



Australian Government



Contacts Guidelines

V 1.3

Disclaimer

This document is not a stand-alone document and does not contain the entirety of Disability Employment Services Providers' obligations. It should be read in conjunction with the Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement and any relevant guidelines or reference material issued by the Department of Social Services under or in connection with the Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement.

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Contacts Guidelines

Document Change History

| Version | Effective Date | End Date | Change & Location |
|---------|----------------|-------------|--|
| 1.3 | 1 Jul 2022 | | Included processes for recording the result of Contacts where it is not possible to record the result on the day of the Contact (p.8-9) Noted that face-to-face Contact requirements have been relaxed in response to COVID-19 (p.6). |
| 1.2 | 3 Dec 2018 | 30 Jun 2022 | Amended the term Electronic Diary to Electronic Calendar as per Direction No: 2. Updated Targeted Compliance Framework Guidelines name to Targeted Compliance Framework: Mutual Obligation Failures Guidelines. Updated to include the location in ESSWeb to record the Participant's preferred mode of contact. |
| 1.1 | 10 Sep 2018 | 2 Dec 2018 | Updated DES Grant Agreement clause references throughout (from Departmental Direction No.1) Narrative: Clarification that face to face contacts do not have to be solely conducted at a Provider's site location. (P.7) |
| 1.0 | 1 Jul 2018 | 9 Sep 2018 | Original version of document |

Background

This Guideline outlines DES Provider's responsibilities and required actions when conducting and recording Appointments for Contacts with Participants eligible for DES.

Contacts will be used to deliver required services and interventions throughout a Participant's Period of Service, and during Ongoing Support. Contact types may include:

- an Initial Interview to outline the services the DES Provider will deliver and the type of activities the Participant may undertake;
- scheduled Contacts during Employment Assistance, Extended Employment Assistance and Work Assist Services;
- Contacts as required during Post Placement Support; and
- scheduled Contacts during Ongoing Support.

The minimum Contacts requirements for Period of Service and Ongoing Support are set out in *Attachment A*. The Contacts requirements for Ongoing Support are detailed in the *Ongoing Support Guidelines*.

Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement Clauses:

Clause 91 – Appointment with Participants

Clause 92 – Initial Interview

Clause 93 – Contacts Services

Clause 95 – Assistance for Participants

Clause 120 – Change of Circumstances Reassessment during Period of Service

Clause 129 - Change of Circumstances Reassessment during Ongoing Support

Reference documents relevant to this Guideline:

Eligibility, Referral and Commencement Guidelines

Disability Employment Services Targeted Compliance Framework: Mutual Obligation Failures Guidelines
Service Fees Guidelines
Records Management Instructions Guidelines
Documentary Evidence Guidelines
Job Plan and Setting Mutual Obligation Requirements Guidelines
Direct Registration Guidelines

Explanatory Note:

All capitalised terms have the same meaning as in the Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement. In this document, “must” means that compliance is mandatory and “should” means that compliance represents best practice.

