

Information sheet 7

Standards and monitoring performance

Disability Act 2006

Introduction

Standards and monitoring performance are central to ensuring that people with a disability access high quality and accountable services.

The *Disability Act 2006* ('the Act') commenced on 1 July 2007, and allows for mechanisms to measure, monitor and continually improve the quality of support for people with a disability to be established.

How does the Act provide for the monitoring and continuous improvement of services?

Under the Act, the Minister for Community Services (The Minister) must determine the standards that are to be met by disability service providers. Disability service providers must comply with these standards.

The standards to be determined by the Minister may include standards in relation to:

- service delivery
- support plans
- how complaints are managed
- how information is managed and privacy is maintained.

The Act also outlines the powers of the Secretary of the Department of Human Services (The Secretary) to specify, in relation to the standards, performance measures and monitor the performance of disability service providers. The Secretary may monitor the compliance of disability service providers with the relevant performance measures, and authorise a person or agency to conduct an independent review for this purpose.

Disability service providers must provide reasonable assistance and access for independent monitoring.

If a disability service provider does not meet the performance measures, conditions of funding or any other requirement of the Act, the Secretary has the power to take action.

What are the Standards for Disability Services in Victoria?

The Standards for Disability Services in Victoria (the Standards) define the acceptable standard for disability services and against which services of disability service providers are

measured and improved. The Standards assist to establish a common language that defines quality and establishes criteria for safety, rights, reliability, efficiency and service user outcomes.

Outcome Standards for Disability Services (Outcome Standards)

Outcome Standards are used to measure the quality of services according to the experiences of people who use those services.

Individuality

Each individual has goals, wants, aspirations and support needs and makes decisions and choices about their life.

Capacity

Each individual has the ability and potential to achieve a valued role in the community.

Participation

Each individual is able to access and participate in their community.

Citizenship

Each individual has rights and responsibilities as a member of the community.

Leadership

Each individual informs the way that supports are provided.

Industry Standards for Disability Services (Industry Standards)

The Industry Standards are used to measure organisational systems and processes.

Service access

Fair and equitable practice that is consistent with funding obligations, applicable legislation and purpose of the service applied when managing and allocating resources.

Individual needs

Planning and support is tailored, flexible, responsive and appropriate to the individual.

Decision-making and choice

Support options are planned, developed, implemented and reviewed in a manner that is responsive to the decisions, choices and aspirations of individuals.

Privacy, dignity and confidentiality

Privacy, dignity and confidentiality is respected and maintained.

Participation and integration

Support options are planned, developed, implemented and reviewed in a manner that builds opportunities for individuals to participate in the life of the community.

Valued status

Support options are planned, developed, implemented and reviewed in a manner that recognises the skills, abilities and potential of individuals and enables the achievement of valued roles in the community.

Complaints and disputes

Complaints and disputes are addressed promptly, fairly and respectfully without compromising services to the individual.

Service management

Management and governance practice is sound, accountable and consistent with current disability policy and practice.

Freedom from abuse and neglect

Supports are provided in safe and healthy environments that support individuals to exercise their legal and human rights.

How will the Standards be implemented?

From July 2007, disability service providers will be supported to implement the Standards through the Quality Framework for Disability Services in Victoria (the Quality Framework)

The Quality Framework is a structure that brings together important elements of quality. These elements include measurement, monitoring and improvement.

The Quality Framework is underpinned by the principles of the Act, and supports the goals of the State Disability Plan 2002–2012.

The Quality Framework builds on the processes and activities that started with the framework's initial introduction in 1997.

The implementation of the Quality Framework is supported by a learning and development strategy aimed at equipping disability service providers with the awareness, motivation, knowledge and skills to understand and effectively measure, monitor and improve their performance against the Standards.

Will disability service providers still be required to self-assess against the Standards?

Organisational self-assessment processes form part of any robust quality management practice. Objective and transparent collection and analysis of data enables an organisation to make evidence-based decisions and identify ways to improve services and supports, and for people to experience improved outcomes.

Disability service providers will continue to undertake self-assessment processes to measure the quality of services.

As improvement is always possible, all disability service providers must have a plan for improvement, regardless of their performance against the Standards.

How will disability service providers be monitored?

Disability service providers will participate in a cyclical process of independent quality monitoring. Independent quality monitoring is a process that is independent of the organisation being assessed, and objectively verifies service provider compliance with the Standards for Disability Services in Victoria. Independent quality monitoring will commence from 2009.

Independent monitoring will:

- assure compliance of disability service providers with the Standards
- be consistent with Commonwealth States & Territories Disability Agreement [CSDA] obligations
- provide an objective basis for regulatory action to address non-compliance
- be applicable across disability services funding models and activity types
- apply consistently to department-managed and community service organisations
- promote continuous quality improvement at the organisational and system level
- be transparent in its operation
- have a focus on individual outcomes
- involve people with a disability who receive services and their families and carers.

How will compliance be coordinated between the Commonwealth and State government?

In developing the monitoring mechanism for disability service providers in Victoria, one objective is to minimise duplication with other jurisdictions. This includes the Disability Employment Services Quality Assurance scheme administered by the Australian Government, Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs as well as other major quality frameworks used by disability service providers.

Further information

For a copy of *Better services, better outcomes, stronger communities: The Quality Framework for Disability services in Victoria*, or more information on the Quality Framework visit our

Improving Supports — Quality Framework web page at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability or contact:

Disability Services Division, Department of Human Services

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For more information about the *Disability Act 2006*, visit: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability