

Disability Services

Individual Support Package Guidelines



Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1 Definitions	2
1.2 Context	5
1.3 Structure and format	5
1.4 Application of these guidelines	6
1.5 What is an Individual Support Package?	6
1.6 Process and timeline for an Individual Support Package	7
2. Getting started	9
2.1 Offer of an Individual Support Package	9
2.2 Accepting the offer	9
2.3 Notional allocation	9
2.4 Individual Support Package Handbook	10
2.5 Interim Support	10
3. Funding guidelines	11
3.1 Principles	11
3.2 Applying the funding principles	12
3.3 What can be purchased?	12
3.4 Who can support be purchased from?	12
3.5 Selecting service providers	14
3.6 Limit on choice of providers of personal support	15
3.7 Costing of support	15
3.8 Recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure	16
3.9 Time period for funding	16
3.10 Sharing support delivery	17
4. Funding administration arrangements	18
4.1 Direct payments	18
4.2 Financial intermediary service	18
4.3 Registered disability service provider(s)	18
5. The funding approval process	20
5.1 Support Plan	20
5.2 Funding proposal	20
5.3 Acknowledgement of the conditions of funding	20
5.4 Approval	21
6. Implementing a funding plan	23
6.1 Assistance with implementing funded supports	23
6.2 Changes to supports	23
6.3 Changes that exceed the current funding allocation	24
6.4 Emergency support	25
6.5 Moving to another region	25
6.6 Moving interstate	25
6.7 Individual Support Package is no longer required	26
7. Monitoring and reporting	27
7.1 Financial monitoring	27
7.2 Acquittal	27
7.3 Unspent funds	27
7.4 Reporting	28
8. Reviewing supports	29
9. Complaints	30
Practice Advice (see separate index)	
Information Sheets (see separate index)	

1. Introduction

1.1 Definitions

carer	A person who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability.
case management	Case management is a service targeting people with a disability in complex situations and who require intensive assistance to identify issues, plan and implement solutions and strategies.
community services	Services or supports within local communities for all community members. Examples include health services, education, transport, home cleaning.
CRIS	The department's Client Relationship Information System
CRISSP	The Client Relationship Information System for Service Providers
delegate (regional delegate)	A Department of Human Services regional officer with authority to approve, up to prescribed limits, the expenditure of Government funding.
department	The Department of Human Services
direct payments	Funding provided by the department directly to a person with a disability or their nominated person to purchase supports in line with an agreed plan.
<i>Disability Act 2006 (the Disability Act)</i>	The legislation in Victoria that provides the legal framework for the delivery of disability services.
disability service provider	A person or body (for example a community service organisation) who provides disability services under the Disability Act and are registered on the register of disability service providers or the Department of Human Services, Disability Services.
disability support	Supports that specifically meet the needs and goals of a person with a disability.
Disability Support Register	The system used by the department to record a person's current need for on-going disability support. The Disability Support Register provides a clear and accurate picture of the support that is currently required, so that when resources become available, they can be allocated in a fair and efficient manner.
facilitator	A worker employed either by the department or a community service organisation who works with a person with a disability to plan for their disability supports after the person has accepted an offer of an Individual Support Package. A facilitator also assists with the initial implementation of the person's funding plan.

financial intermediary	An organisation engaged by the department that holds funds, makes payments at the direction of the person with a disability or nominated person in accordance with their funding plan, keeps records of each person's funding and reports expenditure to the person and to the department.
funding plan	Once a regional delegate approves a funding proposal (see next entry), it can be referred to as a person's funding plan.
funding proposal	A document that outlines the Individual Support Package funding and supports requested to meet a person's disability support needs.
Individual Support Package	The amount of money the department allocates to a person that is used to purchase a range of supports as set out in an approved funding plan.
informal support	Naturally occurring support or assistance available within families, among friends, neighbours and members of a community.
<i>my future my choice</i>	An initiative to provide better living options for younger people with a disability living in, or at risk of entry to, residential aged care services.
nominated person	A family member, carer, friend or other supporter nominated by the person with a disability to assist with making choices about what supports they require and who will provide them. The nominated person may assist with the arrangements for the provision of the supports and management of the funding administration arrangement.
notional funding allocation/notional allocation	The amount of money that was calculated at the time of lodging a person's request for disability funded support on the Disability Support Register or as amended following a review. By being aware of the available resources, people can better plan for the most cost effective supports they need.
person	The person with a disability who is the subject of the Individual Support Package. The term is also inclusive of people at different life stages such as childhood, adolescence and adulthood and acknowledges the varying needs and involvement of family and carers.
personal support	A service for people to assist with activities they are unable to complete for themselves because of their disability. Personal support may be provided for daily in-home activities or to access community activities and services.
regional delegate	See definition under 'delegate'.

self-directed planning	A process that explores a person's needs, goals and aspirations and develops a plan for how they may best be met. Principles for self-directed planning are provided in the Disability Act.
support coordination	A service that can be purchased as part of a person's plan, to coordinate and monitor their support arrangements.
support plan	A support plan is a requirement of the Disability Act where a person is receiving an ongoing disability service. A support plan documents the goals of the person with a disability and describes how the support from the disability service provider is intended to address their goals.
supporter(s)	A term used throughout these guidelines to refer to family members, friends, carers and informal advocates who are working with the person to determine the content of their Individual Support Package and its implementation, and to help them achieve their goals. The term excludes paid carers and service providers.
supports	A term used throughout these guidelines to refer to the services, goods and/or activities that may be purchased through an Individual Support Package.

1.2 Context

The Disability Act provides the framework for a whole-of-government approach to enable people with a disability to actively participate in their community. The Disability Act also provides the framework to deliver flexible support based on choice and a person's individual requirements.

The *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012* (State Plan) is based on the principle that people with a disability should be able to live and participate in the life of the Victorian community, with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as all other citizens of Victoria.