Contacts Guidelines

| Who is Responsible: | What is Required: |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Provider</p> <p>Ensure the Electronic Calendar has capacity to receive an Appointment for a Participant.</p> <p><i>Grant Agreement References:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 22 • Clause 91 | <p>The DES Provider must ensure the DES Provider’s Electronic Calendar has, at all times, capacity to receive an Appointment for a Participant, within the next two Business Days, for the purpose of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting an Initial Interview; • Re-engagement (including for the purpose of reconnection); or • Conducting a Contact with the Participant following a Change of Circumstances Reassessment or a Program Review. <p>Providers are required to use the Electronic Calendar to book all Contacts with Participants. Providers must retain sufficient documentary evidence to support its claims for payment.</p> |
| <p>2. Provider</p> <p>Arrange a Contacts schedule with each Participant.</p> <p><i>Grant Agreement References:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 91 • Clause 92 • Clause 93 | <p>Providers, in conjunction with individual Participants, must establish an appropriate Contacts schedule, which is to include all required Contacts.</p> <p>As long as minimum Contacts are met, any additional Contacts will be determined by the DES Provider based on the needs of the individual Participant.</p> <p>Providers must include the agreed Contacts schedule in the Participant’s Job Plan.</p> |
| <p>3. Provider</p> <p>Provide at least the minimum number of Contacts and in the specified modes to each individual Participant.</p> <p><i>Grant Agreement References:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 93.1, Table 1 • Clause 93.2(a) • Clause 93.5 • Clause 93.6 • Clause 93.7 • Clause 93.8 | <p>The Provider must provide each Participant with at least the minimum mandatory number of Contacts as set out in the table at <u>Attachment A—Minimum Contacts</u>. Providers have access to reports to assist them to manage Participant Contacts and ensure all Participants receive minimum Contacts.</p> <p><u>Minimum Contacts for Employment Assistance</u></p> <p>For Participants in Employment Assistance (and Extended Employment Assistance if relevant) at least two Contacts must fall within each month of the claimable period.</p> <p>If at least two Contacts have not been delivered within each month of the claimable period then at least one Contact must fall within each month of the claimable period and there must be evidence in the Department’s IT Systems (in the Electronic Calendar) of the DES Provider attempt(s) to schedule another Contact appointment with the Participant in each month of the same claimable period.</p> |

| Who is Responsible: | What is Required: |
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| | <p>Modes of Contact Unless otherwise advised, the Provider must conduct the following Contacts face-to-face with the Participant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Initial Interview; • the Initial Interview for a New Program; • the first Contact following Re-engagement; and • the first Contact following a Change in Circumstances Reassessment or a Program Review, except in circumstances as set out in Clause 93.5. <p>Note: In response to COVID-19, the Department advised this requirement was relaxed and that these Contacts could occur by alternative modes where needed. The Department will clearly advise providers if and when this flexibility is lifted.</p> <p>Subsequent Contacts can be conducted in alternative modes as agreed by the Participant and the Provider in the following modes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face-to-face; • by telephone; or • by video conference. <p>The Provider must record the Participant’s preferred mode of Contacts in the Department’s IT Systems. This is located in ESSWeb under Job Seeker Calendar > Job Seeker Calendar Settings> Preferred Contact Method. For more information on Contacts during Ongoing Support please refer to the <i>Ongoing Support Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>Minimum Contacts and Job Plans It is the responsibility of the Provider to ensure that each Participant is provided the number of Contacts required to successfully complete the activities in their Job Plan.</p> <p>Please note, where Job Plan activity code “A109 - Attend DES Appointments Contacts “weekly or fortnightly,” is inappropriate because the DES Provider has decided to deliver the Contacts under the flexible Contacts arrangement, the activity code “FTXT - Free Text” should be used with the following text – “I agree to attend [x] Disability Employment Services appointments with [DES Provider] over the next three months.”</p> |
| <p>4. Provider</p> <p>Complete a range of pre-interview preparation tasks and become familiar with all available servicing information for each Participant.</p> | <p>The Provider is to contact Participants via their preferred Contacts method.</p> <p>The Department’s IT Systems will automatically send an Appointment reminder via mobile phone or email, if that is the Participant’s selected method of Contacts. Please note: Reminder messages are sent as a service to assist Participants—they are not a Notification for the purposes of compliance action.</p> <p>Providers must become familiar with all available information relating to the Participant including current or previous Job Plans, Participation Profile information, and any Referral/Placements and compliance-related activities. This information is available in the Department’s IT Systems.</p> |

