

Disability Services Commission

Local Area Coordination Consultation
Project

January 2010

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Executive summary

Project overview

In September 2009 PricewaterhouseCoopers ('PwC') was engaged to undertake consultation on the Disability Services Commission's Local Area Coordination Program ('the Program'). The Program is state-wide and has been operating in Western Australia since the late 1980s and has benefitted many thousands of people over this time. The Program supports people with disabilities by providing them with a Local Area Coordinator ('LAC') who delivers personalised and flexible support to them and their families.

The Disability Services Commission ('the Commission') conducted the project to gather feedback from clients of the Program to inform the Program's future enhancement and continuous improvement. The consultation included one hundred conversations with people with a disability and their families and/or carers. The interviews focused on gaining a better understanding of clients' expectations of LACs, their relationships with LACs and the outcomes achieved.

This report summarises the key themes and issues raised by a sample of clients currently using the Program. The report also includes direct quotes from those interviewed to support the key findings. This report seeks to reflect the views of clients of the Program as they were expressed and should not be seen as PwC endorsing these views.

PwC wishes to thank everyone who took part in the interviews for their time and for sharing their experiences.

Key findings

Below are the key findings which were identified through the consultation.

1 Overall satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 The majority of participants were satisfied with the Program1.2 Satisfaction was driven by: accessibility, knowledge, responsiveness and the support provided1.3 Dissatisfaction was driven by: lack of accessibility and of LAC's understanding, limited knowledge and timeliness in follow-up1.4 A high turnover of LACs and a lack of consistency generally had a negative impact on satisfaction1.5 Overall satisfaction with the Program was related to client expectations1.6 Client expectations of the Program differed between people with a disability and carers1.7 The level of support the client requires from their LAC varied – and changed their expectations of the Program
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2 Role of the LAC	<p>2.1 Most clients felt their LAC had made a positive difference to their life</p> <p>2.2 Commission defined LAC roles were generally accepted</p> <p>2.3 LACs have a key role in providing access to information and services</p> <p>2.4 The priority attributed by clients to the different LAC roles differed based on their needs and their access to other support</p> <p>2.5 The frequency of contact with the LAC differed based on client needs and access to other support</p>
3 Relationship between clients and their LAC	<p>3.1 The relationship between the client and the LAC influenced satisfaction with the Program</p> <p>3.2 Building a working relationship with an LAC was based on: compatible personalities; genuine interest in the client; being understanding; being supportive; and the client agreeing with the goals of the Program</p> <p>3.3 The strength of relationship with an LAC differed depending on client needs</p> <p>3.4 The length of time with an LAC strengthened the relationship</p> <p>3.5 There were limited relationships between the LAC and wider family</p>
4 Achieving client outcomes	<p>4.1 Most clients felt their LAC had made a positive difference to their life</p> <p>4.2 Not all clients had clear goals identified – goals were most important at key transition points in their lives</p> <p>4.3 Some clients did not want their LAC involved in defining family goals</p> <p>4.4 Around half of clients recalled preparing a ‘Shared Agreement’ with their LAC</p> <p>4.5 Feedback was mixed about the usefulness of completing a ‘Shared Agreement’</p> <p>4.6 Types of goals agreed in the ‘Shared Agreement’ varied</p>
5 Client proposed improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced and more consistent LAC style and approach • Improved quality of, and access to information • Improved LAC handover arrangements • Greater clarity of the LAC role • Improved process for referral to the Program

Conclusions

Overall, the majority of participants in the consultation had positive experiences through their involvement with the Program, with a significant number being satisfied with their experience of having an LAC. There was strong support from clients that this valuable service be continued for other people in similar situations.

However, there are a number of opportunities for further enhancement of the Program, to reinforce the benefits which people have experienced.

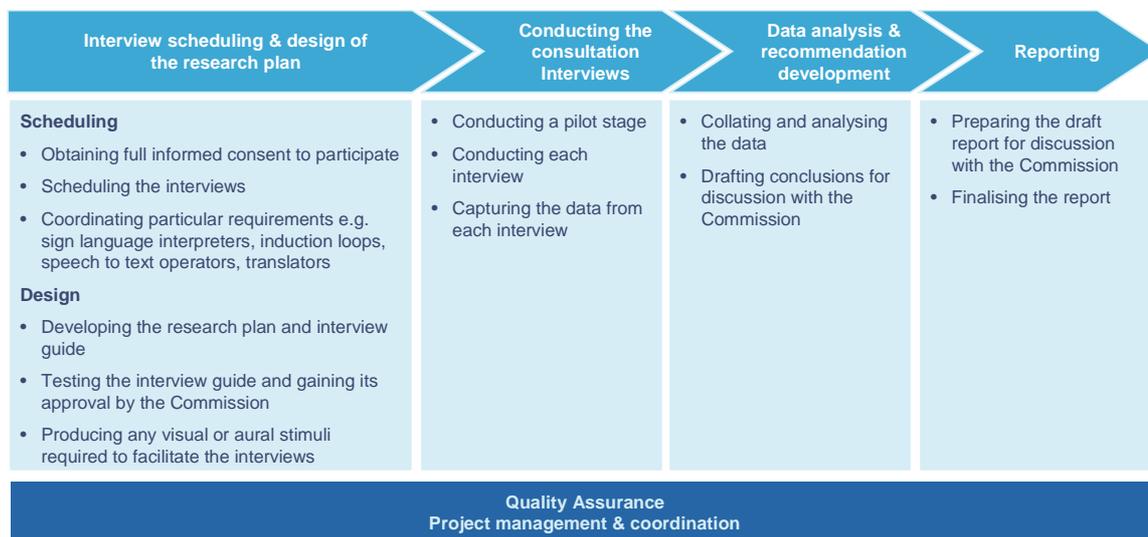
Many of these opportunities involve reducing the variation in experiences of different LAC clients, further improving information and communication, managing client expectations through greater clarity of the LAC’s role and the services that they can provide, and smoothing handovers

between LACs. The Program could also look at policies, processes and systems to further support the LAC's ability to respond to the needs of clients in a timely manner.

Clarifying the purpose of the Shared Agreement could further support the client/LAC relationship by defining the key activities by which the LAC could support the client. Defining the client goals is important for the LAC to understand their client's situation and could therefore be completed or reviewed at key life transition points, or as they approach.

Consultation Approach

The project was conducted in four stages as summarised below.



The interviews were conducted between October and December 2009. Further details about the consultation are described below.

Consultation participants

The consultation included one hundred conversations (i.e. interviews) with current clients of the Program. For the purposes of this report, the clients are defined as the primary user of the Program - either the person with a disability or their carer. In a small number of interviews it was conducted with both the person with a disability and their carer.

