



Australian Government
Department of Employment

Service Delivery Plans

Information for Employment Providers

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Disclaimer:

This document is not a stand-alone document and does not contain the entirety of Providers' obligations. It should be read in conjunction with the Employment Services Deed 2015–2020 and any relevant guidelines or reference material issued by Department of Employment under or in connection with Employment Services Deed 2015–2020.

Explanatory Note:

All capitalised terms have the same meaning as in Employment Services Deed 2015–20. In this document, “**must**” means that compliance is mandatory and “**should**” means that compliance represents best practice.

1. Purpose

The capacity for Employment Providers to develop and deliver flexible servicing arrangements is an essential component of the Employment Services 2015 model.

A Provider's Service Delivery Plan captures the commitments that they made in their Tender response in an easy-to-read format. It is their main tool to showcase to stakeholders (such as job seekers and Employers) the services that they can expect to receive.

A Provider's compliance with the commitments in their Service Delivery Plan, the Service Guarantees and their Tender response (Service Offer) is an integral part of the Performance Framework measure of Quality and Assurance.

The purpose of this document is to provide information to ES2015 Providers about developing, approving and changing these commitments and Service Delivery Plans, at the start of the ES2015 contract and throughout the contract period.

2. Developing Service Delivery Plans

As outlined in the Employment Services 2015–2020 Request for Tender, successful Providers need to submit one or more Service Delivery Plans that reflect the services described in their Tender response by **10 April 2015**.

The aim of the Service Delivery Plan is to communicate with stakeholders about the services they can expect to receive, especially job seekers and Employers. Employment Provider Tenderers received some guidance in the Request for Tender on developing a Service Delivery Plan, which is included at [Attachment A](#), however they should also consider:

- the audience of the Plan. Providers should use language that's appropriate for the stakeholders each Plan (or section of a Plan) is talking to
- the intent and purpose of the commitment being incorporated into the Plan. Providers should retain this and not diminish it in any way, even though the Plan is likely to use different language from what was in the Tender response
- that some commitments they made in their Tender response may not be appropriate for their Service Delivery Plan. The Department may still identify these commitments for ongoing monitoring and assessment, separate to the Service Delivery Plan
- how their plans will interact or relate to one another, if they develop multiple Plans. This is especially important where sub-contracting and consortia arrangements are in place.

Submitting a Plan to the Department

Providers will receive a due date for their Service Delivery Plan at the same time as their advice on their provisional contract offer.

Providers should send their completed Plan to their Account Manager. All Plans must be accessible. Section 4 provides further advice on accessibility requirements.

The Department reserves the right to not accept Service Delivery Plans submitted to the Department after their due date and to withdraw the provisional contract offer.

Assessment

The Department will assess all Plans submitted by successful Providers. As part of this assessment, the Department will consider the following questions:

- Does the Provider's Service Delivery Plan address the core elements outlined in the Request for Tender: Our job seekers, Our Employers, Our Networks and About Us?
- Are the core elements outlined in the Service Delivery Plan clear and measurable?
- Is the Plan in a format that is clear and easy to read, and does it outline the services that stakeholders—in particular job seekers and Employers—can expect to receive?

Commitments not included in the Service Delivery Plan

Recognising that not all commitments made in a Tender response can or should be incorporated into a Service Delivery Plan, the Department will also identify any other commitments that it determines are core to the Provider's overall servicing strategy and that should be monitored and assessed throughout the Deed period. This can include commitments identified as commercial in confidence, or commitments that relate to the Provider's relationship with the Department. These are called Service Offer commitments.

If Providers elect to, they can provide the Department with details on these commitments—that is, those that they recognise as part of their overall servicing strategy but would like to exclude from the Service Delivery Plan. They should do this at the same time that they provide their draft Plans.

Assessment outcomes

There are three potential outcomes from an assessment:

- 1. Service Delivery Plan approved:** The initial plan presented to the Department is approved. It contains material commitments made in the Provider's Tender response that should be included, and is clear and measurable.
The Department will notify Providers when their Plan is approved, and contracting will continue as required. The Service Delivery Plan will be part of the Deed.
- 2. Request for review:** This is where the Department asks a Provider to reconsider their submission because it determines that a material commitment is missing, the document does not meet accessibility requirements or there is some ambiguity in the Service Delivery Plan.
The onus is on each Provider to develop and make changes to their Service Delivery Plan, however the Department will clearly communicate the changes and the reasoning behind them, to help implement this new feature of Employment Services and make sure resubmissions are approved.
The Department will reassess the updated Service Delivery Plan once it is resubmitted. If the Plan includes all of the changes requested by the Department, the Department will approve the Plan and contracting will continue as required. The Service Delivery Plan will be part of the Deed.
- 3. Service Delivery Plan rejected:** Following a request for review, if the Department determines that the Service Delivery Plan still does not contain the material commitments a Provider made in their Tender or does not contain detail against one or more of the core elements, it will reject the Plan.
In these cases, the Department may elect to cease negotiations (where the second or subsequent drafts are still missing key commitments) and recommend that the Provider's provisional contract offer is withdrawn.