| Who is Responsible: | What is Required: |
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| | <p>Providers are also able to access the Participant’s other details on the Department’s IT Systems to check if there are any special requirements that the Provider may need to cater for—these can include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any special assistance associated with the Participant’s disability; • an interpreter for Participants with cultural or language requirements; and • taking account of aggressive or violent Participant incidents. <p>The Provider will need to access the Department’s IT Systems to check whether the Participant has had a Program Review or a Change of Circumstances Reassessment since the Participant’s last Appointment. If so, the Provider will also need to check whether the results or outcomes are available in the Department’s IT Systems. The Provider’s noticeboard will display any messages relating to changes in eligible Program Services and completed reassessments, reviews and any required Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) or Ongoing Support Assessment (OSA).</p> <p>If the Participant has had a JCA, ESAt or an OSA, the Provider is to check whether the Report and recommendations have been submitted.</p> <p>The Provider must review and action the JCA, ESAt or OSA recommendations, as appropriate.</p> <p>The Provider may be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the Participant to make any arrangements for new Appointments or a transfer to another Site; or • Exit the Participant (as appropriate). <p>The Provider should also review the Participant’s Job Plan and/or Skills Assessment if one has been completed, any changes in circumstances and whether the Participant is nearing a time appropriate for a Program Review.</p> |
| <p>5. Provider</p> <p>Ensure that the issues covered in Contacts are appropriate to the circumstances of the individual Participant.</p> <p><i>Grant Agreement References:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 92 • Clause 93 • Clause 95 • Clause 120 • Clause 129 | <p>The issues covered in Contacts must be appropriate to each Participant’s individual circumstances, and may cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functional capacity evaluations, physical assessment or other assessments to determine a Participant’s limits or abilities, • discussion of job search activities and, if relevant, assistance in directly contacting employers on the Participant’s behalf and identifying appropriate job vacancies, • identification of and referral to appropriate activities, • reviewing progress and discussion of ways to overcome barriers, • reviewing and updating their Job Plan. <p>Providers should also consider the individual Participant’s circumstances when arranging Contacts. For example, some Participants such as those with a mental health issue may benefit from an arrangement where their counsellor or carer is present. It may also be appropriate to consult a nominee or social worker in</p> |

| Who is Responsible: | What is Required: |
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| | <p>determining an outgoing communication arrangement for Participants with a mental health condition. Where a special Contacts arrangement is implemented, the Participant should be made aware that the arrangement is for their benefit and that it can be reviewed if they find it is unnecessarily restrictive or unhelpful.</p> <p>The Provider must conduct face to face contacts with the Participant at the site location as specified in the Schedule, unless the Participant agrees to a face to face contact at a mutually agreed upon location within the ESA. This location must be a safe, private environment where the Participant’s confidentiality is assured.</p> <p>The Provider must identify and record any relevant changes in the Participant’s circumstances in the Department’s IT Systems.</p> <p>Note: If the Participant advises of a change in their circumstances it may be appropriate for the Provider to update the Job seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) or make a referral to an Employment Services Assessor for an ESAt. This may result in the Participant’s eligibility for their current Program changing.</p> |
| <p>6. Provider</p> <p>Record results of each Contact in the Electronic Calendar</p> <p><i>Grant Agreement References:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 106 • Clause 111 • Clause 113 | <p>Contacts must be scheduled in the Electronic Calendar. Providers should schedule Contacts well in advance, where possible, to ensure the Participant has appropriate notice of the Contact requirement.</p> <p>The result of a Contact must be recorded by close of business on the day of the Contact wherever possible. Under the job seeker Targeted Compliance Framework, no compliance action can occur for a participant who fails to attend a scheduled Contact without a valid reason, unless the provider enters a relevant result on the day of the scheduled Contact.</p> <p>A provider be unable to record the result of a Contact on the day the Contact occurred in some situations, including where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Contact occurred after normal working hours • the Contact occurred at the participant's place of employment • a rural consultant travel to different locations, where the consultant does not have immediate ESSWeb access. <p>In these instances, providers should record the result of the Contact promptly as set out below.</p> <p><u>Scheduled Contacts – unable to result on the day of Contact</u> Where a consultant cannot access ESSWeb by close of business on the day of a scheduled Contact, the Provider must, within three business days of the scheduled Contact, include in the Electronic Calendar's Appointment Notes a comment advising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the participant satisfactorily attended the scheduled Contact; and • the reason the Contact result could not be recorded on the day of the Contact. <p><u>Unscheduled Contacts – able to record on the day of Contact</u></p> |

