



myEmpowerPlan

NDIS SUPPORT SPECIALISTS



Access to Services Policy

Version 1.0 | March 2026

Introduction

myEmpowerPlan is committed to ensuring that every person who seeks our services has a fair, respectful and transparent experience from the very first contact. Access to services should never be a barrier — it should be the beginning of a supportive and empowering relationship.

This policy establishes how *myEmpowerPlan* manages enquiries, referrals, eligibility assessments, service agreements, waiting lists and decisions to accept or decline services across Support Coordination, Specialist Support Coordination and Plan Management. It ensures that access decisions are consistent, documented, non-discriminatory and clearly communicated to participants and referrers.

This policy applies to all direct participant enquiries, referrals from external providers, referrals from the NDIA, internal transfers between service types, and any other pathway through which a person seeks to access *myEmpowerPlan*'s services.

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Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all *myEmpowerPlan* staff, contractors and volunteers involved in receiving enquiries, conducting intake assessments, developing service agreements or managing waiting lists. It covers all stages of the access process from first contact through to service commencement or a decision not to proceed.

This policy is read in conjunction with the Privacy Policy (which governs the collection of personal information during intake), the Privacy and Dignity Policy (which governs how participants are treated throughout the process), and the Conflict of Interest Management Policy (which governs how conflicts are identified and managed at intake).

Principles of Access

All access decisions and intake processes at *myEmpowerPlan* are guided by the following principles:

Equity Access decisions are made consistently and without discrimination. All enquiries are treated with equal respect regardless of the participant's background, disability type, communication needs or personal characteristics.

Transparency Participants and referrers are given clear, honest information about what services *myEmpowerPlan* offers, what the eligibility requirements are, and what limitations or waiting periods may apply — before intake is completed.

Participant-led Participants direct their own intake process wherever possible. Information is provided in a format and at a pace that enables informed decision-making. No decision is made on behalf of a participant without appropriate consent.

Safety first *myEmpowerPlan* will only accept referrals where services can be delivered safely, competently and within

the organisation's registration scope. The safety of the participant is the primary consideration in all access decisions.

Non-discrimination Access decisions are never based on a participant's disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, cultural background, language, family structure or any other personal characteristic unrelated to service suitability.

Timely response Enquiries and referrals are responded to promptly. Participants and referrers are kept informed of the status of their request at every stage of the intake process.

Accessible The intake process is designed to be accessible to all. Reasonable adjustments, alternative formats and communication supports are available to any participant who needs them, at no additional cost.

Eligibility and Suitability

Before accepting a referral, *myEmpowerPlan* assesses both eligibility and suitability. Eligibility refers to whether the participant has the relevant NDIS funding. Suitability refers to whether *myEmpowerPlan* is the right provider for that participant at that time.

Service Type	Eligibility Criteria	Suitability Considerations
Support Coordination	Participant holds a current NDIS plan with Support Coordination funding in the Capacity Building budget. The support coordination service type is listed in the participant's plan.	<i>myEmpowerPlan</i> 's capacity to take on additional participants. Geographic location and ability to deliver services effectively. The participant's goals and whether SC aligns with their current needs. Absence of an unmanageable conflict of interest.
Specialist Support Coordination	Participant holds a current NDIS plan with Specialist Support Coordination funding. The plan reflects	Staff competency and qualifications for the level of complexity presented. Availability of a suitably qualified SSC staff member. Risk level and whether <i>myEmpowerPlan</i> can safely manage the participant's needs.

	complexity, risk or instability requiring a higher level of coordination expertise.	Presence or absence of crisis planning requirements.
Plan Management	Participant holds a current NDIS plan with Plan Management funding in the Improved Life Choices budget. The participant has chosen plan management as their funding management type.	myEmpowerPlan's capacity to onboard new participants. The participant's understanding of plan management and willingness to engage with reporting. Absence of conflicts of interest with providers in the participant's plan.

Where a participant meets eligibility criteria but suitability concerns exist, the Operations Manager must assess whether those concerns can be addressed through risk management, staff allocation or other mitigation strategies before a decision to decline is made. Every reasonable effort should be made to find a pathway to service before declining.