A key achievement of the State Plan has been to firmly establish self-direction (initially referred to as individualised planning and support) as the preferred approach to supporting people with a disability.

This approach has been further refined and described in the document *Support Your Way* released in April 2009. *Support Your Way* establishes the direction for building self-directed approaches in Victoria.

The three main elements of self-directed approaches are:

- Self-directed planning
- Self-directed funding
- Self-directed support.

Supports must be planned for and implemented in a way that is respectful of and responsive to each person's cultural identity as defined by themselves and their supporter(s). Self-directed approaches provide the opportunity to provide supports that are appropriate to the person's needs and preferences at the same time as recognising the role of supporters and community services.

The *Statement of Principles for children and young people with a disability and their families* emphasises the role of family in assisting children and young people to realise their potential and in active decision making about how they are supported.



For more information

Information about *Support Your Way* can be found on the Disability Services website:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

Koori Human Services Unit
Building Better Partnerships: Working with Aboriginal communities and organisations

www.health.vic.gov.au/koori

Department of Human Services Cultural Diversity Guide

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/multicultural/downloads/cultural_diveristy_guide_2006.pdf

1.3 Structure and format

This document provides an overview of the key policy requirements for the development and implementation of Individual Support Packages.

Where applicable, a reference is provided to separate practice advice. These are highlighted by the following:



Refer to:

- Chapter X. Sample
- Section X.Y, Sample Section

1.4 Application of these guidelines

These guidelines provide information for regional and disability service provider staff involved in the development, assessment, approval and implementation of Individual Support Packages.

The guidelines will be reviewed and updated annually to incorporate updated information. Additional or updated practice advice will also be issued throughout the year.



For more information

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- Disability Services Access Policy
- Disability Services Access Policy Implementation Guide
- Disability Services Disability Support Register (DSR) Registration Guidelines
- Disability Services Planning Policy
- Disability Services Planning Resource Kit and Implementation Guide

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

1.5 What is an Individual Support Package?

An Individual Support Package is an allocation of funding to a person with a disability to purchase supports that will best meet their ongoing disability support needs and achieve their goals.

An Individual Support Package enables the person to direct the identification and implementation of supports that are most appropriate to their individual needs and circumstances. It enables the person to exercise choice in obtaining support that will assist them to achieve their goals and pursue their own lifestyle. Planning for an Individual Support Package will also take into consideration the needs of family members or carers to maintain the caring relationship.

Through self-directed planning, the person is able to determine their needs, what supports are required to achieve their goals, who will provide the supports, and how and when the supports should be provided. This may also include the purchase of group based activities such as a place in a day service or a place in an accommodation service through the *my future my choice initiative*.

For children, a child and family centred approach is used to ensure supports are responsive to the needs of the child and their family and strengthen family wellbeing.

Supports purchased with an Individual Support Package are not intended to replace those provided through informal sources or other community or government services. Purchased supports may, however, complement those informal and community services.

An Individual Support Package is 'attached' to the person. This means that there is flexibility for the person to change the nature of supports or service provider in response to a change in their needs, goals or where they are living.

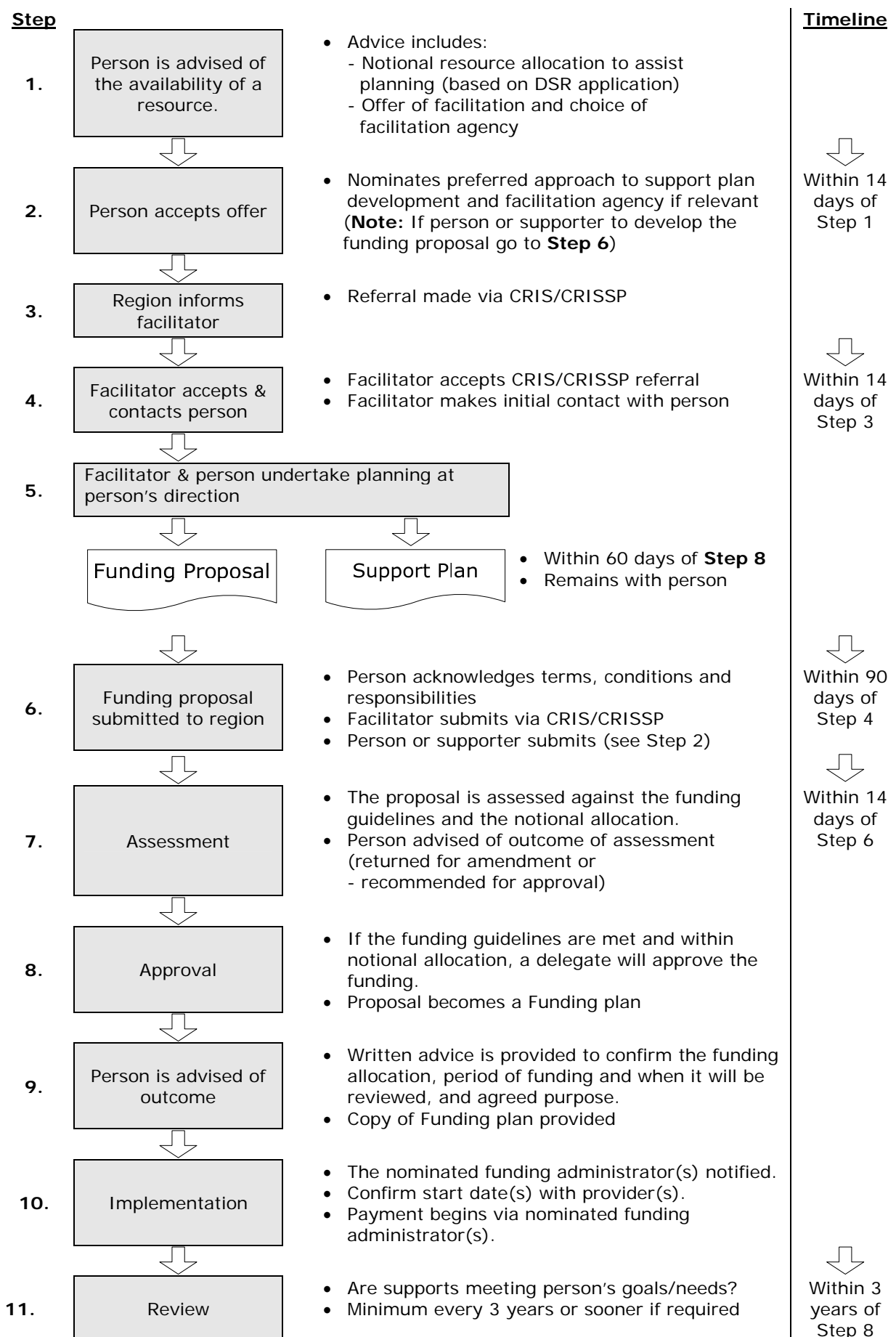
1.6 Process and timeline for an Individual Support Package