| Who is Responsible: | What is Required: |
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| | <p>Where a Contact is delivered unexpectedly, the Provider should, where possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule the appointment in the Electronic Calendar on the day the Contact occurred • record as the notification method that the appointment was directly booked with the participant (this prevents the participant from being notified to attend an appointment they have already attended); and • enter the Contact result by the end of the day the Contact occurred. <p><u>Unscheduled Contacts – unable to record on the day of Contact</u></p> <p>Where a Contact is delivered unexpectedly and the Contact cannot be scheduled and resulted on the day the Contact occurred, the Provider must, within three business days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule an appointment with the Participant in the Electronic Calendar, for the current date (this is a shell appointment created for evidentiary purposes, which the Participant does not need to attend); • record as the notification method that the appointment was directly booked with the Participant (this important step prevents the Participant from being notified to attend the shell appointment); • enter the Contact result (by the end of the day the of the shell Contact); and • include in the Electronic Calendar's Appointment Notes a comment to correct the shell appointment, advising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the date and time that the Contact actually occurred; and ○ the reason the Contact could not be scheduled and a result entered on the day of the actual Contact. <p>Participants are required to attend Contacts as set out in their Job Plan. Where a Participant with Mutual Obligations/Compulsory participation requirements misses an appointment and fails to give prior notice of a valid reason, the Provider must attempt to contact them once on the day of becoming aware of the non-attendance to discuss the reason why the Participant did not contact beforehand together with the Participant's reason for missing the appointment. Refer to the <i>Targeted Compliance Framework: Mutual Obligation Failures Guidelines</i> for more detail.</p> |
| <p>7. The Provider</p> <p>Decide if the Participant's next Contact(s) is to be booked immediately following the completion of each Contact.</p> | <p>At the end of each Contact Providers must consider whether or not it is appropriate to book the next Contact. If so, the Provider must arrange an appropriate time with the Participant and book the next Contact.</p> <p>If the Provider deems that it is not appropriate to book the next Contact at the completion of a Contact, they should decide if a reminder is required to be set in the Department's IT Systems for the appropriate date. The reminder will serve to ensure the Provider has sufficient time to contact the Participant to arrange an appropriate</p> |

| Who is Responsible: | What is Required: |
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| | time for the next Contact. Reminders will appear as noticeboard messages to Providers. End of Process. |

Attachment A—Minimum Contacts:

| Participant | Minimum Contacts |
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| All Participants (excluding Work Assist Participants) | Initial Interview |
| | Six Contacts over each period of three months for Participants receiving Employment Assistance and Extended Employment Assistance |
| | Regular Contacts, as deemed appropriate by the Provider, for Participants receiving Post Placement Support |
| | Initial Interview for a new Program when a Participant moves from Disability Employment Services – Disability Management Service to Disability Employment Services – Employment Support Service or vice versa |
| | As required for Participants receiving Flexible Ongoing Support |
| Work Assist Participants | Initial Interview |
| | Regular Contacts, as deemed appropriate by the Provider, during the Period of Service |
| Disability Employment Services – Employment Support Service Participants only (applicable to Disability Employment Services – Employment Support Service Providers only) | Six Contacts over each period of three months for Participants receiving Moderate Ongoing Support |
| | Twelve Contacts over each period of three months for Participants receiving High Ongoing Support |
| Participant (Mutual Obligation) | Capability Interviews |
| | Any Contact that is a Reconnection Requirement |
| | Any other Contact required in accordance with Section 5H |

Note 1: *The timing and duration of Contacts is not specified but will depend on the individual circumstances of each Participant, as determined by the Provider.*

Note 2: *There are no minimum number of Contacts specified for Participants who are receiving Flexible Ongoing Support.*