Intake Process

Step 1 — Initial Enquiry or Referral

When an enquiry or referral is received — by phone, email, website, referral form or in person — the receiving staff member must:

- Acknowledge receipt within 2 business days
- Provide clear, plain-language information about the services myEmpowerPlan offers, the eligibility requirements and any relevant limitations or waiting periods
- Ask whether the person needs any communication supports, accessibility adjustments or an interpreter — and arrange these before proceeding
- Obtain consent before collecting any personal information, in accordance with the Privacy Policy

- If the enquiry is clearly outside *myEmpowerPlan*'s scope, advise the person promptly and where possible provide information about alternative providers
- Log the enquiry in the intake register on the same day

Step 2 — Eligibility and Suitability Assessment

The Operations Manager or relevant service lead conducts an eligibility and suitability assessment within 5 business days of the initial enquiry. The assessment considers all factors set out in Section 4, including:

- The participant's current NDIS plan, funding categories and plan dates
- The service type requested and whether it is within *myEmpowerPlan*'s registration scope
- *myEmpowerPlan*'s current capacity to take on additional participants in the relevant service type
- Geographic location and ability to deliver services effectively
- Any risk considerations that may affect safe service delivery
- Any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest — assessed in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Management Policy
- For SSC referrals — the complexity and risk profile of the participant's situation and whether *myEmpowerPlan* has a suitably qualified staff member available.

The assessment outcome must be documented with clear reasons before any decision is communicated to the participant or referrer.

Step 3 — Decision and Communication

Following the assessment, the Operations Manager communicates the decision to the participant or referrer within 5 business days of the assessment being completed. All communication must be:

- Clear, respectful and in plain language
- Provided in an accessible format if required
- Documented in the intake register

Where the decision is to accept, the participant is informed of the next steps and the expected service commencement date. Where the decision is to decline or place on a waiting list, the participant is provided with a clear explanation and, where appropriate, information about alternative providers.

Step 4 — Service Agreement

Where a participant is accepted, a Service Agreement is developed before services commence. The Service Agreement must:

- Clearly describe the scope of services to be delivered, including specific supports funded
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of both *myEmpowerPlan* and the participant
- State the agreed service commencement date
- Include the fee schedule and billing arrangements (for Plan Management)
- Reference the participant's right to make a complaint and how to do so
- Reference the participant's right to exit services at any time

Participants must be given adequate time to review the Service Agreement before signing. They must be encouraged to ask questions and may have a support person or advocate present. Consent processes are conducted in accordance with the Privacy and Dignity Policy.

Service commencement dates are agreed collaboratively and must not be imposed on the participant.

Declining or Deferring a Service

This section describes how person-centred practice is implemented in daily operations at *myEmpowerPlan*.

myEmpowerPlan may decline or defer a service request only on the grounds set out below. Decisions to decline are never based on personal characteristics. Every decision to decline must be documented with clear reasons and communicated respectfully.

Capacity exceeded	<i>myEmpowerPlan</i> does not have sufficient staff capacity to safely take on additional participants in the relevant service type at the time of the referral.
Outside registration scope	The service requested is not within <i>myEmpowerPlan</i> 's current NDIS registration scope.

Outside geographic service area	The participant is located outside the area in which <i>myEmpowerPlan</i> can safely and effectively deliver services.
Risk cannot be safely managed	The level or nature of risk presented by the participant's situation exceeds <i>myEmpowerPlan</i> 's current capability to manage safely, and appropriate mitigation is not possible.
Conflict of interest cannot be mitigated	A conflict of interest exists that cannot be appropriately managed, and acceptance of the referral would compromise the participant's interests or <i>myEmpowerPlan</i> 's integrity.
Service type mismatch	The participant's needs or NDIS plan funding do not align with the service types <i>myEmpowerPlan</i> delivers.
Funding not available	The participant does not have the relevant NDIS funding in their current plan for the service being requested.

Where a service is declined, *myEmpowerPlan* must:

- Communicate the decision in plain language within 5 business days of the assessment
- Provide a clear, honest explanation of the reason
- Offer information about alternative providers where possible
- Advise the participant of their right to make a complaint about the decision
- Document the decision and reasons in the intake register

A participant who believes a decision to decline was unfair or discriminatory has the right to make a complaint in accordance with the Complaints Management Policy and to contact the NDIS Commission directly.

