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| Document Metadata |
| **Target Audience** | All Clinical Employees |
| **Jurisdiction** **Jurisdiction Exclusions** | NT Health N/A |
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| **PGC/SharePoint ID: HEALTHINTRA-1880-8449** | **PGC/Content Manager ID:** EDOC2018/44727 |
| **Version Number:** | Version: 6.0 |  | Approved Date: 01/02/2021 | Review Date: 01/02/2024 |
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# Policy Statement

To ensure appropriate financial eligibility for the Territory Equipment Program (TEP).

# Policy Purpose

The TEP aims to provide prescribed items of assistive technology to assist eligible residents of the Northern Territory with a permanent or long-term functional impairment, to enhance their safety and independence, and to assist them to live and participate in their community.

This policy has been developed to transition the former Disability Equipment Program (DEP) to a service model for the provision of assistive technology for people with a functional impairment, within a contemporary service system model and within existing funding.

This policy introduces the financial eligibility criteria for the provision of assistive technology through the TEP.

# Policy Details

## Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the TEP policies and procedures.

## Policy Content and Implementation

Assistance through the TEP is directed to people with a functional impairment who are financially disadvantaged and are unable to afford to purchase items of assistive technology to meet their assessed needs. Therefore, access to TEP is limited to those people who are beneficiaries of a full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pension.

An applicant’s financial eligibility can be evidenced by the production of:

* Centrelink Disability Support Pension Card; or
* Centrelink Age Pension Concession Card.

Financial eligibility is verified with Centrelink by the TEP as part of application processing. Applicants consent to verification of their details at the time of application.

There are some exceptions to financial eligibility criteria:

* Children up to the age of 16 years with a long-term functional impairment are eligible for TEP regardless of parental income;
* Existing TEP clients as at 1 July 2019 are not required to verify financial eligibility. All new applicants from this date will be assessed for financial eligibility as per this policy;
* Special Consideration may apply to people who are experiencing financial hardship or require assistance with high cost items.

## Special Consideration

People with a functional impairment who are not beneficiaries of a full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pension may still be able to receive TEP assistance by applying for Special Consideration.

Special Consideration is recognised in two instances, for clients experiencing financial hardship or for assistance with high cost items.

Approval for Special Consideration is dependent on the following:

* priority rating;
* availability of funds;
* history of previous applications for items of assistive technology; and
* the applicant’s ability to contribute.

Clients are notified through the Approved Prescriber if an application for Special Consideration is not approved.

## Financial Hardship

The Financial Hardship provision is for people with a disability, earning limited income from sources other than the full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pensions such as part pensioners, self-funded retirees or part time employed.

Applicants for this assistance must:

* satisfy Community Allied Health eligibility;
* earn an amount equal to or lesser than the full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pension (excluding any applicable allowances) for their status. (Centrelink payment rates are publicly available from the [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) website.); and
* require specialised items of assistive technology essential to activities of daily living.

Applicants are required to provide proof of income by submitting at least one of the following:

* two payslips for the prior month;
* group certificate for the previous financial year;
* statement of earnings for the previous financial year from a superannuation fund; or
* recent bank statement clearly showing at least two regular payroll or other income debits; or
* copy of clients Level 1 or Level 2 Home Care Package budget and contingency funding (if applicable – see below for details).

Applicants who do not provide proof of income will be considered as ineligible to receive assistance from TEP.

Clients deemed eligible for TEP based on Financial Hardship are required to re-submit proof of income if they have a change in financial status or for new prescriptions if more than 12 months has passed. Clients acknowledge this requirement when signing the Special Consideration application.

## Financial Hardship for persons on Level 1/2 Home Care Packages

If a client in receipt of a Level 1 or Level 2 Home Care Package requires a high cost item of assistive technology, the TEP has a Financial Hardship provision to assist in the provision of items over $2000.

In principal, the TEP will accept requests for items of assistive technology over $2000 and will require the provision of financial information in regard to the client’s budget and contingency funding available, which would determine if this would be approved.

If approved, TEP will procure the prescribed item of assistive technology on the clients behalf, following which ownership will be transferred to the client who will then need to factor into their packages all ongoing repair and maintenance of the item.

## Assistance for High Cost Items

While it is necessary to restrict automatic eligibility for higher income earners who are not beneficiaries of a full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pension, it is recognised that expensive one-off items can present some financial concerns for all clients. In these situations, a Special Consideration application may be made for Assistance for High Cost Items.

Applicants for this assistance must:

* satisfy Community Allied Health eligibility; and
* require high cost specialised items of assistive technology with more than $2 000 to be contributed.

Applications will be considered for additional TEP assistance to fund the balance of the client contribution over $2,000. The full cost of the prescribed item/s may be partially or fully met by TEP. The relevant TEP Cost Centre Manager based on the information provided by the applicant makes this decision on a case-by-case basis. Home modifications are excluded from this provision.

Special Consideration provisions are not retrospective for items of assistive technology already issued to current clients. Approval for Special Consideration does not qualify the applicant for full eligibility for TEP or ongoing Special Consideration provisions.

This policy has been developed to provide a framework for the administration of the TEP in the Northern Territory. It will facilitate delivery of a coordinated and efficient service, which provides consistency and equity to clients to access item of assistive technology Territory wide.

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| Quality Assurance |
|  | **Method** | **Responsibility** |
| **Implementation** | Document will be available for all staff via the PGC. | PGC Administrators |
| **Review** | TEP policies - review every three yearsTEP procedures - review annually to ensure continuous quality improvement. | Senior Manager Community Allied Health & Aged Care, TEHS  |
| **Evaluation** | Adverse events will be recorded in the patient’s clinical notes and Riskman. | Senior Manager Community Allied Health & Aged Care, TEHS |
| **Compliance** |  |  |

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| Key Associated Documents |
| **Key Legislation, By-Laws, Standards, Delegations, Aligned & Supporting Documents** | TEP Policy and Procedure ManualTEP PO-5 Client Contribution PolicyTEP GL DEP Glossary |
| **References** |  |

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| Definitions, Acronyms and Alternative Search Terms |
| Term | Description |
| **Beneficiaries of a full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pension** | Clients who are entitled to and receive the full Centrelink Disability Support Pension or full Centrelink Age Pension. |

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| **National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards** |
| cid:image001.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090Clinical Governance | cid:image002.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090Partnering with Consumers | cid:image003.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infection | cid:image004.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090Medication Safety | Comprehensive care iconComprehensive Care | cid:image006.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090Communicating for Safety | cid:image007.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090Blood Management | cid:image008.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090Recognising & Responding to Acute Deterioration |
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