



**POLICY No: SP-17**

**VERSION No: 3**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION: May 1993**

**REVIEW DATE: August 2017**

**Approved By: Committee of Management**

**Date: August 2014**

## **Service Access and Exit Policy**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#), and National Disability Strategy promote access, inclusion and choice for people with disability, and a focus on their individual needs, goals and aspirations. ConnectAbility Australia (ConnectAbility) aims to promote these principles within all aspects of policy and service delivery.

ConnectAbility is committed to providing people with a high standard of service aimed at meeting individual need and promoting a sense of dignity, purpose and security. ConnectAbility is committed to ensuring that it provides a consistent and transparent approach to all people entering or exiting the service.

ConnectAbility's access to services is clear, transparent and non-discriminatory to ensure equity and fairness is applied. Information about ConnectAbility's services will be easy to read and widely available. ConnectAbility will work with other service providers and community supports to share information and establish relevant networks placing the needs of people at the centre of their supports.

### **2.0 Purpose**

The Purpose of this policy is to clarify the service entry and exit process for ConnectAbility Australia participants, including those people provided funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

It is not the intent of this policy to label a person, but it is recognised that this can be an unintended consequence of being determined eligible for disability services. The purpose of defining access and exit is to enable people with a disability to access supports and services, and to ensure that services are directed towards the intended target group. ConnectAbility promotes the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all people with disability, and respect for their inherent dignity.

The policy provides direction for ConnectAbility staff when considering the referral or request for supports and services to the organisation, or considering the exit of a person from the organisation. Where ConnectAbility may not be resourced to provide a potential or existing participant the necessary and required supports ConnectAbility will assist them to obtain services elsewhere.

ConnectAbility is obliged to provide potential and existing participants and their family members/carers with clear and concise information about access to services, capacity and waiting



times for supports to commence or be implemented and transparent processes to ensure an appropriate exit from the organisation.

### 3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all existing and potential Connectability participants and their family members/carers who have requested, or currently receiving supports and services.

### 4.0 Definitions

- **Entry:** Is the process through which a person enters into a specific support or service arrangement with Connectability.
- **Exit:** The point, at which a person leaves ConnectAbility, no longer requires ConnectAbility support or transfers to another external service provider.
- **Stakeholder:** encompasses (but is not limited to) participants, family member, carer, advocates, guardians or external service provider.
- **Disability Service Standards:** The benchmark by which the rights of people with a disability are upheld.

### 5.0 Principles

- ConnectAbility strives to promote the health, wellbeing, safety and security for all people receiving supports and services;
- Entry and access to services will be provided on the basis of relative need and availability of resources;
- Connectability Australia adopts a non-discriminatory access process that respects age, gender, race, religion, sexual preferences and disability consistent with human rights and other applicable legislation;
- ConnectAbility acknowledges all people have the right to accurate, clear and transparent information about gaining access to and exiting ConnectAbility's services to inform their decision making;
- Information is not limited to one mode or type and can be changes to suit individual needs and preferences (e.g. translated material ; easy read using pictorial format);
- Services are provided in a flexible, responsive and person centred way to meet each person's individual support needs and goals;
- Connectability staff will assess all participants requesting supports and services, and where limitations of resources, knowledge or skills exist, manage waiting lists for services according to the participant's level of need.
- ConnectAbility acknowledges that each person has the right to refuse a service or to leave ConnectAbility at any time they choose. ConnectAbility further acknowledges that it may discontinue a service after consultation with the person, their family and other important members of their support network if the service is no longer sustainable or appropriate for the person;
- ConnectAbility is committed to working with and referring to other community services or organisations to meet the multiple needs of people;



- Exit procedures will be fair, transparent, follow due process and uphold the rights of the participants.
- Exit procedures will protect the safety and the integrity of ConnectAbility staff, participants, programs and services. ConnectAbility assists people when they exit the service and provides them with sufficient information on how to re-enter the service if/and/or when required
- ConnectAbility values feedback from people who use its service and will provide access to Complaints and Compliments processes to help inform and improve service access for others.

