

Choice, flexibility and control

There will be expanded opportunities for people to exercise choice, flexibility and control over their supports, to build the skills necessary to plan and negotiate how their supports are delivered, and to use and manage their supports through individualised funding arrangements as we transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.



We all want to make real choices about our lives. People want the opportunity to have valued relationships and the ability to build a safe and secure future for themselves and those they care about. Our *Living Life My Way* consultations affirmed this and the wish of people to exercise choice, flexibility and control in the way supports are delivered.

This is why NSW was the first Australian state to agree to fully implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), contributing \$3.1 billion a year from 2018/19 along with Commonwealth Government investment of \$3.3 billion.

The NDIS will empower people with disability to achieve their life aspirations and safeguard their fundamental human rights.

The NDIS is starting first in Newcastle. People using disability supports in the Newcastle local government area (LGA) will access the NDIS from 2013/14, while those in the Lake Macquarie LGA will start to access the scheme from 2014/15. Existing clients in the Maitland LGA will start accessing the scheme in 2015/16. New participants from all three LGAs may start accessing the scheme from 2013/14.

All other eligible NSW residents will transition to the NDIS after 2016. This will give people eligible for NDIS supports control over their lives by making it possible for them to make decisions about

their supports and activities for themselves, whether they are social, recreational or employment.

These are big changes; however it is important to remember that the NDIS will not be fully operational until 2018. For this reason NSW will continue advancing access to individualised funding for disability service clients where we can, and in many cases, earlier than our original planned date of July 2014.

NSW will do this in a way that minimises the number of changes clients and service providers have to go through as they become participants in the NDIS. We are doing this to ensure that NSW does not expend scarce resources on the creation of a new duplicate system only to have to dismantle this within the same time frame.

Expanding individualised funding arrangements

NSW will increase its efforts to deliver individualised funding arrangements from 2013 to ensure that people with disability have the skills and experience necessary to transition seamlessly to the NDIS by:

- redirecting previously planned investment in the development of access, information and payment systems under *Stronger Together 2* toward increasing the number of individualised packages available for people with disability
- expanding the use of individualised funding arrangements within existing programs and reducing the constraints on the scope and nature of the supports they provide
- providing increased opportunities for people receiving support under a

number of programs to amalgamate this support into a single funding arrangement

- providing new clients with the option of receiving support through an individual funding arrangement

Accessing these arrangements

People requiring support will continue to access it through the current pathways. More transparent information on the eligibility criteria for and means by which existing programs are accessed will be made available through low cost enhancements to existing websites.

Those currently receiving multiple types of support who wish to access this through a single funding arrangement will be required to apply for this through designated ADHC contact officers, who will have the information necessary to determine the availability of and a person's eligibility for these arrangements.

Planning

Planning is vital to the success of any approach to supporting people with disability based on choice, flexibility and control. It forms part of the process of establishing the level of funding for a person's services and how that will be used to meet their disability support needs. It is also used as a process to support people with disability to create a detailed day to day plan which enables them to realise their goals.

Planners will work with new clients accessing support based on individualised funding arrangements to build a support plan. This will be based on approved funding which reflects not only their goals, but preferences in the

way in which their support needs are best met. They will also work in a similar way with those people provided with the opportunity to amalgamate their existing supports into a single funding arrangement. Service planners will also work with these individuals to develop a detailed day to day plan where they would like this.

People with disability already using disability services will be able to choose to access the skills of a service planner who can assist them to review their current goals and aspirations, and to consider whether their current support arrangements are working to facilitate their achievement. Access to this planning support will be aligned with the progressive implementation of the NDIS across NSW to support people with disability transition to the new scheme.

Plan management

Not everyone will want to manage their own support arrangements. People with disability receiving individualised funding will continue to be provided with the opportunity to receive their support directly from a service provider or to manage their own support with the assistance of a plan manager.

People will also have the opportunity to manage their own funding under a direct payment agreement. A risk assessment will be conducted before approving a person to manage their own funding using this arrangement. While a small number of people are currently receiving direct payments, current and new clients will only be able access these arrangements once the current direct payment agreement pilot has been successfully completed in mid 2014.

Over the past few years we have established a panel of providers who are able to assist people to manage their support arrangements. These providers carry out a range of financial, administrative, employer and reporting responsibilities on behalf of people receiving individualised funding.

This panel of providers will continue to be available to those in individualised funding arrangements. Other providers wishing to be plan managers will also be provided with this opportunity. Consistent with the NDIS, those providers who seek to be plan managers must demonstrate that they have a mechanism in place for dealing with conflicts of interest.

The costs associated with plan management functions will be built into a person's plan and funding.

Choosing a quality support provider

Finding and choosing a support provider can be daunting and time consuming. During the *Living Life My Way* consultations, people voiced their concerns about the need for transparent and accessible information about providers and the quality of their support.

