

Disability Services – Aged Care Assessment Services Protocol: An Overview

May 2009

About the Protocol

When a younger person with a disability is at risk of entering a residential aged care facility, the Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) and Disability Services have a joint responsibility to determine the best way their support needs can be met. The *Disability Services – Aged Care Assessment Services Protocol* aims to facilitate collaboration between the program areas by:

- improving understanding of the ACAS and Disability Services program areas
- identifying clear processes between Disability Services and ACAS, including referral processes
- fostering collaborative working relationships to ensure optimal outcomes for clients.

The protocol has recently been updated. Revisions include legislative and policy changes that have occurred in Disability Services since the development of the original protocol. ACAS and Disability Services staff should familiarise themselves with the protocol to ensure a good understanding of the agreed statewide processes. The full protocol is available at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability.

Focus of the Protocol

The focus of the protocol is people with a disability under the age of 65 years who are within target group for Disability Services (as defined by the *Disability Act 2006*) and who, because of high support needs, may require admission to a Commonwealth funded residential aged care facility.

Shared principles

To ensure best outcomes for younger people with a disability:

- Disability Service and ACAS will work together proactively to achieve the best outcomes for the person with a disability and their family.
- Disability Services and ACAS deliver client focused services and supports, and respond to individual needs in a timely fashion acknowledging that demand for service often outweighs available resources.
- In situations where there is a high level of risk/urgency, and an obvious and clear need for residential aged care, access to an ACAS assessment is not to be delayed.

Roles and responsibilities

	Disability Services	Aged Care Assessment Services
Overview	Disability Services Division is part of the Department of Human Services and aims to improve the quality of life of Victorians with a disability through supports that enhance independence, choice and community inclusion.	The Aged Care Assessment Program (ACAP) is a national program funded by the Commonwealth Dept of Health and Ageing, with voluntary contributions from states and territories. There are 18 Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) in Victoria.
Principles	Disability Services support aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support people with a disability to pursue their own lifestyles within the community • facilitate access to generic services that are the same as other members of the community • strengthen informal support networks. 	The operating principles underlying ACAS assessments are that they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive and holistic • independent • multidisciplinary and multidimensional, and • client focused.
Target group	To access Disability Services, a person must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require supports from the disability service system • be within target group as defined in the <i>Disability Act 2006</i>, and • be considered a priority for access. 	The ACAS target group is frail older people, that is people over 70. Indigenous people are included in the target group from age 50. Younger people with disabilities are assessed by ACAS when no other more age appropriate services are available.
Responsibilities	Disability Services works in partnership with people with a disability, their families, carers, DHS regional staff and community service organisations to plan and fund a range of supports. These include individual support packages, planning, case management, day services, accommodation and respite.	The core objective of the ACAS is to comprehensively assess the needs of frail older people and facilitate access to available care services appropriate to their needs.

Making a request for service (referral) to Disability Services

Regional Intake and Response Teams are the first point of contact for requests for Disability Services. Following a request for services, Disability Services are required to determine whether the person has a disability (as defined in the *Disability Act 2006*) and communicate this decision within six weeks, if this has not occurred previously. The six week time frame should be considered a guide and regions should work to accelerate the decision making process where appropriate. (Section 2.2)

Referring to ACAS

The process by which referrals to ACAS are made is determined by the support the person may be receiving, if any, at the time of referral. If the person is receiving services from Disability Services, then all referrals to ACAS are to be made via either Disability Client Services or Disability Accommodation Services. If the referral is from another source such as self-referral, a community service organisations or via a hospital as part of discharge planning, ACAS will request that Disability Services be contacted as part of the process of determining the most appropriate response to the person's needs.

In all instances, early planning is essential to support optimal outcomes for younger people who are at risk of requiring care from an aged care residential facility.

Prior to making a referral to ACAS, Disability Services will need to advise ACAS in writing of the reasons why there is a need to refer to ACAS. The letter should identify the care options, other than through aged care system, that have been explored and reasons why these are not suitable. This is a revision to the protocol. (Section 3)

Assessment

Once the processes outlined above have been completed, ACAS may accept the referral for assessment. This acceptance suggests that it is likely that the person may need care in a residential aged care facility, at least in the short term, as no other care options are currently available to meet the person's current type and level of need. Disability Services, community service organisations and ACAS will need to determine the most appropriate approach to the assessment in order to reduce duplication and streamline processes for the person. (Section 4)

Planning and review of support needs in a residential aged care facility

Consideration of additional support for younger person being cared for in a residential aged care facility as well as regular review of their support needs and options for their care is an important aspect of planning for their care. (Section 5)

Contact information

Disability Services		Aged Care Assessment Services			
Statewide TTY	1800 783 783 1800 008 149	Barwon South West Region - Geelong	5279 2246	Barwon South West Region - Warrnambool	5561 9351
Eastern Metropolitan Region TTY	9843 6312 9843 6638	Eastern Metropolitan Region – Eastern	9881 1875	Eastern Metropolitan Region – Eastern Outer	9764 6390
Southern Metropolitan Region TTY	1300 131 079 1800 008 149	Gippsland	5172 2820	Grampians - Ballarat	5320 3740
North and West Metropolitan Region TTY	9412 2741 9412 2647	Hume – Shepparton	5823 6000	Hume – Wangaratta	5722 2000
Barwon South West Region TTY	1800 675 132 5226 4062	Loddon Mallee – Mildura	5023 9022	Loddon Mallee - Bendigo	5454 7588
Grampians Region TTY	1800 670 143 5333 6815	Northern Metropolitan - Bundoora	9495 3109	Northern Metropolitan – Heidelberg	9496 2489
Hume Region TTY	1300 650 152 5722 0623	Northern Metropolitan – St Vincents	9816 0566	Southern Metropolitan – Caulfield	9276 6314
Loddon Mallee Region TTY	5434 5888 5434 5669	Southern Metropolitan – Kingston	8587 010	Southern Metropolitan – Mt Eliza	9788 1276
Gippsland Region TTY	5136 2474 5136 2494	Western Metropolitan – North West	8387 2129	Western Metropolitan – Western	8345 1246