider whether there are any additional commitments that your organisation wants to make.

In identifying the actions your organisation will take to implement this policy, you should include the following:

- how you assess and record the needs of the individuals, families or communities that are eligible to use your service
- how you plan, provide and review service delivery responses for each individual, family or community using your service in a responsive, competent, inclusive and culturally sensitive manner, and with appropriate input from other agencies
- how you deliver continuity of service in the event of significant change.

### **4. Procedures**

The procedures describe how your organisation achieves the aims and goals you have outlined in your purpose, scope and policy statement.

#### **4.1 Needs assessment**

Having assessed a client's eligibility for your service, the assistance you provide your clients should be designed to meet their specific needs and to build on their existing strengths.

Refer to your eligibility policy, and describe how you will undertake a needs assessment for each client to identify their needs and service delivery options. Consider the following:

- the written information you give the client about the assessment process
- the timing of and responsibility for the initial assessment
- the way you maintain contact with the client (For example, this may be at their initiative only, by appointment, by home visit, phone, letter or via a third party.)

- the approach you use to understand and record a client's needs (For example, this may be an informal talk, a formal interview, written application, discussion with another agency or family member.)
- the forms and format you use to record a client's needs
- special steps taken to ensure that the assessment process maximises opportunities for the client to express their needs in ways most appropriate to their circumstances, cultural background and capabilities
- the input other agencies have to the assessment process and how you facilitate the involvement of advocates, support services and interpreters
- the way you engage with the client to clarify and confirm your understanding of their needs and service options and provide opportunities for the client to express their agreement with your assessment
- the way you tell clients about the service delivery options available to meet their assessed needs.

#### *4.2 Planning, providing and reviewing service delivery responses*

Every client using your service is entitled to:

- receive a service that is competent, culturally sensitive, inclusive and designed to respond to their needs as closely as possible
- be told clearly how you plan to assist them and the service options available to them
- have the opportunity to reassess both their needs and their progress towards meeting these needs.

Having undertaken a needs assessment, you will work with each client to:

- plan — establish a personal service plan
- implement this plan — deliver the agreed service
- review the plan — assess progress towards meeting the client's needs and changing their plan as appropriate.

Your terminology will depend on what services you provide, but the steps of planning, implementing and reviewing a service response should be clearly identifiable in all types of service.

Depending on the nature of the service you provide, and the relationship you have with your client, your approach may be:

- formal or informal
- a single contact or ongoing contact
- simple or complex.

##### *4.2.1 Planning service delivery*

Describe the steps you follow in service planning:

- How do you develop the plan?
- What elements does the plan have — for example, the nature of the agreed service, time- frame, expectations, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality and privacy (refer to your confidentiality policy and privacy policy), breaches of agreement, frequency and nature of reviews, measures of progress?
- What choices do clients have in establishing suitable service responses?
- How do you involve other agencies or family members in individual service planning?

- How is the plan documented? What file records are kept? What forms and formats are used?
- How do you ensure the client is confident that the plan is workable for them and will meet their needs?

#### *4.2.2 Implementing a service plan*

Describe the steps you follow in implementing service plans:

- How are services delivered to each client?
- What records are kept (case management notes, attendance records, performance outcomes, reports, self-assessments, referrals, involvement of other agencies etc.)?
- What are the respective roles and responsibilities of the client, your service and other individuals and agencies?

#### *4.2.3 Reviewing a service plan*

Describe the steps you follow in reviewing service plans:

- Who is involved in service plan reviews?
- When and how are reviews undertaken?
- What records are kept?
- How is progress assessed?
- How and when are changes made to the plan?
- How do you make sure that continuity of service is available to your client in the event of a significant change affecting your organisation?

### **5. Other related policies and documents**

The service delivery policy should be linked to other policies related to responding to individuals, families and communities. This may include:

- allocation policy
- ending service delivery policy
- collaboration with other agencies policy
- community development/education policy.

It should also be linked to policies about client rights:

- access policy
- eligibility policy
- service requests and referrals policy
- privacy policy
- confidentiality policy
- client records policy
- access to confidential information policy.

Also list the forms and other organisational documents related to your service delivery policy.

### **6. Review processes**

Consider how often the policy should be reviewed and the process for doing this:

- **frequency of review:** Most policies benefit from an annual review. The experience of implementing the policy is used to decide which changes are necessary. Consider

reviewing your service delivery policy as part of an annual review of your organisation's policies or, if your organisation is small, perhaps over a three-year period. Critical incidents may prompt you to review the policy ahead of schedule.

- **responsibility for the review:** In most organisations, the person accountable for client service would be responsible for reviewing this policy. In small organisations, this may be the manager or service coordinator. In larger organisations, this may be a client service manager.
- **process for the review:** Decide which particular staff, volunteers, external people and organisations will provide input to the policy review and whether clients will be involved.
- **decision-making process:** Who will review draft changes to the policy and approve changes? What will be the timeframe for the review process?
- **documentation and communication:** What records of the policy review process are needed? How will changes to the policy be communicated to staff implementing the policy? In a small organisation, this may be as simple as noting the changes at a staff meeting. In a larger organisation, an email memo may be needed.
- **key questions for the review:** Is the policy being implemented? Are procedures being followed? Is the policy clear? What has changed that may prompt a change to the policy? Have particular stakeholders had difficulty with any aspect of the policy? Can their concerns be resolved? How does the policy compare with that of similar organisations?