Referring a customer to Disability Employment Services (DES) 008-04030110

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Background

This document explains how Services Australia refers customers to DES.

DES Overview

DES is a program to help people whose disability, injury and/or health condition is their main barrier to finding and maintaining employment.

Depending on the customer's level of need, they will be eligible for:

- Disability Employment Services - Disability Management Service (DES-DMS), **or**
- Disability Employment Services - Employment Support Service (DES-ESS)

Both programs offer support to find and secure employment. For more information, see Disability employment assistance services and programs.

Eligibility for DES

Generally, customers are eligible for DES if they:

- are an Australian resident
- are at least 14 years of age and not yet attained Age Pension qualifying age
- are at or above the minimum legal working age in their state or territory
- have a disability, injury and/or health condition
- have a future work capacity with intervention of at least 8 hours per week, and
- are not studying full time or already working at or above the applicable employment benchmark hours.

Most customers cannot be referred to DES unless they first have an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) or Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) to assess their work capacity and suitability for the program.

Some customers are exempt from this requirement, including:

- Work Assist participants
- Special Class Clients (SCCs), and
- Eligible School Leavers (ESLs).

A new ESAt or JCA may also be required if the customer wants to be re-referred to DES after leaving the program because they:

- achieved a 26-week outcome
- completed the maximum 24 months servicing allowed
- were exited from DES whilst receiving ongoing support

For detailed information about eligibility criteria, including when an ESAt or JCA is required, see Eligibility criteria for participation with Disability Employment Services (DES).

Referral to DES

The agency is responsible for referring customers with mutual obligation requirements to DES at the earliest possible opportunity.

The agency can also refer Disability Support Pension (DSP) customers with participation requirements, if the customers ask us to.

All other customers are eligible to directly register for DES by contacting their preferred DES provider. This pathway is known as 'direct registration' and applies to customers who are:

- not receiving a payment with mutual obligation requirements
- an Eligible School Leaver (ESL)
- a Special Class Client (SCC)
- a Work Assist participant, or
- not in receipt of income support and volunteering for DES to meet Program of Support (POS) requirements for DSP purposes

For more information, see Direct registration with a provider for disability employment assistance services.

Timing of DES Referral

Wherever possible, customers are referred to DES as soon as they become eligible for the program.

Where an ESAt or JCA is required, the qualified health or allied health professional conducting the assessment will refer the customer to DES if appropriate.

This referral will be automatically deferred if, at the time of the ESAt or JCA, the customer cannot participate in DES because they:

- have a Temporary Reduced Work Capacity (TRWC)
- are exempt from meeting their mutual obligation requirements or participation requirements
- are working at or above the applicable employment benchmark hours

In these situations, the agency will contact the customer to make the referral once their TRWC or exemption ends, or their work hours drop below the applicable employment benchmark.

Choice of DES Provider

DES is designed to give customers flexibility and choice in the services they receive and how they receive them. This includes selecting which DES provider they want to be referred to.

The agency gives customers information about the providers and services available in their area to help them make this choice. This includes details of any DES providers who specialise in delivering services to specific cohorts. For example, customers with a certain disability or personal circumstance (mental health, vision impairment, etc.)

There are no restrictions on what provider a customer can choose, with 2 exceptions:

- customers eligible for DES-DMS cannot be referred to a provider who only delivers DES-ESS services (or vice-versa)
- customers cannot be referred to a DES specialist provider if they are not part of the target group for that provider's identified specialty

Customers can ask to have a provider selected at random if they do not have a preference.

Acceptance into DES program

At the customer's initial appointment, the DES provider will assess the customer's suitability and decide whether to accept the customer into the program.

Once the customer is accepted into DES, the customer will be automatically exited from Workforce Australia if appropriate.

DES providers must accept a referral from the agency if:

- the customer has mutual obligation requirements
- the customer's ESAt or JCA has a status of 'finalised', and
- there is a recommendation to DES

If the ESAt or JCA has a status of 'submitted', the provider can contact the agency to request a review. A qualified health or allied health professional will review the assessment and, if appropriate, amend the ESAt or JCA report. If the DES recommendation is affirmed, the DES provider must then accept the referral.

Participation with DES

Once accepted into the program, participation with DES is compulsory for customers who:

- receive a payment with mutual obligation requirements, or
- have Disability Support Pension (DSP) participation requirements and have chosen DES as their work focused activity.

For all other customers participation is voluntary. Customer participating in DES on a voluntary basis can exit DES at any time without penalty. Customers who want to exit DES should speak to their provider in the first instance.

