

PoI_049	<h1>Demand and Capacity Management</h1>
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Life Choice effectively manages demand for services, including high demand periods to reduce stress on staff and resources, while ensuring the provision of high-quality services.

This policy outlines procedures to predict, prepare for, and effectively manage participant numbers to ensure that participants access quality services as quickly as possible, and that those most in need are prioritised.

The demand management system will be reviewed at least annually and actions taken to improve the system will be monitored and evaluated.

Record of policy development		
Version	Date approved	Date for review
2020/2	August 2022	August 2024

Responsibilities and delegations	
This policy applies to	All Staff
Policy approval	Quality & Risk Committee

Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018
Legislation	National Disability Insurance Scheme Act (2013) Privacy and Confidentiality Act (1988)
References	National Disability Services
Organisation policies	Risk Policy Intake and Referral Policy
Forms, record keeping, other documents	Risk Assessment

Definitions

Demand	the number of potential participants in need of services from the organisation
Capacity	the number of participants the organisation can service at any given time

Procedures

Priority system

Upon presenting to the service, people seeking assistance will undergo an initial screening/assessment to determine the urgency of their situation. The most at-risk participants will be prioritised in the provision of services, followed by less at-risk participants.

Factors used to determine priority include:

- The participants current state (physical, psychological, financial, etc.)
- Whether the participant is a risk to themselves and/or others
- Their current situation (e.g. homelessness, no carer, legal situation) and what their likely situation would become without any assistance
- Whether the potential participant is currently in a crisis situation
- The participants cultural and ethnic background, and language/s spoken
- The participants age and whether they have any accompanying persons with them

Following initial assessment each participant is assigned a level of priority as follows:

- Most urgent category – for people who are an immediate risk to themselves and others
- Issues and situations of a lesser priority
- Limited involvement required
- Ineligible for services/referred to another service

Assessments will be conducted in compliance with the relevant anti-discrimination legislation.

Waiting list procedures

Where demand exceeds capacity, the NDIS Coordinator is responsible for keeping an accurate record of waiting lists.

This includes recording:

- Date commenced on waiting list, and dates contacted while on the waiting list
- All relevant information about a potential participant, including their eligibility and any special needs
- Outcomes of an initial assessment of the participant and their priority ranking
- Date that the participant exited the waiting list, and reason for exiting

Participants will be advised:

- that they are on the waiting list
- their position on the list

- estimate of the approximate waiting time before services can be provided

If lengthy delays are expected, the participant is informed and advised of alternative options including referrals to another service provider.

Developing a demand management strategy

The demand management strategy forms part of Life Choice's quality management system.

Life Choice is dedicated to continual monitoring, review, and evaluation of demand management strategies to inform continuous improvement activities.

Principles of demand management

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the establishment of a demand management strategy which aims to align capacity and demand. The demand management strategy:

- Is participant-focused and treats each case individually
- Prioritises at-risk participants
- Predicts high-demand periods before they happen
- Will decrease excess demand and increase capacity where possible
- Is regularly reviewed and informed by data

Data collection

Life Choice will determine the data to be collected to inform the development and refinement of the demand management strategy. It may include data from waiting lists, participant flow through and re-entry rates.

Data about waiting lists should include:

- Number of participants who have been waitlisted
- Average time on the waitlist before receiving service
- Number of participants who have been refused service
- Number of participants who are ineligible
- Number of participants who have refused service

Review data and identify appropriate strategies

The CEO is responsible for reviewing data and staff feedback on previous high demand periods at least annually order to map trends and, where possible, recommend strategies to assist in meeting demand.

To predict demand the organisation needs to determine:

- The participant demographic to which it provides services

- Planned admission to services (if relevant)
- Capacity of services
- External factors contributing to demand such as demographic changes in the area where the service operates and other external environmental changes.

Implement strategies to manage demand

Strategies to decrease excess demand include:

- Ensuring that service is as complete as possible with appropriate follow-up and exit planning to reduce the likelihood of re-entry
- Referrals to external services

Strategies to increase capacity include:

- Identifying and managing factors impacting participant flow through
- Streamlining administrative and participant intake processes to ensure that they are efficient, reduce duplication of work, and time spent on paperwork. This may be done through improvements to software and IT systems, and through information sharing agreements with other service providers
- Managing planned staff leave to ensure that there are sufficient staff during predicted high demand periods
- Training staff to develop adaptive abilities and manage resources in high demand periods
- Measures such as recruiting additional staff, extending opening hours (if possible)

End of document
