

1.0 PURPOSE

Autism Queensland (AQ) understands there are times when planned sessions cannot go ahead. Costs are incurred by AQ regardless of whether a client attends a session. This policy aims to minimise the negative effect on AQ and its clients when a session is cancelled.

2.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all clients who access services provided by AQ, except the AQ school, training and consultancy.

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

3.0 POLICY

AQ aims to balance customer and organisational financial interests in relation to cancellations and no-shows, and to make all reasonable attempts to safeguard customers who no-show. This Policy reflects requirements of the relevant government agencies that fund services clients purchase from AQ (e.g. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Terms of Business for Registered Providers and the most current NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits, or other).

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Adequate Notice Cancellation

Cancellation with more than two (2) business days’ notice, except where the supports are NDIS-funded *Supported Independent Living (SIL)* or under an NDIS *Program of Support arrangement*.

4.2 Business Day

Monday to Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm, excluding public holidays.

4.3 Client

Client refers to the client or client representative, unless otherwise stated.

4.4 No-Show

Non-attendance for scheduled delivery of supports without notice or within a reasonable time. This includes not being present at an agreed place (e.g. the client’s home) within a reasonable time and failure to attend an online session.

4.5 NDIS Program of Support

Group services or packages of support that include group-based supports, delivered under an NDIS Program of Support agreement to assist clients to achieve specific goals. These are scheduled in blocks of up to six (6) months. Clients must provide two (2) weeks’ notice to cancel a Program of Support, otherwise will be charged 100% of the scheduled fee for non-attendance at individual sessions.

4.6 Short Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of the scheduled delivery of supports with less than two (2) business days’ notice, except where the supports are *SIL*.

Failure of an online session to go ahead due to technical difficulties at the client’s end, and which are not due to any fault of AQ, is considered a Short Notice Cancellation.

4.7 Supported Independent Living (SIL) Adequate Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of SIL supports with more than sixteen (16) weeks (112 days') notice.

4.8 Supported Independent Living (SIL) Short Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of SIL supports with less than sixteen (16) weeks' notice.

4.9 Supported Independent Living (SIL) Unplanned Exit Payment

Under limited circumstances as defined by the NDIA, a payment made from an NDIS participant's plan where the participant no longer occupies the SIL residence.

4.10 Supported Independent Living (SIL) Transition Period Payment

Where there is a change in support needs which causes a material change to a SIL NDIS participant's plan and impacts the amount, frequency, intensity and or ratios of support delivered, we will support this transition by providing a minimum period of twelve (12) weeks to move to the new support arrangements.

5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 Communication

AQ's Cancellation and No-Show Policy and Procedure is available on the AQ [website](#) and is provided to all clients prior to services being delivered.

To cancel an appointment, clients can contact the office of the appropriate AQ centre within business hours. Alternatively, clients may leave a message if contacting over a weekend or public holiday. However, our policy regarding business day requirements still apply.

Please note: for services where an SMS reminder is sent prior to the appointment, the reminder is a courtesy only. Failure to receive the SMS reminder is not accepted as reason to not attend an appointment.

5.2 Cancellation Fees

5.2.1 Where AQ cancels as the service provider, no charge is made to either the client or to the NDIS.

5.2.2 Where the participant cancels with adequate notice, face-to-face charges will not apply; however, where non-face-to-face supports have been undertaken in preparation for the session, charges will apply ([4.1 Adequate Notice Cancellation](#)).

5.2.3 Where the participant cancels with short notice ([4.6 Short Notice Cancellation](#)) or fails to show ([4.4 No-Show](#)), AQ will charge 100% of the scheduled fee which may include non-face-to-face supports which may have been undertaken in preparation for the session and/or travel time that was allocated.

5.2.4 A cancellation fee will only be charged if AQ is unable to find alternative billable work for the relevant worker for the time that would have been spent providing the cancelled support.