Changing DES provider

DES customers can change DES providers at any time, for any reason, with no limitation.

When a customer changes address, the Employment Services System (ESS) will automatically send the customer a letter inviting them to select a new provider closer to their new residence.

Whilst the agency can provide information about DES providers in their area, customers who want to change provider must contact the National Customer Service Line.

Concurrency with other programs

Customers may be able to access other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government funded programs at the same time as DES.

Examples of suitable concurrent programs can include:

- Skills for Education and Employment (SEE)
- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE)
- Self-Employment Assistance

Participation in concurrent programs is generally only appropriate where the customer has the capacity to fully participate and benefit from both programs at the same time. Customers should discuss their interest in a concurrent referral with their DES provider in the first instance.

The Resources page contains links to the JobAccess website and contact details for the National Customer Service Line.

Related links

Employment assistance for people with a disability

Eligibility criteria for participation with Disability Employment Services (DES)

Direct registration with a provider for disability employment assistance services

Process

This document explains details about the process for Services Australia to refer eligible customers to DES.

On this page:

Determining suitability for referral to DES

Customer contact

Actioning the DES referral

Determining suitability for referral to DES

Table 1

Step	Action
1	**Referring to a Disability Employment Service (DES) provider** + Read more … The need for DES referral may be identified in the following ways. If: • An Assessor is making a referral to DES during an ESAt/JCA appointment, <u>go to Step 4</u>. • There is a current DES referral work item requiring action, <u>go to Step 3</u>. • The customer has requested a transfer from one DES provider to another, <u>go to Step 2</u> • A customer contacts requesting a DES referral, <u>go to Step 3</u>.
2	**Already connected to a DES provider** + Read more … Where a customer is currently connected to a DES provider and is requesting to transfer to a new DES provider, advise the customer this can be done by: • contacting their current provider, • using the Workforce Australia App, or • Contacting the National Customer Service Line See the <u>Resources</u> page for links, procedure ends here.
3	**Processing DES referral activity** + Read more … Eligibility for DES must be determined prior to actioning a referral. Unless already confirmed, see <u>Eligibility criteria for participation with Disability Employment Services (DES)</u>. If the customer is: • exempt or fully meeting mutual obligations requirements, <u>go to Step 4</u> Some customers may register directly with a provider. This is known as direct registration and applies to the following, customers: • receiving a payment that does not have mutual obligation/participation requirements, or • not receiving an income support payment and who are: ○ an <u>Eligible School Leaver (ESL)</u> ○ a <u>Special Class Clients (SCC)</u> ○ a <u>Work Assist participant</u> ○ volunteering for DES to meet Program of Support (POS) requirements for DSP purposes See <u>Direct registration with a provider for Disability Employment Assistance Services</u>.
4	**Exempt or meeting mutual obligations** + Read more … If the customer is exempt from or fully meeting mutual obligation requirements, they do not require a referral to DES. However, these customers can volunteer to participate. Does the customer want to volunteer? • **Yes**, <u>go to Step 5</u> • **No**, the work item should be placed on **hold** until the exemption or approved activity ends
5	**Work capacity assessment** + Read more … Ensure there is a <u>current and valid assessment of the job seeker's work capacity</u> and the ESAt/JCA recommends DES prior to referral. Where a customer was previously exited from DES after: • achieving a 26-week employment outcome • completing 24 months in employment assistance, or • exited while receiving ongoing support

	a new assessment of their work capacity conducted after the exit from DES is required prior to being re referred. See Request an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) for information. **Note:** determine if the customer has previously been exited from DES. In Process Direct go to s47E(d) s47E(d) If a DES referral is being actioned: • by an allied health professional (Assessors) as part of the ESAt/JCA interview, go to Step 6 • following allocation of a DES referral work item s47E(d) or contact from the customer, go to Step 7
6	**Allied health professionals (Assessors)** + Read more … Wherever possible, Assessors will refer the customer to a DES provider when the ESAt/JCA is submitted. If the customer is unable to be referred at this time, for example due to a Temporary Reduced Work Capacity (TRWC) of 0 14 hours per week, or an exemption, or fully meeting requirements, the system will generate the appropriate activity to ensure the customer is referred when appropriate. If the customer is present and the Assessor has determined the referral can be completed, see Table 3 > Step 1.
7	**Service Officer** + Read more … The work item s47E(d) is created when the customer has an active JSR ID but has not: • had their Job Seeker Snapshot completed, or • been connected to an Employment Services Provider i.e. Workforce Australia or DES See Table 1 > Step 3 in Job Seeker Management Activities before proceeding with this step. Before processing the work item, consider the information provided within the: s47E(d) Where the referral has already been actioned or the customer has transferred to a payment without mutual obligation requirements, complete the work item, see Table 3 > Step 6. The action required to progress the DES referral will vary depending on the customer circumstance. If the customer is: • suspended, go to Step 8 • cancelled, go to Step 9 • current, go to step 10
8	**Suspended payment** + Read more … If the customer's payment is suspended do not cancel or complete the work item. Determine if the payment can be restored, see Restoration of payments. If payment: • can be restored, go to Step 10 • cannot be restored, place the activity on **hold** until the day the customer is expected to return to payment **or** 13 weeks from the date of suspension, whichever is later. Procedure ends here. **Note:** if SUS-IMP, place the activity on **hold** for 13 weeks from the date of incarceration.
9	**Cancelled payment** + Read more … In most cases, a cancelled payment cannot be restored more than 13 weeks after the notification of decision to cancel was sent. Ensure the record is reviewed thoroughly when determining the 13 week period.