## **6.0 Responsibilities**

The **CEO** is responsible for maintaining this policy, its related procedures and associated documents.

The **Operations Manager** is responsible, and will be held accountable for the following:

- Ensuring the policy is effectively implemented across the service;
- Monitor staff compliance with the requirements of the policy
- Ensure training and information is provided to staff to carry out this policy

The **Support Delivery Coordinators/Support Planner** are responsible and will be held accountable for the following:

- Ensuring staff are familiar with the requirements of the policy, and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements.

All **Staff and Volunteers** will be held accountable for the following:

- Complying with the requirements of this policy.

## **6.0 Entry Framework**

### **6.1 Entry Criteria**

People who are provided supports and services by ConnectAbility must have a disability which:

- a. Is in the form of an intellectual, physical, neurological, ABI, psychiatric and/or sensory impairment, or a combination of such impairments;
- b. Is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- c. Results in a significantly reduced capacity in one or more activities of daily living such as communication, mobility, decision making personal care, decision making or social skills;
- d. Is assessed to have between moderate and exceptional needs;
- e. Identifies eligibility or receipt of an ADHC funded individualised funding package, or assessed as eligible to receive support funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme;
- f. Be 16 years of age at time of request for service.

A potential person must be identified through the entry procedure to be eligible to receive supports and services.



Previous acceptance to ConnectAbility does not entitle the person automatic access or to the same service/supports at a later time.

Any person requesting service that is exiting, or has exited from the Criminal Justice System will be deemed ineligible to access supports and services by ConnectAbility.

## 6.2 Entry procedure

1. To access the services of ConnectAbility a person or a family member/advocate must first make a request for service and be determined as eligible to receive support.

2. Requests for service can be made in the following ways:

- Phone or email request
- On-site visit to ConnectAbility
- A general enquiry via the Contacts page through the ConnectAbility website [www.connectabilityaus.org.au](http://www.connectabilityaus.org.au)

3. From the initial contact the person's eligibility will be determined and arrangements negotiated for the person, their family members/carers and other significant people from their support network to meet with ConnectAbility staff. This may take place at the person's home, school, or other community venue suitable to the person and their stakeholders.

4. ConnectAbility staff will assess the information provided by the person and provide a recommendation to the Operations Manager in regards to the suitability of the person's needs and request for supports and services. If the Operations Manager deems the service has the appropriate resources and can effectively support the person to meet their goals and needs, the Operations Manager will approve the request for access.

5. The person will be notified of their acceptance to ConnectAbility in writing from the Chief Executive Officer. The person and/or their family/carer will receive a Service Introduction pack.

6. If the person and/or their family/carer accepts the offer of supports and service by ConnectAbility a transition will commence.

7. Where a person is transitioning from school or is transferring from another service provider, ConnectAbility will seek consent from the person and/or their family/carer to contact other providers e.g. school, ADHC, NDIA or other service to discuss or obtain support requirements, schedules, plans, and person centred goals to assist in development of a transition.

Where a person is transitioning or transferring with an NDIS Support Plan ConnectAbility will:

1. Determine if it is able to provide service specific to the "Cluster of Support/s" the person is eligible to receive supports through. ConnectAbility will seek consent from the person and/or their family/carer to contact NDIA to discuss the plan and person's goals to assist in the development of a transition.



2. Consult with the person and their family/carer to obtain the person's NDIS Participant Number, date of birth and obtain the person's NDIS Support Plan (or portion of the plan related to supports that ConnectAbility has been engaged to provide).
3. Once the person and or their family/carer accepts the request for service the NDIS Transition Manager will initiate the required service.
4. ConnectAbility staff will develop a Service Level Agreement with the participant based on the supports identified and person's need using the information obtained at the initial meeting with the person and their family/carer and other members of their support network.

