

## PROJECTS UPDATE

DECEMBER 2009

*This update is a general summary about current projects. Any use of the information contained in it will need the prior consent of the Ministry of Health*

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### ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT SERVICES

#### *Equipment and Modification Services*

The pressures on the Equipment and Modification Services budget have resulted in significant work focusing on possible ways to manage increased demand. We are working closely with Enable New Zealand and Accessable to see whether extending the range and type of equipment on their Common and Standard Lists would result in cost savings and also increase refurbishment rates. Items which could be added to the Lists will include mattresses, a range of equipment for children and power wheelchairs – we want to be sure that the items selected will be the first choice for Specialised Assessors to trial and meet the needs of the majority of disabled people.

Accessable, the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Services provider in the Auckland/Northland region, has recently begun trialling two new initiatives:

- Application process for Minor Housing Modifications – this relates to the provision of rails which will cost less than \$1,000 and if the trial is successful, will result in a more streamlined and faster process for such applications.
- Housing Clinics and a new process for applications for complex housing modifications – these clinics are aimed at supporting Specialised Assessors with all aspects of these applications as due to their complexity, many are administratively intensive by all parties, time-consuming and protracted. Specialised Assessors will be offered assistance at the start of the process, well before the final solution has been identified.

The Ministry supports these two initiatives and acknowledges the work by Accessable to implement processes which we hope will ultimately result in more efficient and timely service delivery for disabled people.

#### *Equipment and Modification Services' Improvement Programme*

Two key projects within this programme are:

**Prioritisation of Equipment and Modification Services (EMS)** - A series of workshops which were aimed at developing improved priority assessment criteria for the provision of equipment and modifications have recently been completed. The prioritisation tool is being designed to ensure greater value for money from the Equipment and Modification Services budget through services focused more specifically on the needs of disabled people and their ability to benefit from appropriately matched equipment or modification supports. We are also working on a new prioritisation tool that will help manage access to funding in a fairer and more transparent way. This is being developed with consumers, clinicians (e.g. Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Therapists and Audiologists), the providers of Equipment and Modification Services and other key stakeholders such as representatives from the office of the Health and Disability Commissioner.

High priority is assigned to people where there is a high likelihood of the proposed equipment or modification solution meeting their needs and reversing the impact of the disability on their life. Through these initial workshops consumers with disabilities also supported the inclusion of criteria that considered the ability of the person to contribute to the funding of the equipment or modification support.

This work is based on prioritisation criteria which have been developed for elective surgery and Disability Support Services has been fortunate to have been supported by the Team Leader, Electives, within the Ministry of Health, in the planning of this new tool. When the tool has been finalised it will be piloted in a small number of regions early in the New Year.

**Assessor Accreditation** – Draft competency frameworks have been completed in two specialised areas of assessment, Wheelchairs and Seating and Communication Assistive Technology. These frameworks will be presented to the Ministry by late December for its consideration – if the recommendations are adopted by the Ministry, they will be implemented during the next calendar year. The pilot project looking at service accreditation in the four DHBs is now being evaluated, and the outcome of this work will guide recommendations for wider changes to the assessor accreditation framework. Five meetings were held with Specialised Assessors (focussing on DHB clinicians) during November to provide participants with an update on the accreditation work and these meetings were very well attended.

A separate project is underway looking at the level of competency required to assess for, fit and recommend hearing aids. This work involves discussion with key sector groups, including the New Zealand Audiological Society and the Academy of New Zealand Audiometrists Inc.

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## **REVIEW OF THE EQUIPMENT AND THERAPY PROTOCOLS**

A revised draft framework for the Ministries of Health and Education is now complete. This includes a Memorandum of Understanding and Operational Guideline (including Local Area Agreements). The Ministries have agreed final edits and discussions around implementation are underway.

A project has been completed to consider the requirements for including Speech Language Therapy (SLT) into the equipment and therapy protocols. A meeting was held in October 2009 with Senior SLT Leaders from across the country representing SLT Services within DHBs, to provide them with information about this.

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## **CHILD and YOUTH**

The Guideline on roles and responsibilities for supporting disabled children and young people under the Children, Young Person, and their Families Act 1989 is available on the Ministry of Health website. National implementation was jointly coordinated between Child Youth and Family (CYF) and Disability Support Services in June 2009.

