Disability Services Commission

Individualised Funding Policy

1. Keywords
Individualised funding, individualised planning, self-directed supports and services, choice and control, person-centred, funding principles.

2. Policy Statement
This updated policy provides the context, principles and parameters for individualised funding for people with disability, who receive funding from the Disability Services Commission (the Commission). The policy is supplemented by the Individualised Funding Policy Operational Procedures which support implementation of the policy and an Individualised Funding Fact Sheet, which provides information regarding what can and cannot be funded.

3. What is individualised funding?
Individualised funding, for the Commission's purposes, is defined as a package of funding allocated specifically to a person in response to his or her disability related needs. Individualised funding can be managed by an individual or their family/carer; by a disability sector organisation; or management may be shared by the person with disability their family and carers and a disability sector organisation (also known as shared management).

The purpose of individualised approaches is to improve outcomes for people with disability by enabling genuine choice and control through person-centred planning and self-directed services and support. Individualised funding is underpinned by the principles and practice of person-centred support. The typical mechanisms used to achieve this include needs identification, individualised planning, goal setting processes and flexibility in how funds are spent within the Individualised Funding Policy boundaries.

Individualised funding is different from individualised service where the delivery of a service is tailored to the needs of the individual but may be funded through individualised funding or through block funding of an organisation. This policy refers to individualised funding only.

4. Who does this policy apply to?
The policy provides an overarching framework and principles for all individualised funding that is provided through the Commission. This includes all people in receipt of individualised funding and all disability sector organisations on the Commission’s Panel for Individually Funded Services who support people in receipt of individualised funding.

There are various mechanisms through which individualised funding are allocated to people with disability. These include the WA NDIS trial, Local Coordinators (LC) through localised decision making, funded disability sector organisations, and the Combined Application Process (CAP). Each of these has their own operational policies and procedures.
There is a commitment\textsuperscript{1} to continue the supports for people with disability who are receiving funded services prior to the commencement of the WA NDIS trial and now receive services in the trial site. This includes maintaining pre-existing agreed support arrangements where their current levels of support may be higher than would usually be provided through the ‘reasonable and necessary’ assessment or receiving supports that do not meet the definition of reasonable and necessary support. Over time, it is expected that the person will be assisted to amend their support arrangement to move towards a level of or type of support that is more consistent with the ‘reasonable and necessary’ criteria.

5. **Who implements this policy?**

Internally, this policy is operationalised by: the Sector Engagement and Development Directorate, through the Combined Allocation Process (CAP) and the management of service agreements with disability sector organisations; by the Local Operations Directorate, through the Localised Decision Making processes and through the Local Coordinators who undertake individualised planning and funding within the WA NDIS trial sites. The Policy and Planning Directorate is responsible for strategic oversight and ongoing development of this policy.

Individualised funding implementation is explored in more detail in the Individualised Funding Operational Procedures.

6. **Policy Context**

This policy has been redeveloped in the context of the wider disability policy agendas of the Western Australian and Commonwealth Governments. The disability sector is undergoing a process of transition and the first version of this policy was developed at a time when work was occurring to establish the Commonwealth NDIA NDIS and the WA NDIS trials. Both trials are now underway and supported by established operational policies and procedures (WA NDIS) and operational guidelines (NDIA NDIS).

At a state level, the 2011 Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy (DCSPP) emphasised genuine partnerships between public sector authorities and the not-for-profit community sector. This is achieved through flexibility, innovation and community responsiveness in funding and contracting services. It prioritises the empowerment of service users in the planning, design and delivery of community services. Further, the Commission’s ongoing removal of program boundaries supports individualised funding and facilitates choice and control over the services and support provided for funded people with disability.

At a national level, the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in July 2013 reinforced and expedited the strategic directions of several jurisdictions in moving to individualised planning and funding. New national standards for disability services also came into effect from 1 July 2014. The disability services system in Western Australia has long been recognised as being at the forefront in the development and provision of individualised, self-directed supports and services.

