
RED HEN SPEECH PATHOLOGY PRIORITISATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the key considerations given in regards to prioritisation of clients on the waitlist for Speech Pathology services. This framework assists Red Hen Speech Pathology to manage the workload in terms of response to referrals and allocation of resources.

Scope

This policy applies to all clients seeking services from Red Hen Speech Pathology.

Policy Statement

When demand for Speech Pathology services exceeds the capacity of Red Hen Speech Pathology clients may be placed on a waitlist for services. This is regrettable but necessary to ensure that clients are provided with good customer service, appropriate intensity of intervention, and high quality intervention. Furthermore, it aims to ensure that staff of Red Hen Speech Pathology have adequate time to prepare for appointments, complete indirect tasks such as documentation, and do not burn out.

It is important that clients understand that there are a number of areas taken into consideration when prioritising clients on the waitlist. As a result, services may not be offered on a first-comes first-served basis.

Prioritisation will give consideration to the following factors:

Clinical Risk

The nature and severity of the concern, prognosis, the age or time since onset, and the impact on the client's health, well-being and participation are all taken into consideration. Consideration is also given as to whether there are any anticipated changes such as plan review dates, transition to school, post-school options, change in residence or accommodation provider.

Location

As a mobile therapy provider, Red Hen Speech Pathology aims to coordinate appointments to minimise travel as much as possible. This increases the number of appointments that can be offered and reduces the cost of travel incurred by clients. As a result, appointments may be offered to a client who needs appointments in a particular geographical location because it is the best fit for the planned travel route for the therapist.

Availability for appointments

The clients' stated availability for appointments will be taken into consideration. Some clients may have a number of other demands on their time such as school or other therapy appointments which limits their availability. As a result, they may wait longer for a suitable

appointment time to become available. It is the responsibility of the client/guardian to ensure that Red Hen Speech Pathology is informed if there are changes to availability which may impact on appointment scheduling.

Service delivery model required

There are a range of different service delivery models which may be appropriate depending on the needs of the client. Different service delivery models place different demands on staff and the ability to provide that model of service may be limited by available resources. For some clients, it may be anticipated that the service required will be time limited. Service delivery models include:

- Assessment and report/guidelines
- Assessment and home program
- Assessment and report for the purposes of diagnosis or funding support application
- Individual therapy at home and/or school
- Individual community-based intervention
- Assistive technology trial and prescription
- Monitoring
- Consultative services
- Telehealth services
- Observations and staff/carer training in an educational setting, workplace or accommodation service
- Caregiver education

Intensity of supports required

Some clients require a very intensive level of support whilst others require a low level of intensity. Appointments may be offered to clients on the waitlist when it is anticipated that the appropriate level of intensity can be delivered.

Funding

Red Hen Speech Pathology seeks to maintain a balanced mix of clients with different funding sources. It is recognised that clients with NDIS funding are often engaged with therapy services for a longer period of time than clients who are paying privately, using private health insurance or CDMPs. As the number of clients with NDIS increases, there is increasing demand for services in the sector and many clients without NDIS plans have found themselves unable to access services. Red Hen Speech Pathology acknowledges the rights of all clients to access appropriate Speech Pathology intervention in a timely manner.

Access to alternative service providers

Provision of Speech Pathology services from two different services providers simultaneously is strongly discouraged unless there is clear delineation of roles that is agreed upon by both therapists.

Clinical area of need

Red Hen Speech Pathology offers services for clients across the lifespan. However, services are not offered for clients who are primarily seeking assessment and intervention for voice or fluency/stuttering. From time to time there may be other clients for whom a different service provider may be more appropriate due to lack of clinical expertise or resources. Red Hen Speech Pathology seeks to maintain a balanced mix of clients with different areas of clinical need. This is a conscious decision to ensure that a wide range of people can access appropriate support in their local community, whilst also ensuring that clinician skills are maintained.

Procedures

1. At the time of enquiry, all potential clients will be asked:
 - a. Age of client
 - b. Area of concern
 - c. History of intervention
 - d. Geographical location
 - e. Availability for appointments
2. Information about each waitlisted client will be maintained on the client management system – Cliniko.
3. Potential clients on the waitlist will not be automatically removed from the waitlist.
4. Potential clients on the waitlist will be contacted once per semester to confirm if they wish to remain on the waitlist, if their circumstances have changed, or if they have managed to obtain services elsewhere and can be removed from the list
5. When it is anticipated that an appointment time will become available, the Director will review the waitlist and identify potential clients who best fit the time available. The Director will contact the potential client/s in order of who has been waiting the longest via email or phone to offer them an appointment. If an email is sent, a request for a reply within a given timeframe will be made.
6. If an attempt has been made to contact a potential client on the waitlist and no response has been received within 7 days, another attempt will be made. If no response is received within 7 days of the second attempt, the individual will be removed from the waitlist.
7. If a potential client is concerned about the time they have spent on the waitlist, they are encouraged to contact Red Hen Speech Pathology to discuss their concerns and alternatives for intervention.
8. If a potential client is unhappy with the prioritisation or waitlist management, they may bring this to the attention of Red Hen Speech Pathology directly or via the Feedback form available on the website.

Related legislation, regulations and standards

Speech Pathology Australia Code of Ethics (2020)
[Code of Ethics 2020 \(speechpathologyaustralia.org.au\)](https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/code-of-ethics-2020)

UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\) | United Nations Enable](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/enable/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpdp)

Approvals

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