

STANDARD ONE: SERVICE ACCESS

Each person seeking a service has access to a service on the basis of assessed need and available resources.

Standard 1.1

ENTRY

1.1.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to guide and instruct Samaritans staff through the process of accepting referrals and accepting people with disabilities into the service.

1.1.2 Definitions

Service: Refers to a Community Living Support Service, Post School Options programme, Day Placement service, Active Linking project or other disability service operated by Samaritans.

Acceptance: Refers to a person being offered a place in a Samaritans service, programme or activity.

Referral: Refers to a person applying to and being considered for a service from the Samaritans.

1.1.3 Principles

Access to Samaritans services is free from discrimination based on gender, race, sexual preference, class, and political or religious beliefs.

1.1.4 Policy

Samaritans Disability Services provide support to people with disability who are entitled to receive services under the Disability Services Act NSW (1993). In addition, people with a disability within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1990 may be eligible to receive services.

Samaritans provides fair access to services based on established eligibility criteria. These criteria clearly identify those with a disability who are entitled to receive support from any of Samaritans services. It further ensures that these people have the opportunity to access the services offered.

Samaritans provides prompt and efficient service at the time of entry to people applying to enter services. Samaritans provides people with accurate and relevant information about these services, in a courteous manner, which is focused on the individual needs of each applicant.

1.1.5 Procedures

- Application to Samaritans services may be initiated from a wide variety of sources, including the individual, an advocate or family member, a medical service and any non-government or government agency.
- All people making enquiries to enter Samaritans receive information in standard and alternative formats regarding:
 - a) eligibility criteria
 - b) waiting list procedure for each service
 - c) protocol for determining priority of access
 - d) the type of information required and why the information is sought
 - e) rights and responsibilities of people using Samaritans services
 - f) policies and procedures.
- All enquiries for application to Samaritans services are responded to by the Disability Services Manager within the time frame specified in the entry procedure stated for each service.
- All applications for entry to a service follow the referral and entry procedures based on a stated method for determining priority and acceptance.
- At time of application the following procedure is completed:
 - a) ensure the person being referred and, where appropriate significant others, have knowledge of and agree to the referral
 - b) ascertain if the person has the disability type specified by the service and if the person meets the entry criteria of the service they wish to enter
 - c) each applicant for service is to be assessed on an individual needs basis
 - d) the approval of each application is based on meeting the entry criteria and individual needs of the applicant. Where there is no vacancy the applicant's name is placed on an eligibility list and/or referred to another service
 - e) approval of each application is made by the Disability Services Manager based on the success of the application and an interview with the applicant and significant others. This decision is referred to the Ethics Committee for endorsement
 - f) the successful applicant receives written notification of their acceptance into the service for an initial three month trial period, together with relevant service information from the Disability Services Manager.

- The successful applicant is provided with information about the individual support planning process and commences the process of developing an Individual Support Plan (transition) prior to entering a service. This plan forms the basis of an agreement that describes how the service meets the identified needs and wishes of the person.
- Where a decision is made that a person does not meet the entry criteria they, or their referring agent, are provided with this decision in writing stating the reason that their application was unsuccessful. Samaritans provides advice and assistance to the person to access a more appropriate service.
- Where a person challenges a decision by Samaritans not to receive them into the service, Samaritans involves the Ageing and Disability Department and encourages the person to seek advocacy support.
- Samaritans advises people joining the service that should they be asked to leave or choose to leave they may apply for re-entry under the procedures of **1.1 Entry**.
- As part of non-discrimination to people from non-English speaking backgrounds Samaritans ensures all information about the service is available and publicised in accessible formats. This also includes planning for current and future cultures in the geographic location identified by Samaritans to improve the accessibility of services.
- Samaritans management annually reviews the relevance and accessibility of its services to people with a non-English speaking background and Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders.
- Samaritans only provides support to people who are registered through the entry procedure.

1.1.6 References

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 Schedule 5
NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
Racial Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
NSW Disability Services Act 1993 - Objects 3 (a & b), Principles 1 (e, d, g & h),
Applications of Principles 2 (a, b & e)
NSW Disability Services Standards - Standard 1
Samaritans Disability Services Policies and Standards
Entry Procedures for each Programme
Ethics Committee
Service Promotion and Availability
Transition Planning

1.1.7 Person Responsible

It is the responsibility of the Disability Services Manager to:

- respond promptly to all enquiries and applications
- follow the procedure for entry
- refer the applicant to a Coordinator where a vacancy exists to commence transition process.

