

1.0 PURPOSE

Autism Queensland (AQ) commits to providing the best possible services and supports to clients and their families within funding and resources available, and with respect to the safety and well-being of all stakeholders. Autism Queensland also acknowledges that at times, the difficult decision to cease or withdraw providing services to a client may need to be made, and AQ reserves the right to so at its sole discretion.

The purpose of this document is to ensure AQ has a fair, clear and effective process to cease providing services to clients where it has been identified that discontinuation or suspension of service is required.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to any person who accesses services provided by Autism Queensland, their family members and other support personnel, as well as all employees of Autism Queensland.

A reference to “employees” includes permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual employees, directors, contractors, volunteers and other representatives acting on behalf of Autism Queensland in any capacity.

3.0 POLICY

Autism Queensland reserves the right to discontinue or suspend service provision if, in its sole opinion, it wishes to do so, but particularly when the following circumstances have occurred.

- A client or, if the client lacks decision making capacity, the client's legal guardian or attorney appointed under a power of attorney or plan nominee appointed for the purposes of the NDIS or, in the absence of those individuals, an informal supporter or independent advocate¹ (Decision Maker), has demonstrated they no longer believe AQ is the right service for them, or AQ is unable to meet their needs.
- Autism Queensland, after applying all reasonable risk assessment and management strategies in collaboration with the client or the client's Decision Maker (where relevant), is unable to ensure the safety and well-being of clients and/or employees.
- Autism Queensland, after assessing the needs of the client and applying all reasonable risk assessment and management strategies, determines it is unable to meet the needs of the client.
- The client has consistently failed to pay fees on time or follow fee collection procedures and opportunities.
- There has been unacceptable abuse, aggression or violence towards other clients or employees including psychological, physical or sexual abuse.
- There has been unacceptable discrimination towards other clients or employees.
- Autism Queensland believes the service is no longer able to meet the needs of the client.
- Autism Queensland's complaints and resolution process has been exhausted and no tenable resolution has been reached.
- Autism Queensland has become aware of criminal activity by a client or family/legal guardian that could adversely impact on AQ, its clients or employees.
- A client and/or the client's Decision Maker has demonstrated they are unwilling to address areas of concern and/or has failed to cooperate with AQ processes.

¹ See the NDIS decision-making flowchart issued by the Office of the Public Advocate

4.0 PRINCIPLES

Autism Queensland will ensure:

- all other options have been exhausted prior to making a decision relating to discontinuation or suspension of services;
- the client is provided with the necessary information and explanation in appropriate communication formats in relation to the discontinuation or suspension of services from AQ; and
- the client or the client's Decision Maker has been given notice of the discontinuation or suspension of services which is reasonable in the circumstances.

5.0 PROCEDURE

Autism Queensland will:

- ensure the decision for discontinuation or suspension of a service is made by the Executive Manager responsible for the service or department;
- document actions undertaken to attempt to ensure AQ could continue to provide services to the client and avoid discontinuation of services, and the circumstances which have led to AQ's decision to discontinue the services;
- provide documentation and communication to the client in an appropriate format to ensure, as far as is possible, that there is understanding of AQ's process and rationale for decisions made regarding service provision;
- provide support on where and how to source information about other potentially relevant services outside AQ, if available or known;
- engage in a planned and coordinated transition to another provider to a reasonable level or to the extent of available funding;
- make AQ's complaint process available and clear including how to lodge a complaint with the appropriate government body;
- in communications with clients, use its best endeavours to use communication modes, language, and terms that the client and/or their Decision Maker can understand.

6.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation and Regulations

Australian Consumer Law (as part of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth))

Disability Discrimination and Other Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2009 (Cth)

Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)

Disability Services Regulation 2017 (Qld)

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)

Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)

Standards and Principles

Australian Privacy Principles

NDIS Practice Standards

NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework

DISCONTINUATION OR SUSPENSION OF SERVICES POLICY & PROCEDURE



Autism Queensland Quality Assurance

- AQ NDIS Service Agreement Policy
- Cancellations and No-Show Policy & Procedure
- Client Consent Form
- Client Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Client Individual Planning Policy
- Clients' Rights Policy
- Complaints Management Policy

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