Waiting List Management

Where demand for a service type exceeds *myEmpowerPlan*'s current capacity, participants may be placed on a waiting list. Waiting lists are managed transparently and in accordance with the following principles:

- Waiting list placement is offered at the time the capacity constraint is identified — not retrospectively
- The participant is informed of their approximate position and an estimated timeframe at the time of placement
- Waiting lists are reviewed monthly by the Operations Manager

- Participants are notified of any significant change to their estimated timeframe within 5 business days of the change being identified
- Participants are notified as soon as capacity becomes available

Waiting List Prioritisation

Where prioritisation of the waiting list is necessary, decisions are based on:

- Urgency of participant need — particularly where the participant has limited or no alternative support in place
- Safeguarding risk — participants with identified safety concerns are prioritised
- Continuity of support — participants transitioning from another provider are given consideration to minimise service gaps

Prioritisation decisions must never be based on personal characteristics, referral source or organisational convenience. All prioritisation decisions must be documented with reasons.

Participants on the Waiting List

While on the waiting list, participants are not yet receiving services from myEmpowerPlan. myEmpowerPlan has no obligation to deliver active support during this period. However, staff must:

- Provide the participant with information about alternative providers if the waiting period is likely to be lengthy
- Escalate immediately if a participant on the waiting list discloses a safeguarding concern or urgent support need — in accordance with the Incident Management Policy and Risk Management Policy v2.0
- Not use the waiting list as a mechanism to delay or avoid accepting a referral that the organisation should accept

Urgent and High Risk Referrals

Where an enquiry or referral involves an urgent safeguarding concern, a participant in crisis, or a situation presenting immediate risk of harm, the normal intake timeframes do not apply. The receiving staff member must:

- Escalate to the Operations Manager and Director on the same day
- Assess whether emergency services or the NDIS Commission need to be contacted

- Refer to the Incident Management Policy and Risk Management Policy v2.0 for escalation obligations
- Document the referral and all actions taken in the intake register

Where *myEmpowerPlan* is unable to accept an urgent referral, the Operations Manager must assist in identifying an alternative provider or support pathway as a matter of priority. *myEmpowerPlan* will not leave a person in immediate risk without at least attempting to connect them with appropriate support.

Accessible and Culturally Safe Intake

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

myEmpowerPlan is committed to ensuring the intake process is accessible to every participant regardless of communication needs, disability type or language background. The following adjustments and supports are available at no cost to the participant:

Plain language versions of documents	Service agreements, information sheets and key documents can be provided in simplified plain language on request.
Large print	All written materials can be provided in large print format on request.
Audio format	Key information can be communicated verbally or provided in audio format where required.
Interpreter services	<i>myEmpowerPlan</i> will arrange a qualified interpreter for participants whose preferred language is not English. This is provided at no cost to the participant.
Alternative communication formats	Where a participant uses AAC, signing, visual supports or other communication methods, intake processes will be adapted to accommodate this.
Support person or advocate	Participants may have a family member, carer, advocate or other support person present at any stage of the intake process.

Flexible meeting formats

Intake meetings can be conducted in person, by phone, by video call or in writing — whichever is most accessible for the participant.

Accessible locations

Where face-to-face meetings are required, myEmpowerPlan will ensure the meeting location is accessible to the participant.

Easy Read

Easy Read versions of key participant information are available on request. Refer to the Participant Information Pack.

Staff must proactively ask at first contact whether the participant needs any adjustments or supports. It is not the participant's responsibility to ask. Any adjustments must be documented in the intake record.