The diagram on the next page describes the key steps and indicative timeline of an Individual Support Package from letter of offer through to formal approval and subsequent review.

The diagram commences from the point immediately after an Individual Support Package resource has become available and the Disability Support Register (DSR) has been used to identify a person who meets priority for access criteria and whose notional funding allocation is within the resource that is available.

Note: The timeline reflects the anticipated progress of a funding proposal that meets the funding guidelines within these guidelines and is within notional allocation. Any variations to this may result in the funding proposal being referred back for further consideration and this may impact on the timeline.

See diagram over page.



2. Getting started

2.1 Offer of an Individual Support Package

When an Individual Support Package becomes available within a region, the Disability Support Register (DSR) is used to identify a person who meets priority for access criteria and whose notional funding allocation is within the resource that is available.

The region will then send a letter of offer of an Individual Support Package to the person. A pro-forma letter is available for this purpose.

The letter of offer includes advice that the person may receive facilitation to assist with development of their support plan and funding proposal. The letter also includes advice of the regional process for selecting a facilitator.

The letter of offer should also enclose a copy of the **Individual Support Package Handbook** for information for the person and anyone who is to support them in developing and managing their Individual Support Package.



Refer to: Information Sheet #1— Letter of Offer pro-forma

2.2 Accepting the offer

The person's acceptance of the offer must also be in writing. A pro-forma letter is available for this purpose.

The letter of acceptance includes a section where the person can accept or decline the offer. If they accept the offer, they must also indicate their preferred method of funding proposal development.

If a facilitator is required, the acceptance should include the name of the preferred facilitation organisation or agreement for one to be allocated. The person may prefer to nominate their case manager (where this arrangement is already in place) to undertake the facilitation role.

The person must clearly indicate their consent for relevant personal information being provided to that facilitator organisation for the purpose of helping in the development of their support plan and funding proposal.

The person can accept the offer of a package, but decline the offer of facilitation from an organisation if they wish to undertake the planning and funding proposal development themselves or with the assistance of a supporter.



Refer to: Information Sheet #2—Acceptance pro-forma

2.3 Notional allocation

The letter of offer of an Individual Support Package includes advice of the notional allocation that was calculated at the time of the DSR application or at review. The notional allocation is the funding range linked to the relevant band within the DSR.

The notional allocation provides the context for the person and/or their facilitator to plan for supports they require.

2.4 Individual Support Package Handbook

A copy of the Individual Support Package Handbook, in a format preferred by the person, should be provided at the same time as the letter of offer.

The handbook has been published to assist the person and their supporters when putting together and managing an Individual Support Package. The information contained within the handbook is consistent with these guidelines, but written specifically to provide information to service users.

Any staff member working with the person or their supporters should ensure that they can refer to the handbook.



For more information

- [Individual Support Package Handbook](#)

2.5 Interim Support

When a resource is allocated through the DSR process, planning is undertaken to outline the specific supports, select provider(s) and negotiate commencement dates. Where support is required immediately, or when a person's support arrangements are complex to establish, interim support may be proposed and implemented with the assistance of a facilitator, regional officer or, if relevant, a current case manager.


A request for interim support may be made by the person, their family or carer(s), or facilitator following the allocation of an Individual Support Package and prior to approval of the funding proposal.

The interim support must be consistent with the funding principles and be within the person's notional allocation.

Interim support will be time limited with a view to alignment with a person's agreed funding plan.

3. Funding guidelines

3.1 Principles

- 3.1.1 Individual Support Package funding (funding) must be used to purchase supports that are directly related to the person's disability needs and to achieve the goals identified in their support plan. Outcomes may include:
- moving to independent living
 - remain living within the family environment
 - remain living independently
 - enabling family or carers to receive support so they can continue their caring role
 - having better health and well-being
 - improving skills and capabilities
 - having more opportunities to go out and meet friends or attend social events
 - having more opportunities for community access and participation
 - participating in education or further training
 - improving employment opportunities.
- 3.1.2 Funding is not provided as income for the person.
- 3.1.3 Funding can only be used where informal supports and community services available to all members of the community have been explored and found to be unavailable or inappropriate.
- 3.1.4 Funding must not replace or duplicate, but may contribute towards supports that are available through other funding sources, including other local, state and commonwealth government programs (for example, the Victorian Aids and Equipment Program).
-  **Refer to:** **Information Sheet #3 —Aids & Equipment Program**
- 3.1.5 Funding must represent the most cost effective and relevant option to meet the person's needs.
- 3.1.6 Funding should be used to support the person within their own cultural identity as defined by themselves and their supporter(s).
- 3.1.7 Funding **must not** be used to meet costs that any other community member would reasonably be expected to pay from their own money unless **at least** one of the following circumstances applies:
- the person's disability prevents them from accessing the service or item in the same way as the rest of the community
 - there is a benefit to the person's health, wellbeing or fitness that would otherwise be unavailable
 - funding a community service or item is more cost effective than the person being allocated a higher cost, more intensive or restrictive support
 - funding an item or service that is instrumental in assisting the person to achieve the outcome of community access or participation that would otherwise be unachievable
 - the person is experiencing financial hardship in accordance with the Disability Services Undue Financial Hardship Guidelines.



