

## Why Do We Have a Waitlist?

This statement explains why and how Word By Mouth Speech Pathology endeavors to provide speech pathology assessment, intervention and/ or consultation to as many clients as possible. Unfortunately, there are times when WBM does not have availability due to fluctuations in the demand for speech pathology services. Therefore, it is necessary for WBM to implement a waitlist.

## Closing the Waitlist

Word By Mouth Speech Pathology reserves the right to temporarily close the waitlist when it reaches beyond capacity to provide an evidenced based level of service to clients.

## Service Provision

Word By Mouth assists clients presenting to the clinic in a fair and equitable manner and is not limited to providing services to those with specific funding. Decisions regarding the scope of services available are made in accordance with Speech Pathology Australia's Parameters of Practice (Speech Pathology Australia, 2016).

The following considerations are made when implementing a waitlist:

- Availability of staff members with relevant skills and experience within treatment areas;
- Existing staff caseload capacity and scheduling;
- Availability of senior clinicians to provide supervisory support as deemed necessary;
- The provision of services to meet outcomes for existing clients;
- The complexity of a potential clients needs and their suitability to the services provided by Word By Mouth Speech Pathology;
- The clinical needs of the potential client e.g. stage of development, period for optimal gains and impact on overall function.
- The capacity of WBM to meet the ongoing needs within a suitable period and manner e.g. assessment, clinic or school-based therapy;
- Agreement of the potential client to attend services via Telehealth and /or in person.

## Clinic and School Based Referrals:

- New client parents / legal guardians must make initial contact. Referrals directly from schools cannot be accepted.
- Waitlists for the Mitcham Clinic location, individual school locations and Telehealth services will be recorded individually.
- Clients from a school may elect to attend clinic-based services or Telehealth if these options are available.



## When an Initial Consultation Becomes Available:

- The WBM Client Care & Administration team will make contact to offer an appointment time for an initial consultation;
- An initial consultation does not guarantee future speech pathology services at WBM;
- An initial consultation provides an opportunity for parents / guardians to discuss their child's developmental history and communication needs;
- From this appointment, a client's individual needs will be assessed by the clinician and parents to determine next steps for speech pathology management e.g. assessment, therapy, referral to alternative service etc.
- Clients who present with complex needs may be directed to alternative health services if assistance in other areas may be of more benefit before commencing speech pathology e.g. medical, psychological.
- If times offered for assessment or intervention are not suitable to the client, they will remain on the waitlist and the sessions will be offered to the next eligible person.

## Failure to attend or Pay for Service:

- Clients who fail to attend 3 out of 6 appointments (regardless of illness) may be placed back on the WBM Speech Pathology waitlist.
- Prior to this, the parents / guardians will be offered a Client Consultation meeting to discuss potential barriers to participation and considerations for alternative service options if applicable.
- Clients who have 3 outstanding invoices may be placed back on the waitlist – refer to our Terms.

## Ethical Considerations:

- WBM Speech Pathology abides by ethical considerations when managing a waitlist. Intervention offered is based upon a client's identified needs in line with evidence-based practice.
- All decisions regarding intervention (assessment & therapy) are made in accordance with evidenced based principals for the frequency and duration of treatment.

## Alternative Service Options:

- If WBM does not have immediate capacity to meet a client's needs, a parent / guardian consultation may be available. This service is to discuss general strategies and not intended to replace formal assessment or speech pathology led intervention.

If you have any questions, comments, or feedback regarding the Word By Mouth Speech Pathology Waitlist Policy, please call our Client Care & Administration Team on 9873 0102, or email: [office@wordbymouth.com.au](mailto:office@wordbymouth.com.au)