### **6.3 Transition Procedure**

1. Once a person has accepted supports and services from ConnectAbility a transition process will commence. The aim of a transition is to minimise the impact of change that is occurring for the person and to create a support schedule that meets the person's goals, needs and requirements in a person centred way.
2. The Support Planner, and if applicable the NDIS Transition Manager will coordinate the transition of supports and services meeting with the person and/or relevant stakeholders including the family/carer to develop a transition pathway.
3. ConnectAbility will implement person centred processes and adopt staff matching principles to ensure the organisation develops an understanding of the person's strengths, likes and dislikes. This will inform the development of personalised support schedules, client risk profiles and support budget.
4. The transition pathway should clearly identify the timeframe for the induction and transition and any review schedules that have been agreed upon and who is responsible to manage steps included in the transition.
5. The transition places the person and/or their family/carer and other members of the support network at the centre. The transition pathway is designed to assist the person and/or their family/carer to build capacity to have as much control over the planning, implementation and review of the person's support plans, supports and services.
6. An information file for the person will be developed ensuring this information is kept private and confidential.

### **7.0 Exit Framework**

#### **7.1 Exit Criteria:**

A person may leave Connectability Australia for a number of reasons or circumstances including:

- Relocation to an area outside ConnectAbility's area of service delivery;
- Where the support schedule and service is no longer able to meet the person's needs or assist in achieving chosen goals;

- Transfer to another service provider;
- Lack of available resources, or funding;
- The death of a person using the service;
- The person is unwilling to meet the reasonable conditions required in their support plan and thus affecting the safe delivery of a service to the participant and the health and safety of the staff;
- Changes in the person's condition results in the support they require exceeds the skills and expertise ConnectAbility staff can deliver;
- There has been no contact between the person and ConnectAbility Australia for a period of 3 months;
- The person and/or family member/carer engages in behaviour which is unacceptable to ConnectAbility such as violence, abuse, aggression, theft or property damage;
- Continued non-payment of service delivery fees incurred during support and services provided by ConnectAbility.

## 7.2 Exit Procedures

ConnectAbility acknowledges that exiting a service provider can be a daunting, stressful and anxious process for people using the service as well as their family members and carers. ConnectAbility ensures that an exit occurs in a professional, planned and collaborative manner.

Exit planning is an integral part of the exit process and is conducted in close consultation with the person, and where appropriate the family, carer and any other important people from the person's support network.

As appropriate to their circumstances, the participant is given information about, referral processes or supported introduction to other service providers, community agencies organisations, which can offer supports and services they require after they have exited ConnectAbility.

- ConnectAbility actively encourages and supports a person to exit its service if a least restrictive alternative or one that is likely to enable positive outcomes and inclusive opportunities is identified and preferred by the person. Prior to exiting ConnectAbility people are provided guidance and support to: Investigate other options or models of support from ConnectAbility;
- Explore the consequences of their decision to exit the service;
- Consider re-entry to the service in the future should their needs or circumstances change;

The person, subject to consent, their family or carer/s and other stakeholders are involved in developing the exit plan. The exit plan is made available to the person and with the person's informed consent (where possible), any other stakeholders. The exit plan has identified timeframes outlining actions and those responsible to implement the actions.

Where a person has chosen to exit the service and receive an Individual Funding Package, or are supported in a Block Funded program funded through The Department of Family and Community



Services: Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) are required to provide four (4) weeks' notice of intention to exit, in writing to the Operations Manager.

Where a person has an NDIS support package and has entered into an agreement with ConnectAbility for the service to provide supports and services they are required to provide four (4) weeks' notice of intention to exit, in writing to the Operations Manager.

The participant reserves the right to re-access service, within a period of 3 months after formally exiting the service, without having to follow formal access processes (see Section 6.3), provided the necessary service resources area available.

Following expiration of the three month cooling off period the person's place within the service is formally terminated and a new referral/intake assessment needs to be undertaken if the person requests service at some point in the future.

