

## GUIDE TO ALLOCATION POLICY TEMPLATE

### ABOUT THIS POLICY AREA

This policy guides how the organisation allocates services when there is a limit on the amount of service available or a waiting time for clients to access services.

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

#### **Standard 2 - allocation**

*The organisation develops, implements and reviews policies and procedures for how decisions are made about the needs of clients and their priority for receiving services in situations where there is a shortage or waiting time for services.*

#### **Policy checklist**

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

The policy should:

- describe how decisions are made about client needs and their priority for receiving a service where there is a shortage or waiting time for services
- describe how clients are informed of the waiting period if they are not allocated a service, and the process for assisting clients to access other services
- describe the criteria for the allocation of funds to clients (where appropriate) and the process in place to ensure the effective distribution of funds
- contain clear procedures and actions
- indicate the timing of any actions
- show when it was approved
- show when it was last reviewed.

### COMPLETING YOUR ALLOCATION POLICY

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

The template provides some example statements. You can adapt these statements and include them in your policy or write your own statements to better suit the 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 allocation policy template 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 decisions that are made about client needs and their priority for receiving services in situations where there is a shortage or waiting time for services?

### **3. Policy statement**

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

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

- when it may be necessary to prioritise access to services based on comparative need, waiting lists, or urgency of need
- how you will make fair and consistent decisions about resource allocation and service delivery options for each client in these circumstances
- how you will allocate to clients any funds you are responsible for (e.g. brokerage or emergency relief) fairly and effectively
- how people who are not allocated a service are informed of this and assisted to access other services
- how you will analyse service and client data to inform your allocation procedures.

### **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 Allocation of service (if applicable to your service type)**

If requests for your service or activity exceed your capacity to respond in every case within your available resources, it will be necessary to determine which clients will be given priority in accessing your services. This may be on the basis of comparative need, urgency of need, and/or time waited.

Prioritising client access to services may involve:

- advising a client that you are currently unable to provide them with a service
- specifying boundaries or conditions to the service you are able to provide
- providing a client with information about their waiting time, and when and how to keep in contact with you and other agencies that can assist them.

It is important that your allocation decisions are consistent and fair. Decisions about who is given priority should be guided by:

- underlying principles about how to assess comparative need
- standard allocation criteria that are clearly documented
- (if appropriate to your service type) a risk assessment of the implications for a client of being refused service
- an agreed approach to how the criteria are applied (This may include one or a combination of a points system, selection categories, nominations from specific agencies, committee or staff team decisions, advice from experts, staff judgment.)

In describing the steps you will follow to allocate services or funds such as brokerage or emergency relief on the basis of assessed needs, consider the following:

- When or how often does a prioritising or allocation process take place?
- Who is involved in the process? Who is delegated with decision-making power?
- What process is followed? What forms and formats are used?
- How is the confidentiality of each individual client maintained when needs are being compared?
- How are decisions communicated to clients?
- Can adverse decisions (to limit, delay or not provide a service or funds) be appealed and, if so, what is the appeal process?
- What information and advice is provided to people who are not allocated a service or funds, now or at all?
- How are service and client data used to inform the review of the allocation procedures?

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

List the other policies related to responding to individuals, families and communities. This may include:

- service delivery policy
- ending service delivery policy
- collaboration with other agencies policy.

Also list policies about client rights, in particular:

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

Also list the forms and other organisational documents related to your allocation 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 allocation 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 be involved.
- **decision-making process:** Who will review draft changes to the policy, and who will 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?