Refer to: **Information Sheet #4** —Supports that other members of the community would reasonably be expected to pay for.

- 3.1.8 Funding **cannot** be used for:
- anything that is illegal
 - gambling
 - or
 - Directly employing staff - staff must be employed by a service provider – **unless** the person is involved in the Direct Employment Project trial and has regional approval.

3.2 Applying the funding principles

A flow chart providing guidance on how to apply the funding principles is included as a practice advice.



Refer to: **Practice Advice #1** —Applying the funding principles

3.3 What can be purchased?

The types of supports that can be purchased with a particular Individual Support Package **must be considered within the Principles outlined in Section 3.1** and will depend on the context of the person's disability needs.

3.4 Who can support be purchased from?

Support can be purchased from the following types of providers:

- registered disability service providers
- providers of personal support – not registered as disability service providers
- providers of generic community services
- providers of commercial goods and services

Registered disability service providers

The Disability Act makes provision for a person or organisation that delivers disability services to be registered as a disability service provider. To be registered, the department must be satisfied that the person or organisation can provide a service for persons with a disability and comply with the Disability Act.

Registration places obligations on disability service providers to comply with all aspects of the Disability Act, including:

- providing information about their services
- having access to complaint mechanisms about those services (including access to the Disability Services Commissioner)
- controls regarding restrictive interventions and compulsory treatments
- to meet the Standards for Disability Services in Victoria (disability standards).

Registered providers may also be required to:

- conduct pre-employment safety screening (police checks and Working with Children checks where appropriate)
- comply with financial accountability requirements
- have processes in place to meet the obligations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- have a WorkCover policy

- comply with the departmental incident reporting procedures
- have appropriate insurance

The Disability Services Policy on Registration of Disability Service Providers is currently under review. Any relevant changes will be reflected in the next version of these guidelines.

Providers of personal support – not registered as disability service providers

A person may wish to engage the services of a provider of personal support that is not registered under the Disability Act.

There are a number of such providers across the State. Some of these organisations provide services under other Commonwealth or State Government programs, for example Home and Community Care (HACC), or may have accreditation under alternative quality frameworks. Other organisations may not have accreditation or any independent quality monitoring system.

Any person wishing to select a service provider for personal support that is not registered as disability service provider needs to be made aware that these providers **are not**:

- required to comply with the provisions of the Disability Act, such as meeting the disability standards
- subject to the jurisdiction of the Disability Services Commissioner in relation to complaints in relation to these services
- monitored by the department.

Providers of generic community services

Generic community services may be the most appropriate provider of the supports a person requires to meet their disability support needs. This includes supports that many community members access and are not covered by the Disability Act, such as dental services, therapy and recreation.

In some instances, these services will be subject to monitoring by a relevant professional association and/or a statutory body that can consider complaints.

Providers of commercial goods and services

Commercial goods and services are those that all members of the community purchase or make use of. This includes providers of goods, such as household equipment, and services, such as home help.

These providers are not covered by the Disability Act and in many cases there are no other professional or statutory safeguards. These providers are, however, governed by consumer laws and protections.

Consumer Affairs Victoria has a range of information services to help people understand the rights and responsibilities of consumers and businesses. Services include an Agency Referral Hotline, detailed internet site and a network of regional offices.



For more information

Consumer Affairs Victoria

- Telephone: 1300 55 81 81
- Website: [Consumer Affairs Victoria contact information](#)

Family members

A person may engage the services a family member not living at the same residence as a paid provider of personal support, provided that the family member is employed by a service provider.

It is the role of the facilitator to explore whether the engagement of a family member is consistent with the person's goals and preferences and considers the best interests of the person with a disability.

Further instruction about employment of family members is included in the relevant Practice Advice.



Refer to: Practice Advice #2 — Family Members as paid carers

3.5 Selecting service providers

It is the role of a facilitator to assist the person to obtain information that will support the person to make decisions about which supports to use and who to obtain them from.

The facilitator should ensure that the person is able to access information in an appropriate format. If the person needs assistance to understand the information or implications of their decisions, their supporters may provide this assistance.

The facilitator's role includes assisting the person to find out about:

- the particular expertise and experience of providers
- staff capabilities
- costs and availability of supports
- conditions related to support delivery
- quality assurance mechanisms
- complaints mechanisms.

The facilitator may provide the names of organisations that provide the required support in the person's local area. From this, the person and/or their supporters can make the enquiries and make the decision about which provider to use.

The person and their supporters should make enquiries of prospective service providers and satisfy themselves that the provider is an appropriate person or organisation and will deliver the supports required.

To assist the person, they should be referred to the relevant chapter and question 'checklist' in the Individual Support Package Handbook.

Where the person cannot choose independently and does not have supporters to assist, the facilitator must only refer them to registered disability service providers.

Where the person indicates they wish to use a non-registered provider for personal support, they need to acknowledge they understand the implications of this choice and will monitor the delivery and quality of supports for themselves.

This acknowledgement must be documented.



For more information

- [Register of disability service providers](#)
- [Disability Services Registration Policy](#)
- [Individual Support Package Handbook](#)

3.6 Limit on choice of providers of personal support

Registered disability service providers **must** be used for personal support in the following situations:

- the person being supported is vulnerable* due to their level of support need, capacity to make decisions or lack of a support network
- the person needs specialist supports, for example, support for individuals with behaviours of concern
- the Individual Support Package is used to purchase a place in a shared supported accommodation service.