Implementation occurred in seven locations across the country and included workshops for NASC and CYF staff. We expect that further implementation of the Guideline will occur at a local level to communities by the individuals that attended the workshops.

Disability Support Services are working closely with CYF to strengthen approaches to working together, including developing new referral resources to support the implementation process.

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## **AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

Implementation of the NZ Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline continues based on the priorities agreed between the Ministries of Health and Education following consultation with the implementation advisory group, the ASD Intersectoral Advisory Group, and a group of senior officials from a range of government departments. The priority areas are assessment and diagnosis, support to strengthen families, interventions, respite and coordination of services.

Five projects are currently in progress to increase the resources for people who refer, assess and diagnose ASD, including training for specialists working with children and young people with ASD and their families. We are looking at approaches that support coordinated implementation. We have contracted for five projects to support strengthening families. Contracts are now in place for Autism NZ and IDEA Services to provide parent education programmes that will improve parents' knowledge of the impact of ASD. We are establishing two ASD-specific services in the Auckland region to increase the availability of community-based interventions. These include the ASD-specific family and whānau community outreach service, and the Auckland based communication and behaviour support service.

We have allocated funding to increase access to respite beds nationally and have completed and submitted a paper to the Ministry of Health that describes a model for ASD-specific respite services in consultation with the implementation advisory group. There are also three projects underway to look at improving service co-ordination.

More information about implementation is available in the October newsletter on our website. Another newsletter is to be published on the website in December.

([http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/8594/\\$File/asd-newsletter-oct09.pdf](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/8594/$File/asd-newsletter-oct09.pdf))

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## **WORKFORCE**

### ***Workforce Action Plan***

Implementation of The Disability Support Services Workforce Action Plan (Action Plan) has begun. The Action Plan defines our workforce priorities through to 2014 and guides how we allocate funding and resources in partnership with the sector.

We will focus on three key groups for the new initiatives – consumers, providers, and workers. Recent funding announcements demonstrate how these three groups will be supported. The new national training coordination service (under development) will support providers through a small staff of regional training coordinators. It will also support workers through training grants. Our DSS Leadership Initiatives for 2010 will support consumers (disabled people and their families and carers) and providers by funding innovative leadership development programmes.

The Action Plan will not be published in hard copy but electronic copies can be requested.

### ***Needs Assessment & Service Coordination (NASC) Workforce***

Enrolments for the 2010 intake of the new Graduate Diploma in Education (Disability Support)<sup>1</sup> have opened. The process can now be completed online. The Ministry is funding 20 places in 2010 for senior employees of needs assessment and service coordination organisations funded by the Ministry. Potential students must apply for approval to study at Auckland University by 8 December 2009. Enquiries should be made to directly to Auckland University in the first instance.

Enrolments for the new National Certificate in Disability Support Assessment Planning and Coordination recently closed for the first intake of the pilot training programme. A second round of enrolments will close in May 2010. Delivery details are being finalised by Careerforce and a cross-section of workforce development leaders. Enquiries should be made to directly to Careerforce in the first instance.

### ***National Training and Coordination Service***

The Ministry requested tenders in August to develop and deliver a national training coordination service. The selection process is nearly complete. This new service will coordinate training options for all DSS workers who wish to study towards approved national certificates. An announcement of the preferred provider of this exciting new service is expected in late 2009.

### ***Priorities for 2009/10***

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<sup>1</sup> An award of the University of Auckland

The following table describes in order of priority (from highest to lowest) the initiatives that we plan to allocate funding to during the current financial year. These initiatives have been endorsed by the DSS Workforce Reference Group and approved by senior management.