Participants were randomly selected by the Commission and were chosen to provide a sample of the types of clients that use the Program. Quotas were used to make sure key groups using the Program were represented. The interviews included participants across age groups, disability type and different locations in Western Australia:

- Age groups: participants were categorised into two age groups: the person with a disability is less than 24 years old or the person with a disability is 24 years or older.
- Type of disability: those with an intellectual disability or another form(s) of disability.
- Location: metropolitan area (within Peel, Lancelin and Chidlow) and regional areas (from across Lower South West, Lower Great Southern, Wheatbelt, North-West and Midwest regions).

The Commission initially contacted each participant to confirm whether they would like to be involved before providing their contact details to PwC. PwC then contacted the participant to organise a convenient time for the interview. The majority of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, with some conducted by telephone if requested by the client.

An interview guide was prepared to prompt the discussion and is included as Appendix A.

Structure of the Report

The report is structured around five key themes:

- 1 **Overall satisfaction with the Local Area Coordination Program** – this section explores participants' overall views on the Program and their satisfaction with the service.
- 2 **Role of the Local Area Coordinator** – this section focuses on the perceived role of Local Area Coordinators ('the LAC'), the type of support they provide and the frequency and nature of this support.
- 3 **Relationship between clients and their LAC**– this section considers the qualities and attributes that are valued in the relationship with LACs and the impact of the length of the relationship on its value to each participant.
- 4 **Achieving client outcomes** – this section identifies and discusses the outcomes achieved as a result of the Program, along with the process and value of creating a Shared Agreement, with each participant.
- 5 **Client suggested improvements** – the final part of the report reflects participants' suggested changes to the Program.
- 6 **Conclusions** – this section summarises key outcomes from the consultation process.

1 Overall satisfaction with the Local Area Coordination Program

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to describe their level of satisfaction with the Program and to talk in general terms about their experiences. Key findings are highlighted below and described in the following sections.

Key Findings

- 1.1 The majority of participants were satisfied with the Program
- 1.2 Satisfaction was driven by: accessibility, knowledge, responsiveness and the support provided
- 1.3 Dissatisfaction was driven by: lack of accessibility and of LAC's understanding, limited knowledge and timeliness in follow-up
- 1.4 A high turnover of LACs and a lack of consistency generally had a negative impact on satisfaction
- 1.5 Overall satisfaction with the Program was related to client expectations
- 1.6 Client expectations of the Program differed between people with a disability and carers
- 1.7 The level of support the client requires from their LAC varied – and changed their expectations of the Program

1.1 The majority of participants were satisfied with the Program

'Our LAC has been an unbelievable support.'
carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Country WA.

Around two thirds of participants expressed satisfaction with the Program citing how useful LAC's were in:

- providing information
- acting as a guide to the various services and funding options available
- helping to ensure people and families have the help and support they need

Those who were satisfied also often described how valuable the emotional support of their LAC has been to them, particularly during transition points (for example when a child starts school) and during times of 'crisis'.

Of those clients who were satisfied, around half were 'very satisfied' with the Program. This high level of satisfaction was often due to a feeling that their LAC 'went out of their way' to help them, and was very committed to their role and the families with whom they were working.

Some of those who described themselves as satisfied stated that they were not currently using the Program to a significant extent, but that they were confident that should they need more support in future it would be available. This confidence was based either on previous experience of the Program, or on their positive relationship with their LAC.

'I don't always have to do it alone. It's good to know someone is there to fight your battles if you get too tired or fed up.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

However, almost one third of clients did not describe themselves as satisfied with the Program. A number of these clients stated that the Program was a good concept but that their dissatisfaction stemmed from issues with the delivery of the service. In particular, lack of confidence in individual LACs drove much of the dissatisfaction with the Program, with some clients stating that they had previously been satisfied, but that since they had experienced a change in personnel, this satisfaction had reduced.

'All the services our family finds ourselves, and we only get information that is not relevant to our needs.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

Common complaints were the LAC's lack of knowledge regarding the availability of services or funding, lack of regular contact, and inconsistency on following up on actions and keeping the client informed of progress. Some of those who were dissatisfied complained about high levels of turnover in personnel and issues regarding handover and the time required to rebuild the relationship each time the LAC changed. In some instances the turnover was so great and the contact so inconsistent that at times they were unsure who their LAC was.

'Each new LAC, a new form, a new ball game.'

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

A number of clients described how their LAC had helped them with applications to access services or funding which had proved unsuccessful. However, these clients were not necessarily dissatisfied with the Program and a number were still very satisfied with it. In these circumstances, clients understood when the outcome of a decision was not within the LAC's control and did not blame them for the unsuccessful result.

'We have had a lot of disappointment. When our LAC has been good they have been shipped off (i.e. promoted) and we have been left in the dark.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

1.2 Satisfaction was driven by: accessibility, knowledge, responsiveness and the support provided

Clients were asked to describe which elements of the Program were working particularly well for them. Their responses can be summarised as:

- accessibility and understanding
- knowledge
- responsiveness
- support to the client and their family.

Each is described in further detail (see over) with how it relates to client satisfaction.

Accessibility and understanding

'I don't need much help but recently had an emergency and needed help to sort out funding for my wheelchair. He (the LAC) knew it was really important for me and sorted it out really quickly.'

younger person with a disability, Perth Metro

'I ring whenever I need. [The LAC] does go away for weeks at a time to visit other regions but always leaves a back up number/contact.'

carer of a younger disabled person, country WA

'She gets things done when others say they will but don't. Will follow up on what she says she's going to do sets a timeframe to respond and sticks to it.'

older disabled person, country WA

Our LAC has come to meetings with us and brought up things we wouldn't have known of or thought of which has really helped.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, country WA

'Our LAC takes an interest...(and is) constantly looking out for things for us to become involved in.'

carer of an older person with a disability, country WA

'When someone in your family falls ill you don't know anything about the systems or services ...there's a whole universe you don't know about ... (we were) terribly dependent on our LAC ... to walk us through it all.'

carer of an older person with a disability, Perth Metro

- Satisfied clients often described how much they appreciated having someone available and accessible at the times that they required them
- This, combined with their LAC's prior knowledge of their situation and understanding of their needs, proved very valuable
- Clients liked the ability to determine how regularly they were contacted, and felt that this flexibility enabled them to receive intensive support during key points in time, and less intensive, 'checking in' type support while things were progressing well