* Indicators of vulnerability can include:

- the person has difficulty communicating their needs
- the person does not have supporters to assist in decision making and be involved in monitoring supports
- the person or their supporter(s) cannot demonstrate that they understand the implications of their decisions

3.7 Costing of support

Supports are costed according to the Disability Services pricing framework which is detailed in the Disability Services Policy and Funding Plan. The Policy and Funding Plan outlines unit prices (excluding GST) for a range of services. The funding available in a package may, under exceptional circumstances, be used for purchases at rates higher than unit prices. Examples may include, where specific skills or expertise is required or there is a lack of availability of service options.

The principles of value for money, efficiency and cost effectiveness are applied to supports not covered by Disability Services unit prices.

The facilitator should assist the person to try and find a provider who will deliver the support at the required standard at the best possible price.

Recurrent funding allocations will be indexed annually according to the department's non government organisation price index rate.

The purchase of a 'place' in a day service is based on the Service Needs Assessment (SNA) funding level, recognising that this funds group based support. These funds are able to be used flexibly for chosen supports to the same level of funding.



Refer to:

Information sheet #5 - Current unit prices for the disability services most commonly purchased with Individual Support Package

How is the total cost worked out?

All cost details **must be** calculated on a yearly basis, consistent with the DSR notional allocation, even though the review date may be for a longer period (such as 36 months).

Calculating the quantity of service required may need to take into consideration the potential for unexpected events. This may be things like extended period of illness requiring increased personal support at home.



For more information

- The automated funding proposal will perform some of the required calculations.
- Further explanation about how to complete the costs of a person's Individual Support Package can be found in the **Automated Funding Proposal Business Practice Guide**.

Goods & Services Tax (GST)

Application of GST to purchases under an Individual Support Package depends on the type of services being purchased, the funding administration arrangement and from whom the services are being purchased.

When costing the funding proposal, facilitators need to identify any GST component. This will enable the department to pay the required amount in addition to the funding allocated for supports.

Service providers are responsible for seeking advice directly from the Australian Taxation Office on GST for the services they provide and the issue of appropriate invoices.

3.8 Recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure

An Individual Support Package is a funding mechanism to assist people with an ongoing support need in accordance with their DSR application. The notional allocation represents the annual funding that a person needs on an ongoing basis. Therefore, an Individual Support Package will predominantly be recurrent funding. There is, however, capacity for some funding to be allocated on a non-recurrent basis for a specified period. This may often occur in the first year of a person's Individual Support Package where, for example, they may require assistance to establish an independent living arrangement.

Non-recurrent funding may also be required where it is known that the person requires a short-term or one-off support during the year such as, additional personal support due to a planned event.

Further guidance on how to work with recurrent and non-recurrent funding is included in the relevant practice advice.



Refer to:

Practice Advice #3—Recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure

3.9 Time period for funding

Individual Support Package funding is allocated to a person who has an ongoing support need and is calculated and allocated as an annual amount. When funding is allocated for a part year, a pro rata amount is provided.

The funding is subject to review on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the person.

The maximum period of allocation is three years in line with the Disability Act requirement regarding the review of support plans. An earlier review may be required for some people (see Chapter 8).

A recurrent funding allocation will continue in its agreed form until a review is undertaken and the person's plan identifies changes are required.

A package may, also include one off or short term funding for goods and equipment or for specific short term supports.

3.10 Sharing support delivery

Sharing support delivery means that two or more people put their Individual Support Package funding together to buy support from the same provider or providers.

Where a person indicates a wish to share support delivery with another person(s), their facilitator must refer the person to the relevant chapter in the Individual Support Package Handbook which includes some examples of issues the person should consider before making a final decision.

Approval of sharing support delivery will be subject to the region being satisfied that arrangements will be sustainable. The region may not be able to provide additional funding in the event the arrangement ceases.



For more information

- [Individual Support Package Handbook](#)

4. Funding administration arrangements

The person and their supporters may choose how their funding is administered. The funding can be administered through one of the following arrangements or a combination of arrangements:

- direct payments
- financial intermediary
- registered disability service provider (through a service agreement with the department).

4.1 Direct payments

Direct payments is the transfer of Individual Support Package funding to a person with a disability or a nominated person to purchase supports to meet the goals of the person's funding plan.

The person(s) signs a deed of agreement (direct payments) with the department. The deed requires the person(s) to comply with the Individual Support Packages Handbook and their funding plan. The funding is transferred to the person in accordance with the funding plan. The person chooses and pays for supports in line with the goals of their funding plan and is responsible for keeping records of expenditure and meeting the accountability requirements.

When might a person choose direct payments?

People who wish to have maximum control of their funding may choose direct payments. It currently has limited availability in the Southern, North and West Metropolitan and Gippsland regions and will be available across the State in 2010.

4.2 Financial intermediary service

The financial intermediary service holds the Individual Support Package funds allocated to a person, makes payments at the direction of the person in accordance with their funding plan and keeps records of the person's expenditure.

When using the financial intermediary service the person is responsible for checking that invoices for supports are correct, authorising the invoices and sending the authorised invoices to the financial intermediary for payment. The financial intermediary is responsible for paying the invoices, keeping records of payments made, providing individual expenditure reports and reporting, reconciling and acquitting expenditure in accordance with the department's requirements.

The financial intermediary service is not responsible for negotiating or organising service providers to deliver supports, monitoring delivery or the quality of the supports received.

When might a person choose a financial intermediary service?

A person who has a number of different service providers in their funding plan and who wants flexibility, choice and control over expenditure but is unable to hold the funding or pay invoices might choose a financial intermediary service.

4.3 Registered disability service provider(s)

The department allocates funding to a registered disability service provider through a service agreement to deliver services directly or purchase services on behalf of a person in accordance with the funding plan.

The service provider administers the funding and is accountable to the department for the services provided or purchased for the person.