No.	Initiative	Applicable to
1	Graduate Diploma in Education (Disability Support) delivered by the University of Auckland	40 DSS NASC employees (20 in 2009 and 20 in 2010) who meet criteria for admission to study at the University of Auckland
2	National Training Coordination Service (incorporating training grant administration)	All DSS employers to enable front-line workers, who provide direct support to users of disability support services, to gain relevant qualifications at Levels 3-5 on the NZ Qualifications Framework. The service will have a strong emphasis on smaller, rural, Māori and Pacific providers
3	Leadership Development Scheme (modelled on successful 2008/09 initiative)	All DSS employers for emerging leaders who supervise or manage front-line service to develop advanced competencies
4	Consumer Training and Leadership Fund	Consumers of any Ministry of Health funded disability support service
5	DSS Workforce Information Project	A representative cross-section of DSS employers
6	Ministry of Health Action on the Carers Strategy	Informal carers delivering support to those who meet eligibility criteria for Ministry of Health funded disability support service

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## PACIFIC

### *Lu'i Ola Strategic Framework for Action 2009/13 (Auckland) 'Together I am Able'*

Lu'i Ola continues to progress forward with new developments evident in all areas of the interagency project. This includes the identification and the appointment of service user and family member representatives to be actively involved and participate in the governance and activities of Lu'i Ola. This has been acknowledged as an important area of need to have consumer input into all Lu'i Ola development and activities. In addition it is a step forward in creating a closer connection between the Pacific disability community and Lu'i Ola.

The Lu'i Ola Co-Sponsor Roadshow has also supported the connection with the Pacific disability community and the Pacific community in general. Initially the roadshow served to re-engage and re-connect the Lu'i Ola agencies to the project. However there has been an increasing demand for this roadshow to extend beyond the Lu'i Ola partners to heighten the profile of Lu'i Ola at a community level. This includes Pacific community advisory groups, disability reference groups and organisation advisory committees.

An inaugural meeting of the newly established Lu'i Ola Pacific Disability Provider Network will provide support and advice to all Lu'i Ola planning and activities from a service delivery perspective. It further provides a coordinated approach to ensure Pacific disability providers are well linked and supported to enable them to provide a quality service to Pacific peoples with disabilities and their family members and caregivers. This piece of work has been led by Lu'i Ola agency Counties Manukau District Health Board and executed by Vaka Tautua Ltd.

Vaka Tautua has been contracted recently by the Ministry of Health to provide project development and management support for Lu'i Ola. The Pacific disability provider has been contracted to develop and deliver on key pieces of work of Lu'i Ola which includes the first ever Pasifika church community tool kit, organise and implement a community fono and undertake and complete communications activity to raise the awareness of Lu'i Ola and its messages in the community. Support will also be provided by Vaka Tautua in the implementation and evaluation of the Access Pilot Project currently being delivered in the Mangere South Auckland area.

The Lu'i Ola Steering Group continues to gain governance status with senior managers from each participating organisation.

### **National Pacific Disability Plan 2009 – 2013**

A focused external feedback process was undertaken to further strengthen the National Pasifika Disability Plan 09/13. As a result, the final draft of the plan now incorporates the majority of the recommendations received from key external parties. A procurement process has commenced to identify and appoint an external agency to implement the National Pasifika Disability Plan for the next two years.

The key strategic focus areas of the plan are:

- Workforce
- Provider development
- Information and communication
- Leadership.

The Plan aims to ensure 'Pacific peoples with disabilities can live in their home and take part in their community in the same way other New Zealanders do'.

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### **INDIVIDUALISED FUNDING**

Individualised Funding (IF) is a payment arrangement which enables disabled people to directly manage the resources they are allocated for disability supports following an assessment by a NASC organisation. This can range from simply choosing caregivers and service delivery plans to employing their own care providers, managing the payment for services of these providers and managing all aspects of service delivery. The arrangements allow the disabled person increased choice and control over how and when they use their allocated money and who provides them with support.

As a result of a review of the IF Scheme completed in 2008, the Ministry is now working to:

- extend eligibility for IF to more disabled people who may not fit existing criteria
- increase the number of providers who wish to offer IF.

The review and subsequent implementation plan is aligned with the *Government Response to Report of the Social Services Select Committee on its Inquiry into the Quality of Care and Services Provision for People with Disabilities (2009)*.

The Ministry has committed to expanding IF during 2010, beginning with Home and Community Support Services. During December, the Ministry will be seeking expressions of interest from Home and Community Support Service providers who are interested in becoming IF provider hosts. Providers will be evaluated against criteria to ensure they have the systems and support in place to offer IF to consumers.

