

Quick Reference Guide

Support Your Way: A self-directed approach for Victorians with a disability

March 2009

The *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012* (the State Plan) identifies the reorientation of disability supports as a key strategy to enable greater flexibility, greater control and better outcomes for Victorians with a disability.

Since the release of the State Plan, Victoria has been progressively moving to personalised responses and approaches. The introduction of Individual Support Packages, a focus on person centred approaches and an emphasis on enhancing community inclusion have laid the foundation for significant change.

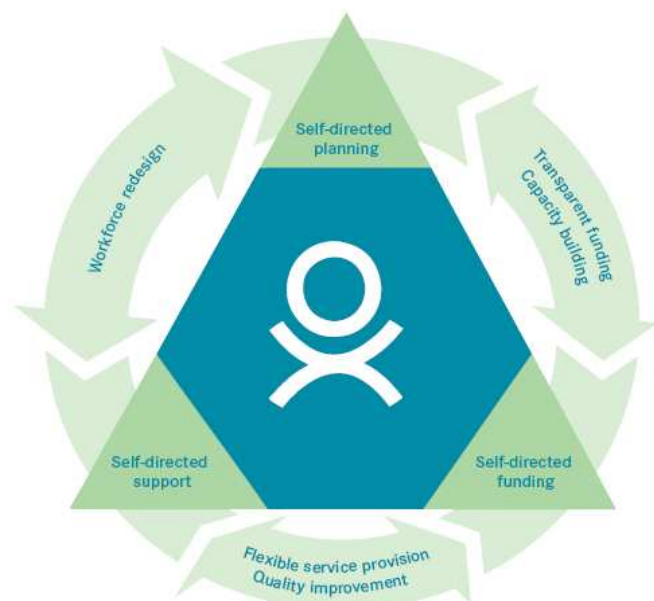
An introduction to *Support Your Way*

Support Your Way builds upon the work undertaken in recent years to provide greater choice and control to people with a disability. It describes the core elements of self-directed approaches and outlines the next steps in expanding the use of self-directed approaches in Victoria.

Key elements of *Support Your Way*

Support Your Way furthers the reorientation of disability supports and enables a shared understanding of self-directed approaches by:

- introducing a common language
- providing clarity about expectations
- consolidating the different policy elements
- outlining future directions.



Self-directed approaches put people in control of their own support and life. *Support Your Way* identifies the three core elements of self-directed approaches, that is, self-directed planning, self-directed funding and self-directed support. Self-direction ensures that the focus remains on the person, who is at the centre of all activity and decision making.

Self-directed approaches recognise that every person has unique support needs, and they will need different levels of assistance to design and manage their supports.

Principles underpinning self-directed approaches

Self-directed approaches are underpinned by six principles that foster a person's ability to actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives. These principles are self-determination, choice, inclusion, transparency, accessibility and citizenship.

The case for change

The development of self-directed approaches reflects an emerging understanding of what it takes to provide quality support for people with a disability. The case for change is clear and consistent with worldwide trends: people with a disability are seeking more responsive and flexible supports and greater control over how these supports are managed and delivered. Self-directed approaches put the person at the centre and focus on the person's aspirations, lifestyle choices and goals.

Outcomes of self-directed approaches include:

- changes people's attitudes towards themselves and their ability to influence the way that supports are managed and delivered
- gives people and their families/carers a greater voice
- mobilises service providers to deliver supports that meet the needs of the individual
- changes the power balance to people with a disability and increases the focus on their rights and responsibilities.

The introduction of self-directed approaches means that supports have to adjust to the needs and choices of people with a disability. This means a shift away from program based support provision towards supports that are flexible and personalised. This is supported by the gradual redevelopment of the disability support system, focusing on workforce re-design and on building the capacity of people and the community to facilitate more effective self-directed approaches.

Consultation

Support Your Way has been developed in consultation with people with a disability, their families and carers, representatives from disability support providers and Victorian Government departments. Disability Services will continue to work with all key stakeholders to both refine and expand the implementation of self-directed approaches.

Next steps

People with a disability, their families and carers, disability support providers, communities and government need to work as partners and share the responsibility for achieving greater choice and control for people with a disability. The key areas that contribute to a successful self-directed approach to the provision of supports include:

- Flexible service provision
- Capacity building: Individual, organisational, community
- Industry development: Building a sustainable services sector
- Continuous quality improvement

Support Your Way provides a challenge to all Victorians to enable greater flexibility, greater control and better outcomes for people with a disability.

For more information

The full version of *Support Your Way* can be found on the Disability Services webpage:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au .