\textsuperscript{1} Intergovernmental Agreement for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Launch, Annex E: Continuity of Support
Operating since 1 July 2014, WA NDIS involves an individualised planning approach\textsuperscript{2} that identifies goals in a person’s life and strategies to achieve these based on natural, community supports which are complemented by funded supports where required. Supports identified in the plan must meet a range of criteria, including being reasonable and necessary\textsuperscript{3,4} for funding approval. Individualised packages are reviewable, and renewable. This occurs within the WA NDIS pricing framework.

7. **NDIS Alignment**
This policy is reflective of the objectives, principles and service standards referred to in the Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993.

The principles for individualised funding are consistent with NDIA NDIS and the WA NDIS trial. In particular, this policy supplements, and is consistent with, the broader WA NDIS – Operational Policy – Funded Supports in a Plan and Responsibilities for Supports – WA NDIS and Mainstream Government Agencies. The funding principles of ‘reasonable and necessary’ criteria apply statewide (see Attachment A).

8. **Principles**
The Commission defines contemporary services as services where people with disability can exercise choice about service delivery and funding so they have control of their lives and the services that support them to the extent that they choose\textsuperscript{5}. The provision of information assists individuals to make informed choices.

In light of this, the following principles will guide individuals, families, disability sector organisations and the Commission:

- People with disability, their families and carers are in the best position to determine their own needs and goals, and to plan for the future.
- People with disability can exercise choice and control in the planning, selection, design and implementation of disability related supports and services.
- Funding will support costs that are directly related to the additional costs incurred as a result of the impact of the person’s disability on their life.
- Funding is used to purchase supports or services deemed to be reasonable and necessary, to achieve goals identified in the individual’s plan.
- Funding is flexible and responsive to change with a person’s needs. Funding is reviewable and renewable based upon the goals in the plan.
- Planning will incorporate strategies that encourage and prioritise the use of informal and local community connections in preference to formal, paid supports and services.

\textsuperscript{2} Further details of the planning process and implementation of individualised funding are provided in the Individualised Funding Operational Procedures.

\textsuperscript{3} ‘Reasonable and necessary’ are defined in Section 26I in the Disability Services Act 1993

\textsuperscript{4} Refer to WA NDIS – Operational Policy – Funded Supports in the Plan – Reasonable and Necessary for further information about the WA NDIS planning and funding process.

\textsuperscript{5} Disability Service Commission. Point of View: Contemporary Services. July 2013
9. **Individualised funding**

**What will be funded?**

Individualised funding can be used for disability related strategies, supports and services identified through the individualised planning process that are assessed to be reasonable and necessary.

**Funding will not be provided for:**

- Any costs not attributable to a person’s disability.
- Purposes that are likely to cause harm to the person or pose a risk to others.
- Purposes that are inconsistent with the best interests of the person.
- Income replacement for individuals with disability or family members (except in special circumstances approved by the Commission and in accordance with the Commission’s Policy on Family Members as Paid Support Workers).
- Purposes that duplicate other supports and services delivered under alternative funding through the Commission, NDIS or other government services.
- Support that is contrary to:
  1. A law of the Commonwealth; or
  2. A law of the State or Territory in which the support would be provided.

10. **Definitions**

Key words and concepts of this policy are defined at Attachment B.

11. **Consultation**

This review of the policy has been informed by input from representatives across the Directorates. Further, the legislative and operational environment has evolved since its development, with both the NDIS and WA NDIS legislation now in place, and the NDIA NDIS and WA NDIS trials now underway.

This policy was first developed in 2013, amalgamating a number of previous funding policies. The process was led by Policy and Planning and consultation involved stakeholders within the Commission and several peak bodies in the sector including National Disability Services Western Australia (NDS WA), WA Individualised Services (WAIS), People With Disabilities WA (PWdWA) and the Developmental Disability Council (DDC).

12. **Implementation**

This policy is supported by guidelines that aim to facilitate implementation.

13. **Quality assurance mechanisms**

Quality assurance mechanisms align with current Commission practice and requirements.