An Implementation Reference Group (IRG) will be established also in December and includes Ministry, consumer, NASC and provider representatives. The purpose of the IRG is to provide a forum to discuss matters relating to implementation of the Individualised Funding Scheme as they arise and to help in the development of key communications and guidance documentation for all stakeholder groups. Implementation activities will begin in early 2010.

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### **RESIDENTIAL SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

A project reviewing residential services for people with physical disabilities including those services provided in aged residential care facilities is underway. This project is part of the Disability Support Service Plan for 2009/10 and fits within the wider work programme around residential services and other supports for disabled people.

The project is made up of a number of stages. The current stage has focused on analysis and aims

to identify potential options for reducing the number of people in age inappropriate disability support services funded by the Ministry of Health.

Initial analysis is underway to identify some options or solutions that can be implemented in the short term. Further reports identifying potential support options, that are age appropriate and affordable for people with physical and neurological disabilities and high support needs, will be completed in February and June 2010.

These options will focus on solutions to ensure that disabled people who live in residential services have a greater degree of choice and control than they do at present.

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## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT & COORDINATION SERVICES (NASC)**

### **NASC Service Budget Management Framework Development Project 2009/10**

The work to support NASCs to enhance their budget management capability has continued to progress as planned.

The first stage of the work has been delivered. Since July 2009 each NASC has been provided with Service Budget and Actual Expenditure Financial Reporting.

The second stage of the work is on track and now requires further refinement and planning prior to being implemented early next calendar year. During this second stage the Ministry plans to make available to NASCs a set of Tools to help improve the management of Expenditure. The Tools will help NASCs to operate more consistently when coordinating services for a person.

The Ministry's Directorate Services Group and Service Access Team will continue to work closely on this work throughout the remainder of this financial year.

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## **LOCAL AREA COORDINATION (LAC) TYPE PROCESSES: INVESTIGATION**

The investigation of LAC-type processes has included a visit to two Australian sites, a stocktake of current LAC-type processes within New Zealand and a literature review. The investigation has also been extended to examine a new model of supporting disabled people that incorporates the key elements of Local Area Coordination, and also includes other features such as supported living and individualised funding. The report will be submitted to the Ministerial Committee once it is completed.

The work is being led jointly by Disability Support Services and Disability Policy.

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## **CONSUMER CONSORTIUM**

The final consortium for 2009 was held in Wellington in early November. The Members worked with the Ministry representatives to advise on service development including workforce and the consumer training and leadership options, criteria setting within the equipment & modification services improvement programme, community residential support services & home agreements, individualised funding, respite & carer support, local area co-ordination, and improving the health of people with an intellectual disability.

The following new members were welcomed to the Consortium:

1. Morgan Smith – People First
2. Jill Waldron – Muscular Dystrophy Association
3. John Grealley – Autism NZ
4. Christine Morrison – IHC Advocacy

5. Patrick Thompson – Mana Turi o Aotearoa

The Consortium farewelled the following members and acknowledged their huge contribution over the last two to four years.

1. Kevin Anderson – Brain Injury Association
2. Patricia Anderson – IHC Advocacy
3. Rainus Baker – People First
4. Jennifer Birch – Autism NZ
5. Jan Moss – Carers NZ
6. Kim Robinson – Deaf Aotearoa NZ
7. Gillian Smailes – Hearing Association
8. Hilary Stace – Autism NZ
9. Anne Wilkinson – Parent to Parent
10. Graeme Parish – People First

The next consortium will be held in March 2010.

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### **SUPPORTED LIVING PROJECT**

The Supported Living project is a collaborative effort involving Supported Living New Zealand and representatives from NASCs to move Supported Living towards an outcome based service. The Service Specification is in the final stages of review. The reporting framework and individual planning documents are also being reviewed to reflect the aim of measuring outcomes, not inputs. We are also working with ACC and it is anticipated that future developments will continue to be done in conjunction with them.

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### **TRANSFER OF DAY SERVICES FUNDING TO MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The transfer is on hold pending decisions at the Ministerial level. It is not clear when a final decision will be made on whether the transfer is to proceed.

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