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# Policy Statement

To outline the aims, objectives, target populations and principles that underpin 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 introduces the key aspects of the TEP including program objectives, eligibility and clinical framework features.

# Policy Details

## Responsibilities

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

## Policy Content and Implementation

This policy provides 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 in client access to items of assistive technology on a Territory wide basis.

### Objectives

The objectives of the TEP are to ensure that clients receive a service that:

* Provides access to appropriate items of assistive technology to meet their assessed needs;
* Provides access to items of assistive technology that assist in maintaining and improving their capacity to remain in the community and to participate in social and community activities;
* Enhances continuity of care;
* Is efficiently administered, with effective management of existing resources;
* Has a consistent and equitable prioritisation process, targeted to people most in need; and
* Is flexible and able to respond to the individual needs of clients.

### Target Population and Eligibility

The target population of the TEP are those persons who:

* Have a functional impairment of a permanent or long term duration; and
* Are a permanent resident of the Northern Territory; and
* Are living in or returning to the community, and are not a resident of a Residential Aged Care facility; and
* Require access to prescribed items of assistive technology on a permanent or long term basis; and
* Are not eligible to receive the item of assistive technology under any other government-funded program; and
* Are not eligible to receive compensation in respect of the functional impairment for which the item of assistive technology has been prescribed; and
* Who are beneficiaries of a full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pension;
  + 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 1st July 2019 are not required to verify financial eligibility;
  + Special Consideration may apply for persons who are experiencing financial hardship or require assistance with high cost items.

Items of assistive technology are not provided by the TEP for:

* Residents of a Residential Aged Care facility;
* Applicants in receipt of a Commonwealth Home Care Package 1, 2, 3 or 4;
* Applicants receiving services under the NATSI Flexible Aged Care Program;
* Applicants who have an approved National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Plan; or have been identified as eligible for NDIS plan;
* Applicants eligible to receive items of assistive technology under any other government-funded program;
* Applicants eligible to receive compensation in respect of the disability for which the item of assistive technology has been prescribed; or
* Applicants who have private health fund cover for the prescribed item of assistive technology.

### Principles

NT Health is committed to decisions being:

* Person-centred
* Culturally appropriate
* Future focussed
* Equitable
* Flexible and responsive
* Collaborative
* Sustainable
* Outcome driven

These principles underpin the TEP and form the basis of its policy.

### Scope of Application

The TEP will:

* Provide the most economical item of assistive technology that meets the assessed needs of the client, within priority guidelines;
* Provide TEP approved items of assistive technology in line with clinical guidelines and TEP policies and procedures;
* Ensure that the administration of TEP in each region is consistent with the TEP policies and procedures. It is recognised that regional differences will necessitate some flexibility to ensure that items of assistive technology are appropriate to individual needs, and available to as many clients as possible within available financial resources.

### Clinical Framework

The TEP use a clinical framework for prescription of items of assistive technology that includes:

* Clinical guidelines documenting criteria for the prescription of each assistive technology type with the aim of guiding clinical decisions;
* Approved prescriber registration procedures which require prescribing therapists to be appropriately qualified and experienced to prescribe items of assistive technology in accordance with defined professional criteria for prescribers;
* Clinical expertise of the TEP/ SEAT Team Leader and TEP Advisory Committee; and
* Clinical governance by TEP Advisory Committee.

### Implementation

Existing TEP clients as at 1 July 2019 will not be affected by the changes in financial eligibility criteria and will remain financially eligible for TEP assistance. Whilst existing TEP clients financial eligibility is not affected, all **prescriptions for** **new** items for current or new clients and all **new applicants** to the TEP will be assessed and processed in line with new policies and procedures from 1 July 2019.

Clients who have been issued items of assistive technology will retain the items for as long as required. Clients receiving ongoing supplies, including oxygen and continence will continue to be supplied with these, using the new frequency of supply procedures.

Those clients previously deemed eligible on the basis of Financial Hardship will have their eligibility revised only as new prescriptions arise.