The service provider is responsible for the quality of supports provided or purchased, manages the budget, tracks expenditure at an individual level, keeps records, reports, reconciles and acquits the funds in accordance with the department's requirements. When the provider charges a fee for administering the Individual Support Package, the provider is required to provide expenditure reports to the person. The person has no funding administration responsibilities.

Where a group based service is purchased, recording of individual expenditure is not required.

When might a person choose a registered disability service provider?

Where a person plans to purchase all supports directly from the service provider or to have a majority of supports delivered or coordinated by the service provider, the person might choose to have their funding administered through a registered disability service provider.

Where a person purchases a place in a day service, it will be administered through the disability service provider selected by the person.

Making a choice of funding administration arrangement

When selecting a funding administration arrangement, the person and/or nominated person(s) must acknowledge that they will accept the conditions and responsibilities associated with the arrangement.

It is the role of the facilitator to provide the person and their supporters with information about the funding administration arrangements.

This information is detailed in the Individual Support Package Handbook. Complementary information for facilitators is contained in the relevant Practice Advice.



For more information

- [Individual Support Package Handbook](#)



Refer to:

Practice Advice #4—Choosing Funding Administration Arrangements

5. The funding approval process

5.1 Support Plan

The *Disability Act 2006* (the Act) requires that a support plan is in place for people who are in receipt of an ongoing disability support. An Individual Support Package is considered an ongoing disability support.

The support plan outlines the person's goals and the strategies and resources required to achieve their goals. The support plan can be in the format preferred by the person, however, the supports that require funding need to be documented in a funding proposal.

For more information regarding the requirements for developing support plans, refer to the relevant practice advice.



Refer to:

Practice Advice #5—Support plans

5.2 Funding proposal

A funding proposal is the mechanism for documenting the supports and associated funding details required for a person to achieve the goals as outlined in their support plan.

The funding proposal is used for:

- consideration and approval (as appropriate) of funding
- identifying the funding administration arrangement chosen
- providing information to the person or provider administering the funding about how the funding is to be spent
- acknowledgment of the person's acceptance of the conditions and responsibilities associated with receiving Individual Support Package funding.

The funding proposal must be in a consistent format so that:

- all Individual Support Package recipients and facilitators can understand the requirements for seeking final approval of funding allocations
- regional delegates are provided with consistent information on which to make their decisions
- consistent data is gathered for reporting purposes.

The funding proposal can be completed by a range of parties involved in the person's life:

- the person
- the facilitator selected by the person
- a supporter selected by the person
- a worker who already has a relationship with the person (for example, a case manager)

5.3 Acknowledgement of the conditions of funding

All recipients of Individual Support Packages are required to formally acknowledge their acceptance of the package, their responsibility in ensuring that funds are spent within the agreed goals and the accountability and reporting requirements that are required of them.

By signing the acknowledgement on the funding proposal, the person(s) agree to comply with the Individual Support Package handbook and the responsibilities of the chosen funding administration arrangement.

The following describes who may sign the acknowledgement in the funding proposal:

- a person with a disability (adult) who is the Individual Support Package recipient
- a person with a disability aged 16 years and over and a nominated person *
- a nominated person
- two nominated people (for example both parents of an adult with a disability).

* This option enables a young person with a disability to begin to assume the responsibilities outlined in the acknowledgment with the support of a nominated person. It also enables an adult with a disability who is able to assume some of the responsibilities (such as making purchases or authorising invoices but not others, such as budgeting) to do so together with a nominated person. Where two parties are signatories they must together fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the acknowledgment)

It is the role of the nominated person to:

- involve the person in decisions about their support and in all relevant decisions
- consult with the person in relation to the use and the management of the funds
- operate in the best interests of the person

Automated funding proposal

To ensure a consistent format, the funding proposal has been automated within the department's Client Relationship Information System (CRIS) and Client Relationship Information System for Service Providers (CRISSP).

The business requirements behind the automated funding proposal process are documented in the Individual Support Package Business Practice Guide.

Note: An 'offline' version of the funding proposal remains available for use by people who choose to develop the proposal themselves be assisted by a supporter. (It can also be used where an organisation that is not using CRISSP will assist the person to develop their funding proposal).

Offline funding proposal templates will be available as a paper document or for use on a personal computer. These versions **must** be used at all times for an offline funding proposal.



For more information

- Individual Support Package Automated Funding Proposal Business Practice Guide

5.4 Approval

Approval of Individual Support Package funding must be undertaken by a regional delegate who has authority for the level of funding to be allocated.

There are three key factors that the regional delegate must take account of when considering a funding proposal for approval:

- is the funding requested within notional allocation or, if not, has sufficient explanation been provided?
- do the supports requested comply with the funding guidelines (see Chapter 3)?
- is the Funding Administration Arrangement(s) appropriate to the person (see Chapter 4)?

Further guidance on the approval process can be found in the relevant practice advice.



Refer to:

Practice Advice #6 —Approval of funding proposals

6. Implementing a funding plan

Once the funding proposal is approved it becomes the person's funding plan. The person and/or their nominated must be provided with a copy of the funding plan and can commence putting the plan into action.

Implementation involves:

- arranging the commencement of supports in the plan to meet the person's goals
- ensuring payment for supports provided – responsibilities vary according to the funding administration arrangement chosen (see Chapter 4)
- ensuring supports continue to meet the person's needs and contribute to achieving their goals
- monitoring the quality of supports
- monitoring the expenditure of funding

The person's plan will have identified who will implement and monitor their package. This could be the person, a family member or supporter. Some people may have identified a wish to establish a support or friendship network to provide assistance (sometimes referred to as a circle of support).

6.1 Assistance with implementing funded supports

It is part of the facilitator's role to provide some assistance after approval of the funding plan to ensure:

- supports commence as outlined in the plan
- the person and their supporters, if relevant, are aware of their responsibilities
- the person and their supporters know who to contact if they need further advice or wish to request a review.

Facilitators may provide one off, episodic advice throughout the period of the plan, but do not provide continuous support to implement the plan.