Notification of assessment outcomes

The Department will notify Providers of the outcome of the assessment of their Service Delivery Plans in writing, by 8 May 2015. At the same time, the Department will provide details of any Service Offer commitments that it intends to monitor, outside of the Service Delivery Plan. During the assessment period, the Department may contact the Provider to work with them to refine their Plans for approval.

3. Updating Service Delivery Plans

Providers need to maintain accurate and up-to-date Service Delivery Plans throughout the contract period to make sure they meet the needs of their stakeholders, in particular job seekers and Employers.

The Department recognises that labour markets and servicing strategies may vary throughout the five year contract period, and adjustments may be necessary. The Department will consider requests for variation, in the context of whether the proposed change materially alters the service offer. These requests will generally not be accepted within the first 12 months of the contact period. This applies to both Service Delivery Plan and Service Offer commitments.

Requesting an Update to the Service Delivery Plan

Providers are expected to discuss all potential changes with their Account Manager in the first instance, before they submit a formal request for amendment.

Providers must make all requests to update a Service Delivery Plan or a Service Offer commitment to the Department in writing, through their Account Manager. The request must include, but is not limited to:

- a detailed business case supporting the requested change/s
- details of how the new approach is an improvement, demonstrating what outcomes might be achieved
- if the change removes a service without adopting a new approach, details to substantiate why an alternative is not required
- a draft revised Service Delivery Plan, if relevant.

If a Provider wishes to remove a service or approach from their Plan, it is strongly recommended that they include an alternative strategy to make sure that stakeholders continue to have access to a similar range and level of services.

Approving Updates

The Department will assess and approve all Service Delivery Plan and Service Offer updates on a case by case basis. It will consider the following:

- whether the update will increase or decrease services to stakeholders
- the extent of the change from the commitments made by the Provider in their Tender response.
- if the business case demonstrates that any alternative strategy is likely to be successful
- whether any new elements are clear and measurable.

The types of assessment outcomes are the same as those described in Section 2. If there are any changes that are not approved during the contract period, Providers will be required to continue to deliver the services as outlined in their approved Service Delivery Plan.

Updates requested by the Department

If the Department has concerns about a Provider's servicing strategies and performance, their Account Manager may suggest that they need to consider reviewing the approach. The Provider may need to alter their existing Service Delivery Plan or Service Offer commitments to reflect any changes that are determined and negotiated with their Account Manager.

4. Administrative Requirements

Providing Service Delivery Plans to job seekers

Providers must give a copy of the relevant Service Guarantee and Service Delivery Plan to every job seeker at their initial Appointment and must display them prominently in each of their offices.

If a Plan is updated, providers should give each job seeker a copy of the updated plan at their next appointment, and let them know about the differences in the new version.

Publishing Service Delivery Plans

The Service Guarantees will be published on the Department's webpage, as well as on the Australian JobSearch website.

Providers must publish their Service Delivery Plan on their Services page (previously Connections for Quality) of the Australian JobSearch website (www.jobsearch.gov.au). Providers can publish this information through the Employment Services System, in the same way that they update their Services page content. All Plans must be published within **five** days of the Service Delivery Plan being approved, or as otherwise advised by the Department.

The version published on the website should be the same as the version Providers give to job seekers and display in their offices. Providers are responsible for making sure that the most recent version of their Plan is available at all times.

Accessibility of Service Delivery Plans

The Government has endorsed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.0 for all Government websites, and their content. When developing their Service Delivery Plans for publication, providers should create the content in a way that supports and maximises accessibility for people with disability. Providers should consider the varied needs of job seekers, employers and other stakeholders in an effort to create documents that can be easily accessed by everyone.

Resources on the accessibility of web based information and documents are widely available. Providers are encouraged to consider the Australian Human Rights Commission's [Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes](#), which form the basis of the Government's obligations in relation to accessibility.

5. Compliance with the Service Guarantees, Service Offer and Service Delivery Plan

The commitments a Provider makes in their Service Delivery Plan form part of the Deed and are a key component of the Performance Framework. Providers need to be able to demonstrate how they have delivered on the commitments as outlined in their Service Delivery Plan.

A Provider's performance against the Service Guarantees and any commitments they made in their Tender response (Service Offer) are also part of the Performance Framework.

