

## Setting up 'outlets' in the Data Exchange

When you set up your Data Exchange account, you need to create outlets to identify where your services are delivered. This document explains what an outlet is and why they must accurately reflect the location of your services.

It also explains how organisations with multiple TEI contracts should set up their outlets.

Read this document in conjunction with the Department of Social Services (DSS) resources:

- [The Data Exchange Protocols](#), Section 3.5
- [Create and Manage Outlets](#)

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### 1. What is an outlet?

In the Data Exchange, an outlet is a location where a service took place or where staff travelled from to deliver a service.

When you record your activities in the Data Exchange, you need to identify where these activities were conducted. To do this, you must create outlets.

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### 2. Why are outlets important?

Service providers need to create outlets that are accurate and valid. Outlets must reflect the location services are delivered in.

This will enable us to map and visualise client and service delivery locations.

It will help us answer questions like:

- Are there areas where we have gaps in service delivery? Or are there areas of overlapping services?
- Where do our clients live compared to where our services are delivered?
- Are the locations of our services suitable?
- Are staff and clients travelling long distances to provide/attend services?
- What do our client groups look like in different outlets? Are we reaching the people who need us most?

If service providers do not create outlets that accurately reflect where services are delivered, we won't be able to answer these questions.

This information about your service delivery is in the [Service Footprint](#) Data Exchange report.

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### 3. How do I create/edit an outlet in the Data Exchange?

A Department of Social Services task card explains how to [create and manage outlets](#). Please read this document for support.

When you create an outlet you need an:

- outlet name
- street-level address.

Once you have created/edited your outlets, DSS needs to approve them. This can take up to 10 business days. DSS will notify you when your outlets have been approved.

**Note:** Only organisation administrators can create and manage outlets in the Data Exchange.

### 4. How many outlets do I need to create?

The number of outlets you have will depend on:

- where you deliver your services
- if your organisation holds multiple contracts which deliver services from the same location.

Reflect on your TEI schedule/s to identify where your services are delivered. Once you have a clear picture of the locations of service delivery, you will know what outlets to create.

We have provided some examples below, however, it is not possible to capture every possible scenario. Please use this document as a guide and apply the examples below to your situation.

There are different rules to follow for different types of service delivery:

#### 1. Services that are always in the same location

If your service is held in the same location every time, you should create one outlet for this location.

**Example A:** a community organisation runs weekly computer skills workshops at the local library. They create one outlet for the library.

**Example B:** a community centre provides info/advice/referral for local community members. This service is provided face-to-face for people who walk into the centre, or over the phone. They create one outlet for the community centre.

#### 2. Mobile services

A service is considered 'mobile', if the location of service delivery frequently changes, such as home visiting, food deliveries, or school excursions.

If you provide a mobile service, the outlet should be your nearest office building.

**Example A:** a community centre runs a weekly playgroup for first-time parents. The location of the playgroup changes each week. They often meet in different local parks, at the public library, the community centre etc.

The outlet created for this service is the location of the community centre. This is because it is the nearest office building where staff are located.

**Example B:** a service conducts school excursions with local school children. Each fortnight they take a group of students to a different location (e.g. a park, library, or museum).

The outlet created for this service is the location of the school. This is because it is where the group is travelling from.

**Example C:** an organisation provides intensive family therapy to many different families. The therapy is provided in the families homes.

The outlet created for this service is the location of the organisation's nearest office building. This is because an outlet should never be a client's home.

### **3. Services delivered in different locations to different clients**

If you deliver a service to different clients in different locations, you should create an outlet for each of those locations. This will give us a more accurate picture of where services are delivered.

**Example A:** an Aboriginal organisation delivers weekly language workshops in three local schools. Three outlets are created, one for each school.

**Example B:** an organisation runs parenting education workshops in 10 different community centres throughout the year. They run 6 workshops in each centre.

They create 10 outlets, one for each community centre.

### **4. One-off occasions of service**

If you provide a one-off service (e.g. a community event or information night), the outlet should reflect the location of the session. You can:

- create a new outlet. For example, a community event that is held in a local park.
- use an existing outlet. For example, an information night held in your community centre.

### **5. Online or over the phone services**

If you provide activities online or over the phone, the outlet should be the office building staff work from.

Many organisations have changed how they deliver services due to COVID-19. If you are now delivering services online, you should record your outlet as the office building staff would usually work in.

**Example A:** an organisation is providing counselling sessions over the phone. The outlet they use is the organisation's closest office building.

See [Recording alternate forms of service delivery](#) for more information. Organisations should only record virtual/telephone services that can be expected to lead to a measurable outcome.

