Commonwealth Ombudsman Insights Factsheet – Preventing and Managing Administrative Delay

HOW TO PREVENT DELAY
Agencies should adopt a triage system taking into account:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerabilities</th>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Correcting errors</th>
<th>Holistic case management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a procedure to identify vulnerable individuals and give them priority.</td>
<td>Establish a procedure to identify complex requests and direct them to specialised staff</td>
<td>Establish a procedure that allows simple errors to be corrected quickly</td>
<td>Link multiple requests made by the same individual on a single file</td>
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Other ways to prevent administrative delay include:

- **Staff training**: Ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their role.
- **Guidance**: Provide guidance to staff to support their discretionary decision-making.
- **Timely receipt of information**: Establish procedures and systems to support the timely receipt of relevant information.
- **Staff absences and turnover**: Establish procedures to anticipate and manage leave and turnover.

HOW TO MANAGE DELAY

The following strategies can be used to mitigate the adverse impact of administrative delay:

- **Publish timeliness standards**: Publish timeliness standards for the completion of administrative actions.
- **Support vulnerable individuals**: Provide vulnerable individuals with referrals or access to support services, where appropriate.

Establish procedures to guide staff communication with individuals:

- **Acknowledge requests**: Promptly confirm services requested, next steps, timeframes & point of contact.
- **Provide progress updates**: Provide updates on the status of requests for services either manually or through automated systems.
- **Request further information**: Establish procedures to identify gaps in information and request further information quickly.
- **Publicise timeframes**: Identify delays as soon as possible, and proactively provide reasons for delay and revised timeframes.
- **Backlogs**: Proactively advise affected individuals of any backlogs and when requests have been allocated for action.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman Insights Report – Preventing and Managing Administrative Delay can be found [here](#).

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