Knowledge

- Many clients discussed how complicated the system can seem to be, particularly for those with no experience of it i.e. the parents of a recently diagnosed child or the carer of a person with an acquired disability. These clients greatly appreciated help in orientating their way through the system, and in pre-empting potential issues before they became a problem
- Clients also valued the LAC's knowledge in how to maximise the opportunity to access services and funding, and their practical advice and support to submit these applications
- Some clients described the role of the LAC as an informed, experienced person positioned *between* the client and the various agencies which was important as it enabled them to provide a particular kind of support. Interestingly, clients often perceived that the LAC was somewhat removed from the Commission, or were not aware of the Program's relationship to the Commission at all, and would use the LAC to support them in discussions with Commission staff

Responsiveness

- Effective and timely responses to client requests for information and advice were highly valued and regularly cited by satisfied clients as a key benefit of the service
- Clients often said that being able to deal with just one person, who could then make suggestions and referrals, made managing their situations much easier and less stressful, rather than having to go to each agency individually

Support for the client and their families

- A number of clients expressed their appreciation of the personal support that their LAC provided to them and their family
- Clients often stated that their LAC was not a 'friend' but a supportive professional who, they felt, was genuinely interested in them and committed to helping them
- The relationship with their LAC was valued whether or not the client was currently in frequent contact with them. Many clients stated that they liked the fact that their LAC checked in with them infrequently but regularly (e.g. every six months) as this provided continuity and an opportunity to reassess their situation.

'We see lots of therapists but can't talk to them – we need the support or someone who will just listen.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, country WA

'It's good having someone there for us.'

carer of an older person with a disability, Perth Metro

1.3 Dissatisfaction was driven by: lack of accessibility and of LAC's understanding, limited knowledge and timeliness in follow-up

Clients were also asked to describe the elements of the Program that were working less well for them. Three of the four areas discussed were also areas reported to be working well by others:

- Accessibility and understanding
- Knowledge
- Responsiveness

This highlights how fundamental these factors are to client satisfaction. It also indicates that currently the Program is being delivered inconsistently, thereby causing dissatisfaction for some people.

Accessibility and understanding

- Some clients observed that their LAC appeared to have too many people to work with, and therefore did not have sufficient time to support them. A small number of clients making this observation also commented that as LACs prioritised those needing intensive support, some longer term clients were not given the support they needed to help them achieve less urgent but still important longer term goals, such as independent living
- There were also several instances where the relationship between the client and LAC did not seem to be well established, or to be providing the type or level of support that the client wished to receive

'When things start up outside of the service, the LACs don't know about it ... why isn't there communication from the outside to the inside? They (LACs) are the people who should know.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'All the information I have got has been through other families.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, country WA

'We have to dig around for information so much, it's not very proactive.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'The current arrangement does not meet our needs. Because of the past lack of follow through and the fact that no one has called, I will not call anymore.'

carer of a younger disabled person, Perth Metro

'We would like more regular contact, and a better transition between LACs... not just a letter.'

carer of younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

- Several clients cited LACs not keeping in touch with them with sufficient frequency, saying that regular contact was important to stop situations turning into crises by being able to identify them early and act quickly
- A small number of clients felt that their LAC did not seem to have sufficient understanding of, or experience in, working with people with disabilities and that as a result their advice was not as valuable or practical

Knowledge

- There were several instances of clients stating that their LAC lacked knowledge about particular services and where the client felt better informed than the LAC
- In addition, a number of clients complained that they were not always aware themselves of the questions that they needed to ask and therefore needed their LAC to be proactive in providing information and suggestions. When this hadn't happened it had caused frustration and in some cases meant that people had not received services or funding to which they felt they may have been entitled

Responsiveness

- Clients were frustrated when actions or requests for information were not followed up. This sometimes led to a sense that certain families or individuals were being prioritised over others.

1.4 A high turnover of LACs and a lack of consistency generally had a negative impact on satisfaction

One of the most common complaints about the Program pertained to turnover of LACs. This seemed to have affected certain geographical areas more than others. In general, the greater the level of turnover, the greater the level of dissatisfaction with the Program.

The negative experience of LAC turnover was linked to a resultant inconsistency of approach, contact level, and support provided by the different LACs. This was cited as a major cause of frustration, particularly where the relationship had previously been good.

Clients were often frustrated with the high turnover as they disliked having to retell their story to each new LAC. Clients also did not like the uncertainty associated with getting a new LAC.

This perceived lack of consistency in the level and type of support being provided by different LACs was also expressed in situations where staff turnover was not stated as an issue.

However, some clients who had experienced a fairly high level of turnover remained satisfied with the Program. This appeared to be due to a thorough handover process and the quick reestablishment of a good working relationship.

A few clients recognised that LACs wouldn't stay forever, and that LAC turnover was inevitable or expressed little frustration or concern regarding LAC turnover.

A number of clients expressed positive views about LAC turnover, including the chance to work with someone who had new and different ideas on how to improve the life of the client or carer.

1.5 Overall satisfaction with the Program was related to client expectations

Overall satisfaction with the Program is related to client expectations, which vary significantly from person to person. While some parts of the LAC role were universally expected (for example, responding to telephone calls), others were expected by a smaller group of the clients interviewed.

Key areas in which LAC clients expect support, based on their interview responses, are summarised below:

'When the LAC is new, you are teaching them.'

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'It is clearly inequitable what clients and families get. Some LACs bend over backwards and bend the rules for their clients, others put in no effort.'

carer of a younger person with a disability, Perth Metro.

'I have not had contact with a LAC since August [~3 months]. I received a letter saying I had a new LAC but still have not met them or had any further contact with them.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'They have all been wonderful. They were all very good and understood my daughter's needs.'

carer of a younger disabled person, Perth Metro

'The previous LAC was less experienced and therefore less effective, but did help. The current LAC is very experienced and wise.'

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

Expectation	Comments
LAC makes contact with the client	Almost all clients who expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with the LAC service were those who either rarely heard from their LAC or felt that their LAC was neglecting them
LAC is responsive	Where clients believed that the LAC did not respond in a reasonable amount of time, there was a high likelihood of dissatisfaction with the service
LAC can assist client in times of crisis	Many clients defined the base level of service as being available if and when the client was in a crisis situation – that is, they can use the LAC as a last resort
LAC has a good knowledge of services available	There was a higher level of dissatisfaction with the service where the client felt that the LAC did not understand the services available to people in their situation
LAC understands client's needs	How well the person felt that the LAC understands them directly relates to their overall satisfaction with the LAC - regardless of how often or by what method they communicate with the LAC

Of note, expectations were driven by, amongst other things, the support a client's previous LAC provided. For example, where a previous LAC provided transport for clients or took them out for coffee, an expectation was created that future LACs would also provide such support, regardless of the reasonableness of that expectation.