	Has payment been cancelled for more than 13 weeks from the notice of cancellation or the date of effect of the cancellation?: • **Yes,** the payment cannot be restored, see Table 3 > Step 6 • **No**, do not cancel or complete the work item. Place the work item on **hold** for 13 weeks from the date of cancellation. Include details in a closed **DOC**, procedure ends here
10	**Check the following before coding referral** + Read more … • Review the ESAt/JCA report on the ^{s47E(d)} screen in Process Direct to confirm and note any specific medical conditions, or recommendations to ensure referral to the most appropriate provider • Customer has an active Job Seeker Registration. If Job Seeker Registration is inactive, see Table 1 > Step 3 in Job Seeker Management Activities before returning to this process • Ensure the customer has not been working at or above their Employment Benchmark hours for the last 6 fortnights. If the customer is and will continue to work at or above their benchmark, they are ineligible for DES. Consider if a: • Part Time Work (PTW) exemption is appropriate see Paid work as an approved mutual obligation requirement, or • Referral to Workforce Australia is appropriate. See Table 3 > Step 6 to cancel the work item Staff must contact a customer prior to actioning a DES referral to ensure they are given a choice of provider and understand their obligations. If the customer is: • not present, see Table 2 > Step 1 • present, see Table 3 > Step 1

Customer contact

Table 2: this table describes the steps for where contact with the customer is to action a DES referral.

Step	Action
1	**Contact the customer** + Read more … If the contact number recorded on the customer's record is a mobile number, and they have registered for SMS messaging, staff must create a pre-call notification (SMS only) using Desktop Electronic Messaging Capability (DEMC). After creating the SMS, wait 5 minutes before making the outbound attempt. If the current contact number is a landline or the customer is not registered for SMS messaging, staff must still make the required attempts to contact. Review the customer's record to determine if any previous attempts have been made: • If this is the first outbound contact attempt, go to Step 2 • If a first attempt to contact **DOC** is recorded and a second contact attempt is required, go to Step 3 • If the Q164 letter has been sent and the customer has not responded, go to Step 5
2	**First outbound attempt to contact customer** + Read more … Make 2 reasonable and genuine attempts to contact the customer. If contact with the customer is not possible due to: • Telephone details being incorrect, outdated or not recorded, go to Step 4 • Residing in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility, **hold** the work item for 13 weeks from the date of incarceration or admission into the facility. Procedure ends here Was the contact successful? • **Yes**, see Table 3 > Step 1 • **No**, **hold** the work item to the next calendar day.
3	**Second outbound attempt to contact customer** + Read more …

Make a second [genuine attempt to contact](#) the customer if the first attempt was unsuccessful.

Was the contact successful?

- **Yes**, see [Table 3 > Step 1](#)
- **No**:
    - Close the JSR 1st attempt to contact Display on Access (DOA) **DOC**
    - Record details of the unsuccessful contact using the s47E(d) [ast Note](#). Select the s47E(d) box. When prompted check that the s47E(field shows s47E(d) s47E(d) . The s47E(d) field must default to the maximum date allowed (60 days from today)

4	**Issue a Q164 letter after second unsuccessful contact attempt or where no contact details are recorded for customer** + Read more …

Issue a Q164 letter after second unsuccessful contact attempt or where no contact details are recorded for customer + Read more …

[Issue a Q164 letter](#) asking the customer to contact the agency by phone within 14 days.

