



Title:

Eligibility for Disability Services:
Sector-wide policy

Policy Number:	DIS/188
Version:	1.0
Applies To:	All Disability
Issued By:	Disability SA
Approved By:	Suzanne Carman
Approved On:	1 Oct 2008
Policy Custodian:	Tracey Stephenson
Due for Review:	September 2009
Accessibility:	C1: public unrestricted
DFC Strategic Objective	Refer to the latest version of the blue book
SA Strategic Plan:	Not applicable

1 Intent

The aim of this policy is to provide clearly-documented criteria for determining eligibility for funded or government-provided *specialist disability services*¹ in South Australia. The purpose of defining eligibility is to ensure that services are directed towards the intended population or client group and to enable people with disabilities to access services. It is not the intent of eligibility policy to label a person but it is recognised that this can be an unintended consequence of being determined eligible for disability services.

2 Context

Eligibility criteria set out requirements that are to be met in order for a person to be considered eligible to receive a service or participate in a program. Eligibility does not confer an entitlement to services. Access to services will depend on target criteria for particular programs, available resources and priority of access determination.

Eligibility for disability services is determined at various levels.

- Sector-wide: Sector-wide policy in relation to eligibility is largely determined by the coverage of legislation and the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement, and is influenced by agreement with Federal and State government agencies in relation to roles and responsibilities of related areas eg health, ageing services, employment, transport and other generic services accessed by people with disabilities.
- At the agency level Agencies may determine eligibility for services provided by their agency within the broad sector-wide eligibility policy. Criteria should be broad and related to agency mandate eg agencies established solely for a particular disability group. Eligibility for government services provided by Disability SA is contained in a separate policy document '*Disability SA Eligibility and Access Policy and Procedures*'.
- At the program level Individual programs and services may have particular specific eligibility criteria related to targeting the program to suitable candidates.

¹ See 'Definitions' for descriptions of italicised terms.

Schedule 2 of the *Disability Services Act 1993* relates to eligibility at any of these levels and directs that:

The providers of disability services are to take the following matters into consideration in determining eligibility for and priority of access to the services and in assessing the needs of a person with a disability who is accorded access to a service:

- (a) the person's wishes;*
- (b) the level of disability and its impact on the person;*
- (c) the needs and capabilities of any carers;*
- (d) the extent of support and assistance (if any) provided or available to the person from all other sources;*
- (e) the implications of any decision for carers and members of the person's family;*
- (f) such other matters as may be considered relevant.*

3 Scope

People with disabilities and their families and carers may receive a range of services from various Federal government, State government, local government or non-government/community agencies. This policy relates only to specialist disability services funded or provided by the Department for Families and Communities. This includes all services and programs provided or sub-contracted by Disability SA, and all services and programs funded by the Office for Disability and Client Services.

4 Policy Detail

People with a disability are eligible to apply for disability services within the scope of this policy where they meet **all** the following criteria:

1. The person's disability manifests itself in a need for service before the **age of 65**.
2. The person has a **disability** that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or acquired brain injury or a combination of any of these. This includes young children with a significant global developmental delay.
3. The person's disability results in a **substantial/ significant reduction of the person's capacity** in at least one of the following areas:
 - communication;
 - mobility; or
 - self care/management.
4. The person's disability results in the person needing **support**.
5. The disability is **permanent or likely to be permanent** (and may or may not be of a chronic episodic nature).

5 Definitions

Specialist services **disability** Refers to services specifically funded for people with a disability.

Support Refers to the need for a significant and ongoing level of disability support. Disability support is defined as one of the following specialist disability services covered under the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement (accommodation support, community support, community access, respite or advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication) and equipment.

Permanent or likely to be permanent Refers to the irreversible nature of the disability, even though it may fluctuate in severity over time - that is, it may be of a chronic episodic nature. A person will be eligible if their underlying disability is permanent or likely to be permanent and they meet all of the other eligibility criteria.

The disability will not be considered permanent where there is a need for specific health services for a defined period following physical trauma or the onset of an acute episode of illness. A person in this situation may only become eligible for disability support services once their medical needs have stabilised and the long-term nature of their disability becomes apparent. Some conditions are not considered to be permanent and therefore are not considered to be a disability.

6 Reference Documents and Links

6.1 Directive Documents

- Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)
- Disability Services Act 1993

6.2 Supporting Documents

- Disability SA Eligibility and Access Guidelines

7 Risk

Lack of clear guidelines on who may or may not receive services can result in inappropriately expended resources and lack of clarity for consumers and the public about the assistance they can expect from disability services.

8 Policy Approval

Author:	Director: (or authorised delegate)	Executive: (if required)
<i>Date: 1 October 2008</i>	<i>Date: 1 October 2008</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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