Support coordination

Where the person has a limited network of supporters, limited capacity to negotiate with service providers or complex needs, their funding plan may identify that some ongoing support coordination is required.

Support coordination should be tailored to the person's needs and may range from infrequent contact to regular monitoring and assistance with administration of the supports.

6.2 Changes to supports

Changes within goals of a person's approved funding plan may be made by the person and/or their supporter(s) **without** regional approval where this does not involve a change of funding administration arrangement.

This means the person can change from:

- one service provider to another
- one type of support to another

provided that this does not involve a change of funding administration arrangement and the person believes that new provider or type of support will contribute to achieving the goals in their plan.

Changes can be made for any reason, including:

- the person's need has changed
- the person is not satisfied with the support that is being provided
- the support has achieved its purpose toward the goal and another support is now required

Changes that require regional approval

Regional approval must be sought where:

- the person has identified a change of goal
- the change will require additional funding
- the change involves a change of funding administration arrangement

Administrative requirements for the person

When making changes, the person **must**:

- make arrangements to cease the existing support including providing advice to the service provider(s)
- negotiate commencement of the new support
- notify the funding administration arrangement of the change
- notify the region if the funding administration arrangement is through a disability service provider

The period of notice will be in accordance with the terms required by the service provider or as agreed between the person and the service provider. For registered disability service providers the period of notice is two months.

The person may provide a shorter period of notice where they allege they have been subject to abuse, neglect or other significantly substandard service or the provider is unable to provide the agreed service.

A template notification form is provided in the Individual Support Package Handbook.

If the person requires assistance they may seek this from their facilitation organisation or the regional office.

Monitoring changes

The person's funding plan contains information about the person's goals and supports required to achieve their goals. While supports may be wide ranging within the funding guidelines, a consistent set of categories is used for reporting purposes.

Where the funding administration arrangement is a financial intermediary, monthly expenditure reporting will be used to monitor changes.



For more information

- [Individual Support Package Handbook](#)

6.3 Changes that exceed the current funding allocation

A review of the person's support plan and funding plan is required if additional funding is requested. Requests for an increase in funding allocation are to be considered in the context of applying the priority criteria and availability of funding. An increase in the person's funding allocation must be approved by the regional delegate. If the additional funding requested exceeds what is available, a new DSR application can be made.

6.4 Emergency support

A person in receipt of an Individual Support Package may experience unexpected changes in their circumstances and require additional support to that available through the funding available to them.

Regions may provide emergency funding for support that will reduce an immediate risk to the person's health and wellbeing.

Guidance on how to manage emergency support is included as a practice advice.



Refer to:

Practice Advice #7—Emergency support

6.5 Moving to another region

An Individual Support Package enables the person to move to another region and retain their funding allocation.

The current region must be notified in advance of the wish to change regions.

If the move results in changes to the person's supports as described in Section 6.3, the person and/or a nominated person may make arrangements with replacement service providers.

If the move is a result of change in family circumstance or the existing supports are not available in the new region, a review of the person's support plan and funding plan may be required.

A move from one region to another requires the two regions to make necessary arrangements including:

- ensuring that the person's CRIS record is up-to-date
- transferring information that is not currently in CRIS
- transferring the funding allocation and Individual Support Package target.

Advice of the transfer must be provided in writing by the transferring region to the receiving region.

6.6 Moving interstate

If the person is moving to another State within Australia, a protocol between the States allows for up to 12 months funding to be transferred from the region to the new state. The use of those funds will be in accordance with the policies of that state.

When a move is planned, the person or a nominated person has a responsibility to give the region, their funding administrator and any service providers as much advance notice as possible.

The region will then advise the service provider(s) or financial intermediary that they will be ceasing the flow of funding in relation to the person.

The person and/or a nominated person should also ensure that any regular purchasing arrangements are cancelled. If there are any difficulties in finalising these arrangements Consumer Affairs Victoria should be contacted.

Arriving in Victoria

Any funding received from interstate is considered to be an Individual Support Package and is not restricted by any spending requirements from the state of origin. It should be used in the manner that best meets the person's requirements, as determined through an appropriate planning process.

The planning process should take into account the fact that the interstate funds are non-recurrent and intended to assist with the transition period only. Regions should ensure that adequate supports are in place at the end of the 12 month period, so that the individual and their family have continuity of support.



**For more
information**

Moving Interstate: Assistance to People with a Disability and their Carers protocol

6.7 Individual Support Package is no longer required

An Individual Support Package may no longer be needed for a variety of reasons. When this occurs, the person or nominated person has a responsibility to advise the region within 14 days. The same responsibility applies to a registered disability provider, facilitator or case manager working with the person, if they become aware of the situation.

The region must advise the funding administrator and cease payment other than for supports already provided. Reconciliation of expenditure must be completed. The person and/or their representative should also ensure that any regular purchasing arrangements are cancelled. If there are any difficulties in finalising these arrangements Consumer Affairs Victoria should be contacted.

7. Monitoring and reporting

The person's funding plan identifies who is responsible for monitoring each aspect of the plan and the supports that are purchased. This may include the person, a support coordinator or a supporter.

The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that the intended outcomes of the person's plan are being addressed and the supports continue to meet the person's needs and goals. It is also used to initiate action, such as a review, where outcomes or needs are not being met.

7.1 Financial monitoring

Where an Individual Support Package is allocated directly to a service provider, the service provider is responsible for monitoring the expenditure for each individual.

Where group activities are purchased in a day service, the service provider is not required to report on individual expenditure, however, they are required to report the number of effective full-time (EFT) places.

Where a package is managed by a financial intermediary, the financial intermediary records expenditure for each person and provides reports to the person and the department.

For packages administered through a financial intermediary, reporting based on identified events or triggers form a key element of monitoring expenditure by the department. Funding is cash flowed according to the schedule in the funding plan.