The Department will monitor Providers' performance against these commitments on an ongoing basis. The Department will assess whether Providers are meeting the service delivery standards outlined in the Service Guarantees, their Service Offer and their Service Delivery Plan through a range of activities, such as:

- provider visits
- desktop monitoring audits
- Programme Assurance activities
- feedback received by the Department's National Customer Service Line
- Quality Assurance Framework audits
- direct demonstration by Providers that they meet these commitments.

Remedial Actions

If the Department determines that a Provider is not delivering services as outlined in their Service Delivery Plan or the ES2015 Service Guarantees, the Department reserves the right to apply Remedial Actions to that Provider. The type of actions will depend on the nature of the non-compliance. Any Providers that don't meet the service delivery standards may also be in scope for business reallocation.

Complaints relating to Service Delivery Plans

Job seekers who believe they are not receiving appropriate Services as outlined in a Provider's Service Delivery Plan should raise this with their Provider in the first instance. If they are not satisfied with the outcome, job seekers may then raise their complaint with the National Customer Service Line. The National Customer Service Line can investigate matters that are reported to make sure job seekers receive the required standard of service. Complaints and the way in which Providers respond to complaints is an important feature of the monitoring of Employment Services.

Guidance to Employment Provider Tenderers in developing a Service Delivery Plan

Requirements of a Tenderer in developing a Service Delivery Plan

While it is a requirement for Employment Providers to have an organisational Service Delivery Plan, Employment Providers can choose to develop a selection of Service Delivery Plans. This could include individual Service Delivery Plans for each (or a selection of) Employment Region(s) in which Employment Providers deliver Services or Plans for each stakeholder group (for example one for Job Seekers, one for Employers and one for other networks).

Negotiation of the Service Delivery Plan with the Department

Tenderers are required to submit a draft Service Delivery Plan by 10 April 2015. The Service Delivery Plan must reflect the Tenderer's commitments as outlined in its service offer.

The Department reserves the right to retract offers of business if the Service Delivery Plan does not match the Services described in Tenderer's service offer or if the Tenderer is late in providing the Service Delivery Plan. The Department will work with Employment Providers to finalise the Service Delivery Plan(s). The final Service Delivery Plan must be agreed to by the Department within a short period of time during contract negotiations with a view to being finalised by April 2015.

The Service Delivery Plan once agreed, will form part of the Deed.

Core elements of a Service Delivery Plan

All elements in the Service Delivery Plan should be clear and measurable. Employment Providers must include specific commitments made in their response to the Request for Tender Selection criteria.

At a minimum, the Service Delivery Plan needs to address the following areas:

- Our Job Seekers

Employment Providers should detail the key strategies that are part of their core service offer which are contained in the response to Criterion 3: Achieving outcomes for Job Seekers.

- Our Employers

Employment Providers should detail what Employers can expect from them including any unique or specific strategies to satisfy the workforce needs of Employers. The commitments should reflect the response to Criterion 4: Meeting the needs of Employers.

- Our Networks

This section could include an Employment Provider's strategies and approaches for collaborating with other Employment Providers, Work for the Dole Coordinators, or any unique relationships they have with Employers, support organisations or training providers.

- About Us

Employment Providers may wish to incorporate some background information about their mission, approach or philosophy that is relevant to the delivery of Employment Services.

Monitoring of the Service Delivery Plan

The undertakings and commitments a Tenderer makes in their Service Delivery Plan(s) form part of the Deed and are a key component of the Performance Framework. The Department reserves the right to apply sanctions to Employment

Providers that do not deliver the Services outlined in their Service Delivery Plan(s). Employment Providers need to be able to demonstrate how they have delivered on the commitments as outlined in their Service Delivery Plan(s).

Specific monitoring arrangements are being refined, and will be made available prior to contracting.

Changes to a Service Delivery Plan following the start of the 2015 Employment Services Deed

Providers will be required to maintain accurate and up-to-date Service Delivery Plans to ensure they meet the needs of Job Seekers and Employers.

The Department recognises that with a five year contract period, labour markets and servicing strategies may vary throughout the period and adjustments may be necessary. Nevertheless, requests for variation would need to be considered by the Department in the context of whether the proposed change materially alters the service offer. Tenderers should not propose a service offering where they believe there is a risk of them wanting to rescind elements of the undertakings and commitments in their tender response within a short time.

Format and style of an Employment Provider's Service Delivery Plan

While the format and style of the Service Delivery Plan is entirely left to the Tenderer's discretion, Tenderers are reminded that the Service Delivery Plan must complement the Service Guarantees. Tenderer should be mindful that the Service Delivery Plan(s) must be able to be provided to stakeholders, including Job Seekers, and displayed prominently in their offices. The final Service Delivery Plans are required to be part of a provider's Connections for Quality page on the Australian JobSearch website and therefore, Employment Providers will need to ensure that the documents meet accessibility guidelines.