1.1.8 Implementation and Evaluation

The Disability Services Manager ensures the entry criteria and entry process for each service is followed.

1.1.9 Documentation

Correspondence is filed under Applications to Disability Services and is kept by the relevant Disability Services Manager. Individual files are established once the applicant joins the service.

Standard 1.2

EXIT

1.2.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to guide and instruct Samaritans staff in the process of exiting a person from the service.

1.2.2 Definitions

Exit: the process when a person ceases to use a Samaritans service.

1.2.3 Principles

Samaritans recognises that each person has a right to refuse a service or to leave a service at any time they choose. Equally they have a right to request a further service at any time without fear of discrimination. Samaritans further recognises that it may discontinue a service after consultation with the person and their support network if the service is no longer appropriate for the person.

1.2.4 Policy

Samaritans strives to promote security of support and service for all people receiving the service and only discontinues a service under clearly established conditions. Samaritans involves independent and service-user representatives in decisions to exit people from the service.

1.2.5 Procedures

- Management and staff respect the right of a person to decide they no longer wish to receive a service and actively encourage and support a person to exit from a service if one that is likely to have a more positive outcome for that person is identified and is preferred by them.
- Prior to exiting from the service people are given support and encouragement from staff members to:
 - a) investigate other options for service from Samaritans or other agencies
 - b) explore the consequences of that decision to exit the service
 - c) consider re-entry according to **1.1 Entry** procedure in the future should their needs or circumstances change and funding is available.
- Where the person requires ongoing support through enhanced service provision and the service is not the most appropriate to meet the person's needs, the Disability Services Manager and Coordinator pursue all options for these needs to be met through existing services. Should this be unsuccessful the Disability Services Manager advises the Director Client Services. The Disability Services Manager advises the person that they may need to exit the service and support is provided to refer them to a more appropriate agency.
- The Disability Services Manager recommends to the Director Client Services whether a person is being considered for exit from a service. This only occurs where clear attempts to mediate the situation have been documented and involves the person and their support networks.
- The issues and the process to be undertaken in supporting someone who is being considered for exit from a service are referred to the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee considers the matter and provides endorsement on the process or its views to the contrary.
- The Disability Services Manager notifies the person and their support networks directly of any intention to terminate the service. This includes:
 - a) the reason for withdrawing the support service
 - b) the right of appeal process through Samaritans grievance procedure
 - c) information regarding other possible agencies.
- Samaritans acts in a constructive and supportive manner where there is an intention to exit a person from a service. This may include making referrals to Department of Community Services, who have primary responsibilities for support services to people with severe disabilities.

- The Director Client Services advises the Ageing and Disability Department of its intention to exit a person from a service.
- In the unlikely event that a person is to be exited as a result of their challenging behaviour, Samaritans follows the guidelines set out by the Ageing and Disability Department in the policy and guidelines, *A Positive Approach to Challenging Behaviours*.
- As a result of mediation a recommendation may be made to exit a person because of an irretrievable breakdown in the relationship between the person, service, family member or guardian. Samaritans abides by the mediation decision.
- The Samaritans Foundation continues to actively lobby government agencies to provide appropriate funding resources to support service to people with intellectual disabilities.
- Where the exit of a person is because the service is unable to meet their needs and the person does or does not consent the following process is followed:
 - a) all decisions made are through the individual support planning process including review of goals and strategies to meet needs
 - b) professional advice is sought including medical review, behavioural intervention, Department of Community Services case worker input and Ageing and Disability Department, representative input. Advice may include other services, such as the Office of the Public Guardian
 - c) an action plan is developed based on the professional advice obtained aimed at meeting the identified needs of the person. The development of the action plan includes the involvement of the person and their family or carer. A time frame is attached to the action plan, outlining tasks and those responsible to achieve them. The action plan is tabled at the Ethics Committee meeting for endorsement or comment
 - d) if still unable to meet the person's needs the Coordinator and Disability Services Manager identify other services better able to meet their needs
 - e) if another service is identified, Samaritans assists with the transfer of the person and the transition to the new service
 - g) if no service can be identified the Director Client Services advises the Chief Executive Officer and the Ageing and Disability Department to seek further advice and to update the action plan.