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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 years.  TEP 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 Manual  TEP GL EP Glossary |
| **References** | EnableNSW – New South Wales  [www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au](file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/a114/Local%20Settings/Ministerial%20Correspondence/DD2012_5433%20CE%20Brief%20DEP%20Implementation%20Approval/DEP%20Policies/www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au)  State-Wide Equipment Program (SWEP) – Victoria  [www.swep.bhs.org.au](file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/a114/Local%20Settings/Ministerial%20Correspondence/DD2012_5433%20CE%20Brief%20DEP%20Implementation%20Approval/DEP%20Policies/www.swep.bhs.org.au)  ACT Equipment Scheme ACTES – Australian Capital Territory  [www.health.act.gov.au](file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/a114/Local%20Settings/Ministerial%20Correspondence/DD2012_5433%20CE%20Brief%20DEP%20Implementation%20Approval/DEP%20Policies/www.health.act.gov.au)  Community Aids and Equipment Program CAEP – Western Australia  [www.disability.wa.gov.au](file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/a114/Local%20Settings/Ministerial%20Correspondence/DD2012_5433%20CE%20Brief%20DEP%20Implementation%20Approval/DEP%20Policies/www.disability.wa.gov.au)  TasEquip – Tasmania  [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service)  Domiciliary Equipment Service (DES) – South Australia  www.des.sa.gov.au/home  Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) – Queensland  [www.health.qld.gov.au/mass](file:///D:/Documents%20and%20Settings/a114/Local%20Settings/Ministerial%20Correspondence/DD2012_5433%20CE%20Brief%20DEP%20Implementation%20Approval/DEP%20Policies/www.health.qld.gov.au/mass) |

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| Definitions, Acronyms and Alternative Search Terms | |
| Term | Description |

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| **Functional impairment** | A loss of functional capacity affecting a person’s ability to complete activities of daily living as a result of a medical condition.  For the purpose of TEP, functional impairment refers to people who have difficulty performing activities of daily living without help due to functional limitations (for example communication, social interaction, mobility or self–care). |
| **Permanent or likely to be permanent** | The irreversible nature of the impairment, although its severity may fluctuate over time.  An impairment is not considered permanent where services or support are required for a limited period following an episode of illness or physical trauma; a person may only be eligible under these circumstances following the stabilisation of medical needs and rehabilitation and if the permanent nature of an impairment becomes apparent. |
| **Substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility** | When a person cannot perform tasks of daily living in at least one of the listed four areas without a high level of supervision or assistance, always requiring either supervision or help.  A person with a substantially reduced capacity for self-care because of the disability is also considered to meet this eligibility criterion. |
| **Permanent resident** | A person who resides in the Northern Territory and is able to verify their address.  An address may be verified by production of a recent utility bill or current Northern Territory Drivers Licence, or for beneficiaries of a full Centrelink Disability Support or Age Pension, through TEP verification processes. |
| **Living in or returning to the community** | Clients that reside in individual dwellings or supported independent living facilities (group homes).  Hospital in-patients being discharged back to the community may receive assistance if they meet the TEP eligibility criteria.  TEP applications may be submitted prior to discharge to facilitate assistive technology availability upon discharge. |
| **Long term basis** | Period of more than 12 months. |
| **Compensation in respect of the disability for which the item of assistive technology has been prescribed** | Clients who have received compensation or damages to provide items of assistive technology in respect of their disability.  If an applicant receives settlement after TEP has provided items of assistive technology, monies are to be reimbursed to TEP. |
| **TEP Approved Equipment List** | A list of specified items of assistive technology each having clinical guidelines and conditions for prescription. |

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| **National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards** | | | | | | | |
| cid:image001.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Clinical Governance | cid:image002.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Partnering with Consumers | cid:image003.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infection | cid:image004.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Medication Safety | Comprehensive care icon  Comprehensive Care | cid:image006.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Communicating for Safety | cid:image007.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Blood Management | cid:image008.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Recognising & Responding to Acute Deterioration |
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