1.6 Client expectations of the Program differed between people with a disability and carers

Through the consultation both people with disabilities and their carers were interviewed. Overall people with disabilities were generally more satisfied with the Program than the carers that were interviewed. This was often because the carer had higher expectations about the Program and the services that could be provided.

1.7 The level of support the client requires from their LAC varied – and changed their expectations of the Program

The consultation highlighted that clients do not require a uniform level of support from their LAC. This variation was based on:

'Our LAC helped us get the care we need and we no longer need to use them much as we are now well looked after.'

older person with a disability, Country WA

- the complexity of their current situation
- the availability of other resources such as a family or community network on which they can rely for support
- the life stage of the person with the disability

- whether they were experiencing a period of stability or were going through, or were about to go through, a period of planned or unplanned transition

These factors, amongst others, determined the current level of support perceived to be required by each client from their LAC. It was also noted that a client's level of need often changes over time.

The amount of support required greatly influenced the client's expectations of what the Program should deliver and the role of the LAC. This was more important than other differences such as whether they were younger or older, the type of disability, or the location i.e. metropolitan or regional areas.

Importantly, the level of support required was not related to satisfaction. Clients with both high levels and lower levels of required support expressed satisfaction, and conversely dissatisfaction with the Program.

2 Role of the Local Area Coordinator

Clients were asked to describe their understanding of the role of LACs, the type of support they provide and the frequency and nature of this support. Key findings are highlighted below.

Key Findings

- 2.1 Clients generally had low awareness about the existence of the Program and support provided
- 2.2 Commission defined LAC roles were generally accepted
- 2.3 LACs have a key role in providing access to information and services
- 2.4 The priority attributed by clients to the different LAC roles differed based on their needs and their access to other support
- 2.5 The frequency of contact with the LAC differed based on client needs and access to other support

2.1 Clients generally had low awareness about the existence of the Program and support provided

The consultation showed that generally the level of awareness about the existence of the Program was low, and there was a lack of consistency in the way people were initially referred to the Program.

- Some clients said that they wish they had known about the Program earlier. In particular, they noted that the Program would have been useful when the client first engaged with the Commission
- Some clients first approached LACs directly after being referred by a school or an acquaintance that has an LAC. This was in contrast to being contacted by the Commission about the Program, or by an LAC directly
- In one instance, a parent had been caring for children with a disability for almost 18 years before they were referred to the LAC Program

'I am confused about what can be provided by a LAC. I'm not sure if they can be practical help like I need my local traffic signals adjusted so I can use them – but I'm not sure if the LAC can help',

younger disabled person, Perth Metro

The interviews also revealed that the level of understanding of the types of support that the Program could help them access was low.

- Most clients were unclear about the breadth of services available when they first joined the Program
- For a number of clients, the LAC role has become clearer over time, sometimes through a 'trial and error' approach

- Many clients remain unclear about the breadth of support available and the roles the LAC could fulfil, even when they have been using the Program for a number of years

2.2 Commission defined LAC roles were generally accepted

Clients were asked to respond to the Commission’s definition of the role of an LAC (see Appendix B), and to describe whether it reflected the role that their LAC performed for them.

A large proportion of clients interviewed thought that all roles as defined by the Commission were appropriate roles for an LAC. While most clients expected the LAC to perform the roles described, not all clients had used those services.

The proportion agreeing that each item was a role of the LAC and their expectations about that role are summarised below.

Role	Proportion agreeing role of LAC	Comments and Examples
Builds relationship	High	Almost all clients expected an LAC to be able to quickly form a relationship with the client
Provide access to information	High	The majority of clients expected that an LAC provides relevant information to clients about services available
Assist to access support and services	High	The majority of clients expected an LAC to assist them to access support and services such as funding, respite, care agencies etc.
Develops practical solutions	Medium	A large proportion of clients expected an LAC to work with families to find solutions to problems and achieve goals
Helps define goals / strengths / needs	Medium	While a large proportion of clients thought it was the role of an LAC to help to define client and family goals, some clients did not think this was the role of an LAC, and should be left up to the family
Provides advocacy	Low	Promoting and providing advocacy was not frequently viewed as the role of an LAC. Clients who were more likely to expect advocacy were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • currently, or previously had intensive support from their LAC • negotiating major transitions such as leaving school and starting work
Builds inclusive communities	Low	Many clients did not expect the LAC to perform this role, often because they expected an LAC to have other priorities. However, most clients did believe that this was a role for the Commission

‘The most important aspect is the information the LAC gives me – this is the greatest tool you can have.’

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

‘I don't expect them to be experts but a resource, or provide information that you might not have gleaned. They should have resources at their finger tips about what is available. For example what tax breaks or respite facilities are out there.’

carer of a younger disabled person, Perth Metro

The role which received least recognition was ‘Building inclusive communities’. There was little clarity regarding what this might involve and many clients thought that LACs should be focused on the individual relationship with their clients, rather than spending time working in the community to achieve systematic change. Many thought that this was a role more appropriate for the Commission.

Although providing advocacy and building inclusive communities had lower response rates than other aspects of the role, some clients rated these as amongst the most important roles an LAC could fulfil.

2.3 LACs have a key role in providing access to information and services

A common theme throughout the interviews was the need for clients to be able to access information, either themselves or using the LAC as a liaison.

- In some instances, clients described situations where they did not have a clear idea about what services were available, or did not realise that the LAC could help them access those types of services
- Others gave examples of LACs lacking information on services that they needed, and as a result potentially missing out on certain opportunities
- Some clients expressed frustration at working with inexperienced LACs, and commented that the LAC should have some experience of supporting people with a disability before taking on an LAC role
- Where neither the client nor the LAC has a good knowledge of services available, there is a potential risk that the person will not get the services they need.

2.4 The priority attributed by clients to the different LAC roles differed based on their needs and their access to other support

‘The most important thing is for the LAC to be available in emergencies.’

older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

The importance placed on each element of the LAC role differed depending on the client’s external support needs.

- Those clients with access to other support networks such as extended family or faith groups, tended to prioritise access to information, services and support to develop practical solutions. These clients were also more likely to view building inclusive communities as an important role for the LAC, as many of the client’s more immediate needs were being met by people other than the LAC.

- Those who did not have access to this wider support network thought that the LAC's key roles were around building the relationship with the client and their family and helping them to define goals and needs. Depending upon their individual needs they also prioritised assistance in accessing services and developing practical solutions, and they were less able to access help in making these arrangements themselves. Those clients experiencing change in their circumstances also highlighted the importance of the advocacy role.