Ability Links coordinators will be available to people with disability, their families and carers across all of NSW in early 2014. These coordinators will provide a locally based first point of contact for people with disability wishing to access mainstream and specialist disability services. They will have detailed knowledge about supports available within a person's local community and how these can be accessed.

In addition, we will improve the availability of information to help people

find suitable providers through low cost enhancements to existing websites.

All service providers funded by ADHC are required to implement a quality management system and attain independent third party certification against the NSW Disability Standards by 30 June 2015. Funded providers are being supported in this process by National Disability Services with the assistance of the NSW Industry Development Fund.

Safeguards

A national approach to quality and safeguards will be developed to support the NDIS. In the meantime, it will be necessary to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to minimise the risk of harm to people with disability, protect people's right to be safe, and empower them to exercise choice and control over the next five years.

Information, assessment, planning and plan management are all important components in a suite of safeguards. Other safeguards include guardianship and the Guardianship Tribunal, the Community Visitor program administered by the NSW Ombudsman for residents of supported accommodation and boarding houses, the complaints system for funded service providers administered by the Ombudsman, and systems operated by other government agencies including NSW Fair Trading and the Health Care Complaints Commission.

In the future all ADHC funded service providers will be required to establish and publicise the existence of a documented complaints process to deal with any complaints in relation to services delivered. To support providers' record

and analyse complaints, an online complaints management reporting tool will be developed based on that operated by the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner.

Other safeguard improvements are being considered as part of the development of a transitional safeguards framework.

The National Disability Strategy and mainstream service providers

Improving the lives of people with disability is a community responsibility. In February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* (NDS). With six areas of focus – inclusive and accessible communities; rights protection, justice and legislation; economic security; personal and community support; learning and skills, and health and wellbeing – the NDS is a 10 year plan designed to help realise the vision of '*an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens*'.

On 3 December 2012, *International Day of People with Disability*, we launched our first three year *National Disability Strategy NSW Implementation Plan 2012-2014*. The plan documents a suite of actions being taken across government to remove barriers that prevent people with disability from exercising their rights as equal and valued members of the community. The success of these actions is vital to enabling people with disability to have greater choice and control over their lives and the way that their disability support needs are met.

We recognise that the plan is only the first step in creating a more inclusive

NSW, where mainstream services and community facilities are accessible to and fully engage people with disability. We will be continuing to work across government and with business to strengthen our approach to ensuring that all services are provided in a way that does not directly or indirectly discriminate against people with disability participating fully in Australian society.

Building people's capacity

Capacity building initiatives are being established to help people with disability, their families and carers participate confidently in a disability system based on self directed supports and individualised funding arrangements by being supported to:

- exercise choice and control over their lives and support options
- build their expectations for a good life, set personal goals and have access to the same opportunities to pursue their goals as other members of the community
- build skills and confidence in using plan managers and managing individualised funding
- access supports that are appropriate to their circumstances and life stage needs

Living Life My Way Ambassadors and Champions will facilitate connections of support between individuals who have experience in managing their own supports and those who have limited or no experience.

Through the sharing of stories and experiences, which will include how people have dealt with their setbacks and their successes, people who are still uncertain

will also be encouraged to consider possibilities for themselves.

My Choice Matters, the NSW Consumer Development Fund, is supporting initiatives that will:

- raise awareness of opportunities to enable people with disability realise their goals and participate in their communities
- build the skills and confidence of individuals and their families to strengthen partnerships and networks
- enhance the practical capabilities of people with disability, their families and carers to use and benefit from individualised funding arrangements
- include strategies for reaching Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Disability service providers

The service system will require significant reform during transition to the NDIS to ensure that people can access the supports they need and exercise meaningful choice and control.

Alongside the move to individual funding arrangements and self-directed supports, there will be a significant expansion in the number of people receiving support in NSW. With full implementation of the NDIS from July 2018 it is anticipated that around 140,000 people will be receiving support. To meet demand, the workforce will potentially need to double.

In response, service providers will need systems that identify and respond to changing client demands, enable service flexibility, account for individuals' funding, and link to community and mainstream supports.

They will also need to recruit and retain a variety of quality staff to keep pace with demand and ensure clients can access a range of services.

ADHC will work with individuals, disability service providers and communities to build a sustainable and diverse service system ready for the NDIS by 2018. This will include:

- planning mechanisms that identify service demands and gaps across the system, and enable collaborative responses
- funding approaches that consider system sustainability and support individual choice

- support for service providers through the Industry Development Fund, a partnership with National Disability Services
- the *carecareers* workforce recruitment and marketing initiative

Where to from here

Detailed work is now underway to make this framework a reality. Regular email updates will be provided about *Living Life My Way* initiatives and progress against this framework.

To register for these updates you can:



1800 605 489



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