5.2.5 Clients paying under an NDIS Program of Support arrangement ([4.5 NDIS Program of Support](#)) are not subject to short-notice cancellation ([4.6 Short Notice Cancellation](#)) for individual sessions and will be charged when the client does not attend regardless of how much notice was provided.

5.2.6 Where a client who is paying under an NDIS Program of Support arrangement ([4.5 NDIS Program of Support](#)) has given the appropriate notice of their intention to exit the Program of Support, AQ will charge 100% of the scheduled fee for sessions taking place during the 2-week notice period. No charges will be made for sessions after those taking place during the required 2-week notice period.

5.2.7 A cancellation fee of up to 100% will be charged for SIL Short Notice Cancellations (see [4.8 SIL Short Notice Cancellation](#)) for a maximum period of 16 weeks or until the vacancy is filled if this time is shorter following written notification by the client, unless otherwise agreed in writing between the client and AQ.

5.2.8 A cancellation fee for SIL Short Notice Cancellations will not apply for any periods covered by SIL Unplanned Exit (*4.9 SIL Unplanned Exit Payment*) or SIL Transition Period Payments (*4.10 SIL Transition Period Payment*).

5.2.9 Where the client is using NDIS funding to pay for the service and the NDIA does not permit charges against the NDIS plan, the customer may be personally charged as per 5.2.1 to 5.2.4 above.

5.3 Safeguarding and No-Shows

In the event of a no-show, the employee scheduled to support the client will make every attempt to contact the client to determine if there are any special circumstances or safety concerns for the client:

- telephone the client to check on their safety (if appropriate to do so);
- if unable to contact the client, telephone the client's nominated emergency contact person;
- if unable to contact the client's nominated emergency contact, inform the relevant AQ Team Leader and seek direction on next steps.

The Team Leader will:

- assess and determine the next steps including whether to persist with contacting the client, their emergency contact person or other authorities having regard to what is known about the client, their behaviours and risks; and
- make a decision regarding the client's next appointment (if relevant), including sending a reminder SMS and/or telephone call.

When clients are unable to participate in an online session due to technical difficulties at their end, they will contact either the employee scheduled to support them or the relevant AQ centre with this information to ensure that the AQ employee does not initiate the required safeguarding procedure (see *5.3 Safeguarding and No-Shows*).

5.4 Suspension of Services

Some clients/carers may wish to request a temporary suspension of service delivery (for example, due to going away on holiday, accessing another service).

The client/carer may wish for their place to be held for them until they return. AQ is unable to hold a placement without payment. If the client/carer wishes the place to be held open until their return, the client must pay the service fee during the period of absence. Clients paying for services with NDIS funding cannot use that funding to pay for time periods in excess of what is laid out in Notice Periods above.

If the client/carer chooses not to pay for that position, the place will be offered to the next client on the waiting list for that service.

If the client chooses not to pay for that position and it is still available on the client's return, they will be restored to that service.

If the position has been filled, the client's name will be placed on the waiting list for that service and a place offered when available. The services that this applies to will each have specific arrangements and requirements in place, which will be discussed with the participant and/or family at the time of notification of the ongoing absence.

Continued consecutive absences, regardless of length of notice given, will be considered as subject to suspension of services (refer to the *Discontinuation or Suspension of Services Policy & Procedure*). The placement in the current service will be discontinued and the relevant AQ staff member will contact the client/carer to discuss what services may be more appropriate at this time and/or how else AQ can be of assistance.

6.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

Competition and Consumer Act 2010
National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Standards and Principles

Australian Privacy Principles
 NDIS Code of Conduct
 NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

NDIS Modules and Practice Standards

Core 2: Governance and Operational Management

- 11 Governance and Operational Management
- 18 Continuity of Supports

Core 3: Provision of Supports

- 19 Access to Supports
- 21 Service Agreement with Participants

External

NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits
 NDIS Support Catalogue

Internal

AQ Service Agreements
 Service Enrolment Forms
 Discontinuation or Suspension of Services Policy & Procedure

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