2.5 The frequency of contact with the LAC differed based on client needs and access to other support

Clients were asked about the frequency and nature of contact with their LAC, and whether this met their needs. Responses were largely determined by the individual circumstances of the client.

- Those experiencing stability and with access to other sources of support were comfortable with contact perhaps once or twice per year.
- Those who were also stable but without these external support networks generally sought more frequent contact – often suggesting monthly liaison with their LAC to be appropriate. A monthly check-in was also suggested by those who had more complex needs, but who had access to other forms of support.
- Those experiencing complex situations and who didn't have access to wider support networks tended to request the most frequent contact with their LAC, suggesting that it needed to be at least monthly, with contact on an 'as often as required' basis during challenging periods.

LACs use a variety of mediums to keep in contact with their clients. Often there was an agreement about how often and how the LAC and the client would contact one another.

A significant number of clients, particularly those who were comfortable being self directed in accessing the support they needed, were happy to maintain regular email contact with their LAC and liked the flexibility that this channel of communication provided. Telephone was also commonly used to keep in touch.

Face to face visits appeared to be the most effective way for an LAC to assess how the client and family were going and what assistance they might need. A number of clients said that they felt uncomfortable asking for help, and that the LAC needed to spend time with them to understand what support they required.

Depending on the circumstances, a visit may enable an LAC to recommend support or services which the client did not know were available and therefore would not have requested. Many clients felt that telephone contact would not be appropriate in these circumstances as it would not provide the information the LAC would need.

'I call the LAC every morning.'
older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'The LAC calls every 2-3 weeks to see how things are going. I enjoy talking to her.'
carer of younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'I haven't seen [the LAC] for a year, and called yesterday ... This meets my needs in a way, but I want more contact.'
carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

3 Relationship between clients and their LAC

Clients were asked to discuss the qualities and attributes that they valued in their relationship with their LAC, and the impact of the length of the relationship on its value to them. The following summarises clients' views on their relationship with their LAC.

Key Findings

- 3.1 The relationship between the client and the LAC influenced satisfaction with the Program
- 3.2 Building a working relationship with an LAC was based on: compatible personalities; genuine interest in the client; being understanding; being supportive; and the client agreeing with the goals of the Program
- 3.3 The strength of relationship with an LAC differed depending on client needs
- 3.4 The length of time with an LAC strengthened the relationship
- 3.5 There were limited relationships between the LAC and wider family

3.1 The relationship between the client and the LAC influenced satisfaction with the Program

'The LAC is a nice person, but...she doesn't have any additional information and doesn't know where to look for it any better than I do.'

carer of a younger disabled person, Perth Metro

The consultation highlighted that the personality and skills of particular LACs were a significant factor in the satisfaction of clients. For most clients, it was not just about the Program and the services it provided access to, but about the person providing the support. This was particularly true of those clients who lacked access to other sources of support.

However, many clients viewed their individual LAC as separate from the Program itself and held different views about each. Some clients were dissatisfied with the Program but were happy with their individual LAC.

Other clients commented that their level of satisfaction with the Program was not directly related to the 'friendliness' or 'niceness' of the LAC themselves. For example, some clients stated that while the LAC was a nice person, they found the support provided inadequate.

The interviews did not find that the reverse of this observation above to be true. Where clients did not have a good personal relationship with the LAC, they were almost always dissatisfied with the Program too.

3.2 Building a working relationship with an LAC was based on: compatible personalities; genuine interest in the client; being understanding; being supportive; and the client agreeing with the goals of the Program

Clients were asked to describe their relationship with their LAC. Overall, five key qualities and attributes were revealed as necessary to ensure a trusting working relationship was formed and maintained between the client and their LAC.

LAC and client have compatible personalities

Clients responded positively when they felt their LAC had a personality which made them feel at ease. Terms used to describe this type of relationship included 'approachable', 'easy to talk to', 'friendly', 'good rapport' and 'people person'.

'I trust [the LAC], he's approachable and friendly.'

older person with a disability, Perth Metro

Client feels that the LAC is interested in them

'Good' relationships were often described by clients who felt that the LAC was genuinely interested in them, and in supporting their well-being. Examples used to describe an 'interested' LAC included: responding quickly when the client has a problem; proactively suggesting ideas to the client; listening to the client; and responding to the client with promised information.

'The LAC takes a lot of interest. She knows everything that goes on and is in constant communication.'

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, country WA

Client feels that the LAC understands their situation

Clients were more likely to view the Program positively where they felt that the LAC had a good understanding of their situation. A few clients commented that they felt that those LACs who had personal experience of working with people with a disability were better placed to have a true understanding of their situation.

'The LAC needs to get to know [the client] to understand her problems.'

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

Client feels supported by the LAC

Feeling 'supported' by the LAC was considered by many clients to be a very important part of the relationship. These clients placed a high value on: knowing there was someone there even if they didn't need help at that particular time; always having someone to call; not feeling that they had to be on their own; and being able to access advice when they didn't know what to do. Where clients felt that this support is in place, this 'fall back' option gave them a great deal of reassurance.

'(The LAC) helps our family gain access to help and provides support when our family is in need.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'(The LAC is) someone to support the family, and who knows the ins and outs of the Commission.'

carer of a younger person with a disability, country WA

'[The LAC is] supportive and compassionate. She is extremely good, like a friend as well. She cares, is sincere and really is concerned about us.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'It is very important to have that trust relationship, otherwise you won't rely on them (LACs) to do anything.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'The LAC would be able to do more for families if the Commission removed some of the current restrictions.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'The Commission's services are like the 'secret service'. Nobody knows what's out there - not even the LACs.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

While most clients felt supported, almost all clients were of the view that their LAC was very busy. Clients thought it would be good if the LAC could help them with more things, or do more within the community, but didn't think that this would be possible given that the LAC was 'so busy already'.

The client agreed with the goals of the Program

The consultation highlighted that there needed to be a common understanding (or trust) in the objectives between the client and the LAC, the goals of the Program, and the larger objectives of the Commission. These can be defined as:

- Common understanding with their LAC – this was formed through the direct relationship with the LAC. This type of trust was particularly important when the client wished to use the LAC as an advocate for them in dealing with different agencies, including the Commission.
- Agree with the goals of the Program – this was formed through an understanding of the objectives of the Program. Having trust in the Program enabled clients to begin relationships with new LACs with positivity as they trusted that the Program itself was beneficial. Where the client had not yet established trust with the individual LAC, agreement with the goals of the Program was important for them to continue engaging with it.
- Agree with the larger objectives of the Commission – this was when the client's beliefs were consistent with the goals of the Commission. Some carers commented that the concept of independent living for people with a disability was not appropriate for their family member but was seen as a goal of the Commission. These clients were therefore cautious in their dealings with the LAC as they had limited trust in the Program due to its affiliation with the Commission. Equally, some clients described the 'rules and regulations' set by the Commission as restricting their LAC's ability to react flexibly to their needs.