Events or triggers requiring reporting to the department include:

- expenditure is ahead of the funding plan by more than 20% of annual funding
- expenditure is behind the funding plan by more than 20% of annual funding.

When an irregularity is identified contact is made with the person with a disability to follow up the reason for the irregularity and to address any concerns where required. This may result in a review of the support plan and funding plan.

7.2 Acquittal

Monitoring also involves acquitting the funding allocation for each individual at the end of each 12 month period.

Acquittal for each Individual Support Package occurs at the end of each financial year to ascertain that funds provided have been fully expended or committed in accordance with the agreed funding plan.



Refer to:

Practice Advice #8—Funding acquittal & reconciliation for disability service providers

7.3 Unspent funds

Unspent funds may accrue by the end of the 12 month period for a range of reasons including the person's need being met through alternative means, being unable to access support, or being hospitalised for a lengthy period of time.

Unspent funds do not include funds that have been committed for support already provided or supports on order but not yet delivered.

Unspent funds up to \$1,500 or 5 per cent of the annual allocation (whichever is the greater) may be rolled into the next funding period for expenditure in accordance with the person's funding plan and goals. A pro rata amount must be calculated if the plan has been in operation for a part year.

The following table provides an illustration of the amount that can be carried forward.

Sample package amount	Carry forward amount
Up to \$30,000	\$1,500
\$40,000	\$2,000
\$50,000	\$2,500

Unspent funds in excess of \$1,500 or 5 per cent must be returned to the region which provided the funding. Unspent funds that are returned to the department will be reallocated to support for other people with a disability.

Regions may consider requests for an increased carry forward amount for a specific purpose if there are exceptional circumstances. Where an allocation is significantly over or underspent, a review of the plan will be initiated by the region.

7.4 Reporting

The department is responsible for meeting a number of reporting requirements.

These include the need to:

- demonstrate accountability for expenditure of public funds
- plan for future service need
- demonstrate the effectiveness of service delivery and service system reform
- report under the National Disability Agreement
- meet performance monitoring requirements across a range of levels (service providers, regional offices, Disability Services Division of the Department) and
- support program evaluation activities.

Information to meet these reporting requirements will be obtained at various points in the service delivery process. The funding plan will be used to capture basic service user circumstances and proposed service use. Actual service delivery will be reported in the interim through an annual acquittal process linked to the funding plan.

For packages administered by a financial intermediary, the financial intermediary will report on service delivery through monthly expenditure reporting.

For packages administered through direct payments, sample financial reviews will inform reporting on service delivery.

Reports on expenditure will be based on a defined set of code numbers for categories of support.



Refer to:

Information Sheet #7—Categories of support

Note: The above arrangements replace Quarterly Data Collection (QDC) reporting of Individual Support Packages, pending a comprehensive redevelopment of QDC.

8. Reviewing supports

A scheduled review date and the person or organisation responsible for leading the review should be set at the time a support plan is developed. In accordance with the Disability Act, support plans must be reviewed at least once every three years. There are, however, a range of reasons for scheduling a shorter review time.

These include:

- a person, particularly a child, is approaching a key transition period in their life
- the person has a progressive condition or their health is unstable
- there are anticipated changes in the person's informal support network.

The person or their supporter can request a review at any time:

- if the plan or parts of the plan are not meeting the person's needs
- there are unanticipated changes in the person's circumstances.

A review may also be initiated by the department if there is significant over or under expenditure or other irregularities in the implementation of the funding plan.

Annual reviews are a requirement for people in receipt of Individual Support Package funding through the *my future my choice* initiative.

A disability service provider responsible for providing the service or a facilitator may assist in undertaking the review.

A review involves looking at the outcomes for the person, including considering:

- Have the person's goals been met?
- Are the strategies in the plan working and still relevant or need to be changed?
- Are the chosen supports effectively meeting the identified goals?
- Has the expenditure been consistent with what was anticipated?
- Has the funding administration arrangement met the person's needs?
- Has the person met their responsibilities for the funding administration arrangement?

The person's funding plan cannot be reviewed in isolation. It must be reviewed at the same time as the support plan and, if there have been significant changes, both a new support plan and funding proposal will be developed.

A review may result in:

- no changes to the plans
- changes to goals and strategies required (within the person's allocation and the funding principles)
- changes to goals and strategies required (which exceed the person's allocation – refer to Section 6.2)
- a change to the funding administration arrangement.



For more information

- Disability Services Planning Policy
- Disability Services Planning Resource Kit and Implementation guide
- Disability Support Register Guidelines
www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

9. Complaints

A person is able to make a complaint about any aspect of the service they receive from the department or registered disability service providers at any time during the development, assessment, approval and implementation of an Individual Support Package.

Facilitators and regions must provide appropriate and relevant information about where people can go if they have complaints about any aspect of their funding proposal development or the supports they may receive once the funding plan is approved.

Assessment of funding proposals and associated decisions by regional delegates are subject to the Disability Services Division's Complaints Policy. Regional decisions, other than in relation to the quantum of funds allocated, are subject to review by the Disability Services Commissioner. Information about the processes must be provided to the person at the appropriate time.

Registered disability service providers and the department must have a documented complaints process which may be scrutinised by the Disability Services Commissioner. This must be provided to the person on commencement of receiving support.

Providers of community services and commercial services should provide people with information about how to raise complaints. People assisting with implementation of a funding plan may need to assist the person to obtain information or advice from Consumer Affairs if their complaints are not being adequately addressed.



For more information

The Disability Services complaints policy is contained in the Policy and Information Manual, July 2007. This document can be found on the Disability Services website:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

Information regarding the Disability Services Commissioner can be found on the following website:

[Disability Services Commissioner](#)

Consumer Affairs Victoria

Telephone: 1300 55 81 81

Website: [Consumer Affairs contact information](#)

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline

Telephone: 1800 880 052

Website: [National Disability Hotline](#)