14. **Funding and Resource implications**

Implementation of this policy is within the available funding and resources of the Commission.
15. Related policies
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Western Australian Disability Services Act (DSA) 1993 and Regulations
- National Standards for Disability Services (cited in DSA)
- WA NDIS Planning Framework
- WA NDIS Operational Policy – Funded Supports in the Plan
- National Disability Agreement
- National Disability Strategy
- Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy
- Operational – Localised Decision Making
- Quality Management Framework

16. Communication
This policy will be:
- communicated to the key internal and external stakeholders
- communicated to Commission staff through directorate communication processes
- available on the Commission’s intranet and internet.

17. Training
Training and education may be required to ensure consistency of understanding and application across different delivery mechanisms.

Internally, relevant Executive Directors will identify staff responsible to implement the policy and / or who will be affected by the policy. Policy and Planning will provide information as necessary to enable staff to comply with the activities described within this policy.

Externally, information and training for disability sector organisations will be delivered by Funding.

18. Evaluation and Review
This policy will be regularly reviewed as contextual drivers progress. Annual reviews of the policy should be conducted.

The move to individualised, self-directed funding is a priority of the National Disability Agreement (NDA). The NDIA NDIS and WA NDIS trials will provide learnings and evidence for future implementation of individualised planning and funding. This policy is not intended to be a static document and is malleable to ongoing development, informed by practice.

For further information contact:
Simone Spencer
Executive Director, Policy and Planning

Date: 5 August 2016

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<td>Simone Spencer</td>
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Reasonable and Necessary

Reasonable and necessary supports

The definition of reasonable and necessary supports requires that each support relates to the disability and meets each of the following criteria:

a. The support will assist the individual to pursue the goals and vision set out in the plan, and
b. The support will assist the individual to undertake activities that facilitate their social and economic participation, and
c. The support represents value for money in that the costs of the support are reasonable, relative to both the benefits achieved and the cost of alternative support, and
d. The support will be, or is likely to be, effective and beneficial for the individual, having regard to current good practice, and
e. The funding or provision of the support takes account of what it is reasonable to expect families, carers, informal networks and the community to provide, and
f. The support is most appropriately funded or provided through WA NDIS, and is not more appropriately funded or provided through other service systems:
   i) As part of a universal service obligation (for example, accessible public transport), or
   ii) In accordance with reasonable adjustments required under a law dealing with discrimination on the basis of disability.

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WA NDIS – Operational Policy – Funded Supports in the Plan
Definitions

**Choice and control:**
People with disability exercise maximum independence and autonomy in determining their preferences and in decision making regarding the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports.

**Disability support and services:**
Assistance provided to a person with disability that addresses their disability-related needs.

**Flexible services:**
Disability supports and services that are tailored to and can change/adapt to meet the changing needs of people with disability and/or their family and carers. Flexible services are essential to ensure that people with disability can exercise choice and control over supports and services.

**Funder:**
A government body or statutory authority that provides funding for supports and services.

**Individualised funding:**
Funding allocated specifically to a person with disability for supports or services to meet their disability related needs.

**Individual outcome:**
The difference or differences for an individual as a result of their involvement in a service or activity.

**Individualised plan:**
A plan that describes the life a person would like to lead, their goals, strategies to achieve them and the time frames. The plan will identify natural, community and funded supports which will contribute to achieving the goals. It may include sections on support, funding and services.

**Informal or natural supports:**
Family, friends, neighbours or organisations (for example, volunteer networks) that surround and support a person.

**Person centred approach:**
A way of supporting and working with people with disability that keeps the person at the centre of decision making, across planning, funding and support and service arrangements.

**Planning:**
A process that explores a person’s needs, goals and aspirations and develops a plan for how they may be best met.
Self-directed supports and services:
An approach which is characterised by people with disability, their families and carers having genuine choice and control over the design, planning and implementation of the supports and services they require. This includes access to personalised support arrangements and, where required, flexible funding that is tailored to the needs of the individual.

Shared management:
This term refers to the sharing of funding and service management responsibilities between a person with disability and their family or carer or others, and a disability sector organisation.

Strategy:
A strategy is a way of achieving a goal that is included in the individual plan. It includes practical and realistic actions the disability sector organisation and the individual agree to as part of the support plan to achieve the person’s outcomes. Strategies can take many forms, from informal, ‘unpaid’ supports through to highly structured funded services.