3.3 The strength of relationship with an LAC differed depending on client needs

In general, those clients who were satisfied with the LAC program had a relationship with their LAC that was appropriate to their needs.

- In general, those clients who required relatively more support from their LAC had a closer personal relationship with them
- Some clients did not believe they needed a 'relationship' with the LAC in order to avail themselves of services required. These clients were often those who appeared to have lower external support needs than others interviewed

'A working relationship. Very professional but not a friendship. I don't know [the LAC] personally but she knows lots about us, as she has to.'

carer of an older disabled person, Perth Metro

- Those who used the LAC solely as a source of information had a more transactional relationship with them

In most cases there appeared to be a balance between the LAC being available and responsive to the clients' needs, and encouraging self reliance and independence. In a small number of cases, LACs were relied upon for day-to-day activities, such as transport.

3.4 The length of time with an LAC strengthened the relationship

Clients recalled very different experiences with the length of time they had been with their LAC:

- Most clients reported having had their current LAC for between one to two years
- Some clients have had them for much longer (over five years)
- Others reported a very frequent turnover of LACs

Some clients thought that a longer relationship with an LAC built greater trust and understanding over time. Where clients have had a long relationship with a trusted LAC, they value the relationship immensely.

However, others thought that their relationship with the LAC had not changed over time, and was either good or not good from the start.

3.5 There were limited relationships between the LAC and wider family

Clients were asked about the amount of time their LAC spent with their wider family and whether this met their needs. The role of the family in the client's relationship with the LAC was unclear, and appeared to vary significantly between clients. However generally speaking there was usually just one key contact for the LAC and any interaction or relationship with other family members was fairly minimal.

A few clients stated that they wished their LAC to develop a greater relationship with other members of their family but most seemed comfortable with an arrangement whereby all contact was channelled through one person i.e. the primary carer or person with a disability.

'A friendly acquaintance. It's important that we get on and trust is important. [The LAC] understands the situation. We have known each other a few years – it didn't take long.'

carer of a younger disabled person, Perth Metro

'[The relationship] hasn't changed over time, and it probably won't change.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

4 Achieving client outcomes

In this section the outcomes achieved as a result of the Program are identified and discussed, along with the process and value of creating a Shared Agreement. Key findings are highlighted below.

Key Findings

- 4.1 Most clients felt their LAC had made a positive difference to their life
- 4.2 Not all clients had clear goals identified – goals were most important at key transition points in their lives
- 4.3 Some clients did not want their LAC involved in defining family goals
- 4.4 Around half of clients recalled preparing a ‘Shared Agreement’ with their LAC
- 4.5 Feedback was mixed about the usefulness of completing a ‘Shared Agreement’
- 4.6 Types of goals agreed in the ‘Shared Agreement’ varied

4.1 Most clients felt their LAC had made a positive difference to their life

The type of positive difference for clients varied from making the clients or carer’s life easier by assisting with access to funding or respite through to assisting the client to learn new life skills or attend the school of their choice.

‘It was only due to the LAC that we could get our son into mainstream school.’

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, country WA

‘I haven’t really taken up any of the LAC’s suggestions.’

older person with a disability, Perth Metro

‘I don’t use the service enough to comment.’

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

- Many clients were extremely positive in their assessment of the difference an LAC has made to their lives. In particular, those clients who were less able to find and access services themselves felt that having an LAC had made a significant positive difference.
- However, some clients did not feel that having an LAC had made much of a difference to their lives. These clients tended to fall into one of three categories.
 - Firstly, some clients said that while the LAC had made many good suggestions e.g. how the client could become more involved in the community, they had either decided not to act on these suggestions or they thought they were not appropriate for their circumstances
 - Secondly, some clients said that in general they choose not to use LAC support
 - Thirdly, some clients felt that they did not receive much or any assistance from their LAC, so could not say that the LAC had made a positive difference to their life

- None of the clients interviewed stated that they felt that having an LAC had had a negative impact

Those clients who thought the LAC had made a positive difference reported a number of ways in which this difference was made.

Examples include:

- Identifying and enabling access to funding, including helping with forms
- Accessing respite and home care on behalf of the client
- Accessing Commission resources on behalf of the client
- Providing information that the client would otherwise have been unable to access
- Assisting carers to enrol their child into their preferred school
- Being a contact for the client with knowledge about the Commission services
- Arranging meetings which clients could not have organised themselves
- Assisting clients to plan for the future
- Arranging client services such as providing lifeskills training (cooking, shopping, swimming lessons)
- Helping clients through difficult personal situations
- Helping the client to solve general problems with which they were having difficulty

4.2 Not all clients had clear goals identified – goals were most important at key transition points in their lives

The following observations were made in relation to the identification of clients' goals.

- Not all clients have clear goals for themselves or the person for whom they care
- Of those who do have clear goals, the focus varied from short term (learning to swim) to longer term (independent living and improving life skills)

Clients were more likely to have clear goals as they approached key transition points in their life. These points include starting school, moving from school to employment, moving into independent housing, and moving from employment to retirement or alternatives to employment. It follows that clients were more likely to feel that they had achieved outcomes when at key transition points in their life. Between these key transition points, clients were more likely to feel that they had made limited progress towards goals and objectives, which was not necessarily perceived as a negative outcome.

4.3 Some clients did not want their LAC involved in defining family goals

- Some clients found it difficult to link the role of the LAC to achieving personal goals. There was some confusion around how an LAC could support the client to achieve outcomes and if the LAC should or did assume any responsibility for achieving those outcomes
- Some parents/carers did not think it was the role of an LAC to be involved in defining or achieving goals that the family has for the client. They believed that it was the role of the parent to set and work towards achieving goals for their child. Some carers expressed this view very strongly
- Clients' ability to access other resources, including wider support networks, impacted on their views of the potential role of an LAC in helping them to define and achieve goals. Those without access to such resources valued this process more highly than those with access, some of whom disliked the LAC involvement
- Some clients stated that the process of identifying goals was replicated across a number of different agencies (particularly health and therapy services) and therefore the value of going through the process again with their LAC was minimal

4.4 Around half of clients recalled preparing a 'Shared Agreement' with their LAC

- Around half of clients interviewed recalled preparing a Shared Agreement¹ with their LAC. This included clients who thought they had 'probably' prepared a Shared Agreement
- Around two fifths of clients did not recall preparing a Shared Agreement with their LAC and around one in ten of clients were unsure whether they had prepared one or not
- 'Shared Agreement' had low name recognition. Almost all clients required visual or oral prompting to clarify exactly what the Shared Agreement was. A number of clients stated that they already had to deal with many different forms and pieces of paperwork, and therefore the Shared Agreement became just another form that needed to be filled in

¹ The Commission's 'Shared Agreement' is a document drafted and signed by the LAC and the client which defines the client's goals and the actions which the LAC will take to help them achieve them. The Shared Agreement can then be used to track achievement against these goals.