- If no alternative strategies can be identified and Samaritans remains unable to meet the persons needs, the Ethics Committee reviews the actions taken and agrees that the Disability Services Manager advise Ageing and Disability Department of their intention to exit the person from the service.
- People exiting Samaritans services are provided with the opportunity to discuss their satisfaction with the services they have received with the Coordinator of the service or other relevant personnel.

1.2.6 References

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 Schedule 5
NSW Occupational Health & Safety Act 1983
Community Services (Complaints, Appeals and Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW)
NSW Disability Services Act 1993 - Objects 3 (a), Principles 1 (b, d, g & h),
Applications of Principles 2 (d, l, k & n)
NSW Disability Services Standards Standard 1
Ageing and Disability Department Policy and Guidelines -
A Positive Approach to Challenging Behaviours
Samaritans Disability Services Policies and Standards -
Entry
Ethics Committee
Exit Procedures for each Service
Behavioural Intervention and Support

1.2.7 Person Responsible

It is the responsibility of the Disability Services Manager to:

- follow the procedure for exiting a person from the service
- liaise with other involved agencies to promote service outcomes to people with disabilities
- advise the Ethics Committee and Director Client Services of actions

It is the responsibility of the Director Client Services to:

- monitor the actions of the Disability Services Manager
- communicate final decisions to the Chief Executive Officer and the Ageing and Disability Department

1.2.8 Implementation and Evaluation

All decisions, strategies and referrals are made within the individual support planning process. All actions follow the guidelines from the Ageing and Disability Department, *A Positive Approach to Challenging Behaviours*.

1.2.9 Documentation

Contact with other agencies is documented in the Individual File. Decisions about referral to other agencies are documented in the Individual Support Plan and Lifestyle and Environment Plan.

Standard 1.3

SERVICE PROMOTION AND AVAILABILITY

1.3.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to guide and instruct Samaritans on its role in promoting its services to people with disabilities.

1.3.2 Definitions

Promotion: advertising the availability of services to the widest number of potential service users including people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Availability: access and vacancies in the service.

1.3.3 Principles

Samaritans recognises its obligation to provide information on the services it provides to a wide range of people potentially seeking to join the service.

1.3.4 Policy

Samaritans actively seeks opportunities to promote the availability of services it provides, using a variety of media. Emphasis is given, for ease of understanding, to making information available in a range of formats suitable to the variety of needs of the target audience. Samaritans understands and acts on its legal obligation under Anti-Discrimination legislation to promote services and extend availability to people from other cultures and non-English speaking backgrounds.

1.3.5 Procedures

- Samaritans Director Client Services, Disability Services Managers and Coordinators promote the availability of services in a variety of ways including:
 - a) promptly responding to enquiries and referrals
 - b) distributing service information and, where available, service brochures to public facilities and community notice boards
 - c) liaison with community services, community groups, local schools, Expos and related forums.

Samaritans Director Client Services, Disability Services Managers and Coordinators advertise the availability and selection criteria of vacancies in a variety of ways, to ensure the best possible selection, which may include:

- a) advertisements in the local paper and community radio
 - b) advice to placement agencies, such as Department of Community Services
 - c) advice to support organisations for people with disabilities.
- Promotional material is made available in a variety of formats appropriate to the wide variety of people who may use the service. This includes pictorial representations and where possible audiotapes. It is translated into local community languages as required to meet community needs.
 - Samaritans Disability Services Managers regularly provide information to local disability workers and organisations about the service.
 - Samaritans Disability Services Managers regularly provide information to community organisations including Lions, Apex, church groups, parent groups, Aboriginal and ethnic support groups.
 - In the event of services being unavailable, the reasons are clearly explained.
 - Any promotion in the newspapers or any other media is to be approved by the Director Client Services.
 - Samaritans promotes the abilities of people using the service when assisting them to interact with and participate in the wider community.

