

ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND OF WA (INC.)

SERVICE ACCESS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy describes the circumstances and conditions under which people can be accepted for services with the Association for the Blind of WA (Inc.). The policy has been framed around eligibility criteria as outlined in the Disability Services Act (1993) and Standard 1 of the Disability Services Standards (1993).

2.0 SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

This policy, applies to all services and programs provided by the Association for the Blind of WA.

For the purposes of this document –

- “writing” also describes, where appropriate, electronic, Braille or audio formats.
- “client” also describes the client’s legal guardian if the client is a minor.
- “consultative basis” means that the Association staff member provides consultation and advice to the staff member employed by the child/family’s primary service provider e.g. Association for the Blind Speech Pathologist provides advice on intervention to the Speech Pathologist employed by the child/family’s primary service provider.

3.0 STATEMENT

3.1 Eligibility

Notwithstanding the Association’s right to offer services to other groups or individuals as necessary, access to services and programs provided by the Association for the Blind of WA is available to:

- 3.1.1 Any person with a significant vision impairment who,
- 3.1.1.1 after best correction, experiences or is at risk of experiencing a functional difficulty, as a result of his/her vision impairment. The individual may experience functional difficulty in one or more areas, which include, but are not limited to the following:
- i) orientation and mobility skills
 - ii) self care skills
 - iii) daily living skills
 - iv) ability to access information and to communicate
 - v) ability to access and participate in the community

- vi) fine motor and gross motor development
 - vii) cognitive and language development
 - viii) social and emotional development;
- and

3.1.1.2 who pays or who is exempted from paying the Association's Service Access Fee;

or

3.1.2 Children who have a vision impairment and additional disabilities, who are eligible to receive their primary service from another organisation, are eligible to receive the Association's orthoptic and orientation and mobility services, as these are generally not available elsewhere. In these circumstances, all other therapy and professional service provided by the Association for the Blind of WA (i.e. occupational therapy, speech pathology, physiotherapy, psychology and social work) will be offered on a consultative basis only, to parents and other service providers.

or

3.1.3 Clients' family members and other non-vision impaired people whose participation in a particular Association programs is considered to be of benefit to its clients.

3.2 Provision of Service

Every person who approaches the Association for service should receive a timely, personalised and effective response. Processes of Intake and Service Coordination have been designed to ensure that this happens from the point of initial contact and for as long as contact continues. In some circumstances however, access to Association services and programs by eligible clients may be constrained depending upon the availability of resources or, in situations where the Association's duty of care to either clients or staff are demonstrably compromised.

Dr Margaret Crowley
Chief Executive Officer

26/02/2007

Date

First Adopted 2002

PROCEDURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following procedures support the provision of the Service Access Policy; they are to be implemented to ensure the Association meets its policy objective of providing access to its services.

2.0 GENERAL ACCESS

2.1 Referrals

The Association will accept referrals from prospective clients, family members, advocates, health and allied health professionals, government or non-government agencies.

2.2 Eligibility

The Association will make a determination about offering services to persons found eligible based on the agency's available resources and the person's relative need. Factors to be taken into consideration include but are not limited to:

- i) Ensuring an equitable distribution of available resources and services to clients.
- ii) The involvement of other agencies and access to other services.
- iii) The degree of vision impairment, whether the person is totally blind, legally blind or vision impaired.
- iv) The impact of vision impairment on the person's development and/or functional capacity.
- v) How recently the person was diagnosed and the severity of his/her impairment.
- vi) The potential benefits of the service to be provided and the capacity of the family/carer to support intervention programs.
- vii) In the case of a child, whether the child is at a transition point in her/her education.

2.3 Follow Up

The referral will be allocated to an appropriate service delivery staff member who will contact the referred person (or advocate if relevant) to determine eligibility for services and to schedule appropriate follow-up.

3.0 INELIGIBILITY

3.1 Referral

If a person is found to be ineligible for services, a referral will be made for that person to an alternative service, where an appropriate service exists.

4.0 WAITLISTS

4.1 Waiting Time

If a person is found to be eligible for services, but the Association is not in a position to provide an immediate

service, it will offer to place the person on a waitlist and inform the person of the possible waiting time before services might become available.

4.2 Waiting Advice

Each service delivery manager (or delegated representative) will maintain a separate waitlist as required. Persons on the waitlist will be contacted and advised of their current status on the waitlist. This will occur at least every two months in the case of Independent Living Services and as required in the case of services delivered by staff in the Training, Employment and Information Services Directorate.

4.3 Waitlist Record

For each person on the waitlist, a record will be maintained of the reasons for placing the individual on the waitlist and the time elapsed before services were provided.

5.0 WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICES

5.1 Reasons

Services will be withdrawn only if requested by the client, or if resources are no longer available or, if the Association's duty of care responsibilities to its clients or staff are severely compromised and reasonable efforts to rectify the problem have been made and shown to have failed.

5.2 Discussion

If the Association is contemplating the withdrawal of services, it will first arrange a meeting with the client and any nominated advocate(s), to discuss the reasons why the Association is contemplating withdrawing services.

5.3 Written Advice

If, after the meeting, the Association decides to withdraw services, the client will be informed in writing, outlining the reasons behind the decision and advising of his/her rights under the Association's Complaints Policy.

6.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Service Access Fee Policy and Procedure