4.5 Feedback was mixed about the usefulness of completing a 'Shared Agreement'

There was mixed feedback about the perceived value of completing the Shared Agreement. Some clients thought it was a very valuable process which enabled them to take the time to think about longer term goals. Others thought the process lacked value because they had already completed goal statements for other services or because they felt that it was just a 'tick the box' exercise for the LAC.

- The LAC's approach to the Shared Agreement often shaped the client's approach to the exercise. For example, some clients felt that the process was just a piece of paper for the Commission if it was presented by the LAC in this way
- There was recognition that capturing goals as part of developing a Shared Agreement was something that should be done as part of working with the Program
- As outlined above, some carers felt that they did not require assistance to develop goals or objectives for those for whom they care. A couple of clients, mainly parents, disliked that the Commission thought that they needed help to determine the goals they had for their child
- Clients were unclear about the ongoing role of the Shared Agreement in their relationship with their LAC and how it would be used going forward. Some wished to use it regularly to track their process while others assumed it was an annual review process only. There did not appear to be consistency in how the document was used and/or reviewed, once it had initially been completed

As an example, one family which was caring for a child with a disability set objectives for their child such as 'developing meaningful friendships' and 'getting work over the summer'. Since setting those goals, the carer thought that 'we are not progressing well, and there has been no effort on the part of the LAC'. The carer felt that developing the Shared Agreement was a waste of time and effort as the LAC never followed through on it and that it was just 'a bit of paperwork they had to do'.

'[Developing the Shared Agreement] was useful. We will use it to track progress to help with our longer term goals. It was helpful to put it down on paper, although we don't refer to it very regularly.'

older person with a disability, Perth Metro

'[Developing the Shared Agreement] wasn't useful. I do what I need to myself.'

older person with a disability, country WA

'[Developing the Shared Agreement] was useful, but it was done at a crisis point. It needs to be used more actively as part of all contact, as it is difficult to remember and focus on those goals, otherwise it's just crisis to crisis – and you lose sight of goals. [The Shared Agreement] has helped make things clearer. [The LAC] is the only person we have that kind of conversation with - all other conversations are quick short term chats.'

carer of a younger person with a disability, country WA

'I haven't looked at it since I completed it.'

older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'[I have done the Shared Agreement] but this was done over email and really just 'done as a process' – it was just a quality and assurance measure for the LAC really.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

4.6 Types of goals agreed in the 'Shared Agreement' varied

Goals set by clients varied from short term – for example, learn to swim - to longer term – such as 'improve life skills to enable me to get custody of my daughter back'. Responses given by clients included:

- Life skills needed by the client: how to handle money, use the phone, reading and time management
- Gain employment
- Increase amount of time spent in the community, rather than at home
- Join a new TAFE course
- Learn how to drive
- Start swimming lessons
- Developing meaningful friendships
- Move out of the family home into own accommodation
- Health related goals, such as losing weight

5 Client suggested improvements

At the conclusion of each interview, clients were asked what they would change about the Program to further improve it. Most clients had some suggestions for improvement, however those who were satisfied with it tended to have fewer than those who were dissatisfied. Most of the suggestions related to the delivery of the Program, rather than its fundamental approach or scope.

Clients' suggested improvements have been summarised into the following five categories and the order they appear reflects the number of times these issues were raised:

- Enhanced and more consistent LAC style and approach
- Improved quality of, and access to, information
- Improved LAC handover arrangements
- Greater clarity of the LAC role
- Improved process for referral to the Program

Enhanced and more consistent LAC style and approach

Many clients made suggestions regarding LACs general style and approach to the role:

- LACs should be selected on the basis of their ability to empathise with their clients and their motivation to help them, and the Commission should assess each LAC's performance on this basis
- LACs should receive training to help them develop a good understanding of their client's situation and knowledge of particular disabilities
- LACs should increase their level of contact with clients, even if just to briefly 'check in' with them. This contact should be personal i.e. a phone call or a visit, rather than via letter or email
- LACs should take a more proactive role by assessing their clients' situation, identifying their needs and then developing a plan of practical solutions to address them
- LACs should always follow through on their stated actions
- The consistency of support provided by different LACs should be improved and monitored by the Commission

'Some families have wonderful LACs that provide so much. Others have ones that do nothing.'

carer of a younger person with a disability, Perth Metro

'LACs need a bit more education about it all.'

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Country WA

'LACs need to be in touch with families at least once per fortnight.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'Don't drive an expectation of a service or outcome and then not follow through.'

carer of a younger person with a disability, Perth Metro

'New services should spread the word through LACs - it's the best way to do it.'

carer of a younger person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'It would be good if LACs could somehow stay longer.'

Older client with a disability, Perth Metro

'It is really hard 'fearing' that you will change LACs and have to start the relationship building process all over again.'

carer of a younger person with intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'I'm yet to learn all the secret things they can do.'

carer of an older person with an intellectual disability, Perth Metro

They should be there at the start, when everything is so new/hard to navigate.'

carer of a younger person with intellectual disability, Perth Metro

'We had no LAC for over twenty years until we were put in contact by a friend. It would have made a big difference to our lives if we'd had an LAC during our daughter's early years.'

carer of a younger person with intellectual disability, Perth Metro

Improved quality of, and access to, information

Many clients also suggested that LACs needed improved access to quality information to be able to better support their clients.

- Some suggested that a state-wide database of services, specialists etc could be developed to improve the quality and consistency of the information provided and a few wondered whether such a database could be accessible to families too
- As well as having access to quality information, some clients also stressed how important it was for other services to use the LAC network to disseminate their own information
- Clients had different views on the best way to receive information with some suggesting more use of the newsletter and others encouraging greater utilisation of the website

Improved LAC handover arrangements

Some clients raised the issues of LAC turnover and handover arrangements during this part of the interview, stressing the need for improved arrangements for this situation.

Greater clarity of the LAC role

Another suggestion was the need to provide more clarity around the role of the LAC – both what they can do and what they can't do.