Culturally Safe Intake

myEmpowerPlan recognises that the intake process can feel intimidating or unfamiliar for participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants who may have had negative experiences with service systems. To ensure culturally safe intake, myEmpowerPlan commits to:

- Taking time to understand each participant's cultural context, communication preferences and decision-making processes before proceeding with intake
- Never making assumptions about a participant's preferences, family structure or support needs based on cultural background
- Arranging culturally appropriate interpreter services where required
- Allowing additional time for intake processes where cultural considerations require it
- Offering to involve a cultural support worker or community liaison where this would assist the participant
- Being responsive to feedback from participants about the cultural safety of the intake process

Non-Discrimination

myEmpowerPlan does not discriminate in access to services on the basis of any protected attribute. This includes but is not limited to:

- Disability type, severity or complexity

- Age
- Gender identity or expression
- Sexual orientation or intersex status
- Race, ethnicity, cultural background or national origin
- Religion or spiritual beliefs
- Language
- Marital or family status
- Political opinion
- Socioeconomic status

Any staff member who makes an access decision based on a protected attribute rather than legitimate service suitability or capacity grounds will be subject to disciplinary action. Any participant who believes they have experienced discrimination in the access process has the right to make a complaint in accordance with the Complaints Management Policy v3.0 and to contact the NDIS Commission or the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Key Timeframes

The following timeframes are mandatory. Failure to meet these timeframes without documented justification is a non-conformance under the NDIS Practice Standards.

Action	Timeframe	Responsible
Acknowledge receipt of enquiry or referral	Within 2 business days	Receiving staff member
Respond to enquiry with service information	Within 2 business days	Receiving staff member
Complete eligibility and suitability assessment	Within 5 business days	Operations Manager / relevant service lead
Communicate acceptance or decline decision	Within 5 business days of assessment completion	Operations Manager
Provide waiting list position and estimate	At time of placement on waiting list	Operations Manager
Review waiting list	Monthly	Operations Manager

Notify participant of waiting list progress	Monthly or on change	Operations Manager
Complete service agreement	Before service commencement	Relevant staff member + participant
Respond to urgent or high-risk referral	Same business day	Operations Manager + Director

Documentations and Record Keeping

All intake activity must be documented in the intake register, regardless of outcome. Records must be maintained for a minimum of 7 years. The intake register must capture:

- Date of enquiry or referral and the source
- Participant name and contact details
- Service type requested
- Outcome of eligibility and suitability assessment, with reasons
- Decision made and date communicated
- Whether alternative provider information was provided on decline
- Waiting list position and estimated timeframe if placed on waiting list
- Any communication adjustments or supports arranged
- Conflict of interest disclosures
- Date of service agreement and commencement date

Documentation must be factual, objective and sufficient to demonstrate that decisions were made consistently, fairly and in accordance with this policy. Intake records must be available to the NDIS Commission upon request.

Continuous Improvement

The Operations Manager reviews intake trends quarterly as part of *myEmpowerPlan's* continuous improvement framework. Reviews consider:

- Volume and source of enquiries and referrals
- Acceptance and decline rates by service type
- Waiting list length and average wait times
- Patterns in reasons for declining — to identify whether capacity planning or registration scope adjustments are needed

- Participant feedback about the intake experience
- Any complaints received about access decisions

Where patterns of exclusion, inequity or service limitation are identified, the Operations Manager must raise these with the Director and generate a Continuous Improvement item in the CI Register in accordance with the Continuous Improvement Policy. Access data is also used to inform annual workforce planning.

Legal and Regulatory Requirements

NDIS Practice Standards — Core Module, Standard 1.1: Rights and Responsibilities	Requires providers to ensure participants can access services in a way that upholds their rights, including access to information, consent processes and freedom from discrimination.
NDIS Practice Standards — Core Module, Standard 3.1: Access to Supports	Requires providers to have a transparent, fair and documented process for determining eligibility and accepting or declining referrals. Decisions must be based on participant needs and organisational capacity — not on personal characteristics.
NDIS Act 2013	Establishes participant rights to reasonable and necessary supports, choice and control, and access to services that meet their needs.
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)	Prohibits unfair treatment of people with disability in the provision of services. Access decisions must never disadvantage a person on the basis of their disability.
Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)	Prohibits discrimination in service access on the basis of age.
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)	Prohibits discrimination in service access on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity or national origin.
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)	Prohibits discrimination in service access on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex status, marital status or family responsibilities.
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) & Australian Privacy Principles	Governs the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information collected during the intake process. Consent must be obtained before collecting personal information.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued compliance with all applicable legislation and NDIS Practice Standards. Any breach of this policy will be addressed in accordance with the organisation's disciplinary procedures. The Director holds ultimate accountability for ensuring this policy is implemented effectively.



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Written By: Erin Hall