1.3.6 References

Disability Services Act 1993 - Applications of Principles 2 (e) & 2 (i)

Disability Services Standards - Standard 1

Samaritans Disability Services Policies and Standards

Entry

1.3.7 Person Responsible

It is the responsibility of the support worker and key worker to:

- promote the abilities of people using the service when assisting them to interact with the wider community.

It is the responsibility of the Coordinator to:

- respond promptly to service enquiries.

It is the responsibility of Disability Services Managers and the Director Client Services to:

- be involved in promotional opportunities
- ensure information is available in appropriate formats
- utilise a variety of medium to promote the service.

1.3.8 Implementation and Evaluation

Promotional strategies are identified in the services Strategic Plan and reviewed annually.

1.3.9 Documentation

The Strategic Plan records promotional strategies. Promotional events attended are recorded in Programme and Regional Management meeting minutes.



Standard 1.4

TRANSITION PLANNING

1.4.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to guide and instruct Samaritans on its role in promoting its services to people with disabilities.

1.4.2 Definitions

Transition: the process of preparation and planning to assist a person with disabilities move from one choice of service to another or from one life stage to another.

Planning: a written plan of action outlining the steps to be taken to achieve an outcome.

1.4.3 Principles

Samaritans recognises the aim of transition is to minimise the impact of the changes on a person with a disability. Samaritans recognises that planning provides a significant method to minimise the impact of such change.

1.4.4 Policy

Samaritans promotes the opportunity for people to join the service or move within the service in a planned and monitored way. Samaritans promotes planning and monitoring through transition plans to maximise the benefits a person can gain from the new environment.

1.4.5 Procedures

- Once a person has been offered a placement, with a three month trial, in a Samaritans service, the transition process is planned. The planning involves the person, their family or guardian, existing services provider(s) and the Coordinator.
- The Coordinator allocates a transition worker to the person. In many cases, the transition worker is the preliminary key worker, who is a member of the staff of the service. A contact person is requested from the environment that the person is leaving, who is responsible for handing over information and developing the transition plan.
- An assessment is conducted of the person and their current environment. This forms the basis of the plan.
- The Assessment reviews the following:
 - a) current living situation and day time activities
 - b) current routine and activities
 - c) programmes
 - d) current skills
 - e) identified areas for development
 - f) current individual support plan
 - g) likes or dislikes
 - h) current assessments.
- The transition worker gathers identified personal information and prepares an individual file for that person.
- The transition worker observes the person in their current environment to learn about the person's routine and to identify ways of working with them.
- A transition meeting is held to established contact with the person, the contact person, family member, guardian or advocate, the Coordinator and any significant others.
- The transition plan is developed. This plan follows the individual support plan format. This plan is reviewed monthly for the first three months.
- The plan also includes the process of introduction of the person into the new environment. This introduction process is based on the individual needs of the person.



- The transition plan clearly identifies the time frame for introduction to the service (this may vary according to the compatibility with others using the service), the programmes and activities to be maintained, review times and those responsible for ensuring that the plan is carried out. This information is documented on the individual support plan contract forms.
- Staff members are made familiar with the likes and dislikes, programmes, activities of the person and relevant procedures prior to the commencement of the transition process.
- Once the transition process is complete the individual support planning process is activated and followed through. A key worker is appointed. The skills assessment is not repeated unless there are clear inconsistencies between what was previously identified as required for the person and what is observed by staff.
- Subsequent meetings may be held to develop or review the transition process.
- During the first three months of transition it is important to minimise the changes into a person's routine. Where possible, new skill development programmes or unnecessary pressure are not placed on the person in the new environment.



1.4.6 References

Disability Services Act 1993, Applications of Principles 2 (c, d, k)

Disability Services Standards - Standard 1 & 2

Samaritans Disability Services Policies and Standards

Entry

Individual Support Planning and Review

1.4.7 Person Responsible

It is the responsibility of the transition worker to:

- be involved in the development of the plan
- support the person through the achievement of the strategies outlined in the plan
- be involved in the reviews of the plan.

It is the responsibility of the Coordinator to:

- appoint a transition worker
- be involved in the development of the transition plan
- review the progress towards achieving the plan
- appoint a key worker once the transition process has been successfully completed.

1.4.8 Implementation and Evaluation

Transition plans are developed at the commencement of the transition phase and are reviewed monthly for three months.

1.4.9 Documentation

Transition plan is written.