Improved process for referral to Program

Finally, some clients raised the process of initial referral to the Program and suggested that this be considered and improved.

6 Conclusions

Overall, the majority of participants in the consultation had positive experiences through their involvement with the Program, with a significant number being satisfied with their experience of having an LAC. There was strong support from clients that this valuable service be continued for other people in similar situations.

However, there are a number of opportunities for further enhancement of the Program, to reinforce the benefits which people have experienced.

Many of these opportunities involve reducing the variation in experiences of different LAC clients, further improving information and communication, managing client expectations through greater clarity of the LACs role and the services that they can provide, and smoothing handovers between LACs. The Program could also look at policies, processes and systems to further support the LAC's ability to respond to the needs of clients in a timely manner.

Clarifying the purpose of the Shared Agreement could further support the client/LAC relationship by defining the key activities by which the LAC could support the client. Defining the client goals is important for the LAC to understand their client's situation and could therefore be completed or reviewed at key life transition points, or as they approach.

Appendix A Discussion Guide

The Discussion Guide provides an overview of the types of questions that will be asked/discussed as part of the conversation. The wording will not be posed exactly as written here as it will be tailored based on the needs of each person.

There are 5 parts to the Discussion Guide and at the beginning of each section the key points to be explored/probed are outlined. There are also a number of qualitative techniques which will be used as appropriate during the interview and these are listed at the end of the Guide.

Introduction – warm up discussion, outline the objective of the project, explain confidentiality of responses and that the interview is about improving the LAC program and not about their LAC.

If a carer is participating in the interview, some initial questions will be asked about the relationship between the client and carer (i.e. parent, spouse) and the amount and type of involvement they have with their care, and with their LAC.

Explain that the client will be asked each question first and then the carer will be asked the question too. Carers will be asked how the program has been for them in their role as a carer and also for their family [different wording is highlighted in brackets]. The interviewer will note any differences in responses.

A. Overall satisfaction with LAC – to discuss the reasons that they are satisfied/dissatisfied with LAC and, to better understand the results from the DSC survey.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the LAC services you [you and your family] receive? Why do you say that? **PROBE**

What do you like about the service? What do you dislike? **PROBE**

What does the LAC do for you [you and your family]? How does the LAC help you [you and your family]?

What has it been like having a LAC?

What are the most important things that the LAC does for you [you and your family]?

How long have they been your LAC? **PROBE**

How many LAC have you had? **IF MORE THAN ONE** Have you had different experiences with each LAC? How has it been different? **PROBE**

B. Expectations of LAC – to explore what people think the role of the LAC is, and the type of support they provide, particularly informal support. Also to discuss the frequency and timeliness of contact with the LAC.

What does LAC mean to you? **PROBE** How would you describe the role of a LAC?

Would you describe any of these as the role of a LAC? **PROMPT AND DISCUSS**

- 1 Build a relationship (trust and understanding)
- 2 Provide access to information (information)
- 3 Support the person/family to define goals/strengths/needs (helps me [us] with our goals)

- 4 Provide advocacy (supports me [us])
- 5 Contribute to building inclusive communities (works in the community)
- 6 Support the person/family to develop practical solutions (makes things happen)
- 7 Assist the person/family to access to supports and services (coordinate things)

Does your LAC do these things? **PROBE**

And how important are these things to you [you and your family]? **PROBE**

What do you [you and your family] value most? **PROBE**

And are there other things that you [you and your family] want a LAC to do? **PROBE**

When was the last time you had contact with your LAC? Describe what happened? **PROBE**

How often do you have contact with your LAC? Does this meet your needs? **PROBE**

And how quickly does your LAC respond if you contact them? **PROBE**

Who does the LAC spend most of their time with [in the family]? Does this meet your needs?
PROBE

C. Relationship with LAC – to explore the qualities and attributes that are valued in the relationship with their LAC and the type of relationship between client, carer and family. Also to look at the length of relationship and changes in expectations over time.

How would you describe your [your] relationship with your LAC? **PROBE (MAY USE WORD ASSOCIATION CARDS AS APPROPRIATE)**

Listens to me, Makes things happen, Has time for me, Someone to talk to, Friendly, I trust them, Understands me, Approachable, Practical help, Flexible, Not much help, Not friendly, Bossy, Doesn't understand, Too busy, Doesn't listen, Unreliable, Not interested

IF INTERVIEW WITH CARER ONLY: And how would you describe the relationship between the [name of client] and your LAC?

What are the good things about your [your] relationship with your LAC? **PROBE**

What would you like to change about your [your] relationship with your LAC? **PROBE**

Has the relationship with your LAC changed over time? **PROBE** And how it might change in the future?

D. Achieving client outcomes – to discuss outcomes including community participation and inclusion and support for family/carers. Also to talk about the development of a Shared Agreement.

Do you think LAC has made a positive difference to your [you and your family's] life over the time you have been involved with the LAC program? **PROBE**

What are some examples of the things that have changed for you [your family] as a result?
PROBE (MAY USE EXAMPLES)

- more involved in the community

- more supported in the community
- trying new things
- supported carer/family
- helped with transition to school/employment

What things have made the most difference? What has been most helpful? **PROBE**

Have you developed a 'Shared Agreement' with your LAC?

IF YES

What are some of the objectives you have agreed?

And how do you think you are going with those objectives?

How much has the LAC been involved [in the outcomes]?

What was it like developing the 'Shared Agreement'? Has it been a useful process?
PROBE

E. Changes for the future – to inform the development/refinement of the program.

If you could change one thing about the LAC service, what would it be? **PROBE**

Anything else you would change?

Why would you change [...]? What difference would it make to the LAC program? **PROBE**

What things do you [your and your family] like most about the LAC service and should continue?

What things must remain the same?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix B Commission Defined Role of the LAC

The Commission defines the Local Area Coordinator role as follows:

Role	Description
Builds relationship	Build and maintain effective working relationships with individuals, families/carers and their communities
Provide access to information	Provide accurate and timely information. Assist individuals, families/carers and communities to access information through a variety of means
Assist to access support and services	Assist individuals and families/carers to access the support and services they need to pursue their identified goals and needs
Develops practical solutions	Assist individuals and families/carers to use personal and local community networks to develop practical solutions to meet their goals and needs
Helps define goals / strengths / needs	Provide individuals and families/carers with support and practical assistance to clarify their goals, strengths and needs
Provides advocacy	Promote self-advocacy. Provide advocacy support and access to independent advocacy when required
Builds inclusive communities	Contribute to building inclusive communities through partnership and collaboration with individuals and families/carers, local organisations, and the broader community