### **7.3 Where the person's consent to exit is not given**

As part of the entry process participants are informed of their rights and responsibilities contained in the service agreement document. Information regarding the reasons for being asked to leave the service will be provided and explained to the participant. These reasons will be included in the exit plan if required. ConnectAbility may implement a person's exit under the following circumstances:

- An inability or unwillingness over a period of time to work towards agreed goals;
- Other people using the service, staff or the person themselves are at risk of harm;
- Financial requirements are not being met;
- Severe incompatibility with other person's using the service is displayed;
- Dramatic health changes require significantly increased levels of care or service model not provided by the service.

The service exit will only be actioned after discussion and consultation with the person, their family/carer and other important stakeholders, and strategies have been implemented to meet irreconcilable differences.

Where a person is receiving funding by a government department (e.g. ADHC, NDIS) this organisation will be contacted and requested to be involved in the transition. Determination and communication of the exit will be made by the Operations Manager after consultation with the CEO.

Participants wishing to make a complaint regarding their exit are provided with details on the process of complaint.

### **7.4 Exit Interview**

As part of the exit strategy the person and their family/carer will be offered the opportunity to participate in an exit interview. ConnectAbility acknowledges that engaging in such an interview may be a difficult process and it is the choice and decision of the person and/or their family/carer to engage in an exit interview.



ConnectAbility will use information from the interview as part of an evaluation and feedback processes to improve ConnectAbility services and identify any training requirements for staff of the service.

### **7.5 Files and Documentation**

Upon exit all documentation and information developed and implemented by ConnectAbility will remain the property of the service. Any documentation provided by other service providers and included in the person's file that has been used to facilitate the person's support will be returned to the person and/or their family/carer. ConnectAbility will retain copies of these documents.

All information in relation to the person will be retained, secured and stored within the services Participant Documentation Management Policy.

### **8.0 Cultural Diversity**

Staff are to ensure that services are provided with sensitivity to and an awareness of the cultural beliefs and practices of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is inclusive of the awareness of needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities.

### **9.0 Quality assurance mechanisms**

Supports provided by ConnectAbility must be underpinned by a quality framework that ensures consistency and a high level of quality care and support for participants, their families and carers. ConnectAbility acknowledges that it will be required to undertake third party verification of their performance against the NSW Disability Service Standards (NSW DSS), prior to June 30, 2015.

ConnectAbility's adopted Standards Policy framework must be informed by human rights principles, refer to nationally consistent standards, clear accreditation mechanisms, sound compliance and monitoring systems, and information readily available to participants, families and carers to inform them of minimum quality expectations.

### **10.0 Communication**

Communication about this policy should be implemented in a way that suits each person with regard to their cultural background e.g. use of an interpreter or easy to read documents.

This policy will be:

- communicated to the key internal and external stakeholders of ConnectAbility;
- communicated to ConnectAbility Australia staff through professional development opportunities;
- accessible through ConnectAbility Australia's internal intranet and website.



## 11.0 Review of Policy

This policy will generally be reviewed every three years with participants, their families and staff of ConenctAbility. The move to a nationally recognised Standards Framework is a priority of the National Disability Agreement (NDA). The continued implementation of Stronger Together 2 and introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme will provide evidence as to the planning and review principles, guidelines and procedural direction for ConnectAbility. This policy is not intended to be a static document and ConnectAbility will make a commitment to its ongoing development.

## 13.0 Related policies

- Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality
- Code of Ethics and Practice
- Planning and Review
- Service Delivery
- Participation and Inclusion
- Abuse and Neglect
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Complaints Management
- Discrimination and Harassment
- Individualised Funding
- Participant Documentation Management

## 14.0 Related legislation

- National Disability Service standards
- NSW Disability Services Act
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Racial Discrimination Act
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act (2013)
- United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
- Living Life My Way Framework (ADHC)

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Sections
3	July 2014	Scott Harvey	Policy reviewed to reflect changes in sector. Approved by CoM	All
2	July 2009	Scott Harvey	Review of original policy. Ratified by CoM	All
1	May 1993	Christina Morris	Policy created to reflect new DSS	All