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## 5. What if I deliver many different services in the same location?

If your organisation holds one TEI contract and conducts different activities in the same location, you only need one outlet. Service providers should NOT create duplicate outlets.

**For example:** a community organisation provides a range of services:

- information and advice
- workshops and classes for the elderly
- workshops and classes for the unemployed

All of these services are provided at the community centre.

The organisation can create an outlet with the address of the community centre. They can use that outlet for any activity conducted in that space.

**Note:** There are exceptions to this rule if your organisation holds multiple TEI contracts. See below for advice.

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## 6. What if I deliver a service in a client's home?

If a service is delivered in a client's home, the outlet should be the location of the organisation's nearest office building.

An outlet should never be a client's residential address.

**For example:** if you deliver an intensive family support program, you may conduct home visits. In this case, the outlet would be the location of your nearest office building.

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## 7. What if I deliver a service in a sensitive location?

If a service is delivered in a sensitive location (e.g. a refuge), the outlet should be:

- the location of your organisation’s nearest office building  
OR
- the address of a nearby non-identifiable public place, e.g. a post office, police station, shopping centre.

An outlet should never be a protected address or a sensitive location (e.g. a refuge).

## 8. My organisation has multiple TEI contracts. Will this impact how we set up our outlets?

DSS use organisation names and ABNs to set services up in the Data Exchange. Services are not set up by contract.

This means if a service has multiple TEI contracts, they may need to set up their outlets differently. This will help DCJ manage the contracts of service providers.

See the examples below for how services with multiple contracts could set up their outlets.

**Example 1:** A service called ‘Playgroup Vic’ has 2 TEI contracts. They follow the rules outlined above and set up their outlets as follows:

Contract/operating name	Geelong Playgroup	Moorabool Playgroup
<b>Program Activities</b>	Targeted Support	Targeted Support
<b>Outlet name</b>	Geelong Playgroup	Moorabool Playgroup
<b>Outlet address</b>	55 Little Malop St, Geelong VIC 3220	265 Ballan Rd, Moorabool VIC 3213

**Tip:** Name your outlets something that can be easily linked back to the relevant contract. In the example above, we’ve used the operating name to name our outlets.

**Example 2:** Warragul Family Support Service Inc has 3 TEI contracts that each deliver different program activities. They follow the rules above and set up their outlets as follows:

Contract/operating name	Warragul Family Support Service		Warragul Drop-In Centre	Warragul Supported Playgroup
<b>Program Activities</b>	Community Connections	Community Centre	Community Centre	Targeted Support

<b>Outlet name</b>	Civic Park	Warragul Community Centre	Warragul Drop-In Centre	Warragul Supported Playgroup
<b>Outlet address</b>	Clifford St, Warragul VIC 3820	170 Normanby St, Warragul VIC 3820	170 Normanby St, Warragul VIC 3820	143 Queen St, Warragul VIC 3820

In Example 2, the address for Warragul Community Centre and Warragul Drop-In Centre is the same. This is because these activities are conducted in the same location. However, we have created two separate outlets because these activities have two separate contracts.

Setting up outlets in this way will help us separate the data reported by this organisation, so we can see data for each contract separately.

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## 9. Can outlets have the same name and address?

No. In the Data Exchange, you cannot duplicate outlets (i.e. two outlets cannot have the same name and address). If you create an outlet using an existing name and address, an error will display advising you to modify the outlet name and address before you can create the outlet.

If you need to create one or more outlets with the same address, you need to make sure they have different names. See Example 2 above.

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## 10. What if I've set up my outlets differently to what's described here?

Many service providers have already set up their outlets. Some may have set them up differently to what is described in this document.

As we are in the 'try, test and learn' period, this is ok. We will work with service providers to ensure outlets are set up in a way that is most useful for the TEI program.

If necessary, you can edit your outlets. See the [Create and Manage Outlets](#) task card. When you edit an outlet it needs to be re-approved by DSS. This can take up to 10 business days.

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## 11. Can I delete an outlet?

Outlets can only be deleted if they have no case and session data reported against them. This means outlets used in closed reporting periods cannot be deleted.

For a current outlet to be deleted, you need to delete all case and session data within the current reporting period.

This would mean the outlet and associated cases and sessions would disappear from the current reporting period. However, data reported for that outlet in previous reporting periods will remain in the reports.

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**12. I recently edited an outlet and I am waiting for DSS approval. Can I still use the outlet?**

DSS must re-approve outlets if they have been edited. The Helpdesk states this may take up to 10 business days. However, often it is less than this timeframe. Unfortunately, organisations are unable to use the outlet whilst waiting for approval.