The customer has 14 days to respond after they receive the letter:

- Add days to [allow extra time for mail delivery](#)
- Record the reason for issuing the Q164 on a closed **DOC** to prompt action when customer contacts
- **Hold** the work item until the Q164 response due date + 1 (for example, 14 days + mailing time = 22/29 days after the date the Q164 letter is sent)

5 — **Customer fails to respond to the Q164 letter** + Read more …

If the customer fails to contact by the notification provision date +1 after the Q164 is issued, determine if suspension action can be taken. Before suspending a customer's payment, see [Suspension of payments (CLK)](#) for details about factors to consider.

If it is appropriate to manually suspend a customer for Failing to Respond to Correspondence (SUS-FRC):

s47E(d)

If the customer's payment has:

- been suspended for failing to contact, do not cancel the work item. Place the work item on **hold** for 13 weeks from the suspension date.
- not been suspended as it's not appropriate to suspend the customer's payment for failing to contact:
    - Do not cancel the work item
    - Attempt customer contact, and
    - If the customer does not answer, **hold** the work item as per the Q164 process in Step 4

Actioning the DES referral

Table 3:

Step	Action
1	**Create new referral to DES** + Read more …

DES referrals must be actioned in Process Direct.

<p style="text-align:center">s47E(d)</p>

If the customer is not eligible for DES, an error message will show. The customer must be referred to another employment service or an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt). See <u>Determining when an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) is required</u>.

2	**Specialist providers** + Read more …
	Specialist DES providers support customers with specific medical conditions. These are identified in the customer's ESAt/JCA report. For example, deaf and hearing impaired.
	A provider's speciality appears in the "**Specialist Provider**" column on the List Providers tab. Service Officers must take extra care when discussing available providers and must offer a specialist where appropriate.
	Consider the following regarding suitability of the provider:
	• Customer's specific condition • Distance from their home • Available transport options
	Do **not** refer a customer to a specialist provider if they do not have the appropriate medical condition/s identified in their ESAt/JCA report.
	More information about DES providers, see the <u>Resources</u> page for the JobAccess website.
3	**Choice of Provider** + Read more …
	Customers must be offered a choice of Disability Employment Services (DES) providers. Service Officers are to provide customers with information to assist them in choosing a provider but must not choose a provider for them. If a customer does not have a preferred provider, they can request the random allocation process is used.
	To make the displayed list of DES providers more specific select Advanced search type to search by the following parameters:
	• provider name • provider postcode • suburb
	To update preferences/exclusions, select the s47E(d) link for the relevant provider(s) and then select s47E(d) s47E(d) to confirm selection.
	• **If the customer has a preferred provider,** select the provider from the list • **Otherwise,** if the customer requests, select the s47E(d) button
4	**Check for appointment availability** + Read more …
	The Online Diary shows appointments available with the DES provider within the next 28 days.
	Are there any appointments for the provider listed on the s47E(d) screen?

	• **Yes**, <u>go to Step 5</u>
	• **No**, if the status on the s47E(d) screen shows:
	   ○ No available/suitable timeslots - call the DES provider to open more appointments. Providers have no right of refusal and must make times available. After the provider opens further appointments, re-open online diary to view them.
	   ○ Full - at maximum caseload - staff can call the provider to see if they are interested in increasing their maximum caseload for the purposes of accepting a referral. However, the provider is not obligated to comply with this request. If they choose not to increase their caseload the customer will need to choose another provider
	   ○ Not Available - these providers cannot accept referrals, and staff must **not** contact them. Refer to an alternate provider

	To locate the contact details of providers, go to the JobAccess website. See the <u>Resources</u> page for a link.

5	**Book appointment** + Read more …
	s47E(d) **Note:** the agency can reschedule initial appointments only when it was booked by the agency and the appointment time is still in the future. If the customer has mutual obligation requirements, attendance at the appointment is compulsory. Advise the customer: • failure to attend may affect their payment • if they cannot attend, they should contact their DES provider to reschedule
6	**Finalise DES referral work item** + Read more … Once the DES initial appointment is booked staff must cancel the s47E(d) or s47E(d) from the s47E(d) in Process Direct. **Note:** if an Assessor completes the DES referral as part of the ESAt/JCA interview, no activities may exist.

References

Policy

Social Security Guide, 3.11, Mutual obligation requirements

Social Security Guide 3.11.1.20 Suitable work

Social Security Guide, 1.1.D.115 Designated provider

Legislation

Social Security (Administration) Act 1999

• section 63, Requirement to attend Department

Resources

External websites

How Disability Employment Services can help | JobAccess

Workforce Australia app

Contact details

National Customer Service Line

Training & Support

Add the course number to the s47E(d) field in the   s47E(d)   in ESSentials:

- s47E(d) - Disability Employment Assistance