

Transitioning management of accommodation services to non-government providers

Update for families – July 2014

First group of people to transition

A group of people living in one of the Group 1 houses has recently chosen their preferred service provider, and their transition is underway. It has been a busy few months for this group, as in May after two years of planning the group moved to a new, purpose-built house. Everyone has been working together to make it their home, buying new furniture, designing gardens and adding other personal touches. Now, the group will be supported in that new home by a new service provider.

In January 2014, the four families of individuals who are living in this house received a letter indicating they were part of the first group to commence the transition process. They also received phone calls from the transition team leader and started focusing on their options relevant to the transition process.

From the start, the four individuals clearly stated they wanted to stay living together in their new home rather than pursuing other options. Once this decision was made, their families worked closely with the transition team to research various disability sector organisations and meet with the ones they were most interested in. After many meetings and discussions between the families and with the transition team leader, the families chose their preferred provider in June 2014.

Work has now started on the final transition aspects for this group. Since receiving signed consent forms from families, the transition team leader has been working with the service provider and sharing important information about each individual to make sure all the needs of people living in the house will be met. The organisation will also be meeting with the individuals and their families to make sure they fully understand each person's individual needs and wants.

Once this is completed, the Disability Services Commission and the service provider will finalise agreements outlining the individualised plan for each person's supports, and how much they will cost. These plans will only be finalised by the Disability Services Commission once the individuals and their families are happy with them. At this stage, the house and vehicle (or cashed-out value), will all be transferred to the new provider. Staff from the service provider will commence buddy shifts at the house to ensure a smooth transition for the people living there. A house-warming party will be held and current and new staff will be invited to celebrate the move to a new house and a new provider.

Independent Information Officer

The Independent Information Officer, based at Therapy Focus, was engaged in January 2014 for six months to provide impartial advice around the different types of accommodation support models offered in the disability sector. Uptake of the officer's services has been very limited, so the decision has been made to allow the contract to expire. As a result, the position **will cease at the end of July 2014**. The Commission is very happy to re-establish the role if there is an expressed need for it into the future.

Over the past six months the Independent Information Officer has undertaken extensive research and has developed a suite of information that describes the service model types available in Western Australia and factors to consider when choosing a service model to

best suit each person. This resource will be made available to families and key decision makers who will participate in the transition process.

Information sessions

Information sessions have been booked for Maddington, Floreat and Cockburn for August, September and October, respectively. If you live outside of the metropolitan area, a phone or video link-up can be coordinated to enable you to speak with a Commission representative at a time that is mutually convenient. For further details or to RSVP, please phone Tess Foote on 6104 9589 or email Theresa.Foote@dsc.wa.gov.au

Which groups are part of the 60 per cent of houses to transition?

Many people have been asking: “How have houses in the Commission’s accommodation services been prioritised to transition? Am I part of this 60 per cent?”

People have been prioritised for inclusion in transition groups one and two through the use of a set of guidelines. These guidelines were initially developed by the Disability Services Commission, but have been refined and agreed by an independent review panel. The panel included representatives from advocacy organisations, the Office of the Public Advocate and, importantly, parents of people with disability living in both Commission and non-government homes. The guidelines prioritise people who:

- have limited need for specialist support, other than physical health **and**
- whose individual support needs are complementary to the support needs of those they are residing with **and**
- require a service that can be fully met by non-government service providers **and**
- reside in a house that meets the needs of the people living there and/or another building option is in the process of being built or modified **or**
- when a person, their family, carer and/or guardian nominates for transition.

The houses that meet these guidelines, beyond those nominated in Transition Groups 1 to 3, have not yet been confirmed. When it is time to commence another Transition Group, the same guidelines will be used to identify the next group of people.

Family engagement and feedback

Feedback from phone calls, group and individual meetings and information sessions has driven the development of a toolkit to assist people through this transition process.

Examples of the resources developed for the toolkit include:

- a revised version of the service provider booklet, which includes a quick user guide,
- a list of questions people may wish to ask service providers
- an information sheet explaining the handover between the Commission and the service provider, and how families are involved
- a comparison table to track out of pocket expenses charged by the Commission and disability sector organisations
- a list of ongoing support and services provided by the Commission.

These resources are available at any time during the transition process. Thank you to the many families and stakeholders who have influenced the development of these resources following their discussions with a member of the transition team.

Keeping in contact

If you have any questions about this process I encourage you to keep in contact with your Local Area Manager, transition team member and/or attend one of the information sessions to clarify any queries.

The contact details for the Transition Team are:



Sue Cannell

Phone: (08) 6104 9588

Mobile: 0419 446 002

Email:

Suzanne.Cannell@dsc.wa.gov.au



Neil Paynter

Phone: (08) 9426 9628

Mobile: 0402 965 218

Email:

Neil.Paynter@dsc.wa.gov.au



Luke Doyle

Phone: (08) 9426 9227

Mobile: 0413 437 196

Email:

Luke.Doyle@dsc.wa.gov.au

Wendy Cox

Executive Director, Accommodation Services

Disability Services Commission